PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF AUTONOMY AND COMPETENCE ON COMPETITIVE ANXIETY AMONGST UNIVERSITY ATHLETES IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract
University athleticism is geared towards competitiveness characterized by positive and negative behavioural outcomes which are determined by a psychological state called competitive anxiety. Hence, the sports psychologist has one of his prime roles ensuring athletes' wish of getting into flow is realizable. This necessitated the study which examined the influence of autonomy and competence on competitive anxiety amongst university athletes in South-west Nigeria. Three research hypotheses were formulated for the study. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to draw the sample for the study. The research instrument titled Competitive Anxiety Determinant Scale (CADS) was designed using two standardized instruments with reliability co efficient (α) of each above 0.75. CADS was administered to (N=1200) participants for data collection. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the results of the study revealed that: there was a significant relationship between autonomy and competitive anxiety ($r = 0.305$, $p < 0.05$: $r = 0.063$, $p < 0.05$) and composite contributions to competitive anxiety.(F-value = 63.420, p<value 0.05).Autonomy and competence have specific contributions to competitive anxiety amongst university athletes in southwest Nigeria. It was recommended that University athletes' coaches should ensure appropriate motivational techniques that are individualized and adopted to meet needs of each athlete; planning and organizing anxiety management training for the athlete

Keywords: Autonomy, Competence, Competitive anxiety

Introduction

Athletes in their perfectionist built are open to nuances of stressors in and outside the field of sports and these circumstances precede adaptive and maladaptive behaviour. The self-determination construct is typically used to explain motivational styles and associated behaviour which implies the ability of an athlete to choose a goal-directed behaviour in achieving a set goal with either of the goal achievement dispositions learning/ performance (Deci & Ryan 2012)

One of the most important sub-theories of self determination theory (SDT) is the basic psychological needs theory, which proposes that people have innate psychological needs that, when fulfilled, have positive influences on personal growth, psychosocial adjustment, and eudaimonic well-being. SDT assumes that a strong sense of competence, relatedness, and autonomy make up the basic needs and constitute the essential input that nurtures motivation and well- being across a variety of situations and cultures. The need for autonomy reflects the desire to organize experiences and behaviour that is congruent with the integrated self. The need for competence reflects the desire to have an effect on the environment and attain valued outcome. A sports event is the activity that has a controlling aspect manifested through division and its informing character which is manifested through getting feedback on competence.

If the needs of autonomy and competence are satisfied, autonomous internal forms of motivation will encourage behaviour. However, if the needs are thwarted, then this will lead to more controlling external forms of motivational regulation of motivation. Furthermore, Deci and Ryan (2012) stated that it is within the social context that needs can be promoted or thwarted. According to SDT, the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs is fundamental to incorporating cultural norms and values into a coherent self-structure that is considered to be innate and universal in their positive influence on well-being, while need-thwarting events can diminish energy.

Autonomy is defined as freedom of choice and high when individuals feel they are engaging in exercise because they choose to do so, not because they feel pressured by other people or external factors. Ideally, athletes will engage in sports activities because they enjoy the experience. In reality, however, many people exercise to (Ryan, Patrick, Deci & Williams 2009) enhance their body image, but if athletes can balance that extrinsic motivational state with things they enjoy about participation in sports, this will promote an intrinsic motivational state which is more likely to keep them exercising.

Autonomy is an internal state, reflecting the integrated endorsement and organization of actions, yet the capacity to act autonomously is strongly impacted by the social environment which can vary from being controlling and coercive to supportive of autonomy self-regulation as it is the regulation by self (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The imposition of controlling reward or punishment contingencies may, for example, compromise the athletes' autonomy, as can the presence of evaluative contingencies in contrast when others appreciate an athlete's frame of reference, this provides rationale for action, and allows reflection and choice: the capacity for autonomy is facilitated as well as potential to satisfy other basic psychological needs (Adie, Duda & Ntounamis, 2012). The nature of modern sport requires a level of autonomy to ensure that it runs smoothly and continues to develop.

The sense of competence can be related not only to an athlete's skill and history with the domain of behaviour in focus but also to an aspect of social environment .thus when people around the athletes, be the coach, teammates, parents or others provide meaningful positive feedback, feelings of competence can be enhanced

Competence is a perceived self-belief in one's ability to perform well in an activity. Various other authors have also expressed that competent practice is of utmost importance for the field (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2000; Cropley, Hanton, Miles, & Niven, 2010; Fletcher, & Maher, 2013). Feedback is a great tool for influencing athletes' competence. This is the act a person needs to experience some level of effectiveness and confidence.

There are four stages of the competence described by (Robinson, Sparrow, Clegg and Birdi 2007; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2010; Hammer, Barnes and Buckland, 2011).

1. **Unconscious incompetence:** The individual does not understand or know how to do something and does not necessarily recognize the deficit. They may deny the usefulness of the skill. The individual must recognize their incompetence, and the value of the new skill, before moving on to the next stage. The length of time an individual spends in this stage depends on the strength of the stimulus to learn.
2. **Conscious incompetence:** Though the individual does not understand or know how to do something, they recognize the deficit, as well as the value of a new skill in addressing the deficit. The making of mistakes can

be integral to the learning process at this stage.

3. **Conscious competence:** The individual understands or knows how to do something. However, demonstrating the skill or knowledge requires concentration. It may be broken down into steps, and there is heavy conscious involvement in executing the new skill.
4. **Unconscious competence:** The individual has had so much practice with a skill that it has become "second nature" and can be performed easily. As a result, the skill can be performed while executing another task. The individual may be able to teach it to others, depending upon how and when it was learned.

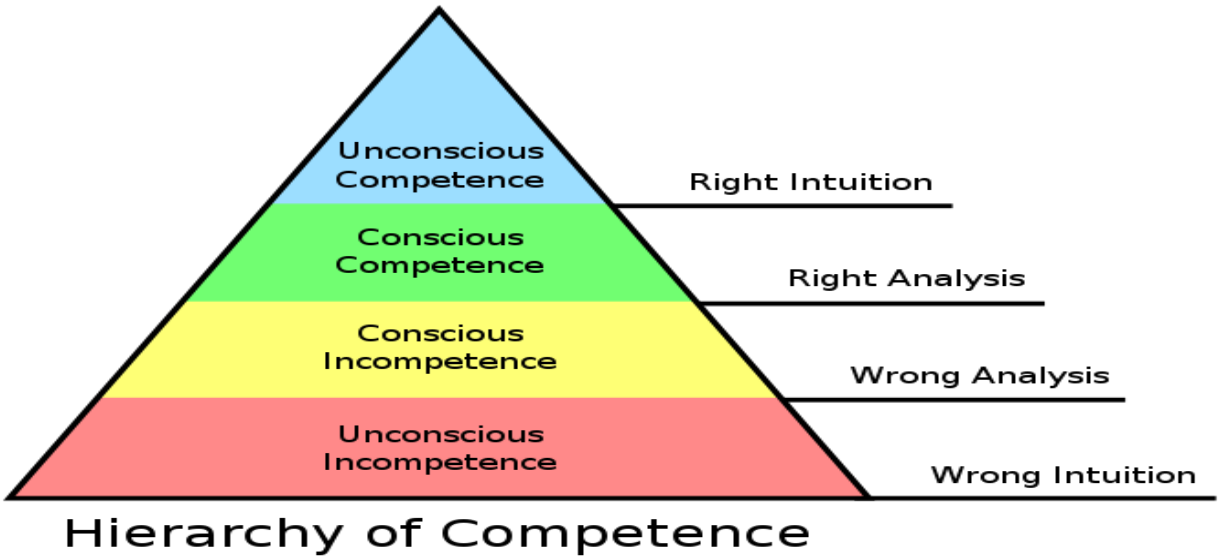

Fig 7: Hierarchy of Competence by Burch, N (2017).

Ryan and Deci (2011) buttressed that competence provides opportunities for success in training. While experiencing and learning to overcome failure during training is certainly valuable, it is important to keep it balanced with opportunities to succeed to maintain competence. Challenge your athletes, but also give them a chance to be reminded of their talent. Feedback is crucial in developing competence. A focus on individual improvement can be tremendous for a strong sense of competence. Use mistakes as an opportunity to instruct the athletes on how to be better instead of becoming angry over them.

Miller, Garganta, Santos & Teoldo (2018) emphasized feedback as effective if athletes feel personally responsible for the action. When athletes have low competence or have low competence in a particular area of their sport, it is important to identify what they did well, be specific and considering competence is about athletes' perceived self-belief; If they believe they are weak, then they should be provided evidence to the contrary by giving feedback to that effect during and after training sessions.

Buttressing the complications of competitive anxiety, Abdali (2005), opined that the anxiety experienced can also affect an individual's overall level of self-confidence and negative response that takes place when players undermine their capabilities to manage certain circumstances.

Competitive anxiety is the tendency to determine antagonistic situations and take action accordingly with feelings of stress, pressure, and nervousness. The competitive anxiety instantly accelerates just before the competition and suddenly

decelerates after the competition (Ahsan, Ruru & Kumar 2014). Competitive anxiety is one of the factors to decrease athletes' performance (Esfahani & Soflu, 2010). Feelings of tension, thinking of upcoming events in their mind, nervousness, and worry involved in physiological changes such as increased heart rate response are common responses for the athletes before the competition. Generally, competitive anxiety is a result of an athlete's sentiment of stress, tension, and failure which is associated with sharp excitement of the automatic nervous system as this explicit phenomenon occurs before and during a sports competition (Hackfort & Schwenkmezger, 1989: Ahsan et al, 2014)

Competitive anxiety occurs as a negative emotional state that is characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension and is associated with activation or arousal of the body. Anxiety is triggered by stressful stimuli and manifests itself in an individual's lack of adaptability on physiological, behavioural, and cognitive levels. In this way, it also hinders athletic performance (Tamorri, 2004).

All nations leading in sports performance have used the university and other tertiary institutions to achieve world-class sports performance but in Nigeria, university sports have been very low in its contribution to the country's sport goals. Athletes in the tertiary institutions are confronted with the challenges of balancing studies and optimum performance in competitive sports. This study intends to examine the concrete impediments for optimal performance as to resist debilitating impact of competitive anxiety and right motivational climate that promotes excellence in sports amongst university athletes in South-west Nigeria.

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between autonomy and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria.
2. There is no significant correlation between competence and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria.
3. There is no significant joint contribution of autonomy and competence to competitive anxiety among university athletes in South-west Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted ex-post facto research design. The population for the study comprised all University athletes in public-owned Universities both by Federal and State governments in South-west Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. Random sampling techniques was used select the university for the study while the purposive sampling technique was used to select One thousand two hundred (1200) University athletes as respondents from the population.. The instruments were adapted and titled Competitive Anxiety Determinant Scale (CADS) using the properties of the two different standardised instruments (BPNS and SCAT). The demographic data of the participants were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and charts for illustrations.. The inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), regression analysis using the SPSS package 19, were employed in testing the stated hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	573	47.8
Female	627	52.3
Total	1200	100.0

As shown in table 1 above, 47.8% of the total respondents were males, while the remaining 52.3% representing the majority were females.

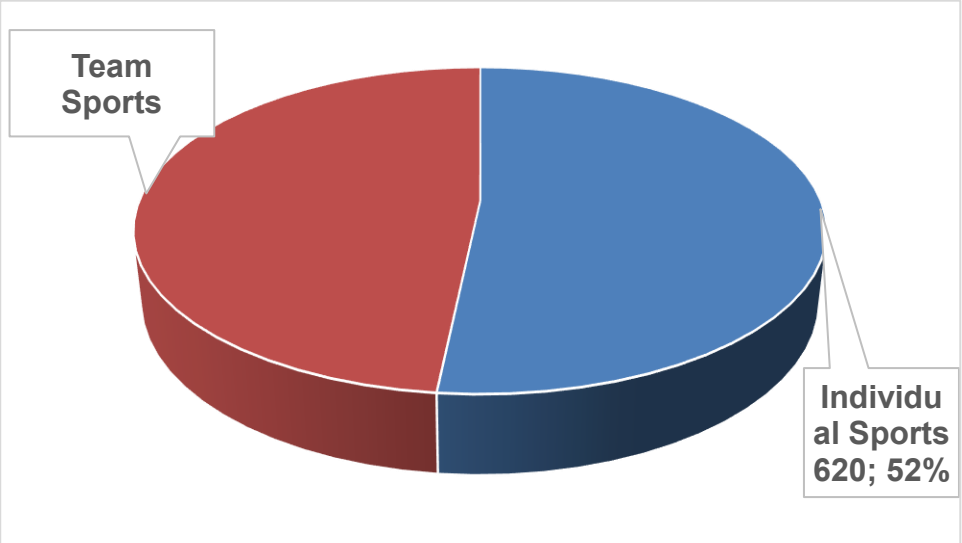

Fig 1.0: Distribution of respondents by type of sport

It could be observed from figure 1 above that 52% of the total respondents were athletes in individual sports, while the remaining 48% were athletes in team sports.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age range

Age range	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
17-19yrs	456	38.0	38.0	38.0
20-22yrs	637	53.1	53.1	91.1
23-25yrs	85	7.1	7.1	98.2
Above 25 years	22	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	1200	100.0	100.0	

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria

Table 3: Relationship between autonomy and competitive anxiety

Variables	N	Mean	SD	SS & CP	CV	r_{value}	Sig.
Autonomy	1200	119.425	22.978	14090.100	11.752	0.063*	0.028
Competitive Anxiety	1200	31.590	7.746				

It could be observed from table 3 above, that a significant r-value was recorded at 0.05 level of significance ($r=0.063$; $P<0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 stated above is hereby rejected. This implies that a significant relationship was recorded between Autonomy and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria. The positivity of the r-value indicates that the higher the level of autonomy among University athletes, the higher the competitive anxiety level.

Hypothesis 2 There is no significant correlation between competence and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria.

Table 4: Relatioship between competence and competitive anxiety

Variables	n	Mean	SD	SS & CP	CV	r-value	Sig.
Competence	120	40.806	13.354	37871.470	31.586	0.305*	0.000
Competitive Anxiety	120	31.590	7.746				

From table 4 above, it could be observed that a significant r-value was recorded at 0.05 level of significance (r=0.305; P<0.05). Therefore, hypothesis 2 stated above is hereby rejected. This implies that a significant relationship was recorded between competence and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria. The positivity of the r-value indicates that the higher the level of competence among University athletes, the higher the competitive anxiety level

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant joint contribution of autonomy and competence to competitive anxiety among university athletes in southwest Nigeria

Table 5: Joint contributions of autonomy and competence to anxiety

Model Summary	**R = 0.170**	**R Square = 0.029**	**AR Square = 0.026**		
ANOVA	**DF = 2 & 1195**	**F-value = 8.881**	**P-value = 0.05**		
		Coefficients			
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficient**		**Standardized Coefficient**	**t-value**	**Sig**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
Constant	29.283	1.156		25.341	0.000
Autonomy	-0.094	0.027	-0.106	-3.518	0.000
Competence	-0.032	0.031	-0.037	-1.049	0.029

The model summary in table 5 above shows that the joint contribution autonomy and competence to competitive anxiety among University athletes (R=0.170) can be predicted at a rate of 13.3% (R Square= 0.029). The table further shows that a significant F-value was obtained at 0.05 level of significance (F=8.881; P<0.05) with degrees of freedom 2 and 1195. Thus, hypothesis 3 is hereby rejected. This implies that significant joint contribution of autonomy and competence to competitive anxiety among university athletes in southwest Nigeria was recorded. Furthermore, significant t-values recorded for autonomy (t=-4.808; P<0.05); competence (t=-3.435; P < 0.05); indicates that each component makes specific contribution to athletes' competitive anxiety levels

Discussion

In testing hypothesis one, a significant r-value was recorded at 0.05 level of significance and hypothesis one stated was rejected. Thus, a significant relationship was established between autonomy and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria. The positivity of the r-value further explained that the higher the autonomy among University athletes, the higher the competitive anxiety level. The above finding agrees with the postulations of SDT by Deci and Ryan (2008), and that of Ponseti, Almeida, Lamerias, Martins, Olmedilla, Lopez Walle, Reyes and Garcia–mas, 2018: Garcia-mas, Ortega, Ponseti De Teresa and Cardenas, 2016 which reported that there are existing relationships between autonomy as one of the components of self determination and competitive anxiety related to sports competition. Surprisingly, self-determined athletes (in all aspects of the self-determination theory, like intrinsic, extrinsic motivation and amotivation) showed high sport competitive anxiety.

The significant r-value recorded at 0.05 level of significance, while testing

hypothesis two, led to the rejection of the hypothesis as stated. Therefore, a significant relationship was recorded between competence and competitive anxiety among University athletes in South-West Nigeria. Subsequently, the positivity of the r-value indicated that the higher the level of competence among University athletes, the higher the competitive anxiety level. The above finding corroborates that of Saadan, Hooi, Ali, and Jano, 2016: Mohammad Zamani and Azizi 2014: Jamshidi, Hossien, Sajadi, Safari and Zare 2011 which revealed that, with increase in competence competitive anxiety is increased.

In testing hypothesis three, it was observed that the joint contribution of autonomy and competence to competitive anxiety among University athletes could be predicted at a rate of 13.3%. It was further discovered that a significant F-value was obtained at 0.05 level of significance, hence, hypothesis three stated was rejected. It, therefore, implies that a significant joint contribution of autonomy and competence to competitive anxiety among university athletes in southwest Nigeria was recorded. Furthermore, significant t-values recorded for both autonomy and competence indicating their level contribution to competitive anxiety.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that:

1. Autonomy and competence are related to competitive anxiety amongst university athletes in the South-west, Nigeria.
2. Autonomy and competence make specific joint contributions to competitive anxiety amongst university athletes in the South-west, Nigeria

Recommendations

University athletes in the southwest, Nigeria not only need to possess excellent technical skills and physical fitness but also a strong psychological skills. Student-athletes' coaches should ensure appropriate motivational techniques that are individualized to meet the needs of each athlete. The sport psychologist should be involved early enough to assist in planning and organising anxiety management training for the athletes, analyse the psychological benefits and implications of each motivational climate engendering good understanding and interpretations of athletes' motivational profiles to cope with competitive anxiety amongst university athletes in the South-west, Nigeria.

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