EXAMINING THE INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA STUDENT-ATHLETES COPING STRATEGY IN SPORTS

Omar-Fauzee M.S., PhD
Yahya Don, PhD
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia
Nina Susterna, PhD
Yudha M. Saputra, PhD
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia
Sofyan Hanif, PhD
Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia
Nagoor Meera Abdullah, M.Sc
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia
Mohd Izwan Shahril, M.Sc
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to compare the coping strategies among university student-athletes between Indonesia and Malaysia. A sample of 469 students athletes of Indonesia (226: female-69; male-157) and Malaysia (243: female-95; male-148) were randomly selected as the sample for this study. The age for Indonesia student-athletes (M=21.05, sd=2.31) and Malaysia student athletes (M=21.41, sd=2.50). The samples were selected from four major universities in Indonesia and Malaysia. Of the sample, 2.6% of Indonesian and 2.3% of Malaysian representing National team and 4.3% of Indonesian and 5.8% of Malaysian student-athletes representing state level during their study. However, 3.8% and 13.9% of Indonesian sample representing National and state during their high school year, respectively, 8.5% and 21.7% of the Malaysian sample representing National and state team during their high school year. The instrument used in this study was The Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ACSI-28). Results show that there are significantly difference between Indonesia and Malaysia athletes in coping in adversity, concentration, mental preparation and goal setting, peaking under pressure and freedom from worries. Out of that, the Indonesian student-athletes score higher than Malaysian student-athletes in subthemes of freedom from worries. While, the others the Malaysia student-athletes score higher. Results were further discussed and recommended for future research.

Keywords: Coping strategies, student-athletes, the athletic skills inventory (acsi-28), national sports representative

Introduction

The strain, stress and tension to compete in competitive sports has increased with all the media attention given to sport and the potential promotion available through success with extensive income (Kuethe & Motamed, 2010; Lucifora & Simmons, 2003). Therefore, people who unable to cope efficiently with the pressure of competitive sport may experience not only a decrease in their ability to perform, but also unmotivated, lack of interest, mental distress, and even to the extend of physical incapabilities (Omar-Fauzee, Daud, Abdullah, &

Rashid, 2009). Whether individual or team sports athletes, they all have different sources of stress, and consequently each athlete deserved specific strategies to cope successfully in their selective sports (Kristiansen, Roberts & Abrahamsen, 2007). On the other hand, sport involvement requires both mental and physical capabilities of individuals in order to overcome the pressure before, during and after each training and competition.

These are also needed when athletes are in a situation where they feel unprepared or unsecure of their capabilities especially during a competition which will make them nervous to perform efficiently (Dominikus, Omar-Fauzee, Chong, Meesin & Choosakul, 2009). Perhaps, the application of mental strength ability including self-confidence, imagery, coping strategies, and goal setting will helps to boost their confidence level in order to resilience back especially when they were psychologically down (Rattanakoses, Omar-Fauzee, & Soh, 2009). Furthermore, athletes who are equipped with mental toughness and strength are more likely to motivate, socialize, eagerness to compete, always calm and relaxed and these athletes are associated to having a high level of self confidence and strong beliefs in sports perfomance (Omar-Fauzee, Saputra, Samad, Gheimi, Asmuni, & Johar, 2012). To back up the point, Clough, Earle, and Sewell (2000) also found that athletes with high mental strengh will enables them to compete in a variety of situations and these athletes have relatively low level of anxiety and nervousness than athletes who have low mental strength. Similarly, with stronger mental strength athletes should be able to cope with competitive stress situations due to external (i.e., managers, coaches, and fans) and internal factors (i.e., fear of success, fear of failure, and emotional problems). Thus, athletes should learned and trained the coping strategies in order to face the realities of highly competitive sports situations.

Moreover, research by Omar-Fauzee, Abd-Latif, Tajularipin, Manja and Rattanakoses (2011) also identify that even the athletes who lost their games also need social support and problem solving skill in order to cope with the losing situations. Therefore, this is especially true with Asean athletes who unable to perform better at Olympic and International level. If far-East countries such as China (38 gold), Japan (7 gold) and Korea (13 gold) can excel better at 2012 Olympic (Shroeder, 2013), it seems that the South East Asian countries were stagnant without gold which are at the same level as ten years back than other countries who improved their sports development and move forward at International level. Thus, a study of Asean country athletes should be conducted in order to examine the psychological needs whether they can be improved and at the same time can cope with pressure received by the wold class athletes (Omar-Fauzee, et al., 2012). Therefore, a profile of how young athletes deals with the stressful situations in competition should investigated in order to understand their major problems. Therefore, this study will examine the coping profile of both Indonesia and Malaysia student-athletes in order to figure out the main reason to cope or not to cope in stressful conditions.

Methodology

Sample

A sample of 469 university students-athletes of Indonesia (226: female-69; male-157) and Malaysia (243: female-95; male-148) were randomly selected for this study. The age for Indonesia student-athletes (M=21.05, sd=2.31) and Malaysia student athletes (M=21.41, sd=2.50). The samples were selected from four major universities in Indonesia and Malaysia. Of the sample, 2.6% of Indonesian and 2.3% of Malaysian representing National team and 4.3% of Indonesian and 5.8% of Malaysian student-athletes representing state level during their study. However, 3.8% and 13.9% of Indonesian sample representing National and state during their high school year, respectively, 8.5% and 21.7% of the Malaysian sample representing National and state team during their high school year. They are representing a wide variety of sports (i.e. swimming, badminton, bowling, soccer, futsal, volleyball and field

hockey) either resident halls, university, state or National teams while they are studying at their respective universities.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was divided into two parts, namely: demographic variables; and the athletic coping skills inventory – 28.

Demographic variables

The questionnaire also contained items that determined the age, gender and level of sports representation during their high school as well as their sports representation during studying at their respective university.

Athletic Coping Skills Inventory – 28

The Athletic Coping Skills Inventory – 28 (ACSI-28; Smith, Schultz, Smoll, & Ptacek, 1995) was used to measure the psychological coping skills for athletes. The ACSI-28 is a self-report questionnaire developed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The instrument consisted of a 28-item scale measuring seven classes of sport-specific psychological coping skills including goal setting, coping with adversity, peaking under pressure, goal setting/ mental preparation, coachability, freedom from worry, confidence and achievement motivation, and concentration. The respondents were asked to respond to each statement by indicating how often they experienced different situations using a 4 point Likert-like scale (e.g., I put a lot of pressure on myself by worrying about how I will perform", 0 = almost never to 3 = almost always). Each subscale consisted of four items that were averaged to provide a subscale range of 0 to 3. Additionally, the scales were then summed to yield a personal coping resource score. The original subscales, as reported by Smith, Schutz, Smoll and Ptacek (1995) were found to be internally consistent with alpha levels ranging from .62 to .78 and a total (personal coping resources) scale alpha of .86.

Figure 1: Terms and definitions of ACSI – 28 psychological coping skills

Sub-scales	Descriptions
Coping with Adversity	Remains positive and enthusiastic even when things are going badly; remains calm and controlled; can quickly bounce back from mistakes and setbacks.
Peaking Under Pressure	Is challenged rather than threatened by pressure situations and performs well under pressure; a clutch performer.
Goal Setting/Mental Preparation	Sets and works towards specific performance goals; plans and mentally prepares him/herself for competition and clearly has a 'game plan' for the competition.
Concentration	Not easily distracted; able to focus on the task at hand in both practice and competitive situations, even when adverse or unexpected events occur.
Freedom from Worry	Does not put pressure on him/herself by worrying about performing poorly or making mistakes; does not worry about what others will think if he/she performs poorly.
Confidence and Achievement Motivation	Is confident and positively motivated; consistently gives 100% during practice and competitions and works hard to improve his/her skills.
Coachability	Open to and learns from instruction; accepts constructive criticism without taking it personally or becoming upset.

Source: Adapted from Smith, R. E., and Christensen, D. S. (1995). Psychological skills as predictors of performance and survival in professional baseball. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 17, 399-415.

Procedure

The permission from the Dean of faculty of respective university was seek before conducting thois research. After getting the approval, the researcher with the help of lecturers of participating universities in Indonesia and Malaysia conduct the research using

random sampling methodologies at the selected universities. All of the student who were selected was briefed of the objectives of the research and they was told that they can quit at anytime if they feel uncomfortanble to answer the questionnaires. It took less approximately 30 minutes to answer the Malay translated questionnaire. This Malay translation was validated by expert in English from main researcher university in Kedah, Malaysia. The completed questionnaires were collected back after the respondents answer it.

Analysis of Data

All the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) program software version 19.0. In relation to the objective of the research which was to examine the coping strategies profile of the selectyed respondents of both Indonesia and Malaysia student-athletes, an independent T-test was used to compare the mean between both countries. The discriptive statistic was also employed to identified the demographic of the respondents.

Results

The followings are the result obtained from the data analyses of demograpahic variables and the t-test of coping strategies between the two countries. The mean age for Indonesia student-athletes was 21.05 (sd=2.31) and Malaysia (21.41) (sd=2.50). All of them are undergraduate students who are obtaining a Bachelor degree programs at their respective universities. The level of competition during respondents high school years are as shown in Table 1, whereby 3.8%% Indonesia and 8.5% Malaysian student-athletes representing state level. Similarly, 13.9% Indonesia and 21.7% student-athletes representing district level. The situation changed when they are at university which shows that 2.6% of Indonesian and 2.3% of Malaysian representing National team and 4.3% of Indonesian and 5.8% of Malaysian student-athletes representing state level (Table 2). All of the coping strategies have the internal reliability between .70-.80 which is appropriate. The independent-t test results shows that five out of the seven coping strategies are significantly difference which are coping with adversity [t(467)= -3.45, p< .05], concentration [t(467)= -3.97, p< .05], goal setting/mental preparation [t(467)= -3.54, p<.05], peaking under pressure [t(467)= -2.65, p< .05], and freedom from worry [t(466)= 6.89, P< .05].

Table 1. Sports representation during high school

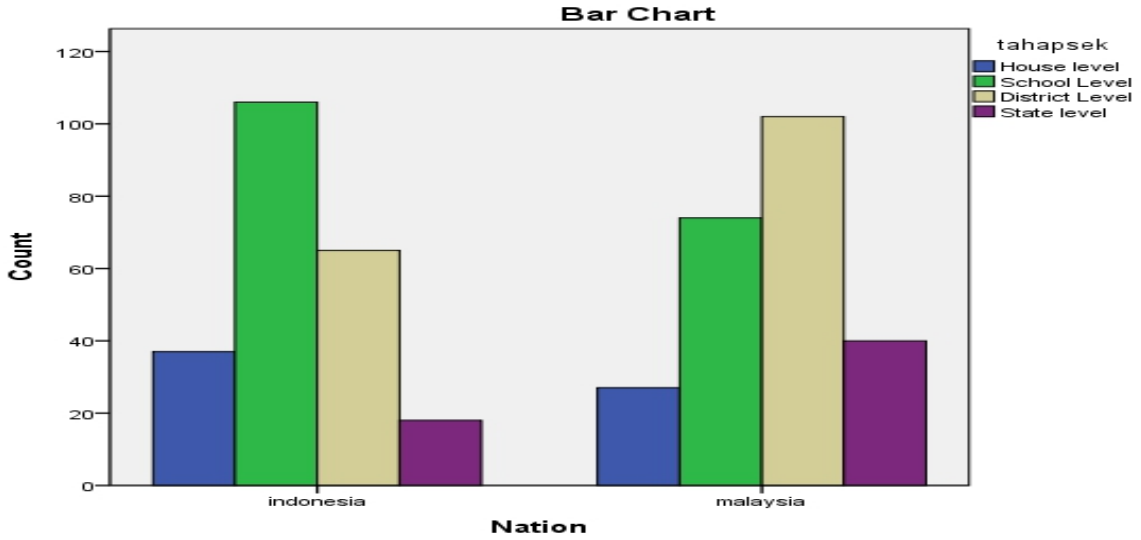

Table 2. Sports representations at University

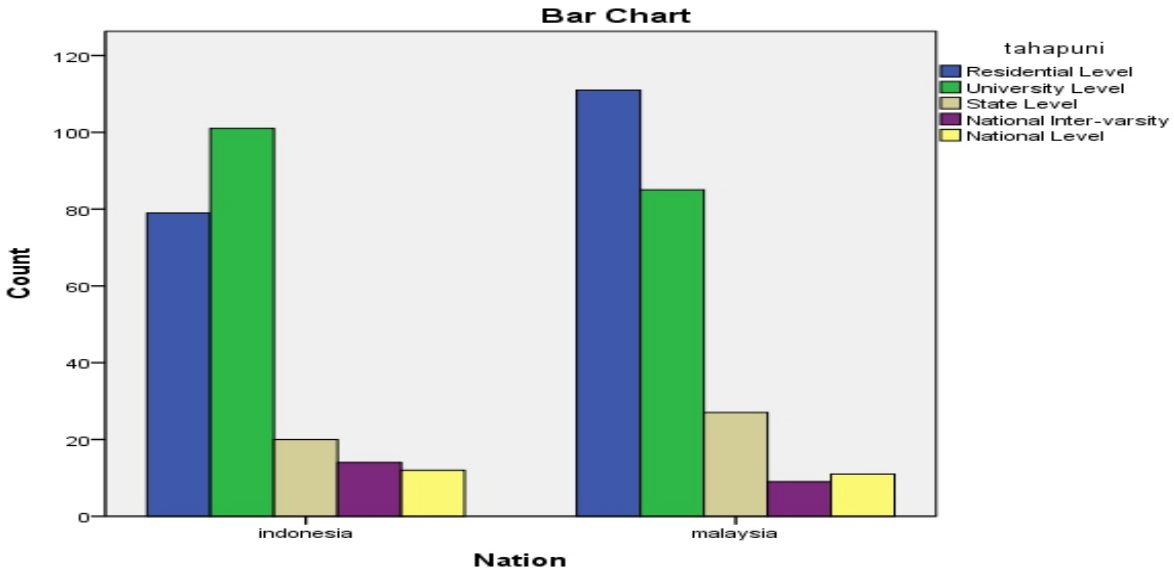

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and t-score and degree of freedom of independent t-test for coping strategies for Indonesia and Malaysia student-athletes

Variable	Mean	Sd	t	df
Coping with Adversity			-.3.45*	467
Indonesia	1.94	.59		
Malaysia	2.11	.48		
Concentration			-.3.97*	467
Indonesia	1.71	.40		
Malaysia	1.86	.42		
Goal setting/Mental Preparation			-3.54*	467
Indonesia	1.89	.44		
Malaysia	2.08	.69		
Peaking under pressure			-2.65*	467
Indonesia	1.72	.46		
Malaysia	1.83	.51		
Freedom from worry			6.89*	466
Indonesia	1.77	.61		
Malaysia	1.38	.62		

Notes: * $p < .05$

Conclusion

The purpose of this research to obtain the coping strategies profile of the student-athletes, therefore, a descriptive statistic was employed in this study. Result shows that the Indonesia student-athletes show higher score in freedom from worry as compared to other coping strategies of Malaysia student-athletes. Thus, this shows that the Indonesia student-athletes do not worry about their performance and do not worry what others think about their performances. Perhaps, the huge population of 246,864,191 million people (Total Population, 2013) might consider another reason of why Indonesian student-athletes do not being so worry about facing others in sports, and they also careless about what others think of their performances. In reality, with 250 million populations, one had to work harder and struggle to be top students and even to enter university they already have the inner-struggle situation to compete with others. So as for sports, it might be a part of working hard to achieve excellence in their studies. Therefore, it is suggested a thorough study of why freedom from worry they cope higher than Malaysia should be conducted longitudinal and qualitatively in order to understand more of their psychological behavior (Omar-Fauzee,

Saputra, Samad, Gheimi, Asmuni, & Johar, 2012). Furthermore, it is interesting to find out that Indonesia student-athletes did not representing well (i.e., National and state team) during their high school years, however, they seems to be late bloomers which shows that when they entering university those who representing National at inter-varsity challenge and National team almost the same percentages with Malaysia students-athletes. What actually happen to those Malaysian who representing state and National level during high school? Moreover, why did the trend of late-bloomers student-athletes happen to Indonesian student-athletes needed further analysis by sport scientist. By understanding the reason, it may help to improve Asean sports performance in the future.

In contrast, the other four of coping strategies shows that Malaysia student-athletes score higher than the Indonesian, which are coping with adversity, concentration, goal setting/mental preparation and peaking under pressure. Thus, this shows Malaysia student-athletes show higher capability in coping strategies in sports. Perhaps due to the Asean-university sports games performance 2012 shows that Malaysia student-athletes was champion with 60 gold medal followed by Vietnam (56 gold medal) and Thailand (45 gold medal) (Asean University Games, 2013). Perhaps, the five year incentive to build up Malaysian university sports also gives an input to athlete's mental strength. Since the Ministry of Higher Education (Nowadays, it had emerged back with Ministry of Education, which is known as Ministry of Education) had introduce the 'excellence scheme for sports' where a particular sports were trained and placed in a particular university in Malaysia (e.g., the cricket for University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Rugby for Universiti Putra Malaysia and Golf for Universiti Utara Malaysia). A special budget of RM10 million being allocated by the ministry for sports development this year, about RM7.2 million was for the Sports Excellence Centres and RM3.6 million for the Focus Sport Centres (Varsity, 2013),were given to the particular university to employed the best coaches and best training facilities to this special 'excellence scheme for sports.' However, if the same incentive was given to the Indonesia student-athletes program, does their athletes mental strength and coping strategies improved? Although, some coping strategies higher than one another between Indonesia and Malaysia student-athletes, however, the point that have to be considered is the mean score between them are still consider low. For example out of likert scale 3, the highest mean score of both countries is coping with adversity and goal setting/mental preparation which their mean score is slightly above 2.0. Whereas, the others mean score are less than 2.0. Thus, with the incentive of approximately RM 10 million (Varsity, 2013) that had been given the student-athletes should score higher than average of 2.3 and above. Perhaps, the Government should look into the capabilities of the program whether it can sustain for a long term results.

This study also has its own limitation that should future researcher overcome it. The first limitation is that this study only a profiling type of research and further research should conducted longitudinally and with qualitative methodologies with interviews and observations. On the other hand, it is only one-off survey and repeated research should be considered in order to build up the Asean countries capability in sports performance (Omar-Fauzee, Saputra, Samad, Gheimi, Asmuni, and Johar (2012). Thus, with the regular result obtained, it helps the coaches to administered a 'resilience program' so that those score lower in certain coping strategy should be send for special course with sport psychologist not only for motivating them, but to help them maintained appropriate level of mental toughness. In a long term, it helps to develop Asean sports performance if all athletes be able to cope with all the struggle and challenges they faced before, during and after competition. Therefore, it is suggested that more repeated survey be conducted every one or two year's time depending on the budgeting provided.

References:

Asean University Games http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASEAN_University_Games, 2013**.**

Clough, P., Earle, K., & Sewell, D. Mental toughness: The concept and its measurement. In I. Cockerill (Ed.), Solutions in sport psychology (pp. 32-45). London: Thompson, 2002.

Dominikus, F., Omar Fauzee, M.S., Abdullah, M. C., Meesin, C., & Choosakul, C. Relationship between mental skill and anxiety interpretation in secondary school hockey athletes. European Journal of Social Sciences, 9(4), 651-658, 2009.

Kristiansen, E., Roberts, G. S., & Abrahamsen, F. E. Achievement involvement and stress coping in elite wrestling. Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports. 18(4), 526-538, 2007.

Kuethe, T. H., & Motamed, M. Return to nstardom: Evidence from U.S. major league soccer. Journal of Sports Economics, 11 (5), 567-579, 2010.

Lucifora, C., & Simmons, R. Superstar effects in sport: Evidence from Italian soccer. Journal of Sports Economics, 4, 35-55, 2003.

Omar-Fauzee, M.S., Daud, W.R.B., Abdullah, R., Rashid, S. A. The effectiveness of imagery and coping strategies in sport performance. European Journal of Social Sciences, 9(1), 97-108, 2009.

Omar-Fauzee, M.S., Saputra, Y.M., Samad, N., Gheimi, Z., Asmuni, M.N., & Johar, M. Mental toughness among footballers: A case study. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 2, 639-658, 2012.

Omar-Fauzee, M.S., Abd-Latif, R., Tajularipin, S, Manja, R., & Rattanakoses, R. The coping strategies employed by female college athletes after losing a game. International Journal of Psychological Studies, 3, 50-57, 2011.

Rattanakoses, R., Omar-Fauzee, M.S., & Soh, K.G. *Evaluating the relationship of imagery and self-confidence in female and male athletes.* European Journal of Social Sciences, 10 (1), 129-142, 2009.

Shroeder, S. 2012 Olympics: Full medal count and results. SbNation. http://www.sbnation.com/2012/8/13/3238075/2012-olympics-full-medal-count-results-usa-china, 2012.

Total Population http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL, 2013.