

Motivational Training: Effects on Self-Regulation of Sportsmen and Non-Sportsmen

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the importance of self-regulation in sports psychology and how motivational training can help improve this ability. Self-regulation refers to the athlete's capacity to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to attain peak performance. Studies show that athletes who exhibit higher levels of self-regulation perform better under pressure. Several factors, such as individual temperamental differences and cognitive functions, can affect an athlete's self-regulation. Motivational training can help athletes develop self-regulation abilities, such as positive self-talk, goal-setting, imagery, and arousal control. The study aimed to investigate the impact of motivational training on self-regulation abilities in sports. The study employed a Wilcoxon-signed Rank test for data analysis. The research hypothesis stated that motivational training would have a positive impact on self-regulation in sportsmen compared to non-sportsmen. The results could help athletes cultivate a positive outlook and improve their athletic performance.

Keywords: *Self-regulation, Athletic performance, Motivational training, psychological techniques, Sport psychology*

Self-regulation, which refers to an athlete's capacity to control their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in order to achieve peak performance, is a key component of sport psychology. Athletes can manage stress, stay focused, and make wise decisions under pressure with the help of self-regulation. As a result, it has been the subject of an expanding body of research in sport psychology.

Importance of Self-regulation: Self-regulation in sports is crucial because research has repeatedly shown that it enhances athletic performance. Athletes who are better able to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours tend to perform better under pressure (Gould & Maynard, 2009). For instance, professional soccer players who reported higher levels of self-regulation were more likely to execute penalty kicks successfully (Woodman, Barlow, & Bandura, 2013). The ability to regulate one's emotions has also been linked to resilience, with better athletes being more likely to recover from setbacks (Hatzigeorgiadis, Zourbanos, Mpoupaki, & Theodorakis, 2011). According to research by Martin and

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colleagues (2020), athletes who used self-talk techniques like positive affirmations reported higher levels of self-regulations and performance success. Similar to this, Hatzigeorgiadis and colleagues (2011) emphasised the effectiveness of imagery techniques in enhancing athletes' self-regulation skills, particularly in the areas of goal-setting, attentional control, and emotional regulation. Overall, these studies indicate that self-regulation is an essential element of successful athletic performance and that athletes can improve this skill through the use of a variety of strategies.

Factors Affecting Self-Regulation: A number of variables have been found to affect athletes' ability to self-regulate. Individual temperamental differences are an important factor. For instance, athletes who are more emotional or impulsive may have difficulty with self-regulation (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004). Similar to this, it has been discovered that cognitive functions like attention and working memory are crucial for self-regulation (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2014). Social factors like peer pressure or coach expectations may also have an impact on an athlete's capacity for self-regulation (Barkoukis, Lazuras, & Tsorbatzoudis, 2015).

Sports motivational training is a crucial component of improving athletes' performance. Athletes who receive motivational training have their motivation enhanced by practising psychological techniques like goal-setting, positive self-talk, imagery, and arousal control. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory asserts that motivational training can boost an athlete's self-efficacy, or confidence in one's capacity to succeed at a particular task. This can then result in improved performance and a greater sense of control over the game's outcome. According to a study by Feltz et al. (2008), motivational training helped college athletes perform better and have higher levels of self-efficacy and goal orientation. Overall, motivational training can help athletes cultivate a positive outlook and improve their athletic performance.

In sports, self-regulation and motivational training are two psychological abilities that are closely related. Motivational training can assist athletes in gaining self-regulation abilities by guiding them on how to concentrate on constructive self-talk, establish realistic goals, and regulate their arousal level while competing. According to the Self-Determination Theory, self-regulated athletes exhibit higher levels of intrinsic motivation, or the desire to engage in an activity for its own sake as opposed to receiving rewards from others. Athletes who received motivational training demonstrated greater improvements in self-regulation and intrinsic motivation than those who did not, according to a study by Lonsdale et al. (2009). As a result, self-regulation and motivational training are complementary skills that can help athletes perform better and enjoy their sport more.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

This research aims to examine the impact of motivational training on self-regulation in sports.

Hypothesis

Motivational training will have a significant positive impact on the self-regulation abilities of sportsmen compared to non-sportsmen

Samples

For the present study, 121 sportsmen and 222 non-sportsmen Participants from Mizoram were randomly chosen. Based on consideration of other demographic profiles, age, and other inclusion criteria, the non-sportsmen group was chosen to match the sportsmen. The background demographic profiles and the psychological tests for self-regulation had to be completed by each participant. Sportsmen and non-sportsmen were randomised into one of two groups, "Training" or "Non-Training," for the Intervention-Phase. After receiving the intervention, participants were required to complete psychological measures of self-regulation.

Inclusion criteria for the groups:

Sportsmen Group

- Participants should be sportsmen from the state and district level sport clubs and sport academies
- The sportsmen should have at least one year of experience in competitive sports
- Age:18-30 years

Non-Sportsmen Group

- Participants should not be under any sports club
- They may or may not play sports, but should be limited to being recreational players
- Age: 18- 30 years

Design

A quasi-experimental study with pre and post-tests with a control group was conducted using a quantitative research approach to evaluate the impact of motivational training on sportsmen's self-regulation.

Psychological Tool

The study employed the Self-Regulation scale (Schwarzer, Diehl & Schmitz, 1999). It is a 10 items scale used to assess participant's level of self-regulation (SRS). It measures how individual maintain their focus attention when facing challenges in achieving a goal. The scale is specifically designed to capture attention control in the process of goal pursuit. (e.g., "If I am distracted from an activity, I don't have any problem coming back to the topic quickly").

Intervention

Participants in the intervention received motivational training. Eight sessions made up the training, which covered a range of psychological techniques like goal-setting, relaxation, visualization, and self-talk. The intervention was given to every member of the training group twice a week for 60 minutes each. All participants went through the same training course. Participants were reassessed on the chosen psychological variable, namely self-regulation, following the training.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, a Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant difference following intervention in the Self-regulation $Z = -2.237$, $p = .025$, of the sportsmen from Training group. However, no significant difference was found for non-sportsmen from Training group.

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Also, Table 2 shows that significant difference was not found in self-regulation for both sportsmen and non-sportsmen who did not receive the training.

The results of the study indicate that motivational training had a significant impact on self-regulation among sportsmen in the training group. Specifically, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant difference in self-regulation scores ($Z = -2.237$, $p = .025$) following the intervention for the sportsmen in the training group. This finding supports the hypothesis that motivational training can enhance self-regulation in athletes, which is consistent with previous research in this area (Burton, 2013; Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2011).

In contrast, there was no significant difference in the non-sportsmen in the training group's self-regulation scores. This raises the possibility that motivational training may not be as effective in enhancing self-regulation skills in non-athletes, and future research is required to investigate this potential difference. It suggests that the intervention may not have been effective for individuals who are not trained athletes or for those who do not routinely participate in sports. This is in line with previous research showing that interventions designed for athletes may not be effective for non-athletes (e.g., Martin, Kulinna, Eklund, & Reed, 2002)

It's interesting to note that neither the self-regulation scores of athletes nor non-athletes who did not receive the motivational training showed any significant differences. This implies that without focused interventions like motivational training, self-regulation may not improve, and it emphasises the importance of intentional efforts to enhance self-regulation skills.

Overall, the results indicate that while motivational training may not have the same effect on non-athletes as it does on athletes in terms of improving self-regulation, it may be a useful tool for athletes. Future research could explore the specific mechanisms through which motivational training impacts self-regulation and potential moderators of this effect.

Table 1 Results of Wilcoxon-Signed Rank test for Self-Regulation of Sportsmen and Non-sportsmen under Training Group

TRAINEE		Sport					Non-Sport				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
SRSP-	Negative	13	19.96	259.50	-2.24	.03	30	32.20	966.00	-.38	.70
SRS	Positive	28	21.48	601.50			30	28.80	864.00		
	Ties	12					43				

Note. SRSP= Self-Regulation Post, SRS= Self-Regulation

Table 2 Results of Wilcoxon-Signed Rank test for Self-Regulation of Sportsmen and Non-sportsmen under Non-Training Group

NON-TRAINEE		Sport					Non-Sport				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
SRSP-	Negative	23	25.26	581.00	1.32	.19	41	50.04	2051.50	-.20	.84
SRS	Positive	20	18.25	365.00			48	40.70	1953.50		
	Ties	25					30				

Note. SRSP= Self-Regulation Post, SRS= Self-Regulation

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of motivational training on self-regulation among athletes. The results indicate that there was a significant difference between pre and post intervention tests for sportsmen who received the motivational training, indicating an improvement in their self-regulation abilities. However, there was no significant difference observed for non-sportsmen who received the intervention, or for both sportsmen and non-sportsmen who did not receive the intervention. This finding is consistent with previous studies that suggest that motivational training can enhance self-regulation in athletes (Burton, 2013; Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2011). However, it also highlights the potential limitations of using motivational training for non-athletes in improving their self-regulation abilities. Furthermore, the lack of significant differences observed in the control groups (i.e., non-sportsmen and sportsmen who did not receive the intervention) implies that self-regulation may not naturally improve over time and requires targeted interventions such as motivational training to enhance these abilities. In conclusion, the results of this study suggest that motivational training may be an effective tool for improving self-regulation in athletes but may not have the same impact on non-athletes. Further research is necessary to explore the underlying mechanisms of this effect and potential moderators of the intervention's effectiveness.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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