

11th ASEAN Council of Physical Education and Sport (ACPES) International Conference 2025



Contribution ID: 140

Type: Oral

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL MEDIATES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COACHING BEHAVIOR AND ATHLETE ENGAGEMENT

Friday, October 3, 2025 11:15 AM (15 minutes)

Effective coaching behavior plays a crucial role in developing athlete engagement and well-being. This study explores the mediating role of Psychological Capital (PsyCap)—a construct encompassing hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism—in the relationship between perceived coaching behavior and athlete engagement. A total of 308 secondary school athletes from various sports programs participated by completing standardized questionnaires measuring coaching behavior, psychological capital, and athlete engagement. Mediation analysis revealed several key findings. First, coaching behavior was found to significantly enhance athlete engagement, particularly through training and conditioning methods and strategic guidance. Second, coaching behaviors were strongly associated with the development of athletes' psychological resources; for instance, training and conditioning influenced hope and self-efficacy, competition strategies affected hope and resilience, and goal-setting practices and coach attitude significantly impacted all four PsyCap components. Third, higher levels of PsyCap were significantly associated with increased athlete engagement. Finally, PsyCap significantly mediated the relationship between coaching behavior and athlete engagement. Although both direct and indirect effects were individually weak ($\beta = 0.2067$ and $\beta = 0.3391$, respectively), suggesting partial mediation, the total effect was strong and statistically significant ($\beta^* = 0.5458$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggesting a partial mediation. suggest that while effective coaching behaviors directly influence athlete engagement, their impact is further amplified when mediated through enhanced psychological capital. This highlights the importance of fostering PsyCap in athletes as a mechanism to strengthen the outcomes of effective coaching.

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Session Classification: Coaching, Leadership, and Athlete Development

Track Classification: Coaching, Leadership, and Athlete Development