

Innovations

The Impact of Positive Psychology on Coaching Practices of Coaches to Zillennial Athletes

Armand John P. Cantor, Jennifer M. Dindin, J-Lyn C. Espiritu, Paul Louie B. Serrano,
Alexander H. Am-una

University of the Cordilleras

Corresponding author: **Armand John P. Cantor**

Abstract

Coaches are pillars on the life of athletes, they serve as back bones for athletes to achieve their full potential and guide them to perform at their best before, during and after competitions. A coach should be able to determine an athlete's passions during training and competition. The athletes of today are from Generation Z, who were nurtured in a totally different environment than the generations before. The understanding of the importance of coaches to the success of their athletes and the sports program will be greatly influenced by the research's findings. Gathered data are tallied, arranged and statistically tabulated using 4-point Likert scale in identifying the impacts of positive psychology in coaching practices on generation z athletes. A questionnaire survey was used, and a weighted mean was statistically compiled and examined. This led to a weighted average overall score of 3.53, indicating that coaches genuinely believe they regularly use positive psychology in their coaching methods. The use of positive psychology has an impact on the performance of zillennial athletes by comprehending their traits, encouraging optimism in them, and directing them to reach their full potential. to support the coaches' optimistic view of their coaching approach. It is essential that they go to conferences and workshops on the use of positive psychology in coaching that are designed to help them advance their knowledge of coaching techniques. This action will get them ready to become better coaches and might be a long-lasting tool for proper and improved facilitation of their athletes' improvement.

Keywords: 1. Positive Psychology, 2. Coaches, 3.Zillennial Athletes, 4. Approach, 5. Impact

Introduction

Sports have been part of every corner of human's life. Researchers often focus on finding athletes who do not depend on enhancements are now difficult. Enhancements include trainers or coaches which are classified as human enhancement. Coaches are pillars on the life of athletes, they serve as back bones for athletes to achieve their full potential and guide them to perform at their best during competitions.

The relationship between coach and the athlete creates the opportunity to maximize physical, mental and social/emotional development of the athlete (Krotee & Bucher, 2007).

In terms of the career development of the athletes, the coach can be considered as the person who has a fairly important role on improving the potential of the athlete. A coach should be able to apprehend how the athlete feels in the settings of the training, during and after competition or in cases of winning and losing and always be able to establish a healthy relationship with the athlete (Karakoc et al. 2011). In sports organizations which have humans at their center, mid-level and top-level managers, coaches, trainers and athletes are performing their duties as amateurs and professionals. Especially, athletes are trying to maintain sporting lives under severe conditions and keeping constant communication with their coaches (Uzum, 2017).

Some of the international athletes mentioned that they are having problems because of the coach's dissatisfaction and lack of control, and emphasized that these problems are having a negative effect on their performances in the course of time (Ursin, 2001). Holt & Hogg (1999) have found that the athletes who attended Women's Soccer World Cup Finals experienced pressure about communication with the coach. Dugdale et al. (2002) pointed out in their study on New Zealander athletes that one of the biggest problems the athletes are facing during international big games is the coach negative behaviors. Campbell & Jones (2002) stressed that circumstances such as group interaction, poorness of communication, and unfavorable coach behaviors etc. have a negative influence on their performances. In their study which was made on professional Rugby players, Nicholls et al. (2006) uttered that the players are facing problems originated from coach behaviors like training contents, unfair team selection, and tactical mistakes. It was spoken out by O'Neil & Steyn (2007) that the South African endurance events athletes are trying to enhance their performances by competing with their own efforts and the coaches don't have much effect on their performances.

Unethical behaviors which exist within the profession of coaching as they were foresaid, reduce the respectability of coaching, therefore, the respectability of the sports (Tuncel&Büyüköztürk, 2009). Studies which were conducted with purpose of defining the negative behaviors of the coaches observed by the athletes are important on account of presenting both athletes' point of view on the coaches and behavioral profiles of the coaches towards the athletes, and coaches' ability to make up for their lacking by reviewing their attitudes regarding the athletes (Karakoc et al, 2011).

Literature Review

Positive Psychology (PP) is a science of positive experience, positive traits, and positive potentials to improve quality of life and prevent the negativity that will arise when life is barren and meaningless. The field of positive psychology is now two decades old, and it has experienced significant growth since its formal launch in 1998 (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It is generally acknowledged that positive psychology is an "umbrella term" and that it covers many different topics from a diverse range of disciplines. Rusk and Waters (2013), found that the most concentrated areas for a fulfilled life are life satisfaction and contentment (in the past) happiness, motivation achievement (in the present), optimism and hope (in the future). "Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living (Peterson, 2008)."

Grant (2001), found that this therapeutic approach adapted to positive psychology in coaching were effective for personal development and goal attainment, Grant also suggested that these approaches could provide a platform in coaching.

Nonetheless, potential intermediary people to teach the athletes are coaches. Smith (2002) explained that the central role of the coaches is to fulfill the development of the athlete, particularly for the young and developing athletes. Every generation has its differences. Age and generation differences have different type of attitude. Proper management is and will be even more a necessary. The youngest generation called Gen Z

was born and raised in completely different circumstances than the other, older generations (Cilliers, 2017, pp. 189–190). Gen Z is the newest generation to be named and was born between 1996 and 2015 (Stephen, 2014). Although every human is different, there have already been many attempts to make generalizations and understand different groups of people. One of the results of generalization is the creation of the term of “generations”. Generations are defined as an identifiable group that share birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66).

Gen Z athletes are characterized and categorized as individuals who have excellent technology skills, high expectations for success, short attention spans, poor communication skills, and an inability to deal with adversity. Challenges included connecting with them and working with their full support (Laualer, 2012).

Understanding the relationship of coaching, athletes needs an in-depth analysis and learning for a better supervision of the two components. According to the studies in the area of the sports, guidance from the coach has shown that the individual athletes’ effectiveness is largely attributed to the leadership behavior exercised by the coach (Amorose and Horne 2000). Due to the changes, modification and improvement of coaching, the researcher attempted to understand the level of agreement of positive psychology in coaching practices that affects the performance, successes and accomplishments of the zillennial athletes.

The beneficiaries of this research would be generation z athletes and even future athletes since the aim of this research is to improve the standards of management and supervision of coaches to their athletes. This study would be a value to the future and current coaches, trainers and even teachers since it could provide an objective of assessment and understanding of the impact of positive psychology in the younger generation specifically gen z. Any valuable inputs from this study would provide additional insights for the improvement of coaching and its implementation.

Method

Research Design

The researchers used quantitative method through a descriptive design. Descriptive design was used because the main purpose was to collect, present, analyze and interpret data gathered from the respondents on the level of agreement of positive psychology coaching practices applied to the zillennial athletes. This approach deals with the concrete descriptions of phenomenon that the participants experienced. It also provides lived-context of the participants and does so focusing on their own perspective without the use of deception (Giorgi, 2009). More specifically, this method allows the researcher to keep the perspective of the coach actual and genuine on the impacts of positive psychology in coaching.

Population and Locale of the Study

The respondents on this study consist of student athletes under the classification of generation z group age and currently under the scholarship in one of the premiere universities in Baguio City. Based on the list given by the Sport Development Office (SDO) of the university, there were 92 student athletes. During the retrieval of the data there are only 64 student athlete who responded respectively.

Data Collection Instruments

The researchers used a questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale and interview guide questions.

Questionnaire was utilized to identify the impact of positive psychology coaching practices applied by coaches to the zillennial athletes. The questionnaire consisted of two (2) parts. The first part contains the information profile of the students, which includes their names, number of years in playing, gender and age.

The second part is a 15-item questionnaire representing the essentials related to the coach's positive psychology coaching. The respondents of the questionnaire rated the statements from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* by encircling their corresponding answers. The formulated questionnaires are based on the past research of Acosta (2018) and the journal published by Uzum (2018).

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers conducted the study in one of the premiere universities in Baguio City. After securing the necessary permission and proper endorsement of the School Program and Sports Development Office of the university, the researchers gave the approved formal letter to the director of athletics. Afterward, the researchers administered the research instrument through online survey using Google forms. Lastly, the researchers collected and collated the answered survey questionnaire.

Furthermore, the researchers interviewed students based on an open-ended (general) question: "What are the impacts of positive psychology on coaching to zillennial athletes?" Participants were assured that comments and answers were anonymous and the data were treated with strict confidentiality.

Treatment of Data

This section presents how the data were treated to gain objective results of the study. Gathered data were tallied, collated and statistically computed using general weighted mean in identifying the level of agreement of positive psychology coaching practices applied to the zillennial athletes.

Using the interview guide questions presentation of the data includes direct quotes from the respondent during the in-depth interview to enrich the themes that emerged from the analysis of such written documents.

In answering the question number one as to the level of agreement of positive psychology coaching practices as applied to the zillennial athletes, the researcher used survey questionnaire, which was statistically computed and analyzed by getting the weighted mean.

Results and Discussion

For the coaches to achieve the desirable result in and off the court, according to the study conducted by Jones et al. (1995) using proper coaching and letting the athletes experience them during a competition are the best strategies. To control factors which cause poor performance of athletes who can control their stressful conditions before a competition can be more successful in achieving their goals.

Furthermore, coaches who practice proper and good coaching could be one of the most important factors that give a very big influence on the performance of the athletes. This also builds a positive relationship between the coach and the athlete and has a positive direct relation to the performance and can cause athletes to overcome anxiety and turn it into motivations. This statement is in accordance with the studies done by Aufenager (2005) and Khodayari et al. (2011) where they stated that mental skills shared positive self-confidence.

Table 1 shows the level of agreement of zillennial athletes on positive psychology applied by the coaches in the locale of the study. Generally, the result shows that the zillennial athletes strongly agree on the positive psychology used by the coaches of various events with a weighted mean of 3.55.

Table 1 Level of Agreement on Positive Psychology as Perceived by the Zillennial Athletes

Positive Psychology Approach "My Coach.....	Weighted Mean	Qualitative value
1. does not use negative words/ instructions	3.28	Strongly agree
2. does not show negative actions through his body language while coaching	3.31	Strongly agree
3. reminds to be always positive in every situation	3.88	Strongly agree
4. Does not let negative thoughts and actions adversely affect athletes' performance	3.58	Strongly agree
5. realistically has a positive attitude before meeting the athletes	3.64	Strongly agree
6. remains cool and focused while dealing with athletes 'mistakes	3.41	Strongly agree
7. creates positive emotional states on groups	3.66	Strongly agree
8. guides athletes to solve their own problems with positive inputs	3.45	Strongly agree
9. does not focus on athletes' mistakes; he/she focuses on the lesson after the mistake	3.55	Strongly agree
10. practices giving good feedbacks to athletes	3.58	Strongly agree
11. does not punish the athletes with physical abuse while dealing with mistakes they committed	3.45	Strongly agree
12. gives chance to athletes to redeem themselves after committing mistakes	3.64	Strongly agree
13. does not dwell too much on the mistakes committed by the Athletes	3.45	Strongly agree
14. points out athletes' mistakes but reinforcing with good feedbacks	3.64	Strongly agree
15. boosts confidence and creates clear mental state of mental consciousness by giving positive feedback	3.69	Strongly agree
General Weighted Mean	3.55	Strongly agree

The result implies that the zillennial athletes firmly believe that the coaches consistently exhibited and use positive psychology in his or her coaching method.

The result indicates that the zillennial athletes are aware of the necessity that the coaches are constantly applying compassionate coaching practices.

In addition, Gold et al. (2005) stated that athletes can concentrate better and have a higher self-confidence when coached properly. It also supports the research of Kruttee and Butcher (2007) when they stated that the relationship between coach and the athlete creates the opportunity to maximize physical, mental and social/emotional development of the athlete. In connection to the above-mentioned results and proposition, the coaches of the University of the Cordilleras constantly apply positive psychology in their coaching process and strongly agreed by the zillennial athletes thus it is asserted that it has a positive effect on the athletes. This agrees to the statement of Grant (2001), that the platforms of positive psychology in coaching were effective and has a place in coaching.

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it was worth noting that the two highest means on the data gathered rated by the zillennial athletes of the university are the following; highest on the list is: "reminds the athletes to be always be positive in every situation", with an accumulated mean of 3.88 which is interpreted as strongly agree.

This implies that the coaches are more often to integrate positive feedbacks and remains on the state of positivity in every situation because the coaches are aware of their influence on their athletes' emotional, psychological and mental state. This corroborates to the theory Solution- Focused Cognitive Behavior (SFCB) that identified the declaration of Seligman (2005) when he stated that the process of identifying and using one's personal strengths can increase well-being. This also agrees to the statement of Acosta (2018) that the coaches groom their athletes to have positive dispositions on the sports they are playing and help them develop necessary skills in confronting stress that they are experiencing.

In addition, the second highest is, "boosts confidence and creates clear mental state of mental consciousness by giving positive feedback" which accumulated the obtained mean of 3.69, interpreted as strongly agree. This statement agrees to the concept of Krotee & Bucher, (2007) when the author stated that the relationship between coach and the athlete creates the opportunity to maximize physical, mental and social/emotional development of the athlete. It corroborates also to the theory Cognitive Behavioral Coaching (CBC) when the author specified that supportive relationship can itself improve performance (Myers, 1999).

This statement is confirmatory to the statement made by Morris et al. (2006) when the author stressed that coaches can manipulate motivations by setting mastery or competition goals by providing praise to their athletes and setting an example in which right attitude are shown. This corroborates with the answer of one of the zillennial athlete saying:

"I think majority of the athletes was always motivated by their coaches. I can also say that there is a good communication in the team seeing that the coaches boost the confidence of the athletes by giving positive feedback. These feedbacks then give a positive effect on the athletes' performance. I think coaches play a big role in the result of an athlete's performance."

It can be depicted from the answer of the zillennial that the coaches play a big role on the performance of the athlete. Believing, that the coaches who are giving positive feedback to their athletes have a big impact to the personality and performance of the players The more positive the coaches are the more the players play better.

On the other hand, rated lowest among the positive psychology applied by the coaches is the item, "Does not use negative words" with an obtained mean of 3.28 and still interpreted as strongly agree. The result demonstrates that the coaches have a tough behavior and thus, whenever coaches feel frustrated, they use negative words to express their frustrations on the performance of the zillennial athletes. This connects to the statement of Campbell & Jones (2002) when they stressed that circumstances such as group interaction, poorness of communication, and unfavorable coach behaviors etc. have a negative influence on their performances.

The second lowest is; "My coach does not show negative actions through his body language while coaching," with an obtained mean of 3.31 and has a qualitative meaning of strongly agree. This validates that coaches are still humans that tend to be upset and show adverse action whenever an athlete commits mistakes.

The finding shows that coaches are not perfect and they are just but human. They are bound to have limitations on his or her coaching approach. It is parallel to the statement Unethical behaviors which exist within the profession of coaching as they were foresaid, reduce the respectability of coaching, therefore, the respectability of the sports (Tuncel&Büyüköztürk, 2009).

The athletes are more motivated to win and improve once that the coach is composed and can give good feedback. Athletes will also give their best performance on their games. This supports the statement mentioned by Grant and Palmer (2002) that coaching has been defined as the "enhancement of well-being and performance in personal life and work domains supported by models of coaching grounded in child and adult learning or psychological theories and approaches"

The result supports the statement of Amorose and Horne (2000) wherein they stated that understanding the relationship of coaching and athletes needs an in-depth analysis and learning for a better supervision of the two components. According to the studies in the area of the sports, guidance from the coach has shown that the individual athletes' effectiveness is largely attributed to the leadership behavior exercised by the coach (Downey, 1999).

The forgoing finding is in conformity to the statement made by Narvaes (2017) when she stated that, a coach's impact is felt beyond training sessions and can shape children's lives. That is why it is crucial that coaches understand their influence and use it to foster a learning experience on and off the field. Coaches with positive mindset incorporate important life lessons into sports, with less of a focus on the concept of losing and winning. A positive coach emphasizes the journey rather than the trophy for the first place, successfully balancing both. The result in real life will outweigh the results in the scoreboard.

It is vital for the coaches of to broaden their perspective and incorporate different style of coaching and they have to open their heart to truly understand the zillennial athletes of UC. Thus, motivating athlete could be a key component to make them realize the importance positive attitude and benefits of a harmonious relationship between the coach and the athletes. More often the coach's role is to bridge the thin line of respect and authority.

Positive Psychology Coaching approaches are more effective than pressure-based (problem-focused) approaches at facilitating goal attainment, reducing stress, and enhancing emotional functioning (Grant, 2012). The proceeding entails that the zillennial athletes of the University of the Cordilleras look to their coaches as a role model and are likely to observe their coaches' behavior. Coaches who show and demonstrate positive psychology in coaching to his or her athletes can gain more respect. In addition, athletes who are given proper coaching show more positive attitude and display positivity before, during and after the competitions.

Conclusion

The conclusions driven from the findings and the recommendations based on the conclusions which are beneficial in gaining a full knowledge of the entire study are hereby presented in this section. Both the zillennial athletes and coaches embraced the compassionate coaching consistently. Through the use of compassionate coaching zillennial athletes and coaches established positive relationship.

After a careful review of the conclusion, the following recommendations are drawn.

- Zillennial athletes and coaches have to sustain the good camaraderie to continuously uplift the spirit and attitude of the athletes at all times.
- To maintain the positive psychology practices, both coaches and zillennial athletes have to focus on the implementation of the positive outlook on the coaching method.
- Further studies may focus on the impact of positive psychology on academics, attitude, sports performance and sports rehabilitation that can cater to the new development and trends in coaching.

References

1. Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified husserlian approach*. Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University.
2. Morris, T., And Summers, J (Eds) (2004). *Sports psychology: Theory, application and issues (2nd ed)*. Milton, QLD.: John Wiley & Sons.
3. Campbell, E., & Jones, G. (2002). *Sources of stress experienced by elite male wheelchair basketball players. adapted physical activity quarterly*, 19(1), 82-99.
4. Campbell, T., & Sullivan, P.J. (2005). *The effects of a standardized coaching education program on the efficacy of novice coaches. Avante*, 11, 38-45
5. Gould, D., Guinan, D., Greenleaf, C., and Chung, Y. (2002). *A survey of U.S olympic coaches: variables perceived to have influenced athlete performance and coach effectiveness. The sports psychologist*, 16, 220-250
6. Krotee, M. L., & Bucher, A. C. (2007). *Sport management (Trans: Köseoğlu, S)*. Istanbul sports sciences association, Beyaz Publications.
7. Karakoç, Ö., Yüksek, S., Aydın, A. D., Karakoç, B., Yetiş, Ü., & Baydil, B. (2011). *Unethical behaviors observed by national team-level male judoists in club coaches. Kastamonu Journal of Education*, 19(1), 321-323.
8. Pensgaard, A. M., & Ursin, H. (1998). *Stress, control, and coping in elite athletes. Scandinavian Journal of medicine & science in sports*, 8(3), 183-189.
9. Yakupoğlu, S. (1997). *Basketball and handball coaches researching similar and different personality traits. 1st International sports psychology symposium, 10-12 October, Mersin*
10. Neenan, M. & Dryden, W. (2000) *Essential rational emotive behaviour therapy*. London: Whurr. Neenan, M. and Dryden, W. (2002) *Life coaching: A cognitive behavioural approach*. London: Brunner-Routledge.

11. Downey, M. (1999) *Effective Coaching*. London: Orion Business Books. Nikitas, Stephen. "Generation Y: Why They're Worth a Second Look." *ConsumerBankers.com*. June 18, 2014.
12. Holt, N. L., & Hogg, J. M. (1999). *Perception of stres and coping during preparations for the 1999 women's soccer world cup finals*. *NASPSPA. Abstracts*, 29
13. Dugdale, J. R., Eklund, R. C., & Gordon, S. (2002). *Expected and unexpected stressors in major international competition: Appraisal, coping, and performance*. *The Sport Psychologist*, 16(1), 20-33.
14. Nicholls, A. R., Holt, N. L., Polman, R. C., & Bloomfield, J.(2006). *Stressors, coping, and coping effectiveness among professional rugby union players*. *The Sport Psychologist*, 20(3), 314-329.
15. O'Neil, J. W., & Steyn, J. M. (2007). *Strategies used by South African non-elite athletes to cope with the environmental stressors associated with endurance events*. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 29(2), 99-107.
16. Üzüm, H. (2017). *Elitsporculardaörgütselstresvebağlılık*. Nobel BilimselEserler, Ankara. ISBN:978-605-9663-77-9.Üzüm, H., Karlı, Ü., &Yıldız, N. O. (2018). *Perceived coach attitudes and behaviors scale: development and validation study*. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(3), 160-169.
17. Theeboom, T., Beersma, B., & Van Vianen, A. (2013). *Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an organizational context*. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9, 1-18.

Corresponding E-mail: apcantor@uc-bcf.edu.ph