



The Adjustment Strategies of Successful Varsity Players

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Abstract : The main objective of this phenomenological study was to capture and describe the meaning and essence of the lived experiences of the successful varsity players in using adjustment strategies, that lead them to overcome the different problems and challenges they encountered. This study used descriptive phenomenological approach of Giorgi (2009). There was a total of thirteen (13) co-researchers for this study and were selected using purposive-snowball sampling. Individual in-depth interview was used to gather the data among the co-researchers using an interview guide. The recorded in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatimly then the descriptions of the lived experiences of the successful varsity players were treated and analyzed based on Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method. Four themes emerged from the successful varsity players' lived experiences in using adjustment strategies including (1) developing identity including social influence and motivation and satisfaction as its sub-themes; (2) problems and challenges encountered by the successful varsity players. The identified sub-themes were academic and sports conflict; financial-related matters and health issues; (3) adjustment strategies of successful varsity players that includes time management, body conditioning and support system as the sub-themes; and (4) opportunities and privileges as successful varsity player with two sub-themes: developing as a varsity player and realization and learning. In conclusion, the different adjustment strategies being applied by the co-researchers of this study to overcome the different problems and challenges they encountered, helped them to survive and successfully played their role as varsity players and students at the same time. For the recommendations, it was stressed that the coaches, teachers, school administrators and parents should be knowledgeable about the various problems and challenges encountered by the varsity players as well as their adjustment strategies that could help these varsity players succeed in their chosen endeavor.

Keywords: Adjustment Strategies; Successful Varsity Players; Problems and Challenges; Purposive-Snowball Sampling; Themes; Sub-themes; Division of Cavite Province

INTRODUCTION

Sports and education have long been inextricably intertwined as extracurricular activities and even as subjects. Physical education is necessary from primary school through college. According to Ganaden, Canones, and De Guzman (2018), physical education is an intrinsic aspect of an educational program that develops an individual emotionally, socially, cognitively, and physically through engaging in sports and other physical education activities that include total-body activity. In addition to enhancing a person's physical stamina, sports may also cultivate discipline, tolerance, willpower, and resolve to achieve. It has long been considered as a means of achieving social mobility and enhancing one's entire personality.

According to Paestano and Vargas (2021), despite understanding of the importance of schools in establishing sports programs, only 3.8% of primary schools and 2.1% of secondary schools, including junior and senior high schools, offered the required daily allocation for sports training among varsity players. Due to growing academic pressure in public schools and a shrinking education budget for sports, the time varsity athletes devote to sports training has fallen dramatically. Agot (2019) stated that the facilities and equipment for the preparation of athletes had not been

upgraded. Additionally, athletes' rights are taken for granted. They are unable to exercise their right and get the advantages to which they are entitled. Worse yet, some athletes who continue to sacrifice not just their time, but also their whole lives, are hounded and utilized as a means by other sports administrators and as a means to corrupt and partisan objectives.

Another hard scenario is their sports competition preparation before to the competition and during the competition itself. In this section, their training hours are quadrupled because students must be excused from class to participate in both training and the tournament itself. This caused him to miss class discussions and activities. In addition, they typically submit late their other class obligations due to limited time. Occasionally, professors do not accept late submissions of requirements, administer make-up exams, and the like. Consequently, their academics are being compromised (Moejis et al., 2018).

Even though different studies revealed different problems and challenges in balancing academics and sports among varsity athletes, the researcher observed that varsity athletes who eagerly excelled in both sports and academics utilized a variety of coping or adjustment strategies in order to succeed in their chosen career. They realized and understood that not just talents, but also values, ethics, and character, must be cultivated through sports participation in order to be considered a successful varsity athlete (Robles, 2018).

Szczypiska and Guskowska (2021) noted that success is defined not only by winning and success, but also by performing within the rules and achievement in strengthening inner morale and character.

According to Park, Lavalley, and Tod (2017), it is difficult to be a successful student, but it is even more difficult to be a successful varsity athlete because they are not only students who are expected to devote their time and energy to their academics, but they are also athletes who are expected to perform well in their chosen sports. It is quite challenging to be a varsity athlete due to the necessity of recognizing and comprehending these numerous concerns and obstacles. However, as challenging as it may appear, there are people who have achieved success by retaining their athletic and academic excellence.

Since, the importance and benefits of sports participation is being acknowledged by the government as proven by the expressed provision in the 1987 Constitution, it is therefore necessary that schools should support this great endeavor.

For this reason, the researcher made this study to capture the adjustment strategies of these successful varsity players particularly those who are in junior and senior high schools, with the purpose of helping other varsity players who might also be in this same situation. Also, working as coach as well, this would be an eye opener on researcher's part to help the future varsity players to adjust both in academic in sports and sports and to create more successful varsity players in the said Division office.

Methodology

This study used descriptive phenomenological approach of Georgi (2009). There was a total of thirteen (13) co-researchers for this study and were selected using purposive-snowball sampling. Individual in-depth interview was used to gather the data among the co-researchers using an interview guide. The recorded in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatimly then the descriptions of the lived experiences of the successful varsity players were treated and analyzed based on Georgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method including application of epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and synthesis of the meanings and essences.

Results

After all, data were collected and transcribed among the 13 co-researchers, significant statements were identified. Each of those significant statements was coded, and from the codes, four interwoven themes emerged. These are: (a.) developing for identity; (b.) problems and challenges encountered by successful varsity players (c.) adjustment strategies of successful varsity players and (d.) opportunities and privileges as a successful varsity player.

Theme 1: Developing Identity

This theme consists of two subthemes including social influence and motivation and satisfaction.

Social Influence. The experiences shared by the co-researchers revealed that social influence was the major factor that pushed them to join in sports and soon to realize its major influence on their lives. The majority of the co-researchers shared that their teachers convinced them to join in sports while others were influenced by their parents, family friends and cousins. This result showed how important the teachers in developing the identity of the students through pushing them to join in sports and became their passion, motivation and satisfaction. It can be inferred that aside from relatives, teachers are the major factor that helped the varsity players to join and pursue sports.

Motivation and Satisfaction. The study revealed that sports are never isolated from the term of cooperation, cohesiveness, supports and interaction. No matter what kind of sport, people would always deal with and need each other to improve and grow. Even if it is an individual sport, the athlete will always have teammates on their back to support. Also, satisfaction may develop through the course of acceptance and motivation.

Theme 2: Problems and Challenges Encountered by Successful Varsity Players

This theme consists of three subthemes including academic conflicts and sports conflict; financial-related matters and health issues.

Academic Conflicts and Sports Conflict. Academic conflicts are an issue that varsity players must contend with daily. Scheduling conflicts can occur for varsity players and therefore they may not be able to take certain classes or complete internships due to conflicts with their respective sport. Aside from the fact that the varsity players deal with the stress of competing both on and off the field. The daily pressures of performing at their best for the team, as well as passing classes, can weigh heavily on the minds of these students. Many class scheduling conflicts can also occur for varsity players, whereby the times of required classes conflict with their sports season. Such scheduling conflicts can prevent a varsity player from exploring other educational opportunities or possible career paths.

Financial-related Matters. Some varsity players experienced financial difficulty as well as a lack of budget on sports equipment and budget that have an impact on their sports performance.

Health Issues. Some of the co-researchers in this study expressed health problems including emotional, psychological and physical problems as one of the problems and challenges they encountered. These emotional experiences of some of varsity players are mostly characterized by depression, feelings of emptiness, guilt, helplessness and hopelessness, and loss of pleasure which led to psychological issues among athletes. It was revealed that due to sickness and health problems led to various emotional issues and problems among varsity players which later turned into psychological problems.

Theme 3: Adjustment Strategies of Successful Varsity Players

This theme consists of three subthemes including time management, body conditioning and support system.

Time management. The co-researchers unveiled that to meet the specific needs of being a student and athlete at the same time, they have to manage their time carefully, set and work towards specific performance goals; plan and prepare themselves for competition and has a game plan for the competition; and able to focus on the task at hand in both practice and competitive situations. Time conflicts affected not only academics, but social experiences as well. Varsity players find difficult to maintain relationships they once enjoyed or to develop new relationships given time constraints. Unfortunately, for varsity players to manage time for academics and athletics, social activities are often forfeited. In this case, not just time management is being used but also sacrifices or choosing the best and essential opportunity – the academics and athletics.

Body Conditioning. The varsity players unveiled that to meet the specific needs of being a student and athlete at the same time, they have to be very positive and should set their mind not to worry about negative things as well condition their physical body. The findings revealed that sports have been a tremendous psychological, emotional and physical fight among varsity players.

Support System. The co-researchers unveiled that to meet the specific needs of being a student and athlete at the same time, support from teachers, parents and friends are very crucial. Teachers, parents and friends were cited as crucial in enabling athletes to overcome stressors and facilitate the successful integration of sport and education by all but one athlete. Their support among is critical for the varsity players to survive among the problems and challenges they encountered.

Theme 4: Opportunities and Privileges as Successful Varsity Player

This theme has two sub-themes: developing as a varsity player and realization and learning.

Developing as a Varsity Player. Despite various problems and challenges encountered by the varsity players, the co-researchers still felt successful in this role as varsity players because they were committed to learn and grow in their chosen field. They were willing and driven to develop themselves and also to learn from others. In addition, these co-researchers agreed that learning through experience was the most beneficial education. Most of the co-researchers stated that they improved the way they think as varsity player. Also, majority of the co-researchers viewed these experiences as part of sports development. Although taking up the role of being student and athlete at the same time is very hard, there are some positive effects of it to the varsity player involved such as change and improvement as a varsity player either in physical and emotional and sports development as stated by the co-researchers.

Realization and Learning. The co-researchers used the experience as a means of learning as well. This included drawing from past experiences and learning from personal experiences and the education that they received from their current and daily experiences as varsity players. Co-researchers encountered both positive and negative experiences as they up the role of being a student and athlete at the same time. Co-researcher realized that freedom to worry, coping with adversity and peaking under pressure; goal setting and concentration; confidence and coachability and support from teachers, parents and friends are all crucial components needed to be a successful varsity player. There is a saying that experience is the best teacher. Although you failed, at least you learned and realized something. And this is the result of the lived experiences of the thirteen successful varsity players. All the co-researchers realized that effective time management; body conditioning and support from teachers, parents, and friends are all crucial components needed to be a successful varsity player.

Discussion

This study made an impact on the phenomenon of the lived experiences of successful varsity players by revealing the notion that even the successful varsity players used various adjustment strategies to overcome various sports-related problems and challenges that lead them to become strong and successful in their chosen field. Also, it will be a wake-up call to everyone about the various problems and challenges encountered by successful varsity players and their benefits on their part. Thus, this study made it clear that the degree of the coaches, teachers, administrators and parents' support, social and educational acceptance of the teachers, collaboration and meaningful interaction of teachers and diverse learners are the factors that contribute to the success of the sports participation of successful varsity players. If this will happen, sports programs will not just be a mandated concept but can become an avenue and starting point for every individual to become strong and successful.

Furthermore, the present study made an impact to the future varsity players to be inspired to do their best work and, like the co-researchers, will be looked up to as good role models in their school communities. The findings of this qualitative study have important implications for other researchers in this field, highlighting the importance of adjustment strategies on the success of varsity players. The findings of the study could lead to more varsity players who are not only successful in sports, but also in academics and other areas and aspects as well.

Nwanko and Onyishi (2012) supported the findings that varsity players with high self-efficacy reported employing a greater number of adaptive adjustment methods under sport-related stress than those with low self-efficacy. People with strong self-efficacy perceive difficult issues as challenges to be conquered. People who are effective also behave, think, and feel differently from those who are ineffective. Thus, a strong sense of self-efficacy supports more effective adjustment techniques for the prolonged performance of varsity athletes throughout athletic competition. Also, varsity players with high self-efficacy likely to have active influence over their surroundings and

life situations that might contribute to stress, as they possess the key to optimism, positive behavioral change, goal attainment, and the creation of desired outcomes.

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are hereby suggested: the most important details are the establishment of a Sports Club, orienting and re-orienting varsity players on time management, addressing emotional, psychological and physical health issues, motivating incoming and present varsity players, instilling positive values, developing adjustment strategies, designing a mechanism to monitor varsity players' status, conducting a Seminar-Workshop on character development, developing a support system for varsity players, conducting a fund generating sports tournament, giving support in the attainment of the goal of the sports department, and producing varsity players with a good attitude and strong character. The school's policies and guidelines should focus on a support system for varsity players, that coaches, teachers, school administrators and parents should be knowledgeable about their problems and challenges, and that future research should study the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and school administrators. Additionally, researchers should study the lived experiences of successful varsity players with disabilities.

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