

ABSTRACT & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Abstract:

This study aims to go into depth of how mental toughness in equestrian athletes are strongly recommended. Mental toughness is being able to push pass failures by still being positive and competitive. With the current studies that have been done there is little research on this topic, especially for female athletes and the connection with academic performance (Beron & Piquero, 2016; Meyers et al., 1996; Meyers et al., 1999; Micoogullari et al., 2017). This information can help equestrian female athletes in the future realize that striving for excellence in academic and athletics are co-constitutive and achievable.

Research Questions:

1. Is there a relationship between mental toughness academic performance for sub-elite equestrian student-athletes?
2. Is there evidence that sub-elite athletes experience lower levels of mental toughness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

- It is believed that the education that student-athletes gain at Division III (DIII) schools is somewhat less rigorous than the education that DIII non-athletes receive. In fact, Barlow & Hickey (2014) report research showing the lower academic performance of student athletes compared to non-athletes, and more significantly for males. Despite this outcome, the authors state that these results need to be interpreted with caution due to context. The context can refer to population samples, college size and institutional selectivity (Barlow & Hickey, 2014). Institutional selectivity refers to students recruited for the specified institution based on their combined average SAT score. I may also add sport as a factor for context since there has been limited research on mental abilities and performance in equestrian sports (Micoogullari et al., 2017). The differences in academic outcomes for female student-athletes and non-athletes also seem to be negligible as reported by a few studies (Barlow & Hickey, 2014; Beron & Piquero, 2016). Specifically, Beron & Piquero (2016) argue that more research needs to be conducted with female student-athletes beyond issues symbolized only with women such as eating disorders and gender roles. Studies need to show the academic and sport-related factors critical to female athletic performance.
- Mental toughness is the ability to push pass failures by still being positive and competitive. It has been reviewed in terms of self-esteem, confidence, and competitiveness but also in terms of mood, psychological skills and gender. Meyers et al. (1999) found that there were noticeable differences in psychological attributes between the elite and sub elite athletes because of mood and psychological skills.
- Meyers et al. (1999) found that elite athletes could manage their concentration and anxiety in high pressured situations. In other words, a lack of mental preparation and managing anxiety showed more in sub elite athletes. With respect to gender, Meyers et al. (1996) discovered that male competitors have a more aggressive approach in athletics while female competitors contain more precision and maturity.



RATIONALE, MEASURES & PROCEDURES

Rationale:

Very limited research has been done on how mental abilities and performance are related in equestrian sports. Micoogullari et al. (2017) reported that there has been no published research that has been directed toward defining the competitive mindset of the equestrian at any level of competition. Based on these studies, more research is needed in this area of mental toughness and female equestrian athletes. I will aim to add to the body of research by conducting a qualitative study that analyzes correlates of mental toughness and academic achievement among four female athletes.

Participants:

The participants that will be needed for this study will be three female equestrian athletes between ages 18-23. They all compete in National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. One of these patients has a high mental strength and doesn't win. One of the patients will have a low mental strength and doesn't win. One who has a high mental strength and does win. I will be recruiting students on campus that are on the rodeo team.

Measures:

Participants will be given the SMTQ questionnaire. I will then conduct an interview either online or in person. The questions will come from the PSQ. I will then ask a couple of self-reflection questions.

PROCEDURE, EXPECTED RESULTS & LIMITATIONS

Procedures:

Interview will be conducted online. Participants will first be sent a consent form online. Once that is received, they can proceed once they consent to completing the SMTQ. Once the questionnaires are filled out, I will then proceed to arrange a time and place (online or in person) to conduct the interview. The interview questions from the PSQ will first be asked, and then the self-reflection questions. Participants can exit the study any time they wish. Once data is analyzed, I will confirm with all my participants' the interpretation of their results before they are published.

Expected Results:

I expect that in order to be a successful and competitive rodeo athlete that the females will be mentally tough as well as succeed in the other aspects such as academic confidence and self-esteem.

Limitations:

Limitations in this study are that all my participants come from one institution. This will limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, participants may not be honest which will reduce the internal validity of the results.

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