

# Psychology Preparation of Athletes in Malaysia: It Looks Impressive, but They Have No Real Value in Reality

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**Abstract**—the purpose of this document was to assess and investigate the knowledge of trainers and team officials regarding the psychological preparation of athletes in Malaysia, including the role of sports psychology personnel and the problem they face. The study used the document analysis approach. Sixty-two reports on the preparedness aspect of sports psychology provided by 3 State Sports Council were examined. The results showed that all coaches and team leaders (124 of them) agreed on the importance of the psychological preparation of the athletes. From the prospects of the team officials, three main roles were identified, with motivational interviews with the athletes (95 team officials [76.61%]), followed by the mental coach (19 team officers [15.32%]) and with sessions personalized with the athletes or team (10 team officials [8.06%]). In addition, six issues identified by sports psychologists have been identified: motivational talks with the athletes. Applying a method of training psychological skills to all athletes as if they were all the same, saying that my athlete has no mental health problems will send athletes if they have mental or psychological problems without time to adapt to psychological sessions Period training, and team leaders have little or no knowledge of sports psychology. Many of the problems were due to misunderstandings and ignorance among coaches and team officials. The discussion concludes with a brief description of the challenges facing providing psychological services to athletes in Malaysia.

**Keywords**--*psychology preparation, obstacles, challenges in sports psychology.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Attention has been paid to high-performance sports with the creation of the National Sports Council (NSC) on February 21, 1971. The original goal of the NSC was geared towards the national sports policy that is fully responsible for promoting, developing and achieving excellent results. Sporting performance at the highest level. To achieve this, the NSC has made several efforts to fulfill its aspirations and roles in promoting excellence in sport. The proposed measures also include improving the experience of sports science in Malaysia, including sports psychology.

Gradually, this area begins to grow with the development of a degree in sports science at various public universities since the early eighties. To understand the perturbations in this area, it is also good to be able to briefly follow the development of

this field. According to Weinberg and Gould, the field of sports psychology began 40 years ago as an independent research area. Compared to other sports disciplines such as physiology, motor learning, and other sports, sports psychology is considered a new field. However, according to Robert McGowan, when he was asked about the history of sports psychology when sports psychology is the same age as the concepts of sport and competition!

McGowan's statement refers to the first athlete participating in the Olympic Championship in Greece. You can understand the importance of mental preparation as well as other psychological preparations for the prominent sport's championship. But just before the end of the 19th century, the connection between psychology and behavior by athletes raised concerns among researchers.

Many athletes who compete at the highest level mention the importance of mental and emotional preparation of athletes (psychology) to ensure their success in the competition. The presence of athletes on the podium help and support team should support the family, coaches and sports science including nutritionists, physicians, physical therapists, experts in sports science and psychologists should move

In the context of Malaysia, athletes, coaches, and other team officials are aware of the importance of psychological preparation for athletes. However, this so-called awareness of the importance of preparing psychology is not translated into action. Many of the problems were due to certain misunderstandings and lack of knowledge among coaches and team officials.

Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the coaches and official team knowledge about the importance of psychological preparation for athletes and teams, the role of great sports psychologists in the preparation of athletes and teams and the problems the psychologist sports in the preparation of athletes and teams for the competition.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative research approach through document analysis. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the examiner to give a theme of rating voice and meaning and contain

content coding problems similar to how the transcripts of focus groups are analyzed or interviewed.

For the purposes of data collection, the final report submitted by the staff sports psychology, which participated nationwide 2016-2017 three State Councils Sport (SSC analyzed in the preparation of athletes and teams for various competitions). As each state employed sports psychology personnel according to their needs and budget, the number of sports psychologists was different for each state. A total of 62 reports were analyzed and each report is a team sport.

- Process

All SSCs were contacted to obtain their permission to conduct this study. However, only three SSC states responded and agreed to allow the investigators to investigate the reports. Some SSCs mentioned confidentiality as a reason for not participating in this study, while others pointed out that their reports did not cover the specific area of the study. A total of 62 reports for 24 sports from 3 SSCs were truly analyzed for this study. Each sport consists of a trainer and a team manager.

The reports were reviewed to obtain information about the above study goals. The researchers undertook to respect the confidentiality of the reports and only the information related to psychological support was investigated. Information on coaches, team officials, and sports psychologists were not included in the reports.

Overall, given the reports contained information such as the performance of athletes or teams, the level of cooperation sports psychology in the performance of their duties (which resulted in the importance of psychological preparation) to employees, the type of services provided by sports psychology personnel as needed Athletes and teams (which has been translated into the role of sports psychologist) and the problem facing sports psychologists.

### III. ANALYSES

TABLE I. THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

Number of reports	Number of team officials	Important	Not important
62	124	124 (100%)	0

Table 1 indicated that the 124 (100%) team officials (coaches and team managers) agreed that psychological preparation is important to prepare athletes and teams for competition.

Table 2 summarized the findings of the role or services provided by the sports psychologist's staff in the preparation of athletes and teams based on a suggestion from the coaches and team management.

TABLE II. TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY PERSONNEL

Type of sports psychology services	Number of team officials
Motivator (giving motivational lecture)	95 (76.61%)
Mental trainer	19 (15.32%)
Personalized session with athlete or team	10 (8.06%)

Table 2 indicated that the services provided by the sports psychology staff consisted of giving motivational talks to the athletes (95 team officials (76.61%)), as a mental coach (19 team officers (15.32%)) and having personalized sessions with the athletes or the team (10 team officials (8.06)). These three types of services were requested by the coaches and the team officer of the sports psychology staff..

Table 3 summarizes the type of problems that the sports psychologist faces when preparing athletes and teams for the competition. The data was provided by the sports psychology staff in their written report to the SSC. The item ranking was based on the order of importance of the problem in all 62 reports.

TABLE III. TYPE OF PROBLEMS FACED BY SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY PERSONNEL

Rank	Type of problems
1	Giving motivational talks in a lecture hall
2	One method for all approach (no personalized approach to athlete)
3	My athlete has no mental problem
4	Will send the athletes when they have mental or psychological problems
5	No time to fit psychological sessions during training period
6	Team officials has little or no knowledge regarding sports psychology

Table 3 shows the kind of problems faced by sports psychology personnel in carrying out their work in the preparation of athletes. Most of the time, they offered sports psychology by giving motivational lectures to the athletes. This was followed by a method of training psychological skills for all athletes applying as if they were the same, it says like my athlete has no mental health issues, sending athletes, if they have mental or psychological problems, no time for psychological sessions during the Training time and team officials have little or no knowledge of sports psychology.

### IV. DISCUSSIONS

Based on the results, coaches and team officials agreed on the importance of psychological preparation for athletes. However, the obstacles they face in the process of helping athletes, especially on some general misconceptions about the needs and roles of sports psychologists, provide the necessary support for athletes. The most common mistakes and dilemmas include:

- The sports psychologist is a motivational expert: Many players and sports officials come to the conclusion that a sports psychologist is also an expert on motivation. In other words, sports psychology consists of a motivating conference event for athletes. This is an inaccurate idea because the mental aspect cannot be solved simply by motivating the athletes.
- The notion of method one for all, because the sessions are considered sports psychology sessions of motivational lectures, often allocated the time, odds or equipment is night and includes all athletes in a large room. For team members, this is the mental preparation suitable for their athletes. This is a misunderstanding as every athlete is different in terms of events, problems,

desires, and pressures. Therefore, each athlete needs different help and mental support. Obviously, there is no approach for everyone

- c. My athlete has no mental problems; This statement is often expressed by coaches and team officials. It is true in relation to the fact that competing athletes are usually not crazy and have no mental and emotional problems. However, you must know that the ability to work under pressure is closely related to the mental and emotional stability of athletes. To ensure that athletes can achieve optimal performance, they need appropriate physical, mental and emotional preparation [7,8,4]. iv) If my athletes have a mental health problem, I will look for sports psychological services; This is another common statement that is often received by coaches and team officials. They are more committed to the idea that if athletes can still play and the mentality is still strong, psychological support is not needed. If the performance is low and the athlete has problems, the sports psychologist service will be taken over to improve the situation. These people do not stick to prevention; it's better than the cure approach.
- d. We have no time to fit into our psychological preparation program during training; this statement implies that physical training is more important than psychological training; while we know that both are important for athletes.

## V. CONCLUSION

The lack of knowledge about sports psychology knowledge arises from misunderstandings that consider the sports psychologist as a motivator or consultant. Many athletes do not know exactly what range of service and knowledge required to perform the duties as a psychologist and many have admitted that they are unaware of this area and the way of services.

Although the field of sports psychology is still considered new, it is very important to help athletes succeed in sports. These developments also create challenges, especially for psychologists, to provide the best service to athletes or sports teams. Challenges include:

- a. The acceptance of the coaches and the team official regarding the functions, roles, and forms of service that a sports psychologist can offer. There are trainers who assume that they do not need sports psychologists because they can master the problems of the athletes themselves.
- b. We change the focus of waiting for the athletes to reach us, we approach the athlete. In general, there are two approaches commonly practiced by sports psychologists. Traditionally, athletes often meet with sports psychologists at some point. Unfortunately, that does not happen. Therefore, we need to change the focus by observing the athletes during training and taking the necessary notes about each athlete involved.
- c. a reasonable and optimal time for athletes: often when we can be with the athletes, our time is too short or inappropriate for us to make the session more effective. Experience has shown that the assigned time is usually in the afternoon or at night. In terms of temporal

effectiveness, nothing could be done at this time, as the athletes are generally tired after training in the afternoon or afternoon. To maximize the service available, you must, therefore, discuss the best time to ensure the best results.

- d. To understand the ethics of confidentiality: often, after meetings with the athletes, especially if the athletes ora team faced with problems, coaches or management team want to know what the athlete said. Although we can handle the situation by explaining the confidentiality ethos, the action is generally not well received by the coaches or the management team. Both parties have to argue in order to achieve a win-win situation.
- e. Credentials and professionalism. In Malaysia, we have no specific action or perhaps an agency that regulates those who provide services and advice in the field of sports psychology. In simple words, many people provide behind this motivational services, either in the form of motivational talks to the athletes or a motivational camp or camps to organize teamwork with a specific team.

In the Malaysian context, not many people are trained and have experience in the field of sports psychology. In addition to those who work as sports psychology teachers at the National Sports Institute or at a public and private university, there are few experts in the field. This measure is necessary within the context of professional ethics in the field of sports psychology, as well as taking care of the name of the subject and the type of services offered.

He fears that untrained people implement methods or approaches that may adversely affect the athletes or teams involved. At the same time, many people will have doubts and will not believe in sports psychological support services related to the preparation of athletes.

## Psychology preparation of Athletes in Malaysia conclusion

Sports psychological services in Malaysia are still used moderately by those involved in the preparation of athletes. This is due to a lack of awareness of the importance and contribution of support that can be provided in preparing athletes from the perspective of practitioners and athletes.

Add to this the lack of space and possibilities that allow the experts to contribute in the real context, as well as the existence of groups that offer motivational brands that are often accepted by the players but do not contribute to service and knowledge.

Therefore, the establishment of a certification program for sports psychologists is required to ensure that the required services as well as knowledge can be channeled by those who are truly qualified and to strengthen this area in Malaysia.

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