



Fear of Failure: Psychological Actions for Control in Santiagueros School Pessimist



Yoanni Castelnuau Díaz ^a, Ana Celia Mataran Torres ^b

Article history: Received 27 April 2019, Accepted: 31 August 2019, Published: 23 November 2019

Correspondence Author ^a



Abstract

This paper summarizes the results of an investigation carried out with weightlifters of the 15-16 years category of the EIDE "Captain Orestes Acosta" of Santiago de Cuba. From the application of methods and techniques such as observations to training and competitions, semi-structured interviews to athletes and coaches, Inventory of Evaluation of the Error in performance, Attitude Test for Competition, the Inventory of Psychological Performance, as well as the review of documents and statistical records of coaches, among others; it was found that these athletes did not achieve the successful realization of the lifts, manifesting in them a high level of tension, generating insecurity, nervousness, among other negative psychological manifestations that affected the athlete's performance, associated with irrational or maladaptive beliefs and thoughts. To help solve this problem, an action plan was implemented that involved the psychologist, coaches, athletes, and family members. It was an open, flexible, participatory, group, practical and experiential. Its effectiveness was proven from the cognitive restructuring of dysfunctional ideas and thoughts that hinder the achievement of adequate sports performance.

Keywords

competitions;
fear of failure;
psychological;
sports performance;
weightlifting;

e-ISSN: 2550-7001, p-ISSN: 2550-701X ©Copyright 2019. The Author.

SS Journals Published by Universidad Técnica de Manabí.

This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

All rights reserved.

Contents

Abstract.....	109
1. Introduction.....	110
2. Materials and Methods.....	112
3. Results and Discussions.....	112
4. Conclusion.....	114
Acknowledgments.....	114
References.....	115

^a Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

^b Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

1 Introduction

Currently, sports training has become a complex activity, which requires an approach from multiple disciplines, where psychology is also integrated into contributions from various spheres of knowledge, since each time the aspects contemplated by physical, technical and tactical preparation are more evenly matched, with the psychological aspects being the difference (Dasil, 2004).

In sport, and especially Weightlifting or Weightlifting, emotional control is very important for the achievement of concentration and the successful completion of lifts. The feeling of emotional control provides the individual with psychic stability, as well as personal security, which makes him more qualified to respond to the demands of the environment (García, 2004; Pérez, 2007; Sánchez, 2017).

Therefore, deepening the study of emotion control becomes a core issue in the field of research applied to sports psychology. In this sense, it is pointed out that psychological intervention in the field of emotional control must have an educational character that encourages changes in behavior and prepares athletes to act in challenging conditions (García, 2001; González, 2004; Pérez, 2007).

It coincides with the approaches of the aforementioned authors because they value the feelings of fear or fear and their relationship with the judgment they have of the situation and depending on their physical, psychic and technical-tactical preparation, including the perception of the degree of difficulty presented by the task and that is conditioned by learning. Therefore, it is necessary to design effective strategies to establish objectives that significantly reduce the fear of failure and increase the sense of competence and enjoyment of the practice.

In adolescence, age that is also included in the school sports category, the fear of failure appears as a result of a process of reflection, assessment, and aspirations that the athlete has; It takes on a special connotation since it is at this stage where the self-assessment is developing, in which the opinion that others have about the adolescent exerts a great influence, it is for this reason that it is essential to take into account the particularities of the conditions of the social situation of development, given the need to prepare the athlete not only for the demands of the sport but also for the healthy development of his personality (Domínguez, 2003).

This fear of failure appears as an emotional response resulting from the involvement of the subject with their environment, as well as the link and relationships that occur in the sports field when faced with the different demands and obstacles imposed by training and skills. As a sample of all the above, it was found that within the weightlifting team of the school category (15-16) of the School of Sports Initiation (EIDE) "Captain Orestes Acosta" of the province of Santiago de Cuba, during the 2017 and 2018 school games obtained results below the desired forecasts, being in the top three places, reaching 5th place.

During the analysis of the training plan planned for the next macro training cycle, as well as in the systematic evaluations inherent in the psychologist-coach relationship, it was found that within the problems encountered, among other existing causes, the lack of control and management of fear of failure in athletes, a situation that remained in the next training period (2018), so it was decided to prioritize attention to this particular.

For this, it was based on the application of psychological methods and techniques, aimed at exploring this aspect, which showed that during the pre-competitive and competitive stages these athletes began to present changes in their experiences and behaviors, which manifested themselves in a high degree of excitability, feelings of disability and guilt, defeatist thoughts, restlessness and insecurity in their strength, fear and anxiety to think that they will not be able to meet the goals they had set and fear of being injured.

Many of these experiences and behaviors were based on negative thoughts and irrational ideas related to expectations of success or failure about the possible performance generating fear of failure, which significantly influenced the result achieved in the national school games of 2017 and 2018.

On the basis of these inadequacies detected, it is revealed as a problem situation that weightlifting athletes do not have enough tools to achieve the control of fear of failure, and there is ineffective evidence of self-regulatory mechanisms that promote adequate emotional responses to favor their performance, so they easily lose the concentration of attention, emotional control, and enjoyment of the task.

Starting from the need to develop actions that allow the adequate control of the fear of failing in weightlifting athletes, the objective of this research is aimed at designing a plan of psychological actions to stimulate the control of the fear of failure in athletes of Weightlifting category 15-16 of the EIDE Orestes Acosta, in Santiago de Cuba.

The fear fail particularities in sports practice

In contemporary psychology, multiple orientations stand out in the study of fear or fear, as a primary or basic emotion, addressing its definition and its importance for the individual's ability to adapt. In spite of being an emotion shared by human beings and animals, in the first ones the fear turns out to be much more complex, since the innate reaction of the animals to this is the fight, the paralysis or the escape, while in the human beings the reaction involves psychological, physiological and behavioral effects, and variables such as gender, social class, particular situation in which the individual, personality, experience, among others are involved. Consequently, fear is an alarm system that is not only physiological or biochemical as in the rest of the animals, but it is of a psychosocial and subjective nature (Bedoya & Velásquez, 2014).

Faced with a novel and fear-provoking situation, it is most appropriate to have the feeling of control, for this it is essential to reduce vulnerability and increase resistance, a situation that is carried out through the management of thoughts (distortions, exaggerations, beliefs ...) and feelings, as well as the analysis of the external situation and the possibility of exercising control to modify it or internal adjustments to accept and manage it (David *et al.*, 2010).

The definitions offered by these theories generally state that fear is a necessary emotion so that human beings can adapt to their environment, through the perception of dangers and the responses to them. This presents physiological, psychological and behavioral triggers that, although they serve to respond to danger, can also affect the daily lives of individuals.

In the sports field, it is necessary to study fear as an emotional response and its behavioral expression during the performance of this specific activity, in order to intervene in order to achieve better yields.

In the context that the athlete tries to reach a goal and where his demonstration of competence or ability is important. Some authors affirm that their physical and psychological well-being depends on the social environments where sports practice takes place, which is closely related to the figure of the coach, parents, colleagues and the media. More specifically in a team sport such as handball, teammates and coaches are the main social agents within a sports team (Moreno *et al.*, 2014).

The fear of failing according to either in lower categories or even at a professional level can cause the athlete to present a significantly lower potential development than he could present if he observed the error as something inherent to the sports performance itself or as a learning opportunity and not as something shameful and inadmissible.

According to this analysis, these athletes in the development of the game, usually focus part of their attention on thoughts related to the "possible" negative consequences of their decisions, against the fact of analyzing the situation of the game to decide the best way accordingly. They tend to think more about what "could happen" and not what happens "to act", therefore, they do not devote 100% attention to the task they are carrying out at that time, thus favoring precisely the commission of those mistakes they fear so much (Vígara, 2017).

As you can see the fear of failure has been widely addressed by different authors, many of whom highlight their particularities in the sports context, because of its importance in this research the definition is connoted which highlights how the fear of failure constitutes more than an emotion, a belief of the subject associated with a fear response to the possibility of making a mistake when deciding. The author acknowledges that, in this way, the athlete, in a situation in which his decision is likely to be correct or wrong, is afraid of the possibility of error, ignoring that there is also the possibility of making a successful decision offered (Vígara, 2017; Singh & Parmar, 2016).

In this sense, the aforementioned author emphasizes that it is in this case that both internal factors (the subject's own thoughts), and external factors generated from the influence of the athlete's social environment, the influence of the family environment when giving value can be influenced to successes or mistakes, the influence of peers in stages of development in which this opinion is crucial for adolescents.

Based on this criterion, the indicators of fear of failure are presented which are determined by: fear of experiencing shame, fear of devaluation of oneself, fear of having an uncertain future, fear of losing interest in others and fear of disturbing others important (Silveira & Moreno, 2015; Iriani *et al.*, 2018). For their coherence, they were taken into account to elaborate the plan of psychological actions aimed basically at the school weightlifters of the EIDE Santiago. Due to the importance of socialization agents in this work, some actions aimed at preparing coaches and family members are included, in order to achieve a positive impact on them.

2 Materials and Methods

A mixed methodology was used tout the research; qualitative-quantitative; being a descriptive investigation of the cross-section. Which was developed with 10 weightlifting athletes of the category 15-16 of the EIDE of Santiago de Cuba, in the period corresponding to the training cycle of 2018-2019, in it a diagnosis of the manifestations of the fear of failing in these pessimists during competitions (competitive modeling, stops, events and national school games) and how it affected the performance of these athletes. Subsequently, a proposal for psychological intervention actions is developed and applied to diagnose and assess the effectiveness of the proposal, taking into account how it influenced the management and control of this fear of failure.

Taking into account the object of study of said research, techniques were applied such as observations, semi-structured interviews to athletes and coaches, Table of random numbers of Grid, Inventory of Psychological Performance, Inventory of Evaluation of the Error in performance, Attitude Test for Competition, as well as the review of documents and statistical records of coaches.

3 Results and Discussions

During the weightlifting training of the category (15-16) of the Unique Center "Captain Orestes Acosta" of Santiago de Cuba, it was observed that the coaches do not define together with the athletes the objectives to be achieved in each session, there was no explanation of what was the purpose, purpose, and importance of each type of exercise, so they were not a source of motivation for them. The training turned out to be monotonous as a result of the repetition of each exercise without the coach systematically perceiving the progress made, the praise was not given when the exercises were performed correctly, rather the errors were reinforced without taking into account an assessment of set coach-athlete from where they had occurred and how to correct the technique for its proper performance, sometimes when the coach was not supervising the training, the athletes did not perform the number of exercises that had been dosed, to finish quickly so the exercises Finals were made without the required technical quality.

It manifested in an athlete's loss of concentration, excessive language (they talked a lot between them). When they were required by the coach, they made gestures of disgust, used inappropriate phrases and/or adopted a position of disinterest towards the activity. The climate of competition created by the authority figure (coach) emphasized comparisons between athletes taking into account the level of performance, instead of focusing on the achievement and fulfillment of objectives in the athlete himself, generating reduction in volitional efforts in performing the technical exercises.

In the competitions, the presence of the fear of failing to fail in the first exercise of each modality was evidenced, where its successful realization generates more confidence and safety in the athlete. Both in competitions and competitive modeling, the presence of this fear of failure negatively influenced the sports performance of the athletes, since they did not concentrate properly for the realization of the lifts (mainly the first lift) made mistakes during the execution (they carried out the lifts very early without taking advantage of the regulated time for the achievement of a good concentration) and adopted a negative attitude towards the unsuccessful completion of the survey.

Athletes who did not achieve the successful completion of the lifts manifested in them a high level of tension, anxiety, and more fear of failure generating more insecurity, nervousness, using verbal expressions referred to stop trying again and negative and defeatist thoughts regarding your personal worth. The

demands of the coaches, the presence of parents, peers, the public and the arbitration affected the loss of control of this fear of failure, which contributed to difficulties in achieving the concentration of attention by changing the focus of attention with ease, feeling pressured for fear of failure and being judged by others, especially by people significant to them, generating anxiety of execution, which negatively affected the effectiveness of the action and its proper performance.

Taking into account the need to train athletes with resources or tools that allow them adequate management and control of this fear of failure, a plan of psychological actions is proposed that will contribute to the adequate management and control of this fear-based on optimization of sports performance.

The Action Plan had as objectives:

- 1) Train trainers, athletes, and family with respect to the theoretical aspects related to the fear of failure, as well as the methods and techniques used for its management and control.
- 2) Provide a space that promotes self-knowledge in athletes, reflecting on what are the attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts that generate the fear of failure and that hinder the achievement of adequate sports performance.
- 3) Provide resources or tools to athletes, which facilitate the management and control of the fear of failure both in the sports field and in the different areas of their development.

This psychological action plan is characterized by its open, flexible, participatory, group, practical and experiential character. The techniques used allow for both athletes and coaches to reflect, dialogue, share and analyze based on their own reality and experiences, in a fun and motivating way that arouses and maintains interest.

This plan of psychological actions encompassed 4 fundamental actions that were carried out during the entire training cycle, they are designed to work in sessions, with a frequency of 2 times per week, with a duration of approximately 45 minutes. The number of activities is flexible, considering that a greater number of them may be needed to internalize the required skills. The sessions were worked with athletes, coaches, family and jointly. Each of them has its own objective, the methods, techniques, materials to be used and the frequency of its realization.

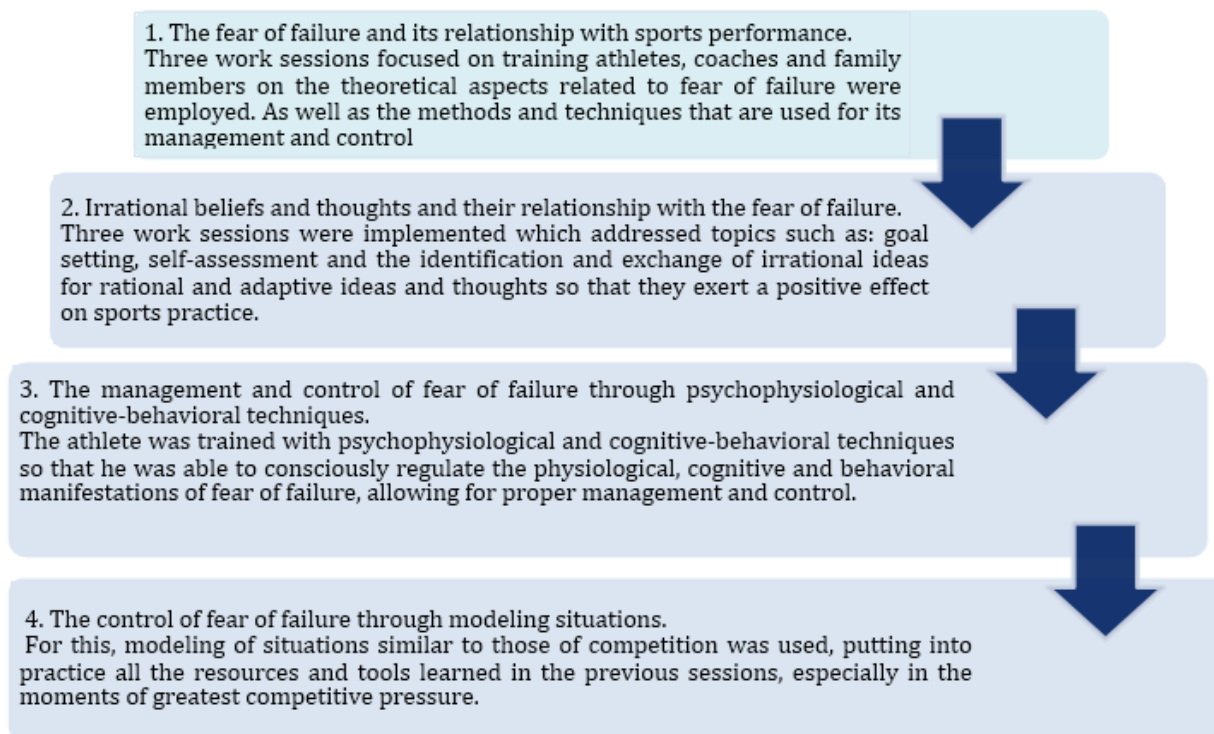


Figure 1. Psychological actions

4 Conclusion

- a) The theme related to the fear of failure has been widely addressed in the scientific literature, in particular by authors conducting research in the sports context. It stands out how they associate it with the emergence of irrational and maladaptive ideas and thoughts and interrelate it with internal and external factors.
- b) In the pessimists investigated, the appearance of fear of failure was related to factors associated with the demands of coaches, the opinion of parents and peers, which contributed to their inadequate management and control, negatively influencing the achievement of the concentration of attention and effectiveness of surveys.

In order to attend to these difficulties, a psychological action plan was implemented that allowed the training of weightlifting athletes of category 15-16 of the "Captain Orestes Acosta" EDE in Santiago de Cuba, demonstrating their effectiveness, so that, in a personalized way, they could solve the difficulties not only in their sports role but also in their social role.



Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the reviewer for their consideration of the further process of the present paper. Thanks to the editor of IJSSH for the valuable support, time as well as advice.

References

- Bedoya, C., & Velásquez, A. (2014). Analysis of the Incidence of Fear in the Organization From the Psychobiological Perspective. *Colombian Journal of Psychology*, 23 (2), 351-362. Retrieved on August 2, 2018. http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0121-54692014000200009&lng=en&tlng=en.
- David, D., Jay, S., & Ellis, A. (2010). *Rational and irrational beliefs. Research, theory, and clinical practice.* Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Dominguez, L. (2003). *Developmental psychology: adolescence and youth. Selection of readings.* Havana: Editorial Felix Varela
- Dosil, J. (2004). *Psychology of physical activity and sport.* Madrid: Mc Graw Hill
- García, F. (2001). Emotions as a result of training loads. <http://www.efdeportes.com/> Digital Magazine - Buenos Aires - Year 7 - N° 41 - October 2001
- García, F. (2004). *Psychological tools for coaches and athletes.* Editorial Sports.
- González, L. (2004). The emotional response of the athlete: a scientific vision of behavior in the face of the competitive challenge. Havana city. Editorial Sports.
- Iriani, D. H., Syahdan, -, & Nuriadi, -. (2018). The effect of early English learning on psychology. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(1), 65-74. <https://doi.org/10.29332/ijssh.v2n1.82>
- Moreno, J., Conte, L., Silveira, Y., & Ruiz, L. (2014). Fear of failing in sport. *Notebooks of Sports Psychology*, vol. 15, 3, 2014. http://scielo.isciii.es/pdf/cpd/v15n3/32_recension2.pdf
- Pérez, Y. (2007) *Psychological guidance program to stimulate emotional self-control in high performance chess players. Thesis in option to the scientific degree of Doctor of Science of Physical Culture and Sport, UCCFD "Manuel Fajardo"*
- Sánchez, D. (2017). *Psychological actions for the control of negative emotions in the basketball players of the Team, "Capitalinos", 1st Category Master's Thesis, University of Physical Culture and Sports Sciences Manuel Fajardo, Havana, Cuba.*
- Silveira, Y. & Moreno, J. (2015). Fear of being wrong and self-determined motivation in teenage students. *Notebooks of Sports Psychology*, 15 (3), 65-74. Retrieved on August 2, 2018 from, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4321/S1578-84232015000300006>
- Singh, A., & Parmar, D. S. (2016). A comparative study of psychological factor among female athletes. *International Research Journal of Engineering, IT & Scientific Research*, 2(1), 8-21.
- Vígara, D. (2017). Fear of failing in competitive sport <https://www.upadpsicologiacoaching.com/el-fear-to-fail-in-sport/>

Biography of Authors

	<p>Yoanni, Graduate in Piscoology, graduated from the Universidad de Oriente in Santiago de Cuba, 1997. For 11 years she worked as a clinical psychologist at the Gynecological Obstetric Clinic Hospital "Dr. Juan Bruno Zayas Alfonso". Since 2006 she works as a Sports Psychologist at the Provincial Center of Sports Medicine in Santiago de Cuba. Master in Natural Medicine and Bioenergetics, has an assistant teaching category and is finishing his Master's in Sports Piscoology. He has presented scientific papers at international conferences. <i>Email: yoanni.castelnau@nauta.cu</i></p>
	<p>Ana Celia, Graduated in Spanish and Literature in 1989 and in Pedagogy and Psychology in 1993 at ISP Frank País G. Full professor who has worked for 20 years at the Faculty of Physical Culture of the University of the East, teaching Subjects of General Psychology, Psychology of Physical Activity and Sports Psychology. Doctor in Pedagogical Sciences and Master in Education. She is currently a methodologist at the Quality Department of the Universidad de Oriente, has held positions as Vice Dean of Research and Postgraduate. He has been part of the academic group of masters: Community Physical Activity and Sports Management Education. <i>Email: amataran@uo.edu.cu</i></p>