

Role of “NLP” and “self-talk” to improve the self-esteem and performance of players

Chennoju Veerender*

Department of Psychologist, P.D.training Institute, India.

ABSTRACT:

The aim of this study was to investigate whether mental training using visualization and self-talk would have an effect on the performance of low-self-esteem players. Low-self-esteem players experience stress when they face opponents with higher self-esteem in any game (Beck AT, 1979). This can create anxiety due to unconscious comparisons in ability, technique, and self. This anxiety can disturb players' concentration and lead to negative thoughts such as “They are superior to me,” “They have good training and good food,” “They have good infrastructure and can do better than me,” and “I can't perform or compete with them (Behncke L, 2004).” I'm going to be a loser.” These thoughts can have a strong impact on the physiology of the body, influencing motor activity and biomechanical activity (Butler A C, 2006). The player begins to respond to these negative thoughts and prepares to lose the game. In addition to the talent, practice, skill, and determination of a player, our study suggests that counseling can help players enhance their performance in competitions by changing their self-esteem from low to high (Cutton D M, 2007). This can be done by providing psych education about self-esteem and about themselves, and by making them practice NLP exercises and positive self-talk to overcome negative thoughts. The study included three case studies of different players from different games (Dana A, 2011). The players were helped with counseling sessions and trained with alternative positive self-talk and NLP exercises. Feedback was taken from the players before and after the counseling sessions. The results showed that their self-esteem improved, and in turn, their performance in their respective games improved for all of the players (cricketer, tennis player, and shuttle player) (DeFrancesco C, 1997).

When self-esteem starts to improve, players start to look at themselves with more confidence and belief in their talent and skill in the game, rather than on external comforts (Dember W, 1974). Naturally, negative thought patterns are changed to positive thoughts with the help of NLP and positive self-talk. This study concludes that counseling has a positive effect on players by using NLP and auto-suggestion (i.e., self-talk) to improve self-esteem and performance (Hatzigeorgiadis A, 2011). This method is more helpful for the majority of rural players and players from poor backgrounds by improving their self-confidence to win the game.

KEYWORDS: Counseling, Self Esteem, NLP. Self-talk.

INTRODUCTION

In India the self-esteem of middle class and lower middle class children are drastically low due to their socio, economic culture and parents grooming during the childhood (Johnson J. J M, 2004). Majority of players who come from this background whenever they expose to the high economical group players they immediately show the nervousness and withdrawal from the group. This is due to low self-esteem and this drastically influence the performance of the player during the competitions (Fuentes-García JP, 2002).

Self-esteem of anybody defines the way we see them and how one can understand their ability and skills. The reasons for having low self-esteem are many, it may contribute the way they look, lack of skills, physical and emotionally low also make people feel bad about self.

In psychology the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's view of self worth or personal value. In other words how much one can accept or like self. Self-esteem is often understood as a personality trait it is supposed to be stable and enduring. Self-esteem is having belief about self, about physical appearance, beliefs, emotions and behaviours (Kolovelonis A, 2011). But the self-esteem may be influenced by various factors. It may be due to genetic factors, parents, stories that we have listened, friends and our own experiences may decrease or increase our self-esteem. Some of the signs of low self-esteem, confidence, ability to say no, positive thinking, positive

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*Correspondence regarding this article should be directed to: drveerender@gmail.com

outlook, accepting the strengths and weakness, ready to accept the criticism, open for the new thoughts . Above said qualities are quite opposite that situation comes under low self-esteem, this will not only influence the game of the player but also the performance in the tournaments and competitions. That is the reason better self-esteem of players play vital role in the competitions to win over others because it motivates the player to give their best. low self-esteem may hold you back from all the success because you don't believe yourself and your capability in succeeding the other players in the competition. If you have high self-esteem, the positive approach towards the competition, this will help you in competing anybody and every possibility with the skills and technique you have possessed with help of practice with your coach. In sports players need to know the skills to adjust with different environments, different people, cultures, languages and food habits (McArdle S, 2012).

Mental imagery and self-talk strategies are implemented by athletes in order to regulate arousal, reduce maladaptive behaviors, reconstruct negative thoughts, and to increase one's concentration and focus. DeFrancesco and Burke reported that imagery techniques were found to be the most common strategies employed by both female and male professional tennis players. Lejuene, Decker, and Sanchez studied the training styles of 40 novice table tennis players and found that "imagining oneself successfully completing a sports skill in the absence of the actual movement or activity increases the probability of improving one's performance". In addition, McKenzie and Howe reported that engaging in a 15-week imagery training program improved accuracy scores among dart throwers when compared to participants not exposed to any imagery training. Peluso reported that participants who engaged in relevant imagery practice increased performance on both a mirror tracing and jack catching task when compared to participants in non-relevant, relaxation, and control conditions. It is widely accepted that that imagery is a powerful and important psychological tool in the enhancement of athletic performance (Skinner BF, 1971).

NLP sports psychology helps to influence the human mind in such a way that it somehow starts to manage the internal states of the mind. The state of mind of the individual is an essential factor in bringing out his or her best performance. A lot of sports performers spend a lot of their time focusing on improving their fitness and technical ability and often the mental element is neglected, even at world class level. NLP for sports gives a coach the authority to stimulate certain states in the players mind. Invoking of states can help bring out the best in a player (Smith L, 2006). Coaches generally know their players very well and therefore have an idea about what is the best thing to bring out the peak performance in a player. Especially when the player is having the low self-esteem, abilities always plays very low and belief makes them feel they cannot achieve anything. Their brain unconsciously keep on comparing with the

rich and socially popular players. With the help of NLP visualisation the self-esteem of the players increases due to the positive picture of self .. The positive picture of the player influences the players brain neuron and shows the effect on the physiology of the players with high self-esteem, this will turn up the confidence of the player, in improves the performance of the players(insert saicon delhi references). Among sport performers and coaches, imagery is a popular and well-accepted strategy for enhancing various aspects of performance. The importance of this strategy is reflected in anecdotal reports of successful athletes. For example, Ronaldinho, a midfielder for FC Barcelona and one of the world's best footballers, eloquently described his use of imagery before the World Cup in 2006 in an article appearing in the New York Times Sports Magazine (Theodorakis Y, 2008).

Physical practice, for the acquisition and performance of motor skills . Effect sizes reported in the three different meta analyses carried out on this literature have ranged from small to large in magnitude.

IMAGERY OUTCOMES: The model suggests three categories of outcomes that can be achieved through imagery; (a) facilitating the learning and performance of skill and strategies; (b) modifying cognitions; and (c) regulating arousal and competitive anxiety. Moreover, the content of an athlete's images will systematically determine what result has been achieved.

Research suggests self-talk is one of the common psychological strategies used by athletes, and that coaches believe it helps build performers' confidence. Cross-cultural research has shown that positive self-talk is widely perceived and promoted as an effective strategy to enhance athletes' self-efficacy.

Thelwell and Greenless found that tri-athletes reported that the use of motivational self-talk increased their self-confidence and motivation during their events

Imagery is described as an experience that mimics real experience, and involves using a combination of different sensory modalities in the absence of actual perception. White and Hardy explained that "we can be aware of 'seeing' an image, feeling movements as an image, or experiencing an image of smell, taste or sounds without experiencing the real thing". Another Moran defined imagery as "perception without sensation" (2004:133). Another commonality among definitions is the notion that individuals are self-aware and conscious during the imagery experience.

The fundamental premise behind each element is the same: in order to maximize functional equivalence and therefore optimize the impact of an imagery intervention, the imagery performed should match actual performance as closely as possible. The "physical: element is concerned with the extent to which physical nature of imagery reflects that of actual performance. For example, a batsman in cricket who

is mentally practicing a shot should assume a characteristic posture, wear typical sportswear, hold appropriate equipment and image the physical responses that would occur in real performance of the skill. The “environment” element refers to the physical environment that the imagery is performed in being identical (if possible) to the actual performance environment. Moreover, the imagery environment should mimic a personalized and multisensory experience akin to the real life performance of any given individual.

CBT emerged as a major form of psychology in the “cognitive revolution” . Assembled into a single coherent framework, the concepts of CBT offered a new and improved approach to understanding the complex reciprocal interactions between cognition, emotion, physical reactions and behaviour. Specifically, the framework proposes that psychological disorders stem from the interaction of these four systems, with environmental factors (e.g. social and cultural contexts) playing an influential role within these interactions. The process of “strengthening positive behaviour and weakening negative behaviour towards a goal” has meant that CBT is inherently appealing to sport psychologists focusing on performance enhancement in athletes. Historically, the framework has had a strong impact on sport psychology’s development (Smith, 2006), and still, to this day, remains a dominant approach to cognitive and behavioural interventions in sport. In addition to positive self-talk suggest the goal setting and imagery are key cognitive-behavioural methods used to enhance athlete performance. With regard to the latter, imagery is based on the notion that ‘the body achieves what the mind believes’ and as such, practitioners from a cognitive-behavioural perspective view images as functional equivalents of thoughts . Therefore, cognitively rehearsing the desired performance outcome enables athletes to regulate negative cognitive thoughts, ruminations and emotions. This self-controlling element is thought to improve the irrational thought and anxiety associated with athletes with a perfectionist mind-set .Goal setting is another example of a cognitive-behavioural approach that can be used to help athletes with perfectionism. Thus, within the context of CBT, practitioners can use goal setting to set task-orientated goals (i.e. goals that focus on self-improvement) in an attempt to modify these maladaptive thoughts on achievement and subsequently, reduce perfectionist behaviour. In research findings the CBT helping the players in alternative thoughts for self-talk which can bring the positivity in their thought process. The positive self-talk is helping the players more NLP is going to helpful to the players, who are suffering from low self-esteem. It should be noted however, that the majority of literature encourages setting difficult goals for athletes but this approach is somewhat unwarranted with perfectionist athletes, as attempts should be made to avoid situations where athletes can engage in self-criticism when unrealistic standards are not met, this may . lead to low self-esteem. The self-esteem of the players is assessed before and after counseling sessions (Wolfe JL, 1975).

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the study was to investigate Study the positive effect of NLP exercises and Self-talk in converting the low self-esteem and fear of failure into better self-esteem, confidence and competent the assessment of self-esteem is being made with standardized tool Rosenberg tool. A case study method was used to for the present study. The sample consisted of 3 sports personnel of Cricketer, Tennis player and Shuttle Badminton player. Pre-post research design was used to study the efficacy of NLP, assessment of self-esteem , self-talk and Cognitive restructuring (thought challenging, role playing, positive statements, and behavioral rehearsal).

CASE NO.1: He is 18years old batsman cricket player, whenever he is ready to take ball in the competitions, his mind used to pop up a visual of clean bowled, all his friends use to laugh at him, his competitor looking at him with high pride this made him to become very sad and used to think , he is useless, he can’t play well, his techniques are not useful in the field and competitions. His family is not providing the best coaching to him, due to the low income to their family. he is not well placed in the society in all respects. Used to respond to all these negative thoughts, experienced anxiety due to unhelpful low esteem thoughts made him lost the attention on the ball and could not able to stand in the crease for not more than two or three overs, this happened for him more than 10 times.

Case No.2: During the tournaments he always gets an automatic thoughts about his poor performance, his poor looks and colour of his skin, whenever the handsome opponent player is seen he always used to feel very bad, lost all the skills in stream of thoughts about his poor appearance, started feeling that he can’t succeed against any player, next moment he used to lose the matches.

Case No.3: Shuttle badminton player, state level player, every match used to lose in the final match, first match used to win on opponent, after the first match winning, player used to get all the images of losing the game with sad face in the brain, he always got the picture of broken relationship with his girlfriend due to the parental pressure, he lost girlfriend, majority of the players knows about this development, In any tournament, face of a known person in the audience also used to make him feel guilt , then automatically second match used to loose for the opponent, the third match also used loose in the competition. The same scenario repeated many a times in majority of the tournaments.

NLP(NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING) IN SPORTS: In sports there are many ways that NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming) can be used to optimize genetic, fitness and technical abilities. NLP is often making the difference. NLP allows people to learn and adopt the strategies, techniques and physiology used by our sporting role models to achieve excellence often in a fraction of a

second. By using NLP techniques in sports we literally teach people to be able to go into 'flow states' to consciously enter states of peak sports performance as and when needed. You can use NLP to maintain the motivation to train so as to take your skill sets to the next level, you can learn to "get over" mistakes and to learn from errors rather than dwell upon them and you can learn to have the confidence to compete to the best of your ability. Whether you are an aspiring Sachin, Sania Mirza, Tiger Woods, Paula Radcliffe, Lewis Hamilton, David Beckham or someone who plays sports simply for fun NLP is used by people even if they do it consciously or unconsciously. It will either be used against you or you can learn to use it for you and when you learn to use NLP with purpose you can really begin to play your sports at a new level.

NLP is often proposed as a study of the way in which human beings structure their perceptions, it creates a framework that can be used to analyse study, reprogram, and program a person's behaviour, lifestyle and attitude. Body posture, breathing, gestures towards the eyes, ears, body, eye movements and language patterns are all elements that are used to trigger the unconscious mind in NLP. High-achievers and peak performers think, act and feel differently from average people. They have superior mental strategies in place that help them learn faster and better and perform to their potential more often. NLP was created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970's.

NLP can teach to change negative thinking to positive, stop self-limiting thinking patterns, increase energy, remove mental blocks, powerful visualization techniques, drop unwanted habits, create instant rapport, improve communication, remove unwanted, negative emotions and to create smart learning and retention strategies. NLP sports psychology is based on the concept of bringing out the peak performance in an individual by improving their coordination and mental concentration. NLP for sports utilizes the five senses which are auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, gustatory and olfactory senses. By utilizing these five senses to influence the mind this can help to enhance the performance of the individual. NLP for sports provides a method where a person can perceive the world around them in a certain way and with the use of sensory based language it is the best way to influence the human mind. When it comes to team work and coordination in sports, use of certain words that represent a sensation can give sports people that extra edge that is required to win. NLP sports psychology helps to influence the human mind in such a way that it starts to manage the internal states of the mind. The state of mind of the individual is an essential factor in bringing out his or her best performance. A lot of sports performers spend a lot of their time focusing on improving their fitness and technical ability and often the mental element is neglected, even at world class level. Invoking of states in the mind can help bring out the best in a player. Coaches generally know their players very well and therefore have an idea about

what is the best thing to bring out the peak performance in a player. The use of NLP has had a significant impact in the area of sports performance. Some of the world's leading sports people have put their success down to using NLP techniques. People like Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Andre Agassi, Greg Norman, Jimmy White, Michael Vaughan are among many highly successful sports performers who use NLP techniques consistently to achieve excellent results.

INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES - BALLOON TECHNIQUE: The below techniques were used:

- Make sure the atmosphere must be very quiet and comfortable if possible make the room must have AC facility. Ask the sports person to sit comfortable in comfortable chair. Ask the client to close the eyes and follow the suggestions.
- Visualise your picture with the disturbance undergoing when in the ground
- Ask client to visualise in colour picture with low self-esteem and disturbing thoughts, make the client perceive the sounds, smells on the ground.
- Visualise all negative thoughts and low esteem feelings one by one in the brain and keep them in a line
- Ask the client to visualise a specially designed balloon of his choice colour, the special balloon has feature of infinite elasticity, has ability to elongate to maximum size
- Give the suggestions to the client to blow the air into the balloon with his/her mouth to inflate the balloon. Slowly the balloon starts inflating slowly the size of the balloon is increasing.
- Visualize all the negative and low self-esteem thoughts percolated to the bottom of the brain, then into the mouth of the client. Then with air in the mouth all the -ve thoughts and low self-esteem thoughts will enter into the balloon, then slowly the balloon size becomes bigger and bigger.
- All the thoughts in the brain enters into the balloon then the brain experiences fresh, relief from the burden, experiencing a comfortable feeling.
- Visualise you are tying the mouth of the balloon with a thread tightly.
- Visualise you are leaving the balloon into the air, slowly the balloon is going up going up into the sky away from you, it is appearing very small in the sky and then disappear into the sky
- Visualise how you look with better performer and face is glowing with confidence (with +ve thoughts +energetic+ skill full sport person).

- Visualize you are giving the best performance then all your friends are congratulating you. Enjoy this wonderful situation.
- Then slowly open your eyes...

If possible ask the client to write the experience. This was practiced at least 21 days to become the reality daily 3 sessions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: The results shows that there was an improvement in each sports personnel

CASE NO-1: He has a problem of too many –ve thoughts (the opposite players have good training than me, financially very strong, they are good looking, white in colour) as he stand in front of the wickets by seeing the well-groomed and financially rich opposite player, always gets an image of “non performer image and duck out” in the brain. After the session, he not only stand in the crease for long time he could hit 85 runs and also his self-esteem is increased and become more comfortable with self and learned the skill to focus on the game, instead of negative thoughts, he learned the skill of “self-talk” during the stressful situation in the game to coup up with the game demands.. He claims it made him become more focussed during the play in the ground. His self-esteem is compared before and after the sessions, after the session self-esteem is increased.

CASE NO-2: Tennis player: During the playing he always have negative thoughts (good looking with costly dress+ car+ good diet+ everybody receives them very well and support them) that he is going to lose the match, though he is very good in all actions of the game, forehand, backhand, rally’s...he used to beat his coach and seniors, but when it is a match...in the second round he is out. After the session he learned how well he is in the game and fitness, he learned few positive and instructional suggestions made he better and started winning the matches at tournaments.

CASE NO-3: Badminton Player: State level player: he has all the skills to beat the opponent in the final matches, he always win the first match...then he will be overwhelmed with this. Remaining matches he used to lose because of too much of fear of failure used get the failure image in the brain, his body used respond to this negative images .during the matches, when he loses the games, his mind starts popup all the images of family , specially about father with financial troubles, this always make him become helpless, his self-esteem falls down. After the sessions he feels better, developed self-esteem with positive self-talk after this he is able to withstand the pressure, started getting all positive images and able to win the matches with all the skills and ability.

Self-talk manipulation check is conducted immediately after training to determine whether each player used the self-talk technique which has been taught to them. Each player is asked the following questions. Do you understand about using self-talk in today’s training?. Do you say anything to yourself during training? If yes, what are the words that you say to yourself (same suggestions given by counsellor must use which words did you most often use throughout todays training? List from most frequent to least used. In order to enhance the player self-esteem, given small project work to socialise make them expose to the senior players who are played at national and international level to share their real life experiences of their life and family background, make them understand to realise –ve feelings are not important, focusing on facts is important, the fact is he has a great skill in the game and recognised by coach and organisation given the certificates, got many prizes. The training sessions was conducted for 10 sessions in a span of 40 days. Remaining days player has to practice this for 21 days and has to record the developments to have expected results.

The above real life stories are very encouraging and useful to all the coaches and sports persons (Table 1).

Table 1.
Automatic Negative Thoughts - Positive Self Talk Suggestions.

Player	Self esteem	ANT	Physical sensations		Self esteem	Positive self talk	Result
Cricketer	Low	Oh! Iam gone, i can't play this ball	Lost control on my focus and body become less energetic	<u>AFFTEr</u>	Good	Be in the present, just play the basics of playing cricket. Stop !	Standing in the creeze for long time and able to focus to hit the balls.
Tennis player	Low	Depressed and negative thoughts are ruling him	Totally weak shivering.	<u>NLP</u>	Better	Feelings are not facts, iam good at technique, i play the ball with all the focus. Improved self esteem.	Able to move fast in the court and hit the balls with force.
Badminton player	Low		Feeling bad, memory of girl friend hard to breath, sweating.	<u>SESSION</u>	Better	Focus on mystrengths, rallies and aggressive, this is another practice match with my coach. Relationships has expiry date.	Able to feel comfortable, breathlessness and Sweating stopped.

CONCLUSION

Sports psychologists have long recognized the importance of positive self-talk in helping athletes achieve their potential (see table). Everyone who play competitive sport or who competes at a serious level faces adversity and obstacles to success: physical pain, poor conditions, strong opponents, negative thoughts, fatigue. According to Neuro-Linguistic Programming, this structure can be redesigned and best things can be executed as with reference frame consciously in the brain. One of the most important things for an athlete who wants to participate in competition is having mastered on his cognitive processes and emotion. The only way an athlete can succeed in the face of these difficulties is to have powerful self-belief and great determination. Positive self-talk is one tool that athletes use to achieve their best in competition. Researchers also believe self-talk can help everyone improve performance in a variety of settings.

With the help of self-talk the negative thought process can be redesigned and empower the player with the alternative self-talk method to alter his state of mind to be more realistic and positive to face the task with all the confidence and power. Combination self-talk and NLP has the highest influence on learning achievement to instructional self-talk and motivational self-talk, motivational self-talk significantly influenced the self-esteem . It also found that there is a correlation between learning achievements of badminton clear lob skill and self-confidence. Therefore, in practice, teachers and coaches should teach their players how to use self-talk in order to help increase self-confidence and When an athlete talk to himself, surface structure of his sentences has a huge impact on his feeling and performances.

This affect determines his state-sport confidence level at a certain moment. When an athlete thinks about his abilities or predicting the result of a next competition, cognitive processing will formed as self-suggestions. Our thought has ability for captivating us in the world of imagination and incomplete information's. Our language can be a clear representative of our thinking process.. In this research we figure out the balloon technique and self-talk can be a useful tool for increasing athletic self-awareness and cognitive controlling that has effect on state-sport confidence. The study recommends that NLP & auto suggestions can be used in sport psychology to help the players to enhance their self-esteem & confidence to perform better in highly pressurised situations. The awareness must be given to all the coaches and players about this approach to enhance the performance and confidence of the players.

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