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Mind Over Muscle: How Mental Alertness Influences Athletic Performance

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This study explores the impact of mental alertness on athletic performance among athletes from the Mindanao Association of State Tertiary Schools (MASTS) 2024, specifically those enrolled at J.H. Cerilles State College, Dumingag Campus. Recognizing that athletic excellence demands more than physical prowess, this research highlights the cognitive dimensions of sport—particularly reaction time and attention span—as critical determinants of success in high-stakes competitive environments. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, involving 61 student-athletes selected through total enumeration. Standardized instruments were adapted from the ZOGIM-A Mental Alertness Questionnaire and the Sport Performance Perceptions Scale (SPPS) to gather data on mental alertness and performance indicators: speed, accuracy, and endurance. Findings revealed that athletes demonstrated high levels of mental alertness, particularly in reaction time (mean = 4.32, “Highly Influential”) and attention span (mean = 4.13, “Influential”). Similarly, athletic performance was reported as largely manifested across all measured domains. Statistical analysis using Spearman rho correlation indicated significant positive relationships between mental alertness and all dimensions of athletic performance ($p < 0.001$). These results underscore the essential role of cognitive readiness in sports and support the integration of mental training into athletic development programs. To address these needs, the study proposes a cognitive enhancement program—ABTIKA (Activate Brainpower Through Training and Introspection for Keen Awareness)—designed to improve reaction time, focus, and mental resilience. The study concludes that cultivating mental alertness is vital for optimizing athletic performance and recommends institutionalizing cognitive training for holistic athlete development.

Keywords: mental alertness, cognitive training, athletic performance, reaction time, sports psychology

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