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Intimidation By Trainers: Reinforcing Martial Athletes to Practice

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Abstract

Rough and harsh trainings often occur in sports training, one of which is in the martial arts sport where athletes often receive more intimidations from the trainer than in other sports. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the form of intimidations occur in the trainer-athlete relationship as an attempt to increase the training motivation. The method used in this research was a grounded theory approach. Observations and interviews were conducted to collect data. The result of this study found that intimidation needs to be done by trainers. However, trainers must be able to choose when to intimidate the athletes and have to understand the athletes' acceptance whether it has a positive or a negative impact.

INTRODUCTION

Children tend to experience emotional abuse in family and other social contexts (Nearchou, 2018; Mishna et al., 2019). The American Professional Society on Abuse of Children (1995) agreed that parental behavior such as rejecting, isolating, destroying, terrorizing, lack of affection, lack of protection, and lack of love is psychological abuse in the child's parent relationship (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2013). Several studies from various countries examined emotional abuse by teachers in the school environment (Nearchou, 2018). Nearly 53% and 33% of primary school students indicated that they have been victims of neglect and emotional abuse by their teachers (Theoklitou et al., 2012). 18% of participants reported emotional abuse by teachers, who insulted, mocked or pointed at them using embarrassing labels such as losers, stupid or idiots (G. A. Kerr & Stirling, 2012). Emotional abuse by teachers can be detrimental to children, similar to emotional abuse that occurs in families or from other caregivers (Twemlow & Fonagy, 2005; Finkelhor et al., 2014; Maguire, 2015).

Some emotional abuse leaves its mark in several forms, such as lack of confidence, difficulty forming friendships, aggression, drug and alcohol abuse, harmful conduct likes suddenly burning things up or acting cruelly to animals, or suicidal tendencies (Manon Andini et al., 2019) Emotional abuse in adolescents has increased levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts (Arseneault et al., 2010; Hong et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2015). In parent-child relationships emotional abuse can harm a child's well-being because of its debilitating and lifelong negative developmental effects (Jellen et al., 2001; Artz et al., 2014). All of these psychological effects have also been reported as a consequence of emotional abuse in parent-child relationships (Iwaniec et al., 2006; Stirling & Kerr, 2013). Likewise, emotional abuse has negative effects on the well-being of athletes, including depression, eating behavior, anxiety, and fear of the environment (Battaglia et al., 2017; Kerr et al., 2020). Emotional abuse in an athlete-coach relationship occurs when athletes show a lack of confidence in their own abilities (Gervis & Dunn, 2004).

Emotional abuse in a coach-athlete relationship has been reported as a common act in a sporting environment (G. A. Kerr & Stirling, 2008; Mountjoy et al.,

2016); and the athletes are reluctant to report such abusive experiences (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2009). Kirby & Wintrup (2002) report that the emotionally abusive coaching happens to 22% to 25% of competitive athletes. Rough coaching is a problem for sports practitioners, but many are still powerless to make changes (A. Stirling & Kerr, 2010). Emotionally abusive behavior, such as criticism and bullying, tends to be generally accepted in sports culture (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2008; Kavanagh et al., 2016).

Emotionally dangerous coaching gives the evidence that this kind of acts is often accepted for the development of elite athletes. The trainers and athletes alike interpret such behavior as an important element of athlete development (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2013; A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014). Trainers explain that they use emotional violence practice partly for instrumental purposes, they believe the strategy is effective in motivating athletes to improve their training and performance (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2013; Bartholomew et al., 2009). Athletes also reveal that the training strategy help to increase their motivation and direct their coach's interest in seeing them improve (G. Kerr et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2005). Parents of younger athletes are given socialization in advance about the sports culture aimed to accept emotionally abusive training behavior as a practice expected for their children' development (G. A. Kerr & Stirling, 2012).

Crow & Macintosh (2009) defines any potentially embarrassing, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activity to a junior ranked athlete by a more senior teammate is required in order to be accepted as part of a team. This can be defined as a form of intimidation in sports, especially in sports teams consisted of athletes of different ages. Therefore, in team sports there is a huge potential for intimidation from seniors to juniors. In this case, it can happen between the coach and the athletes who are far younger.

Referring to the brief explanation above, the purpose of this study is to explore the forms of intimidation that occur in the trainer-athlete relationship in increasing motivation to train, to find out whether the coach's intimidation is beneficial for the motivation to practice.

The psychological impact of emotional abuse on athletes

The emotions or feelings of athletes need special attention in sports, because athletes' emotions, in addition to influencing psychological aspects (sense and will), also affect the increase or decrease in performance (Dannis, 2013). Considering several concepts of psychological and physical organic units, the emotional disturbance of the athlete will affect the overall mental state. So that emotional instability will lead to psychological instability, which will affect the role of psychological functions. Eventually, this will affect the athlete's performance.

Emotional abuse is viewed to have a significant negative effect on athlete's well-being and is associated with a large number of long-term sequelae, including depression, maladaptive eating behavior, anxiety, and social withdrawal (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2008; A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014). This abusive behavior makes athletes feel stupid, worthless, depressed, insecure, and rejected, highlighting the significant impact of emotional abuse on the trainer-athlete relationship (Gervis & Dunn, 2004). In addition, sadness, depression, poor self-esteem, shame, loneliness, and helplessness are common emotions experienced by adolescent victims of emotional abuse (Hutson, 2018).

Coach Extrinsic Motivation

Consistency on performance is the result of emotional consistency. Players who are emotionally unstable during the game will find that their performance is also unstable. The more the players' emotional states rise and fall during the play, the less likely it is that their performance level could be stabilized to the peak. There is a significant relationship between athletes' performance and their emotional state on the field. Some emotional states clearly support high levels of consistency, while other emotional states have the opposite effect (Groppel & Dinubile, 2009).

There are several basic psychological aspects to reach an achievement, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is voluntarily engaging in sports for pleasure or personal satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation, namely the reason for being involved in sports for its inherent participational rewards. There are also types of extrinsic motivation that are self

-determined, such as individuals involved in a sport because it is their identity, and they also feel important and valued by participating (Hein & Jöesaar, 2015).

The peak or maximum performance is directly related to certain emotional states. This emotional state is known as the ideal performance state; the emotional states that lead to the emergence of different physiological states. Changes in the state of feelings affect the biochemical state of a person which affects critical performance variables such as blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, body temperature, and others. Changes in the player biochemically refers to the changes in the state of feeling and mental state (mood). These changes can support or, in reverse, damage their ability to reach peak performance (Groppel & Dinubile, 2009).

Coach Negative Intimidation to Athletes

The emotional coach behavior occurs in three ways. The first is emotionally abusive physical behavior, such as acts of aggression in the form of hitting and throwing objects in front of their athletes. Second, verbal behavior such as yelling at an athlete or group of athletes, belittling, calling names, and making derogatory comments. Third, refusal of attention and support as being ignored by the coach during training (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2008).

Receiving the coach behavior is a psychological threat to some elite young athletes; and screaming, belittling, threatening, and humiliating are forms of emotional abuse experienced in sports, and more violent behavior occurs when athletes reach elite level (Gervis & Dunn, 2004). Emotional abuse of elite child athletes in gymnastics could be in the forms of belittling, humiliating, shouting, scapegoating, rejecting, isolating, threatening, and ignoring. One athlete described an incident of abuse they experienced: "on the first day we had to do a sprint test. I was sick so I didn't make time for it, and the coach yelled at me in front of the whole team I just met that day" (Male swimmer, 24 years) (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014). The more aggressive the sport, the more aggressive the language and vocabulary the trainer will use. They can yell some profanity words at you and be more aggressive in your face because that's how the game is played too. (Male hockey player, 25) (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014).

Coach Positive Intimidation to Athletes

The factors that affect the motivation of athletes come from the coach, ultimately in training or competition, by giving positive instruction and feedback, praising and giving them choices, or by intimidating, criticizing, and controlling them (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007). This is also in line with some opinions of athletes who feel their coach's emotional abuse practices are well-intentioned. An athlete revealed that, "My coach would yell at me, but I knew he cared about me. I know that he didn't yell at me just to make me feel like nothing. There are ulterior motives and that makes me the best gymnast I can be"(Female gymnast, 24) (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014). Likewise, some athletes say that their coaches are not always condescending. Although their comments and criticisms were sometimes quite hurtful, the athletes also receive a lot of praise from their coaches, thereby increasing the athlete's belief that the coach's hurtful comments were well-intentioned. As the following athlete put it: "It becomes a kind of trust because this person (the coach) is a source of condescension (comment) and praise" (Male hockey player, 23) (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014). And intimidation is also one way to achieve success, as in line with; both athletes and coaches can undertake a rough training as a necessary means of achieving success (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2009).

METHODS

Participants and Research Procedure

This research was conducted in Bandung with purposive sampling technique, which was aimed at martial arts athletes. This was based on preliminary observations made by researchers that athletes in the martial arts sport were more likely to receive intimidation from their coaches than in the other sports. The sample in this study were martial arts athletes who had won first place in national competitions. There were 4 martial arts athletes willing to be the sample, 3 of which were pencak silat athletes and 1 was judo athlete.

Instrument

The instruments used were interview and observation. The researchers made a number of questions based

on the findings of initial observations, research problems and research sub-problems. Observation allowed the researchers to detect what the subject feels and lives in, thus allowing the researchers to become a source of data. Thus, the presence of researchers directly on the field could provide ample opportunity to collect data that was used as the basis for obtaining accurate data. The interview planning was carried out by compiling an interview guide which contained open-ended questions. The questions were about various aspects related to the research process. Interview sessions were conducted by interviewers who mastered and understood the topic being researched. This aimed to be able to dig deeper information from the respondents interviewed.

Data analysis

This research used a grounded theory approach. This research approach assumed that knowledge was based on experience, individual interpretation and, unlike other forms of inquiry, did not test hypotheses but rather allowed theory to emerge from athlete's experience (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014).

RESULT

The results obtained in this study were positive intimidation which had an impact on increasing athlete motivation and negative intimidation which decreased the training motivation of the athletes.

1. Positive intimidation affected on increasing the training motivation of the athletes

Positive forms of intimidation that have impact on increasing the training motivation of the athletes included hitting the palms of the hands with a belt or a broomstick, slapping, kicking, throwing objects (shoes), pushing, and pinching. However, though it looked rough, it was very effective in increasing the athlete's focus. According to athletes who had been interviewed, slapping was the most impressive form of intimidation that increased motivation because it had an impact when competing to reduce nervousness and tension. In addition, there was also the feeling of greater fear of the coach than the opponent so whatever happened the athlete would try to win the game. There were those who thought that, at first, they would probably feel hurt because of the intimidation, but in fact they were

Table 1. The Questionnaire of Coach Intimidation to Athletes to Achieve Training Motivation

No	Question	Respondent Answer			
		1	2	3	4
1.	Have you experienced any kind of intimidation that had a positive or negative impact? (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2008)	Once experienced positive intimidation	Once experienced positive intimidation	Once experienced negative intimidation	Once experienced intimidation
2.	What forms of intimidation have positive and negative impacts? (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014; Gervis & Dunn, 2004)	Being slapped, kicked, threw objects (shoes), pushed, pinched. It was all happened because I made a mistake, because I didn't do the right training program, because I lacked enthusiasm, because I didn't want to push myself harder, because I didn't live up to my coach's expectations.	Being hit on the palms with belt (sometimes the handle of a broomstick) because I frequently let go of my handgrip when I slammed my opponent	The form of intimidation that my coach had done to me was physical verbal abuse.	Bing beaten by wood, and mostly with words or sarcasm
3.	What forms of positive intimidation are most impressive in increasing training motivation? (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014)	Slap. Actually it disrupted me mentally, thus I didn't have a normal life like my school friends. I had to practice and practice every day, there was no day without training. I also rarely socialized and did group work because I had to practice. Because if I left a program I would get scolded and confounded the program my coach had made. However, it has shaped my mentality to become a winner.	Hit using a belt to the palm of the hand. A little rough but in my opinion, who had experienced this kind of intimidation. it was quite effective for strengthening my memory and focus. Thus, when I hit the opponent, I didn't let go of their judogi grip.	Verbal intimidation. I felt traumatized from the intimidation that the coach gave me. It was also because my parents treated me in the same way when I was younger. I experienced violence from my parents since childhood, and when the trauma was not healed, I got the similar treatment from my coach. I always got scared when I was going to practice because I thought 'who will get it (the intimidation from coach) today?'. so negative thoughts arose.	Harsh words or sarcasm. It pumped up the motivation and enthusiasm beyond pain and fatigue.

increasingly motivated to become stronger and to prove themselves to the coach.

2. Negative intimidation affected on decreasing the training motivation of the athletes

The negative forms of intimidation that had an impact on reducing the training motivation of athletes was verbal intimidation. There was one athlete who admitted to getting negative intimidation reducing his motivation where, according to the athlete, the intimidation by the coach on him caused a sense of trauma, because the athlete had received the same treatment by his parents since he was a child. When the trauma had not healed yet, the athlete got the similar treatment from

the coach. He was always afraid of going to training and always brought out negative thoughts that made his training motivation decreased.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether the intimidation from a coach can have a positive impact on the motivation to train the athletes. Basically, the coach intends to improve the performance of his athlete; However, it tends to overdo when the athlete finds it hard to perform what the coach is willing to. In the training process, the intimidation from a coach has often been carried out as it remains an important part of

the coaching process (A. E. Stirling & Kerr, 2014). Respondent 1 said "I understand it as it probably is one of his strategies to train his athletes." Although the athletes were being irritated by the treatment of their coach, they struggled with the belief that the intimidation is essential in the coaching process. The appropriate intimidation will certainly make the athlete be more motivated. However, the most important thing to be considered is the character of the athletes and their situation and condition as well as the appropriate intimidation given by the coach. In addition, the form of intimidation will greatly affect athletes who have different characters.

1. Positive Intimidation has an impact on increasing the training motivation of the athletes.

Based on the findings from the interview, positive intimidation performed by the coaches to increase the motivation to athletes are such as slapping, kicking, throwing objects (sandals, shoes), pushing, pinching and even hitting the palms of the hands with a belt, sometimes using a broomstick. From these results, it can be stated that there is the intimidation that has a positive impact on the athletes. These forms of intimidation are a few examples of what the coach actually had performed, which the researchers discovered this time.

According to the coaches, the method of intimidation has several different ways. It happens as the coaches have their own ways of intimidating their athletes which aim to motivate their athletes (Kowalski, 2017). In short, according to the views of the coach, the intimidation is performed by adjusting the character of the athlete.

In line with that statement, Mageau & Vallerand (2003) revealed that various strategies carried out by coaches are the efforts to motivate their athletes which will be based on the athlete's quality of experience and athlete's performance. Respondent 2 said "All the coaches' treatment towards me is just to motivate me to improve my experience and quality". Where the coach's orientation towards training is determined by the context, behavior and motivation of their athletes affecting the training.

2. Negative Intimidation reduces the training motivation of the athlete

Apart from the differences in the character of each athlete, there are several other things that make an intimidation can have a negative impact on the athletes. One of those things is the proper situation and conditions to intimidate by a coach. When the conditions suits, the athlete will be more motivated; on the other hand, when the situations and conditions are unappropriated, performing the athlete a method of intimidation will actually be a boomerang for the athlete. Thus, it can make the athlete be more depressed and impact on the decrease in motivation to train the athlete. It happens as the athlete is unready to receive the intimidation from a coach, even though it aims to motivate him. Therefore, the decision from of a coach in providing appropriate intimidation should be accurate; as a result, the motivation of the athletes will not be impacted (Swigonski et al., 2014; Kelly & Waddington, 2006).

Based on the findings, the researchers found that the proper conditions for a coach to intimidate the athlete is when the athlete is indeed making mistakes in the training, during the evaluation, and at the time break before the match. This condition is the most appropriate time to provide an intimidation to the athletes.

Based on that situation, Amorose & Anderson-Butcher (2007) stated that the coaches are able to influence the motivation of the athletes in training or games by providing positive instructions and feedback, praising and giving them choices, or by intimidating, criticizing, and controlling them.

CONCLUSION

Intimidation needs to be administered by the coach. Coach have to be able to choose when to intimidate, and the coach must understand whether the acceptance of athletes (towards the intimidation) has positive or negative impact on them. Intimidation by coach does seem harsh both physically and mentally, and it is commonly considered to cause negative impact. However, intimidation does not always indicate something rude and impactful in negative ways. It is as revealed in this research that intimidation by a coach in the forms previously mentioned has a positive impact which

makes the athletes more motivated in training and competition. Therefore, this kind of intimidation is dependent on the accuracy of a coach in using methods appropriate to the athletes to trigger their motivation although by using intimidation.

Based on the consideration, basically every athlete does have different characters even though they are in the same kind of sports. Therefore, the method of intimidation used by a coach should be convenient with the character of the athlete. Further, the right situation and appropriate condition when giving the intimidation will make it more effective to make the athletes more motivated, but on the contrary, if the situations and conditions are not right when giving intimidation, it will more probably cause negative impact and reduce the training motivation of the athletes.

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