

Sources of Sport Confidence of Student Athletes with Disabilities

Faith P. Sampan

Diliman Preparatory School

Marie Grace A. Gomez

University of the Philippines Diliman

Abstract

This study investigated the sources of sport confidence among Filipino student athletes with disabilities enrolled in different schools under an inclusionary setting. It also sought to find out if such sources of confidence vary with the type of disability the athletes have and the type of sport they play.

The study was conducted among 63 athletes with visual, hearing, or orthopedic impairment. The participants came from different public schools in Quezon City and the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled-National Paralympic Committee of the Philippines (PhilSPADA-NPC Philippines). To gather data, they were given the Athlete Self-rating Scale. Interviews were also conducted among them. Non-parametric statistics were used to synthesize and analyze data gathered.

Results show that the top sources of sport confidence of student athletes with disabilities are environmental comfort, coach's leadership, and social support. Further, sources of sport confidence differ with the disability the athletes have. Also, there is a difference in the sources of sport confidence based on the type of sport the athletes play.

Keywords: *sport confidence, athletes with disabilities*

Please address all correspondence to: Faith P. Sampan, faithsampan@yahoo.com.

Introduction

People with disabilities usually have problems with self-esteem and other ego-related issues because they are perceived to be different (MacMaster, Donovan, & Macintyre, 2002; George, 1994). Their disability may be a factor for not striving and giving their best. Significant others of children diagnosed with disabilities may be disposed to treating them differently, and these children have psychosocial problems inside and outside the classroom (MacMaster, Donovan, & Macintyre, 2002; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Giannini, 1989). Many studies have found involvement in physical activities to have positive effects on self-esteem. Children who engage in physical education or directed-play situations have higher self-esteem or self-concept scores than those who do not engage in any physical activity (Payne & Isaac, 2008). In addition, children who are emotionally disturbed, have mental retardation or perceptual disabilities, or are economically disadvantaged have higher self-esteem scores than all other groups. Children with special needs start to feel important when they are given the opportunity to participate in physical activities conducted by trained individuals (Payne & Isaacs, 2008; Dunn, 1997). These are only some of the reasons why self-esteem and self-confidence should be considered significant factors in the development of the character of every child.

According to many studies regarding sport psychology, sports develop confidence among athletes. Sport confidence as defined by Vealey (1986) is the degree of certainty one possesses about the ability to be successful in a sport. Sport confidence is an essential element in every athlete. When athletes feel confident about their abilities, they can easily turn their sporting potential into superior performance. A decrease in their sport confidence may result in poor performance.

Given the dearth of material on sport confidence among athletes with disabilities, especially here in the Philippines, this study focused on the following questions:

1. What are the sources of sport confidence of student athletes with disabilities?
2. Do sources of sport confidence vary with the type of disability?
3. Do sources of sport confidence vary with the type of sport?

Review of Related Literature

The humanistic philosophical approach has markedly influenced adapted physical education. Humanism is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the development of self-concept, positive interpersonal relationships, intrinsic motivation, and personal responsibility. Humanistic physical education uses physical activity to help individuals in developing self-esteem, self-understanding, and interpersonal relations. It seeks to identify and meet exceptional needs, abilities, and interests through individualized instruction that includes student choice (Winnick, 1995).

The humanistic perspective suggests that all individuals naturally strive to grow, develop, and be in control of their lives and behavior (Feldman, 2003). Humanists emphasize the importance of free will, the human ability to make choices. They also accentuate the psychological need for love, self-esteem, belonging, self-expression, and creativity (Coon, 1986).

This is important to individuals with special needs who have problems with ego and self-esteem, due to their perceived difference from other people (Agdebasan, 2007; Barber, 1998; Brown, Malouff, & Schutte, 2005; Escarti and Guzman, 1999; Feltz and Lirgg, 1998).

According to Sherill (1993), adapted physical education teachers who utilize a humanistic approach assist their students to develop positive self-concepts so they will become intrinsically motivated and achieve their highest potential in physical education and sport. This kind of self-perception may be influenced by different factors and derived from various sources.

“Sources of sport confidence” is a relatively new topic in sport psychology. At present, there only a few published researches about sport confidence. Most researches on sport psychology tackle motivation techniques. It is vital to comprehend how the sources of sport confidence could influence the athlete’s level of sport confidence, cognition, emotion, behavior, and performance. These are closely examined to properly address and look for the support needed by the athletes in order for them to perform better in their chosen sports. According to Chase (1998), sport confidence can be sourced from important people’s praise and encouragement.

Sport confidence is the belief or degree of certainty individuals possess about their ability to be successful in sports (Vealey, 1986). Sport confidence of athletes is definitely an important tool for success. Families and coaches can influence the confidence of athletes through their expectations, behavior, and interactions with them. Coaches’ positive remarks on athletes’ performances can greatly influence what athletes believe they can achieve and the goals they set, which can then influence the effort they give to achieve those goals (Feltz, Short, & Sullivan, 2008).

Methodology

This study utilized a mixed methods design. A rating scale was answered by the participants. Nonparametric tests were used to analyze the data from such, due to the level of measurement of the variables (mostly ordinal). To obtain qualitative data, interviews were conducted.

A total of 63 student athletes with disabilities participated. Six are athletes who have orthopedic impairment, 18 athletes are deaf, and 39 athletes have visual impairment. The age range of the athletes is 11-39 years old.

The sports that the athletes with visual impairment engage in are running, long jump, shot put, show down (table tennis), swimming, and chess. On the other hand, the deaf student athletes engage in volleyball, running, long jump, badminton, basketball, and chess. These athletes came from different public schools in Quezon City. In addition, athletes with orthopedic impairment [coming from the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled-National Paralympic Committee of the Philippines (PhilSPADA-NPC Philippines)] who compete internationally were included. They compete in swimming, wheelchair racing, and power lifting.

The study used Vealey's Sources of Sport Confidence Questionnaire (SSCQ). The SSCQ was developed and finalized by Vealey after a four-phase process in 1998. This is a validated instrument that was previously used in related studies. In the current study, this tool was named "Athlete Self-rating Scale" to remove bias.

The Athlete Self-rating Scale is a 43-item tool that analyzes the sources of sport confidence of athletes. The questionnaire has nine subscales which include the following: mastery of skill (MS), demonstration of ability (DA), physical and mental preparation (PMP), physical self-preparation (PSP), social support (SS), coach's leadership (CL), vicarious experience (VE), environmental comfort (EC), and situational favourableness (SF). The responses are scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (of highest importance). This instrument already has a predetermined cut-off point for each source of confidence; hence, it is possible to dichotomize the confidence scale to either high or low as a source of confidence.

Mastery is a source of sport confidence from improving personal skills. Demonstration of ability becomes a source of sport confidence when athletes show their skills to others or opponents. On the other hand, physical and mental preparation involves the feeling of being physically and mentally prepared for competition. Physical self-presentation is defined as athletes' perceptions of their physical selves. Further, social support involves getting support from coaches, family, teammates, and friends. Coach's leadership is a source of confidence from believing in the coach's leadership and decision-making skills. Vicarious experience is drawn from watching others perform successfully. Environmental comfort comes from feeling comfortable in a competitive environment. And lastly, situational favourableness involves gaining confidence by feeling that the breaks of the situation are going in one's favor.

Results and Discussion

Sources of Sport Confidence

A primary interest of the study is identifying the sources of sport confidence among athletes with disabilities. Based on the Cochran Q Test, there is no sufficient evidence to show that there are more athletes with disabilities who lean towards particular sources of sport confidence, since the p-value is 0.715, which is greater than the 10% level of significance. Based on the results, the null hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the sources of sport confidence of student athletes with disabilities. Hence, athletes with disabilities, in general, take an equal perspective in each source of sport confidence.

According to the binomial test (see Table 1), only the proportion of the high confidence rates for the source coach's leadership is significantly different from 0.50, which means that more athletes with disabilities take high sport confidence from the coach's leadership.

Table 1
Results of Binomial Test at Test Proportion Equal to 0.50

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Rank coach's leadership	Group 1	2.00	39	.62	.50	.077 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	24	.38		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank social support	Group 1	2.00	32	.51	.50	1.000 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	31	.49		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank vicarious experience	Group 1	2.00	33	.52	.50	.801 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	30	.48		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank mastery of skill	Group 1	2.00	35	.56	.50	.450 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	28	.44		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank environmental comfort	Group 1	1.00	31	.49	.50	1.000 ^a
	Group 2	2.00	32	.51		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank Demonstration of ability	Group 1	2.00	34	.54	.50	.615 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	29	.46		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank physical and mental preparation	Group 1	2.00	34	.54	.50	.615 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	29	.46		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank Physical self-presentation	Group 1	1.00	27	.43	.50	.314 ^a
	Group 2	2.00	36	.57		
	Total		63	1.00		
Rank Situational favourableness	Group 1	2.00	38	.60	.50	.130 ^a
	Group 2	1.00	25	.40		
	Total		63	1.00		

a. Based on Z Approximation.

Table 2 shows the over-all ranking of the different sources of sport confidence of athletes with disabilities, based on the Friedman Test.

Table 2
Over-all Ranking of Sources of Sport Confidence of Athletes with Disabilities

Rank	Over-all
Top	Environmental comfort Coach's leadership Social support
Middle	Mastery of skill Physical and mental preparation Vicarious experience Physical self-presentation
Low	Situational favourableness Demonstration of ability
Total	63

To conclude, the top three sources of sport confidence are significantly different from the two low sources of sport confidence. The top sources are coach's leadership, environmental comfort, and social support. The medium sources are mastery of skill, vicarious experience, physical and mental preparation, and physical self-presentation. Lastly, the low sources of sport confidence are demonstration of ability and situational favourableness.

When asked where he gets his sport confidence, an athlete with visual impairment stated, *"From my family, friends, and teachers. I always pray and will do the best I can."* To the same question another athlete with visual impairment replied, *"My faith in God and my family's support. I ask God's guidance."*

Athletes with disabilities source their sport confidence from social support such as their family, teachers, and friends. This is reflected in some remarks given by the athletes, as shown below:

Sa aking pamilya at mga guro. Dasal at lakas ng loob na kayang gawin ang lahat para magtagumpay. (From my family and teachers. Prayer and confidence that I can do anything to win.)

Sa tulong ng aking pamilya at ng aking mga guro. Kailangan kong magdasal para ako ay magtagumpay sa aking ginagawa. (From the help of my family and teachers. I need to pray to be able to succeed in what I do.)

This is consistent with Chase's (1998) assertion that praise and encouragement from significant people is a good source of sport confidence.

Sources of Sport Confidence vis-a-vis Type of Disability

Another interest of the study is to find out if there is a difference in the sources of sport confidence among athletes with different types of disabilities. Since there are more than two independent populations being considered, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was used. Based on the results in Table 3, there is no sufficient evidence to conclude different levels of sourcing sport confidence among the stated groups, except for vicarious experience, which those who have hearing impairment find as a relatively lower source of confidence. The null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the sources of sport confidence of student athletes with disabilities based on the type of disability. Vicarious experience is the second most salient source of sport confidence of athletes with orthopedic impairment, while for the athletes with hearing impairment, it is only ranked sixth.

Table 3
Kruskall-Wallis Test Results for Testing Difference of Sport Confidence Sources by Disability

	Coach's leadership	Social support	Vicarious experience	Mastery of skill	Environ mental comfort	Demonstration of ability	Physical & mental preparation	Physical self-presentation	Situational favourableness
Chi-Square	.211	.855	5.220	2.645	.466	2.767	2.013	.853	1.667
Df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.900	.652	.074	.266	.792	.251	.365	.653	.434

In the Friedman Test, the top three sources of sport confidence of deaf athletes are environmental comfort, coach's leadership, and social support. On the other hand, the low sources are situational favourableness and demonstration of ability. Results also show that the top three sources of sport confidence of athletes with visual impairment are coach's leadership, environmental comfort, and social support. Their low sources of sport confidence are situational favourableness and demonstration of ability.

Finally, athletes with orthopedic impairment get their sport confidence from mastery of skill, vicarious experience, and coach's leadership. Their low sources of sport confidence are physical self-presentation and demonstration of ability. A possible reason why these athletes source their sport confidence from mastery of skill is that they are considered professional athletes who compete internationally and represent our country; thus, they should be experts in their chosen sports. These athletes even stay in the Philippine Sports Arena for a few months during their season to prepare for the upcoming competition.

Table 4 shows the ranking of sources of sport confidence based on the Friedman Test.

Table 4
*Ranking of Sources of Sport Confidence of Athletes with Disabilities
 by Type of Disability*

Rank	Disability		
	Hearing	Visual	Orthopedic
Top	Environmental comfort	Coach's leadership	Mastery of skill
	Coach's leadership	Environmental comfort	Vicarious experience
	Social support	Social support	Coach's leadership
Middle	Physical & mental preparation	Vicarious experience	Environmental comfort
	Physical self-presentation	Mastery of skill	Physical & mental preparation
	Mastery of skill	Physical & mental preparation	Social support
	Vicarious experience	Physical self-presentation	Situational favourableness
Low	Situational favourableness	Situational favourableness	Physical self-presentation
	Demonstration of ability	Demonstration of ability	Demonstration of ability
Total	18	39	6

It can then be deduced from the results that athletes with disabilities get sport confidence from the people closest to them, such as their family, friends, coaches, and teachers. Social support is deemed to be more salient to them than their mastery of skill. Persons with disabilities usually have problems with self-esteem and other ego-related issues because they are perceived to be different (Agdebasan, 2007; Barber, 1998; Brown, Malouff, & Schutte, 2005; Escarti & Guzman, 1999; Feltz & Lirgg, 1998). Therefore, it is important that they be surrounded by people who believe in their abilities and in what they can do as individuals, in spite of their disabilities.

This study supports the findings of Chase (1998) that the source of sport confidence is significant others' praise and encouragement.

Sport Confidence vis-a-vis Type of Sport

The participants were grouped into individual sport players and team sport players, to find out whether having the experience of playing with a teammate creates a different behavior in the way athletes with disabilities source their sport confidence. Individual sports the participants engage in are running, showdown, chess, standing long jump, shot put, swimming, badminton, wheelchair racing, and power lifting. On the other hand, the team sports are volleyball, badminton, basketball, and swimming. The athletes with hearing impairment engage in volleyball, running, standing long jump, badminton, basketball, and chess. The sports of

athletes with visual impairment are running, standing long jump, shot put, showdown, swimming, and chess. Finally, the athletes with orthopedic impairment compete in swimming, wheelchair racing, and power lifting.

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney Test in Table 5, there is a significant difference in the level of sourcing sport confidence from demonstration of ability and vicarious experience in athletes with disabilities playing a team sport from those who only play individual sports. However, they are generally the same in other sources of confidence. The null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the sources of sport confidence of student athletes with disabilities based on the type of sport they engage in.

Table 5
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Testing Difference of Sport Confidence Sources by Type of Sport

	Coach's leadership	Social support	Vicarious experience	Mastery of skill	Environmental comfort	Demonstration of ability	Physical & mental preparation	Physical self-presentation	Situational favourableness
Mann-Whitney U	297.500	317.000	240.000	313.000	329.500	241.500	324.000	322.000	311.000
Wilcoxon W	433.500	453.000	376.000	449.000	465.500	377.500	460.000	1450.000	447.000
Z	-1.250	-.935	-2.158	-.999	-.739	-2.136	-.824	-.858	-1.034
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.211	.350	.031	.318	.460	.033	.410	.391	.301

Further, results also suggest that athletes with disabilities who play team sports take high sport confidence from environmental comfort, social support, and coach's leadership. The same sources of sport confidence are also seen in athletes with disabilities who play individual sports; however, a difference in ranking is observed. For the athletes who play individual sports, coach's leadership is the top source of sport confidence, while for the athletes who play team sports, the top source of sport confidence is environmental comfort. The low sources of sport confidence of athletes with disabilities who play individual and team sports are situational favourableness and demonstration of ability. The ranking of these two low sources of sport confidence does not vary.

Conclusions

Athletes with disabilities take an equal perspective in each source of sport confidence. Majority of the athletes with disabilities source their sport confidence from the coach's leadership. Athletes with disabilities source their sport confidence from environmental comfort,

coach's leadership, and social support. It can then be concluded that social support is a more vital source of sport confidence of student athletes with disabilities, compared to demonstration of ability (and other sources of support).

Recommendations

Teachers and coaches should always acknowledge the sources of sport confidence of student athletes regardless of their disability and type of sport. They ought to respect the sources of sport confidence of athletes with visual impairment, hearing impairment, and orthopedic impairment. The coaches and teachers should be more aware of how vital their roles are in the sport confidence of athletes, since they are seen as major sources of confidence. The teachers of athletes with disabilities should increase their knowledge of the different sources of sport confidence of their students. They ought to support the students and athletes with disabilities in their chosen sports. They should always be present during competitions because their physical presence gives the athletes sport confidence. The coaches of athletes with disabilities should really try to be supportive of their athletes in any way they can. Coaches should give encouraging words to their athletes all the time, regardless of their performance. Teachers and coaches should encourage their students to pray before and after competition as God has been found to be an important source of sport confidence of these student athletes with disabilities. Studies of the same nature should be conducted on a larger population to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. Finally, further studies should be conducted to explore differences between winning and losing teams of athletes with disabilities. Further studies regarding sources of sport confidence should be conducted on athletes who compete internationally.

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