

Practice and Challenges in Implementing Psychological Skill Training:
With Specific Reference to Ethiopian Youth Sport Academy and Athlete
Tirunesh Dibaba Sport Training Center

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This to certify that the thesis prepared by Addisu Firdu, entitled:

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Abbreviations

PST	psychological skill training
ATDSTC	Athlete Tirunish Dibaba Sports Training Centers
EYSA	Ethiopian Youth Sport Academy
IAAF	International Association of athletics federation
IOC	International Olympic committee
SPSS	Statistical packages for social sciences

Abstract

The objective of this study was to identify the extent to which psychological skill training were being implemented in Ethiopian youth sport academy and Athlete Tirunish Dibaba sports training center and to point out those challenges that impede the implementation of PST. In this regard a mixed concurrent research method was employed . All athletics coaches and technical staffs who had direct contact with athlitics training were selected as respondentes . The primary sources of data were 18 coaches and 4 technical staffs of the two training centers. Questionnaires, interviews and document analyses were used for the purpose of collecting relevant data. Data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using statistical tools like percentage and mean using SPSS version 25.0 for windows. Moreover, data gathered through interview and document analysis were considered to complement the questionnaires in narrative form .The finding of this study revealed that the current status of PST implementation was very poor and not planned and implemented formally in the two training centers . And the major challenges that affected the implementation of psychological skill training in Ethiopian youth sport academy and Athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center were: coaches' lack of practical knowledge to conduct PST ,perceived lack of time by coaches ,lack of practical teaching method in higher education institutes ,lack of awareness from athletes coaches and administrators, lack of trained sport psychologist to plan and organize the program. Accordingly the study suggests: awareness creation programs for athletes, coaches and technical staffs; continuous training for coaches; provision of special emphasis in higher education institutes; and preparation of PST training manuals as a long term solution.

Key terms : psychological skill training , athletics, training center, acadamy

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Ethiopian athletics has a long history of participation in the Olympic. Since our first participation in Montreal Olympic in 1956 G.C the success of Ethiopian athletes is almost growing linearly with some up and downs .The same is true regarding our participation in world athletics championships. Thanks to our heroic athletes the participation is mostly accompanied by medals. However the success of our athletics lacks consistency, moreover our participation and success is limited to few events namely long and middle distance running events. As part of the effort to maintain the previous success on long and middle distance events and to further widen our participation on other athletics events like short distance and field events ,Athelthe Tirunish Dibaba sport training center (ATDSTC) and Ethiopian youth sport academy(EYSA) are established under the direction of the Ethiopian youth and sport minister .

Athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center (ATDSTC),which is named after the renowned female athlete, is established in 2009 G.C in Assela town .The primary aim of the center is to produce elite athletes who can successfully represent the country in all athletics events .Similarly Ethiopian youth and sport academy(EYSA) is established in the capital city 5 years later in 2014 G.C ,with the same mission .Both organizations selects and identify talented and potential athletes from all parts of the country and provide modern and scientific training.

The primary purpose of any training is to improve the performance of the athlete .In order to improve the performance of the athlete coaches are expected to have a basic understanding of the training process .Moreover the training program by itself should encompass all the important components of training namely; physical fitness, skill development, technical, tactical , and mental training. Each component has its own specific contribution to the success of the athlete.

Psychological skill training is important part of training and plays an important role in the improvement of performance of the athletes. Psychological skill training for athletes includes goal setting, focus ,concentration, self confidence, motivation, relaxation etc. the above mentioned skills are the most common and have direct relationship with the performance of the athlete. (Peter, L.J Thompson.2012).

In the researcher's experience at athlete Tirunesh Dibaba sport training center as an athletics coach he observed that even the two sport organizations assumed to provide modern and scientific training, one of the major component, which is psychological skill training is not incorporated in their training programs. Coaches are not teaching mental skill to their athletes and devote much of their time on physical, technical and tactical aspect of the training. The psychological skill training is mostly neglected. Consequently the researcher noticed that this negligence costs both coaches and athletes a lot. He repeatedly observed that athletes who best prepared and performed best in training failed to demonstrate their potential in competition, because of the absence of mental preparation.

All sport psychology books describes the importance of learning psychological skills to better perform in training and competition. Moreover a number of researchers have conducted a research regarding effect of systematical intervention of psychological skills on the performance of athletes. And their findings come up with a result showing its positive contribution. (Amanda A, 2012: Tracyc. Ekoacha 2015:krane and Williams,2006 etc.)

The researcher is therefore motivated by what he has seen the gap between importance of psychological skill training which is advocated by literatures, and research findings. And the negligence in the implementation of PST by coaches in the above mentioned training center and the subsequent negative impact on performance. The researcher finds important to study the reason behind the negligence regarding PST implementation in the training of athletics. The researcher believes that the finding of the research will be used to aware coaches and other stakeholders. And to incorporate PST in to the formal training program of the athletes and makes the training program complete, which in turn helps athletes to fully explore their potential both in training and competition.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Training programs in athletics involves the provision of all the form of training components, including such training as physical, technical ,tactical and psychological (IAAF Manual). As the research literature indicates, the role of each of these components in training program has the major and specific concerns in trainees' development. PST as one of the components has potential to develop the athlete's mental skills and performance. According to S.weinberg and Daniel Gould,(2011) Successful athletes achieved peak performance by using the psychological skills of goal setting imagery, arousal control and management, thought control, competition plan, coping strategies and mental preparation routines .

Coaches should plan and implement psychological skills training into their training program just in the same way that physical skills training and other components are planned and implemented. However, the researcher in this paper has encounter in EYSA and ATDSTC where psychological skills training session was not planned and implemented and the annual training plan and weekly plans didn't incorporate the PST in accordance with both the literature and the IAAF Manual.

Some studies were conducted regarding sport psychology in general and psychological skill training in particular in Ethiopian context. a study by Gosa Molla , (2016) entitled "impact of motivation on athletes training the case of athlete Tirunesh Dibaba sport training center " and by Eyerusalem Yacob, (2011) entitled "Interpersonal Relationships among Ethiopia Commercial Bank's Female Athletics Team" are two different studies, in two different settings, their emphasis is on the impact of motivation ,and interpersonal relationship between athletes and coaches in athletics performance. The other three studies ; Haileyesus Gedefaw, Dr. RC Reddy ,(2016)entitled "Psychological Skills of Ethiopian Male Athletes"; Zelalem Abatkun and Prof. N Vijay Mohan,(2017)entitled' Comparison of anxiety and self-confidence variables among Ethiopian sports academy male soccer players of different playing positions" ; Dagne Getachew Assefa,2015) entitled "self efficacy and intrinsic motivation in south west Ethiopian public universities male football teams: a psychological perspective" all the above mentioned studies aimed at identifying the level of the subjects psychological skill and making comparison. However, they are different from this study in two different ways. Firstly, they focused on the role of some psychological skills in performance and on measuring subject's level of psychological skill only. Secondly, the above mentioned studies didn't show

anything regarding the current practice and challenges of implementing PST. This study is also different in that its focus is on the practice and challenges of implementing psychological skill

Therefore, taking the above stated deviant in to consideration, the researcher tried to focuses up on the implementation of PST in ATDSTC and EYSA .This study was attempted to find the challenges that hinder the training academics to implement PST in their training scheme.

1.3 Research questions

Based on the stated problem, this study was designed to answer the following basic research questions.

1. What is the current practices of psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA?
2. What is the knowledge of coaches working in ATDSTC and EYSA regarding psychological skill training?
3. What is the perception of the coaches towards psychological skill training?
4. What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General objective

Identifying the practice and challenges that obstruct the implementation pstchological skill training was the general objective of this study in athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center and Ethiopian youth sport academy.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The study was also attempt to address the following specific objectives

1. To identify the current practices of psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA.
2. To assesses the knowledge of coaches working in ATDSTC and EYSA regarding psychological skill training.
3. To identify the perception of coaches towards psychological skill training
4. To point out the major challenges affecting the implementation of psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA.

1.5 Significance of the study

Identifying the challenges in the implementation of PST will benefit not only the two academies under study but also benefit different athletes, clubs and coaches by creating awareness on the important contribution of PST in their training program .Moreover the result of this study will also benefit coaches and trainees in different sports

Specifically The finding of this research will have the following contributions

1. To show coaches the contribution of applied sport psychology in general and psychological skill training in particular in the improvement of athlete's performance.
2. To aware coaches and other stake holder the purpose of psychological skill training and to value its importance.
3. To aware and encourage coaches and athletes to give over appropriate time and effort to the development of psychological skill in order to improve athletic performance and to incorporate and implement psychological skill training alongside physical ,technical, and tactical training components in their training program.
4. To motivate other researchers to conduct an in-depth study on this area

1.6. The scope of the study

1.6.1 Delimitation of the study

This study was limited to

1. The field of athletics
2. On two training centers (EYSA and ATDSTC)
3. Coaches and technical staffs of the two training centers
4. The implementation of psychological skill training specifically on skills which have direct impact on performance ,which includes : concentration, goal setting, imagery, self-talk and relaxation

1.6.2. Limitations of the Study

The study would be more fruitful, if it included all coaches and technical staffs in all academies and clubs working in athletics. However, due to time and other constraints the researcher was forced to focus only on two of the sport centers. Consequently, the study might

lack to generate sound findings that could address the overall implementation of psychological skill training in all sports, clubs and training centers of the country.

1.7. Organization of the Study

The detail of the study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the problem and its approach. The second chapter is devoted to the review of related literature. The third chapter presents the research methodology .In the fourth chapter the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data are presented. The final chapter consists of the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.8. Operational definition

Psychological skill training: - is a systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skill for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment or achieving greater sport and physical activity self-satisfaction. (Roberts Weinberg and Daniel Gould.2011)

Psychological skills includes: - goal Setting, imagery, Relaxation, Attention control (concentration)

Performance: - Carrying out of specific physical routines or procedures by one who is trained or skilled in physical activity.

Goal setting: - motivational technique focusing on directing performer attention to important skills and mobilizing effort and persistent by providing incentives (achievement satisfaction) (Roberts Weinberg and Daniel Gould.2011)

Imagery : - an experience that mimics real experience. The use of imagery is considered to be one of the most popular techniques used by elite athletes and sport psychologists, and it is a technique that is commonly used with in mental training programs (Alison White and Lew Hardy 1998)

Relaxation : - method, process, procedure, or activity that helps a person to relax; to attain a state of increased calmness; or otherwise reduce levels of pain, anxiety, stress or anger. (Roberts Weinberg and Daniel Gould.2011)

Self-talk: - a dialogue, in which the individual interprets feelings and perceptions, regulates and changes evaluations and convictions and give instruction and reinforcement. The use of self-talk is believed to enhance performance by focusing on and improving cognitive, motivational, behavioral, and affective factors. (Alison White and Lew Hardy 1998)

Concentration: - ability to focus attention on the task at hand and not be affected or distributed by internal or external distracters. (Roberts Weinberg and Daniel Gould.2011)

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents a review of conceptual, theoretical and empirical studies related to psychological skill training. The first part addresses conceptual and theoretical reviews on psychological skill training and its component parts. The second part of the literature review presents overview of related studies on psychological skill in the Ethiopian context.

2.1. Sport psychology

Sport psychology in the grand scheme is still relatively new and contemporary discipline. According to American Psychological Association (APA, 2015), “Sport psychology is a scientific and applied field which uses psychological knowledge and skills to address optimal performance and well-being of athletes, developmental and social aspects of sports participation, and larger issues associated with sports settings and organizations”.

Until these days it has been very common for sport psychology practitioners to rely on theories mostly from clinical, counseling and mainstream psychology to guide practice (McEvan & Tod, 2015; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). According to McEvan & Tod (2015), sport psychology can benefit from the broader professional development literature in psychology when developing sport psychological training. On the other hand the range of using sport psychology and its techniques in different roles is still focused mainly on sport settings (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Despite this, as an academic discipline and as an applied practice, the popularity of sport psychology has grown significantly recently (Gee, 2010; Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

2.2. Psychological skills training

Psychological skills training [PST] refers to “systematic and consistent practice of psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment, or achieving greater sport and physical activity self-satisfaction” (Vealey 2007; Weinberg & Gould, 2015, 248). The ultimate goal of PST is self regulation. Self-regulative person is able to regulate her own functioning, work towards her goals by effectively monitoring and controlling her thoughts, feelings and behaviors (DeWiggins et al., 2010; Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

Integrating and implementing a PST- course or program has its roots in the 1950s. During the 1970s and 1980s it was systematically applied in many western countries (Vealey, 2007; Weinberg & Gould, 2015; Weinberg & Williams, 2006). Since those days the number of studies and interventions in the field have been made and developed. Most literature on PST utilize expressions such as “psychological skills” and “mental techniques” more or less interchangeably, whereas some authors point out the difference between psychological skills as the desired outcome (e.g. increased self-confidence) and psychological methods or techniques (e.g. imagery) as the means to promote the desired outcomes through the systematic rehearsal of these techniques. Sometimes, the term “psychological strategies” is used for the application of psychological techniques (Birrer & Morgan, 2010; Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

Psychological skills training is one part of the previously mentioned discipline of sport psychology, to be precise, the psychology of coaching (Lintunen et al., 2012). (Lintunen, et, al, 2012). Psychological skills include but is not limited to psychological skills training and it connects both cognitive and behavioral processes (Paquette & Sullivan, 2012). According to Martin, Vause & Schwartzman (2005), most studies assess athletic performance only at competitions but the goal of PST should be viewed more widely like Petitpas (2000, 33) stated: “to enhance individuals abilities to cope effectively in different life events by enhancing their self-efficacy and helping them identify or develop a range of coping resources”. PST should be seen in a wider perspective, it should be a part of everyday training (Lintunen et al., 2012).

2.3. Mental toughness

Mental toughness is a concept used to describe the quality which determines how people deal with challenges, stressors, and pressures (e.g. Connaughton, Hanton & Jones, 2010; Gucciardi, Gordon & Dimmock, 2009; Strycharczyk, 2014). According to DeWiggins et al. (2010, 458), “mental toughness or the ability to stay focused, composed, and confident in stressful situations is a key factor contributing to success in any performance-related field”. Certain attributes of mental toughness, defined by Butt, Weinberg and Culp (2010, 322), such as coping with and performing under pressure, drive or desire to succeed; setting goals, positive attitude, task control and working hard can be seen as something that can be achieved through systematic psychological training. Strong self- belief, affective intelligence, motivation and attentional control are attributes which have also been shown to describe a person who is

mentally tough (Connaughton et al., 2010; Gucciardi, 2011). Mental toughness has shown to be an important characteristic for an athletic success and it is associated with many coping strategies, e.g. imagery (Nicholls, Polman, Levy & Backhouse, 2008).

2.4. Effectiveness of PST

The current state of knowledge regarding PST is posted as effective for attaining optimal athletic performance and the benefit of PST is widely reported (Gill & Williams, 2008; Vealey, 2007; Weinberg & Gould, 2015; Weinberg & Williams, 2006). A number of literature reviews and previous studies verify that planned psychological interventions and programs are effective in enhancing athletic performance (e.g. Birrer & Morgan, 2010; Massey, Meyer & Mullen, 2015; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Positive relationship between confidence and performance is well supported in the sport literature (Machida, Ward & Vealey, 2012; Hays, Thomas, Maynard & Butt, 2010) and self-regulation seems to be an important source of confidence among high level athletes (Duda, Cumming & Balaguer, 2005). Zinsser, Bunker & Williams (2006) presented that there is a direct correlation between self-confidence and success. In a study by Hays et al. (2010), high sport confidence facilitated sport performance through its positive effects on athletes' thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

2.5. Aims and focus of psychological skills training

The most common aims of psychological skills training are performance enhancement, and increased enjoyment, and the ultimate goal of a PST program is self-regulation (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 257). Mental preparation provides an athlete with techniques to overcome both mental and emotional barriers (Blumenstein et al. 2007, 11). Also, the focus of PST can vary greatly depending on the needs of the athlete; the pro-gram can be comprehensive or simply focus on one or two skills (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 251). The most frequently sought after result from PST by athletes is performance enhancement. To reach this aim, many athletes use goal setting, imagery, relaxation, concentration and self-talk. Since thoughts have been shown to influence behavior, using mental skills and learning to control one's thoughts are a very direct manner to further excel in competitions. (Kornspan 2009, 41- 43) Other aims of PST programs are to increase enjoyment and exercise adherence. However, these goals are more common when the participant is part of the general population rather than an elite athlete. As a result of increased enjoyment and adherence, a person is much more likely to live a more

physically active life (Kornspan 2009,14.) .Furthermore, these may be the main focuses for an injured athlete. Unable to practice and compete, many athletes may react very poorly to their injury, thus a PST rehabilitation program can be designed to help them remain positive and motivated during recovery.

2.6. Advantages of implementing PST

There are many reasons to implement psychological skills training into an athlete's regular training program. Many advantages have been reported in studies, these advantages include performance enhancement, emotional and mental well being, and better coping abilities First, there have been a plethora of studies which suggest that in use of PST does increase performance. According to Blumenstein, Lidor, and Tenenbaum, (2007, 11) psychological interventions have been proven to increase performance when comparing athlete's who have received PST with non-intervention athletes One reason for this is that PST tends to target characteristics found in successful elite athletes. Common characteristics found in successful athletes were high confidence, self-regulation of arousal, an in control but not forcing it attitude, great ability to concentrate and focus, and high determination and commitment (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 255.). In addition, prior to the 1988 Olympics, Steven Ungerleider and Jacqueline Golding interviewed 1200 track and field athletes who participated in the US Olympic Trials. They found that all of the athletes trained hard, ate well, received sufficient rest and consumed little alcohol and other intoxicants. The difference between the athletes who made it to the games and those that didn't was that the successful athletes used more time on mental practices(Ungerleider 2005, 4). When Weinberg and Cormar conducted PST programs for 45 athletes in 1994, 85% demonstrated positive performance effects. More recent studies show even greater results, possibly because today programs tend to be multimodal, focusing on a combination of psychological techniques and not just one aspect (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 256) .

The advantages of PST are very significant when the impacts of mental and emotional components on performance are considered. According to Weinberg, mental and emotional components often overshadow the purely physical and technical aspects of performance. In most sports this ratio is considered to account for as much as 50% of performance when competing with athletes of similar capabilities. For some individual sports (figure skating, golf)

it has been suggested that the impact of the mental components are even greater, accounting for 80% to 90% of performance (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 251). Therefore, since mental components can play such a crucial role in sports, the advantages of improving these qualities are clear. Furthermore, PST helps athletes with motivation, releasing tension, choking problems, and helps them get “in the zone”. Also, following PST many athletes are more able to cope with pressure (in athletics and normal daily life), they tend to rebound better following failure, and are more persistent. Yet another advantage of PST is that it helps build and develop mental toughness which is perceived to be the most important determinant of success in sport(Weinberg & Gould 2007, 251) .To recapitulate, the advantages of implementing a PST program are overwhelming. Numerous studies conducted during many decades indicate the positive effects of using various psychological skills in addition to regular physical training.

2.7. Procedure for designing a PST program

When designing a psychological skills training program there are various recommendations which should be followed. There are many considerations which should be taken into account, such as the nature of the sport, the needs of the individual, the periodization of physical training and the time available. First, there are several suggestions regarding which topics to choose. Various experienced athletes and coaches listed relaxation training, concentration, imagery, team cohesion, attention training and self-talk strategies as important topics for PST programs (Weinberg 2007, 255). However, a program does not need to include all of those topics, there is no set PST package as each one should be individualized based on the needs of the individual and sport (Brookfield 2009). In terms of timing, it is important to consider the periodization of the physical training when planning a PST program (Blumenstein et al. 2007, 9). The ideal time to start a PST program is during the off-season as there is more time to focus on mental training (Weinberg 2007, 260). In addition, during this phase the athlete is not under competitive pressure, skill acquisition is maximal because the stress level is low (Blumenstein et al. 2007, 35). During the preparation phase, it is important to fully learn these mental skills and prepare for the competitive phase both mentally and physically. During the competitive phases of the annual plan, the aim for the mental training should be to bring it all together. Following this is the transition phase is a time for a break from both mental and physical training. (Blumenstein et al. 2007, 10). According to Weinberg and Gould, a PST program

should consist of an education phase, and acquisition phase and a practice phase (2007, 256). A similar approach is suggested by Murphy who believes the PST is a partnership between the coach and athlete with an introduction, education phase and action (2005, 287).

The goal of the education phase is to familiarize the athlete with PST and sport psychology in general. The duration of this phase depends completely on the individuals involved, it can be conducted in an hour or it can span several sessions. A good starting point would be to ask about the athlete's current knowledge of PST, and about their current practices (do they use mental training and how often). From there, the person running the session can use follow-up questions and correct any misunderstandings. The next logical step would be to introduce various topics such as goal setting, imagery, concentration (any topics relevant to the PST program). Finally, one technique to help emphasize the importance of PST, examples can be given of how the athlete's role models use different mental skills. At the end of the education phase, the athlete should have a much better understanding of PST and its importance (Weinberg & Gould. 2007, 256) .

The next phase is the acquisition phase during which, the focus is on strategies and techniques used for learning the different psychological skills. For example, imagery could be taught through guided imagery sessions. Sessions to ensure that the athlete fully learns and understands the technique. The phase should consist of both informal and formal meetings. Informal meetings are good because the atmosphere is more relaxed and this can help with building rapport with the athlete. Also they tend to be shorter and easier to schedule, they can be used to check up on the athlete's progress and to answer any queries. Formal meetings are useful when a clear structured session is needed in teaching the skills. Finally, it is important to individualize the learned techniques to the needs of the athlete to help them relate to it so they will then learn it much faster (Weinberg & Gould. 2007, 257, 267) .

Following the acquisition phase is the practice phase. The aims of this phase are to use over learning to automate the skills, to teach the athlete how to incorporate the learned techniques into performance situations and to stimulate skills they will want to apply in actual competitions. In comparison to the acquisition phase, the practice phase will have fewer meetings with the sports psychologist, as the aim is to practice the skills on their own. An example would be moving from guided imagery used during the acquisition phase to self-

directed imagery. With less frequent meetings, it is recommended that the athlete keeps track of progress and perceived effectiveness of the techniques in a training journal. This can produce tangible evidence for the athlete to see what techniques work the best and to see her own progression. Also, training journals are effective as time on a task is much higher when they are used (Blumenstein et al. 2007, 56). Overall, the crucial factor during this stage is repetition to help the athlete thoroughly learn and understand her own responses to the new skills (Weinberg & Gould. 2007, 257.)

As with physical skills, mental training tools and skills are maximally effective only when athletes have over learned them to the point they become habit and can be used automatically without having to consciously think about when and how to use them. Thus, the implementation phase of PST involves helping athletes practice using the tools and skills to the point of over learning, and only then teaching athletes to apply mental skills to actual performance situations. To do this, athletes use the tools and skills in simulations, scrimmages, and low-level competitions that gradually become more and more like full competition. Adverse situations can be simulated in practice settings to help prepare athletes to handle such occurrences during competition. By creating situations that gradually increase competitive stress, the implementation phase helps athletes learn to incorporate mental skills into their game plan

In conclusion, there is no one correct way to design and implement a PST program. Some key factors in designing a PST program include implementing education, acquisition and practice phases, incorporating the mental training practices with other areas of training and individualizing the program. In the end, to increase the effectiveness of a program, it has to be a well-controlled, outcome-based intervention in a competitive environment (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 256).

2.8. Overview of Mental Skills

The following section will cover some of the most common mental skills taught during a psychological skills training program. As mentioned earlier in the scope , the most common mental skills to be addressed are concentration, goal setting, imagery, self-talk and relaxation.

2.8.1. Imagery

Imagery is a technique using all senses, thoughts, feelings, emotions and sensation to recreate an experience in your own mind. It is a skill used by some of the world's best athletes every day (Yukelson 2006, 1). Research shows that imagery works, those who mentally practice their performance perform better than athletes who do not (Miller 2003, 33). However, it is rather important to follow certain methods to avoid some of the potential problems associated with imagery.

First, there are countless uses and benefits for imagery. Possibly the greatest advantage is that everyone has the ability to do it and that it can be done almost anytime and anywhere; it is a skill that must be practiced and developed (Yukelson 2006, 1). Different uses for visualization include practicing a specific skill in the mind, improving confidence and positive thinking, rehearsing tactics and problem-solving, controlling nerves, review and analysis, preparation and it can be part of a performance routine (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 65). Furthermore, there are many studies which support these benefits and demonstrate them at the neural level. Electrical activity in the muscles and brain associated with the movement take place during mental rehearsal. The brain mimics firing the muscles in the patterns that are needed to execute the skill, but not at the level where the body actually moves (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 70; Yukelson 2006, 1.) A similar response occurs when observations are made of other people performing a certain action, this adds learning benefits to watching role models in action. This is called scenario performing which can help skill acquisition (Jensen 5.11.2009). Mirror neurons trigger certain patterns when an athlete watches, for example, their role model perform. Then these same patterns are reactivated when the athlete performs the observed behavior (Bergland 2007, 100). Every time a movement is done or rehearsed, that neural pathway becomes stronger. The opposite is also true, if a certain pathway is not used it will eventually atrophy. This means that if negative images are consciously blocked out and replaced by positive ones, negative images are less likely to emerge during future mental rehearsals (Murphy 2005, 133; Bergland 2007, 53).

Next, there are two main perspectives which are used during imagery: an inside perspective or an outside perspective. The internal perspective is when the images are seen from the first-person point of view and the external perspective is like watching oneself on a TV. The

internal perspective develops a better quality of the ‘feel’ component, while the external perspective is good when reviewing performances and objectively assessing it. It is good to try both methods; there is no conclusive evidence that would suggest that one is better than the other (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 66; Murphy 2005, 130) .

When imagery is first being practiced there are several useful guidelines for beginners. The location should be someplace quiet where interruptions won’t occur. It is important to incorporate all the senses, the most important one is kinesthetic feelings such as balance, and weight movement as this helps the brain recall images from within the memory stores. Also, it is important to practice mainly in real-time as this prepares the athlete for a full-paced situation. Also, focus should not be on past mistakes, as this increases the likelihood of their reoccurrences (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 70-73).

Moreover, it is important to visualize difficult situations, this way the athlete can re-hearse certain responses and then react appropriately should something go wrong in a competitive situation. Anticipation is the main entity, knowing what to do if something happens. Also the focus should be on the process of the performance and not on the outcome, but occasionally imagining a successful end result during practices can be a good motivator as it is a reminder of what the athlete is working towards (Miller 2003, 36-39) .

Finally, there are several aspects which should be taken into consideration with imagery because it is possible to harm an athlete’s performance if certain situations are over-looked. First, it is important to remember that images can hold a personal meaning which is different for each individual. For example, when figure skaters were asked to visualize a golden ball, some saw a calming aura while others were and blinded and stressed by it. In addition, relaxation imagery can have a detrimental effect in strength events. Also, imaging the end result during the competition can distract from the process. Other potential problems include a lack of imagery control, when unfavorable images are seen. This is dangerous as the effects of negative images are stronger than the positive effects of appropriate images. Fortunately, almost all problems can be overcome with an appropriate approach of replacing negative images with positive ones and using self-talk and relaxation to help (Murphy 2005, 136; 150-151).

Overall, using mental rehearsal is a great manner for the mind to communicate with the body as the body only speaks image, therefore it is a tool which should be used by all athletes (Jensen 5.11.2009). However, it is important that athletes have realistic expectations as imagery only has the potential to improve skills if the athlete believes in the process and practices often (Yukelson 2006, 2). The importance of practice and repetition is the most crucial aspect of imagery as it is the best way to improve this skill as it leads to greater vividness and control of the images (Murphy 2005, 144). Finally, this practice also causes the skills to be hardwired into the brain; a lack of practice will lead to reverting to old habits under pressure situations (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 69).

2.8.2. Relaxation

To relax is to decrease unwanted muscular tension, reduce excessive activation of the sympathetic nervous system (associated with adrenaline and elevated heart rate), and calm the mind by keeping it productively occupied. When the sympathetic nervous system is activated, athletes experience the fight-or-flight response—they feel anxious and experience physical symptoms of stress, such as increased heart rate, goose bumps, butterflies in the stomach, and perspiration. A number of relaxation techniques have been adapted for use in sport to elicit the “relaxation response” that relaxes tense muscles, lowers unwanted arousal, and calms the mind

The competitive environment of sports can be rather stressful; it is for these purposes that relaxation skills are used as an aid to relieve some of these pressures. If an athlete is tense, the tension can weigh them down and lead to much faster fatiguing during a competition. The first steps to releasing this tension and learning to relax is to learn to release and breathe, and learning to create good feelings and a positive focus (Miller 2003, 52 & 56). There are many different relaxation methods which can be used to control this performance debilitating anxiety. Some of these methods include progressive relaxation, biofeedback, meditation and breathing techniques. First, progressive relaxation is a method in which muscle groups are individually tensed and then relaxed. This leads to a calm and relaxed state. A sample transcript for this practice has been provided. The next method is biofeedback which uses technology as a guiding tool. Electrodes or a heart rate monitor can be used to monitor, and show an athlete the physiological symptoms of tension. The task is then to try and lower the

heart rate or muscle tension by means of a conscious effort. This provides instant feedback regarding the effectiveness of different techniques (Kornspan 2009, 48) .

The next two techniques are meditation and breathing techniques. Breathing techniques are effective because breathing unites mind and body and it brings focus to the present (Miller 2003, 44). There are a variety of different breathing exercises; the main aim of all of them is to bring focus to this process of breathing which is something that often goes unnoticed. These exercises include imagining different compartments in the lungs, breathing in and out to a count and many others. The final relaxation method is meditation. There are no set meditation methods; one technique involves repeating a single word, such as “calm.” The idea is to let other thoughts pass without notice and this leads to a more calm and relaxed state (Kornspan 2009, 48) .

To recapitulate, the use of relaxation techniques is a good method to reduce an athlete’s anxiety in competitions and in practice. To be able to achieve the maximum benefits of these exercises, they should be practiced regularly for at least a couple months (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 279).

2.8.3. Goal setting

Goals motivate athletes by helping them focus attention on specific tasks, increase effort and intensity, and persist in the face of adversity and failure (Locke 1996). Setting and attaining goals also boosts athlete’s self- confidence and motivation, but all of these benefits depend on formulating goals with the right characteristics.

According to Kornspan (2009, 44) when optimal performance is the aim, goal setting is one of the most important skills taught to athletes. There are several different types of goals an athlete can have, also there are several essential goal setting guidelines which should be followed to produce effective results. In short, goal setting is the process of personal planning. It brings focus to important details, mobilizes efforts, prolongs persistence and helps an athlete develop new strategies (Weinberg & Gould. 2007, 348). Goal setting is often taught to athletes who are struggling with motivation as it helps bring purpose to training and competition (Robson 2007). One of the most recommended guidelines is to follow the principles set by the SMART acronym. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and within a set timeframe (Kornspan 2009, 45; Robson 2007) .

There are three types of goals: outcome goals, performance goals and process goals. Outcome goals are related to specific results of a competition or one's performance compared with others. Performance goals are related to individual performance, independent of others. Process goals are related to performance goals as they are the steps one must take to achieve the performance goal. There are several different types of process goals which are, tactical, technical, physical and psychological goals. For example, wanting to increase leg strength by 10% is a performance goal and aiming to go to the gym three times a week to make this happen is a physical process goal (Kornspan 2009, 44; Robson 2007) .

Finally, there are several methods which can be used make the most of goal setting and to increase the likelihood for success. Writing down the goals and keeping a training journal have been shown to improve commitment to the goals. In addition, sharing the goals with others can also have a similar effect. Another important factor is evaluation. Tests should be done regularly to be able to keep track of progress, and it provides the athlete with feedback regarding their methods for achieving the goals (Robson 2007.) Overall, goal setting is an important skill to learn as it bring focus to various tasks and can improve motivation.

2.8.4. Self-talk

Self-talk is the act of talking to oneself, this can be done out loud or by thought. Therefore, anytime an athlete thinks about something, he is "talking to himself" and this is a type of self-talk (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 378.)

The process of self-talk has three phases: an environmental stimulation followed by a perception or evaluation which results in certain emotional, physiological and behavioral responses. In this process, self-talk is a mediator between an event (environmental stimulation) and the final response to this situation. This suggests that the response to an event is influenced by self-talk, meaning that the same event can result in a response that is either defeating or helpful. This process of self-talk portrays the importance of developing and controlling this psychological skill (Weinberg & Gould 2006, 382) .

Benefits of this technique include enhanced concentration, it is a tool for breaking bad habits, and it is a manner of initiating action and sustaining effort and can be used to help skill acquisition (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 378). The first steps to building a more positive attitude to nurture better performance is for an athlete to become aware of their thoughts (Kornspan

2009, 51). Once an athlete is more aware of her thoughts, the negative self-talk should be written down and alternative, more positive sentences should be written down and then used as replacements for the negative statements (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 382). Furthermore, simply repeating positive statements can lead to a more positive overall mental attitude, it is however important to remove the negative and not simply add more positive statements (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 67; Kornspan 2009, 50-51).

2.8.5. Concentration

Concentration is a mental skill which can play a crucial role in sports however, it is not an easy skill to learn (Kornspan 2009, 49). Like the other mental skills, it can be enhanced with practice and should be treated like a physical ability (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 76). To portray a complete picture, key terms related to concentration will be defined; also methods of improving this mental skill will also be covered.

First, concentration in sports is a fairly complex concept and can be defined as maintaining selective attention over time, having awareness of the situation and shifting attention focus when needed. The definition can be broken down into four parts which are, selective attention, maintaining attention focus, awareness of the situation and shifting attention focus when needed (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 364-365) .

Selective attention is focusing on relevant environmental cues and disregarding irrelevant cues. Preferential information is selected and the rest is ignored; errors occur when focus turns towards distractions. These distractions can be noise, the behavior other athletes, visual distracters or weather conditions (Murphy 2005, 119-121) .In addition, research suggests that performance suffers the more you focus on yourself or thing near you. This means athletes should aim for external focus rather than internal focus. For example, in hockey it is better to focus on the path of the puck rather than the stick. Finally, when skills become automated, they require less attention and focus can be directed to other relevant cues which will further better performance. However, when this skill is improved, constant eye contact with the ball is not needed and the athlete can focus on other relevant cues such as the movements of opponents (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 365) .

The next part of the definition is maintaining attention focus. Maintaining concentration during a competition can prove to be a challenging task since the average length of time that

thought content remains on target is 5 seconds (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 365). Concentration should be thought of as a volume dial or light switch, the level needs to be adjusted. It is something that can be toned down or turned off during breaks and switched back on when needed. It is impossible to remain 100% focused for the entire duration of an event. Different cues can be used to help with switching in and out. These cues can be verbal, visual or physical (slapping legs, deep breath) (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 84) .

The third part of the definition is maintaining situation awareness. This is the ability of the athlete to understand what is happening in terms of game situations and opponents in order to make the appropriate decisions. Often these decisions must be made under competitive pressures. When athletes become skilled at this, it may often seem as if they are always one step ahead of their opponents and this is simply because they are more aware of their opponents and the situation (Weinberg & Gould 2010, 367) . Shifting attention focus is the final part of this definition. During an event it is often crucial to shift between the different types of attention focus since, most errors related to concentration happen because an athlete does not shift to another style of attention quickly enough (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 79). Attention focus can be looked at on two dimensions: direction which can be internal or external, and width which can be broad or narrow (Nideffer in Kornspan 2009, 49). When it is external, attention is directed outward toward an object or opponents. Internal focus is directed inward to thoughts and feelings. This is the appropriate direction of focus when a high jumper prepares to start the approach run. A broad attention focus allows an athlete to perceive multiple incidents simultaneously. A narrow focus happens when an athlete only responds to one or two cues (Weinberg & Gould 2006, 373).

Methods to improve concentration

There are an excess of different methods for improving concentration. Some of these methods can be used during the competition while others are done in a controlled environment.

One method is the use of imagery as its use increases ability to maintain concentration over a period of time and on staying focused on what is important (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 74). Focusing on the appropriate aspects ensures that the athlete remains in the moment during the task (Kornspan 2009, 49). Another fairly simple method to improve concentration in competitions is by improving general physical fitness. Poor fitness and nutrition leads to

fatigue and makes concentration a larger effort for the athlete, this can play a fairly large role towards the end of a competition (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 83). Creating pre-performance routines is a way to bring focus to the task. These routines should be written down so that the athlete can refer to them during the competition, should something go wrong. They are good for track and field events, such as high jump, which have self-paced components (Kornspan 2009, 50). In addition, this practice improves concentration as routines prepare the mind and body to be able to execute skills with maximum focus and belief. Finally, the pre-performance routine should be clear and simple because it is then easier to recall during the game and concentration is thus more readily achieved (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 83, 88).

Another method to improve concentration during a competition is to become more self-aware. Not only is it imperative to have the appropriate focus leading up to the competition, but it is equally as significant to be able to quickly recognize if concentration is lost and at this point everything must be done to try and regain it as quickly as possible. Remaining focused means remaining in the present as past and future events are irrelevant and take away from the current task (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 77, 81).

Moreover, the concentration grid exercise is a highly recommended tool. The grid consists of numbers from 00 to 100 in random order and the aim of the exercise is to find as many numbers as possible, in order, within a certain time limit. It should be done in a quiet area without distractions, but these should be incorporated later to make the task more challenging (Kornspan 2009, 50; Weinberg & Gould 2007, 381.)

Other techniques include thought stopping and thought parking. Thought stopping involves controlling negative energy which may lead to poor performance. The idea is that every time a negative thought is noticed, this is stopped using self-talk. When the negative thought is stopped, the athlete disassociates from it and is then available to focus on the performance (Ungerleider 2005, 65). Thought parking uses a similar approach, however it often incorporates imagery as a means to store an irrelevant thought for later. For example, following a mistake, an athlete can imagine storing the thoughts related to the mistake in a parking lot, or storage file and decide to go back to it later, after the game when there is time to think about it (Bull & Shambrook 2004, 82).

Overall, it is very clear that concentration plays a key role in performance success and this is why it has become such a central part of this thesis and case study. To finish off with the words of Murphy (2005, 123) which truly demonstrate the importance of improving concentration. “In reality, there is no distraction until we recognize it internally.”

2.9. Roadblocks and Myths surrounding psychological skill training implementation

If PST is effective in helping athletes perform better enjoy their sport, and develop life skills, why is it often neglected? Let’s clear the air about a variety of roadblocks and myths surrounding the mental game.

Barriers to PST implementation

Holliday et al. (2008) discussed the numerous problems that are often associated with attempting to implement a mental skills training program. One of the barriers may be connected with the abstract skill set that is required when teaching and learning through a mental skills training program. The notion of teaching mental skills is often met with reluctance from the athletes, as it is a skill set that is much more abstract than the physical training to which they are accustomed. Another barrier may be connected to frequency and duration of time spent with the athlete. Sport psychology consultants may have limited and inconsistent access to the athlete which may reduce the impact of mental skills training. This limited exposure and contact with the athlete may create a barrier due to reduced opportunity for the consultant to earn the athletes' trust, which may also affect the athletes' level of devotion to practice newly learned mental training skills (Holliday et al, 2008). In addition to the recognized barriers to implementation of a mental skills program, doubts have also risen regarding the effectiveness of such programs. The effectiveness of the program's ability to promote consistent skills transfer to a competitive situation, minimize performance slumps, prevent boredom, avoid burnout, and contribute to an athlete's long-term development have all been called into question (Holliday et al, 2008). However, the implementation method of periodization seeks to address these issues by creatively and systemically cycling the structure and delivery of mental skills training. Historically, the training of physical and mental skills has been provided separately when working with teams and individual athletes alike. Periodization has been used for decades to train athletes physically and technically and has

been utilized predominately in the individual sport arena. Mental skills training, on the other hand, are typically considered only after the physical and technical training has been established. Because of this, seeking the support from sport psychology consultants is generally initiated only after an issue develops with an athlete.

Myth: PST Takes Too Much Time

Coaches identify time as the biggest roadblock to implementing mental skills training. You may feel that you barely have time to develop and refine your athletes' physical skills, let alone add work on mental skills. Undoubtedly, working on the mental game takes time. Devoting 15 to 20 minutes several days per week may be most effective in introducing new mental training tools. However, as little as 5 to 10 minutes a day can be beneficial. A good way to implement PST is to integrate it into practice. That way it does not take extra time and has another benefit (Weinberg & Gould 2007).

Myth: Mental Skills Are Innate

It is easy to believe that mental toughness is an innate characteristic that cannot be taught. You may believe that athletes are either blessed with these strong mental skills (as part of their personality or genetic makeup) or have learned them through experience. Either way, you may feel that there is little coaches can do to improve athletes' mental toughness. That is a myth. It is true that we are all born with certain physical and psychological predispositions and that mental skills are shaped and developed through the experiences of everyday life. Being motivated, staying calm under pressure, and maintaining confidence in the face of adversity is not simply innate qualities. They are mental skills that great athletes have learned through experience or through PST. PST is a more efficient way of developing these skills than waiting for athletes to pick them up through the trial and error process of experience(Weinberg & Gould 2007).

Myth: Mental Skills Training is Only for Psychological Problems

Many coaches and athletes believe that only those with deep rooted psychological problems need to work on their mental game. Some athletes also perceive a stigma associated with sport psychology, thinking that those who need to work on their mental game are weak and have some sort of psychological problem that is going to be analyzed by a "shrink." Because of this, some athletes are reluctant to work on their mental game because they believe that they may be chastised and labeled as a head case. To the contrary, PST can benefit all

athletes. Many of the most talented athletes use some form of PST, even as it is clear that they do not have deep-rooted psychological problems(Weinberg & Gould 2007).

Myth: Mental Skills Training Provides a Quick Fix

Coaches and athletes recognize that physical skills take countless hours of practice to develop, but some expect mental skills to provide a quick fix. Short period just before competition is not the time to work on one's mental game. Ideally, mental training begins in the off-season, or at least at the beginning of the season. Is it advisable for coaches to have changed their athletes their physical game plan shortly before competition? Probably not, because you realize that after countless hours of practice, athletes can perform a skill automatically without conscious thought. Introducing a new skill may cause them to start thinking about how to perform the skill and thus disrupt their performance. The same is true for mental skills training. It takes time and effort and is not a magical, quick-fix program(Weinberg & Gould 2007).

Myth: Mental Skills Training Creates Performance Miracles

Another myth surrounding MST involves unrealistic expectations. Mental skills training will not help turn an average player into a superstar. Some coaches and athletes feel that PST will help athletes perform beyond their physical capabilities. In reality, mental skills training are designed to help athletes perform more consistently at or near their potential. Similarly, some athletes and coaches expect incredible results from minimal effort. Athletes try a little relaxation training, imagery, or goal setting, then quit after a few sessions because nothing miraculous has happened. These same athletes would not expect to become superstar after a week or even a year of physical training; they would expect to improve only after putting in the necessary time and effort. As with physical training, mental skills training will help athletes perform at or near their performance capabilities only with consistent practice(Weinberg & Gould 2007).

Myth: PST Is for Elite Athletes Only

Some coaches erroneously believe that PST can only help perfect the performance of highly skilled competitors. As a result, they shy away from PST, rationalizing that because they are not coaching elite athletes, mental skills training is less important. It is true that mental skills become increasingly important at high levels of competition. As athletes move up the competitive ladder, they become more homogeneous in terms of physical skills. In fact, at high

levels of competition, all athletes have the physical skills to be successful. Consequently, any small difference in mental factors can play a huge role in determining performance outcomes. However, we can anticipate that personal growth and performance will progress faster in young, developing athletes who are given mental skills training than in athletes not exposed to PST. In fact, the optimal time for introducing PST may be when athletes are first beginning their sport. Introducing PST early in athletes' careers may lay the foundation that will help them develop and deal effectively with problems and obstacles. During this stage, the mental skills training program is continually monitored to assess its effectiveness (Weinberg & Gould 2007).

2.10. The role of the coach

The ultimate key to success with PST is you, the coach. You must not only believe in the value of this type of training but also understand it thoroughly, just as you must understand the skills and tactics of your sport in order to teach them. As Richard Cox stated "Coaches, of course see athletes daily, whereas ideally a sport psychologist does not do this thus coaches are in a position to administer psychological interventions over the course of the season". (Richard, Cox, 2000). Many believe that teaching psychological skill is the only duty of the sport psychologist and the coaches will not play any role in the implementation of PST. However, it is also the duty of the coaches to impart PST to their athletes as stated by (Stonecipher et al., 2015) "This is best accomplished by a collaborative effort among the coach, the sport psychologist, and the athlete; however, a knowledgeable and interested coach can learn basic psychological skills and impart them to the athlete, especially during actual practice". Moreover, it is advised that the best teachers to teach PST to the athletes are the coaches for many reasons. One he is close to the athletes and meets them repeatedly, second he clearly knows their strengths and weaknesses, and third because of the intimacy with the athletes they have respect and trust from their athletes (Holliday et al., 2008).

Then you must be willing to make PST a regular part of your formal training program. Ideally, you will teach and refine mental skills on a daily basis, just as you do with physical skills. In launching a PST program, you are not filling the role of a psychologist; rather, you are teaching athletes the mental skills necessary to achieve success in sport and life. When you encounter athletes dealing with significant life or personal issues, you will need to wisely

counsel them (or their parents) that professional help may be in order. Even after you have mastered the contents of this book, you are not equipped to provide the clinical assistance such athletes may need. Your role is to educate your athletes about how they can develop specific mental skills, and to refer those who need more psychological assistance to appropriate professionals (Damon Burton, Thomas D. Raedeke. ,2008).

2.11. What the coach should know regarding PST?

Regarding the coaches point of view different scholars in the field of sport psychology strongly believes that the understanding of coaches concerning psychological skill training is limited and wrongly percept it. in this regard (Weinberg & Gould, 2015,) strengthens the idea by stating that Coaches and athletes all know that physical skill need to be regularly practiced and refined through literally thousands and thousands of repetitions .similarity to physical skill psychological skills such as maintaining and focusing concentration, regulation of arousal level, enhancing confidence and maintaining motivation also need to be systematically practiced. Just telling an athlete to relax won't produce the desired response unless the athlete already knows how relax through prior practice and training.

Training the coach

Training coaches to use a periodized mental training program may be an effective way to impart psychological skills training to their athletes. As mentioned previously, sport and exercise psychology consultants may experience barriers, such as an inability to gain the athletes' trust, which make it difficult to train their minds (Holliday et al., 2008). Additionally, training coaches to implement a periodized mental training program may help bring the need for sport psychology to the forefront of their minds. That way, the athletes can have all the physical and mental tools at their disposal that they need to reach the "flow" state. Lastly, training coaches in this matter may help foster a consistency with mental training that seems to be a factor in helping athletes achieve "flow." Coaches are proficient in training the necessary sport skills and physiological systems along with the tactics associated with their sport. However, many coaches lack the knowledge or a proper framework for addressing the psychological components that are also necessary for success in sport (Judge et al., 2010). Coaches seeking success cannot limit their knowledge base to the physical side of training. Sport psychology has emerged in recent years as the latest tool for helping coaches prepare

athletes to perform at the highest level; however, few coaches take full advantage of psychological skills preparation (Judge et al., 2010). The issue though is that high school athletic programs rarely have the funds and resources to hire an AASP-certified consultant in sport psychology to work long-term with their athletes. Therefore, the implementation of a psychological skills training (PST) program often falls to the head coach and staff who have little experience or knowledge of PST. It is for this reason that purposeful training specifically with the coach regarding how to design, as well as implement, their own PST program is the next logical step in sport psychology consulting. Through helping the coach learn how to construct a mental periodization program and how to teach the necessary PST skills to their athletes, a sport psychology consultant can pass on their knowledge to the coach. Teaching the coach may be the most efficient pathway to reach the athletes because the coach already has solid rapport and trust with the athletes, greater awareness of athlete's needs, and a deeper understanding of their specific sport and the associated pressures. (Stonecypher et al.,2015)

2.12. Overview of related psychological skill training literature in Ethiopian context

Compared to other study areas, the study related to sport psychology is very limited. Most researchers prefer to study the physical challenges and physiological variables of training. Even though their number is very little, there are still research works on the area of sport psychology in general and psychological skill training in particular .Ethiopian researchers and foreigners in collaboration with Ethiopians' in conducted some studies in the Ethiopian context. In this regard the following researches are reviewed .(Gosa Molla , 2016; Eyerusalem Yacob, 2011 ; Haileyesus Gedefaw, Dr. RC Reddy ,2016 ; Zelalem Abatkun and Prof. N Vijay Mohan,2017 ; Dagne Getachew Assefa,2015).

The study by Eyerusalem Yacob, (2011) was conducted in Ethiopia commercial Bank sport club female athletics team in Addis Ababa. The main purpose of her study was to investigate the interpersonal relationships among Ethiopian Commercial Bank sport club female athletics team. And she come up with the following finding in relation to the interpersonal relationships among athletes of the team indicated that, most of the athletes responded that there is mutual respect, responsibilities, supporting and appreciating each other during training and computation. They also said that they respect, trust and like their coaches even if they face communication, leadership and coaching styles limits. Finally she draw the

conclusion that there is some what a positive interpersonal relationship among each athletes of the team, coach and female athletes, coaches, management of the team and as recommendation she discussed it is a great impact that the team giving motivations like incentives and bonuses, apply cooperative coaching styles, improve communication and cooperative leadership contribute positive interpersonal relationships to the team. The other study by Gosa Molla , 2016 aimed at identifying the impact of motivation on athletes training in the training center .In his study Gosa,M hypothesize that Some of the main factors of motivation in the training center were: provision of welfare packages, availability of training facility and Equipment, Coaches quality and involvement, family support and Location of training center, and more. In the Athlete Tirunesh Dibaba Sport Training Center, it has been observed that training rely mostly on the physical fitness and skill levels of athletes, whereas little or no attention is given to psychological consideration like motivation. The finding of his study was discovered that athlete's motivation became diminished as a result of unfulfilled promises. In conclusion the study suggested ways to improve the motivational capacities of athletes in the training center, since motivation is the foundation for all athletes training, effort and success. The two above mentioned studies, in two different areas emphasis is on the impact of motivation and interpersonal relationship between athletes and coaches in athletics performance.

The other studies which have direct relationship with psychological skills in the Ethiopian context are conducted by (Haileyesus Gedefaw, Dr. RC Reddy ,2016 ; Zelalem Abatkun and Prof. N Vijay Mohan,2017 ; Dagne Getachew Assefa,2015 ; Seid Suleiman, Dr. R. V. L. N. Ratnakara Rao ,2016).

Haileyesus Gedefaw, Dr. RC Reddy ,2016; the purpose of their study was to examine the psychological skills of Ethiopian athletes and explore whether there is significant difference across athletes in different running events; i.e., between short, middle and long distance runners. To achieve the pre described purpose Psychological variables were assessed for each athlete by using the Athletic Coping Skills Inventory-28 (ACSI-28; Smith, et al., 1995). The ACSI-28 is a self-report questionnaire developed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Mean and standard deviations of the seven subscales of psychological skills of athletes described according to running event category. The mean differences in psychological skills between short, middle and long distance runners were determined by using one way ANOVA .The finding of their study shows that ,long distance runners have significantly

greater strength in the psychological skills than short and middle distance runners. And middle distance runners on the other hand, significantly found to be greater than short distance runners. Ethiopian runners, regardless the event, have greater strength in their psychological skills compared to the norm.

Zelalem Abatkun and Prof. N Vijay Mohan, 2017, the purpose of their study was to find out the Anxiety and Self Confidence level of Ethiopian sports academy male soccer players To achieve the objective of the study one hundred fifty (n=150) male soccer players were purposively selected from Ethiopian Youths Sports Academy, Tirunesh Dibaba National Sport Training Center, Ambo FIFA Goal Project and Aribaminch University Soccer Academy and their age ranged from 14 to 19 years. The Sports competition anxiety test questionnaire prepared by Rainer Martens (1986) and sport self confidence questionnaire prepared by Hardy and Nelson (1992) were used in their study. The collected data from the four groups of the participants were statistically analyzed to test the significance of the mean differences and the groups on selected criterion variables one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. The level of significance is set at 0.05. The analysis of the data indicated that there were no significance mean differences in Anxiety and Self Confidence variables in the four selected group's namely goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and striker players of Ethiopian sports academy male soccer players.

Dagne Getachew Assefa, 2015 ; the purpose of his research was to investigate self efficacy and intrinsic motivation in south west Ethiopian public universities male football teams. In this research, expanded version of physical self-Efficacy measure and intrinsic motivation scale were employed. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of descriptive statistics were undertaken, to analyze the data at the 5% level of significance. The result of the study indicates that there was high level of intrinsic motivation in male football players of south west Ethiopian University teams. And there was a positive significant relationship between self efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Thus, it would be worthwhile that football players are trained with scientifically based strenuous exercise; it would increase both self efficacy and intrinsic motivation of the player's performance towards the competition

Suleiman, Dr. R. Ratnakara Rao ,2016, The aim of their study was to examine and describe the competitive anxiety level of Ethiopian female football players and its impact on their performance. To analyze competitive anxiety level of the subjects sport competitive anxiety test SCAT (Marten et al. 1990) was used. The statistical technique employed for this study was descriptive analysis and one way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance to compare group of players across their playing position. The descriptive Statistical analysis indicates that they were at the “average level” of competitive anxiety. The ANOVA result indicated that there was no significant difference in competitive anxiety among the group of players across their playing position. Even though all the players were at the average level of anxiety and significant difference not obtained, their mean value shown that there was a slight difference between the groups. The mid-fielders scored higher mean value than goalkeepers, defenders and attackers; attackers scored the second higher mean value than goalkeepers and defenders; goalkeepers scored the third higher mean value than defenders and from the whole group of players defenders were scored the least mean value. According to (Marten et al. 1990) measure, the lower the mean value indicates the lower in anxiety. The competitive anxiety level result indicated that Ethiopian female football players were at the average level of competitive anxiety and this could be one of the possible impacts on the performance of female football players.

As shown in the above cases the focus of most researchers, who studied in the area of psychological skill training in Ethiopia, was limited on measuring the subject’s level of psychological skill using standard tests. And mostly focusing on football players. Moreover the focus of most of the researchers is just measuring the level using cross sectional type of study .Although it is important to study the current level it is also necessary and important to study the effects of incorporating psychological skill training in the training programs of the athletes i.e. conducting an intervention program and comparing the pre and post test results. And to investigate the reason behind result achieved by the subjects (lower or higher), and the researcher strongly believes that some longitudinal type of research is necessary by using an intervention program (implementation of psychological skill training) to show the contribution of psychological skill training .Consequently the challenges related to the intervention program needs an in-depth investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research method

This research employed a mixed method research approach. More specifically concurrent mixed type of research strategy .As Creswell ,2005 stated Concurrent mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Therefore the research applied both quantitative and qualitative method to get comprehensive data that potentially answer the research question. For the purpose of triangulation both the qualitative and quantitative method focus on a single case, in which the same subjects complete a questioner and are also interviewed. And the answers from both data sets are combined and compared.

The Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interview with coaches. And quantitative data were collected through questionnaire.

3.2 Sources of data

The primary data sources were athletics coaches and technical staffs from the two targeted sport center and sport academy.

3.3. Study setting

The setting for the proposed study was delimited to

Ethiopian Youth sport academy which is located in Addis Ababa beside the newly built national stadium around bole Medhanyalim .And Athlete Trunish Dibaba sports training centre which is located in Asella town Which is located in the Arsi Zone of the Oromia Region about 175 kilometers from Addis Ababa.

3.4. Target population & sample

The intended populations in the proposed research are

- 18 Athletics coaches who are currently working in Ethiopian youth sport academy and athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center

- 4 Technical staffs of Ethiopian youth sport academy and athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center

The sampling method employed for selecting coach respondents were census because all the subjects of the populations were selected for the proposed study .The same method was employed for selecting Technical staffs' respondents. The sample size was 18 coaches and 4 technical staffs.

3.5. Instruments and Procedure of data collection

3.5.1 Instrument for data collection

The data collection instruments were questionnaires, interview, and document analysis. Questionnaires and Interview (semi structured) were selected as data collection instrument by the researcher because it was preferable to show the extent of the current practice and to identify the challenges of PST implementation. Document analysis was selected for generating data regarding the planning of PST, it included the analysis of the training manual, annual and weekly training plans.

3.5.2 Procedure for data collection

Questionnaire and interview questions were prepared for collecting data from coaches and technical staffs and its validity and reliability were checked using pilot testing .The distribution and collection of the questionnaires were done by the researcher. The researcher gave orientations to his subjects about the purpose of the study and how to fill the questionnaire items carefully with reasonable attentions. The questionnaires, after filled by the subjects of the study, checked for completion. Regarding the interview, semi-structured interview questions were prepared before hand and presented to the coaches' in a one to one basis. During the interview the researcher took notes so as to record the responses. Moreover, checklists for document analysis were prepared and some selected documents that are related to planning and training were analyzed.

3.6. Data analysis

The qualitative data were first coded thematically and then analyzed qualitatively using words, phrases, statements and paragraphs obtained from interviews and open-ended questions.

Regarding the quantitative data, the collected data ready for analysis were checked; questionnaires were tallied and organized in to tables. To analyze the organized data and arrive at conclusions, percentage and mean score were employed. Percentages as a statistical tool were selected because not only it is easy but also helps to determine the extent to which PST programs are being implemented. Based on the results obtained from the calculations with the help of SPSS version 25.0, analysis and interpretation of each item were made. And finally since the method applied to the study is mixed concurrent type the answers from both data sets are combined, compared and analyzed together.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

3.7.1. Pilot Test

Before the final questionnaires were administered, pilot testing were conducted on coaches working on athletics which are not included in the sample study. It helped to ensure that the respondents understand what the questionnaire wants to address and performed with the objectives of checking whether or not the items contained in the instruments could enable the researcher to gather relevant information, to identify and eliminate problems in collecting data from the target population.

3.7.2. Validity of the Study

To be sure of the validity, colleagues were invited to provide their comment. The participants of the pilot test were also be first informed about the objectives and how to fill, evaluate and give feedback on the relevance of the contents, item length, clarity of items, and layout of the questionnaire. Based on their reflections, the instruments were improved.

3.7.3. Reliability of the study

To check the reliability , the instrument was pilot tested on 6 coaches who were selected randomly from former coaches of the training center .These participants were not included in the main study. All responses of the participants on items that measure each category of variables were scored and computed by using Cronbach alpha, by the help of SPSS version 25. The result showed that the reliability index of the items that were supposed to measure the coaches rating on the challenges of PST implementation was 0.83. On the other hand, items on the perception of coaches were 0.68, items on assessing the knowledge of coaches was 0.69 and items on the

planning and implementation of PST is 0.71. Based on the results of the pilot test, the instrument with minor modification was used to collect the required data for the main study

3.8. Ethical considerations

Ensuring informed consent

Research participants were provided with sufficient and accessible information about the study so that they can make an informed decision to weather to become involved, or not. The introductory section were providing the following information

- The aim of the research
- Who will be undertaking it
- Who is being asked to participate
- What kind of information is being sought
- How much of the participants time is required
- That participation is voluntary

Accordingly all the respondents are convinced by the presentation and voluntarily participated in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION , ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. In this section, general characteristics of the population, the sport academy and the training centers' current status of psychological skill training implementation which includes planning and practical implementation ,the perception of coaches regarding psychological skill, some challenge that affect implementation of psychological skill training would have been discussed.

4.1 Characteristics of the respondents

The necessary data were obtained from two sport training centers (one is found in Addis Ababa city and the other is found in Assela town) coaches and technical staffs through questionnaires and interview. Besides, analysis of training documents was conducted to enrich the data obtained through questionnaire and interview. The respondents were coaches and technical staffs from the two training centers. Thus a sum total of 22 copies of questionnaires were distributed to 18 coaches and 4 technical staffs, while interview was carried out with two of the coaches.

In this section of the paper respondents profile would presented and analyzed in terms of their sex, educational background, age, work experience, their level of IAAF coaching course attended in relation to the problem under investigation.

Table1. Characteristics of the respondents

No	Items	responses	Frequency	Percent (%)
1.	Place of work	EYSA	9	40.9
		ATDSTC	13	59.1
2.	Sex of respondents	Female	2	9.1
		Male	20	90.9
3.	Age category of respondents	Less than 25	4	18.2
		26-35	10	45.5
		36-45	5	22.7
		Above 46	3	13.6
4.	Occupational status	Coach	18	81.8
		Technical director	4	18.2
		Other	-	-
5.	Work experience in athletics coaching in years	Below 5	3	13.6
		5-10	15	68.2
		Above 10	3	13.6
6.	Educational status	Diploma	-	-
		Degree	10	45.5
		Masters	12	54.5
		Phd	-	-
7.	Level of IAAF coaching course attended	2 ND Local	8	36.4
		IAAF 1 ST	4	18.2
		IAAF 2 ND	10	45.5
		IAAF 3 RD	-	-

Table 1 describes the background characteristics of the respondents, accordingly item 1 of table 1 is about the working place of the respondent ,out of the 22 participants ,40.9%(9) are from the Ethiopian youth sport academy whereas 59.1%(13) are from the Athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center . The difference observed is due to the fact that Athlethe Tirunish Dibaba sport training center have more athletics events than the Ethiopian youth sport academy.

Item 2 of table 1 shows respondents' sex category. Accordingly, 90.1% (18) of coaches, 100% (4) of the technical staffs were male while female respondents account for 9.1 %(1) of coaches. In the above data the number of female coaches was very much low which accounts

for only 9.1% (1) of the eighteen coaches and no female in the position of technical staffs. The gender gap observed in all positions was a problem that needs further investigation of other researchers and the commitment of the two centers in identifying potential causes and suggesting possible solutions.

The Age of respondents, in years, is presented in the item 3 of table 1. Accordingly, the majority, 68.2 % (15) of respondents were aged between 25-45. The other, 18.2 % (4) of respondents were aged less than 25 years. Only 13.6% (3) of respondents' age was above 46 years.

Item 4 of table 1 shows the occupational status of the respondents, in view of that 81.8 % (18) of respondents were coaches and 18.2 % (4) of respondents were technical staffs.

Item 5, of table 1, shows respondents category of educational status. Accordingly, 50 % (9) of coaches, 75 % (3) of technical directors were 1st degree holders, whereas the rest half of the coaches and 25 % (1) of the technical director were in masters level (2nd degree holders). The above data shows that, the all the respondents were at least 1st degree graduates and might have a better understanding of the issue under study and in turn might provided adequate and right responses to the items presented to them.

In item 6 of table 1, the significant majority of coaches, and technical staff's respondents have been served for more than 5 years in coaching athletics. This shows that, they had a relatively better understanding of the coaching profession. This in turn might enable them to provide genuine and correct responses to the questions presented to them. Besides, they might be in good stand to identify those major problems observed in implementing psychological skill training program in their centers.

Item 7 of table 1 shows the respondents level of IAAF coaching course attended. Accordingly, 36.4 % (8) of coaches were attended only second level local athletics training course, whereas 13.65 % (3) of coaches and 4.55 % (1) of the technical director were attended IAAF 1st level coaching course. And 31.85 % (7) of coaches and 13.65 % (3) of the technical staffs have attended 2nd level IAAF coaching course. The above data shows that, all the respondents were at least have attended 2nd level local athletics coaching course and might have a better understanding of the athletics discipline to properly respond to items presented.

4.2 Status of existing practice of psychological skill training

In terms of current status of psychological skill training, the presence of training manual specifically prepared for teaching psychological skill training, the planning of psychological skill training at the level of annual weekly and daily session's were examined.

Table 2 . Planning; annual, weekly and daily sessions

No	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1.	Does your training center have a uniform training manual for your event?	Yes	15	68.2
		No	7	31.8
2.	If your answer for question no 1 is yes, dose the training manual includes psychological skill training?	Yes	11	50.0
		No	11	50.0
3.	Do you think the way that the manual presents the topic enough to apply psychological skill training in the academy?	Yes	3	13.6
		No	19	86.4
4.	Do you prepare annual training plan?	Yes	17	95.5
		No	1	4.5
5.	If your answer for question no 4 is yes, does your annual training plan include psychological skill training?	Yes	6	33.4
		No	12	66.6
6.	Do you prepare a weekly training plan?	Yes	17	95.5
		No	1	4.5
7.	If your answer for Q no 7 is yes ,does your weekly plan psychological skill training inclusive	Yes	6	33.4
		No	12	66.6
8.	Do you prepare a daily session plan?	Yes	10	45.5
		No	8	36.4
9.	If your answer for Q no 9 is yes ,does your session plan psychological skill training inclusive?	Yes	4	32.3
		No	14	77.7

In item 1 of the table 2 above respondents were requested whether or not their academy or training center have a training manual. Accordingly, 15(68.2%) of them replied that, their training center have a training manual, the rest 7(31.8%) of the respondents said the training center don't have a training manual. The result is cross checked by analysis of training materials and discovered almost similar result with the above mentioned data. Moreover the researcher

observes the presence of training manual in only one of the training center which is in athlete Tirunish Dibaba athletics training center

Item 2 of the same table 2 asked the inclusion of psychological skill training in the manual , out of the 15 respondents who said yes for the previous question 50 % of the respondents assures the inclusion of psychological skill training ,the rest half replied the opposite.

Item 3 of table 2 shows the response for the practicality of the training manual, accordingly majority 86.4% of the respondents said that it is not enough to apply the skill in training

Document analysis of the training manuals also shows that there are a few pages which describe some psychological skills like motivation, self confidence and concentration. However the skills are not well emphasized and also inclusion is just limited to explanations of the terms and no practical guide is presented.

Item 4 and 5 of table 2 is about the preparation of annual training plan and the inclusion of psychological skill training respectively, the vast majority of coaches 95.5%respondes yes and the rest 4.5% responded no. Similarity out of the 17 coaches who said yes 66.6% replied the annual training plan is not including psychological skill training whereas the rest 33.4 %of respondents said that their annual training plan is psychological skill training inclusive.

Item 6 and 7 of table 2 is about the preparation of weekly training plan and inclusion of psychological skill training in the weekly training plan respectively ,accordingly vast majority of coaches 95.5%respondes yes and the rest 4.5% response no. similarity out of the 17 coaches who said yes 66.6% replied they weekly training plan is not including psychological skill training whereas the rest 33.4 %of respondents said that their weekly training plan is psychological skill training inclusive. The result obtained here is almost similar to the result obtained in response to item 4 and 5 of table 2.

Item 8 table 2 shows that 77.7%percent of the respondents said they are not preparing a Dailey session plan and the rest 32.3% of respondents answered yes.

The data clearly shows majority of coaches of the two training centers have prepared annual and weekly training plans .but not a session plan. Results obtained from observation of training materials shows a similar result with the data obtained above regarding the planning of annual and weekly training plans. And also observed that the daily session is also prepared by coaches

but no in a separate piece of paper, rather it is planned alongside the weekly plan. However during the analysis of the training plans, the researcher observed that in most training plans psychological skill training is not included. Only a few training plans includes psychological skill training. But these plans by themselves are not complete and lack clarity and consistency regarding the skills to be taught. It is also observed that the teaching of these psychological skill is only limited to the competition period. It is against the reality that psychological skill training should be learned and practiced throughout all the training periods just like physical skills. From the above discussion and presentation it is clearly shown that the problem of implementing psychological skill Training starts at the planning phase.

Table 3. The implementation of psychological skill training

No	Items	Responses	Frequency	(%)
1.	What training contents have the highest number of sessions in your most weekly training plan?	Physical	12	66.6
		Technical	6	33.4
		Tactical	-	-
		Mental	-	-
2.	How frequently do you apply psychological skill training in a weekly basis	Once	8	40.0
		Twice	2	10.0
		More than twice	1	5.0
		Not at all	7	35.0
3.	How many minutes do you allocate for psychological skill training in your daily session?	Not allocated	7	35.0
		Less than 30 min	4	20.0
		30-60min	2	10.0
		Above 60min	1	5.0
4.	How do you rate the implementation of psychological skill training in your academy?	Very high	-	-
		Good	4	20.0
		Satisfactory	4	20.0
		Poor	11	50.0

Item 1 of table 3 shows the composition of the training contents ,hence 66.6%(12) of respondents said most of their training is composed of physical training ,while the rest 33.4%(6)of the respondents said technical training have the highest composition. Tactical and mental aspects of training is given less emphasis .the data shows that most of the coaches are not giving time on their training for the mental part. The document analysis result supports the data presented in the above table.

Item 2 and 3of table 3 presents the frequency and time allotted for psychological skill training in a weekly basis ,accordingly 35%(7) of coach respondents said not at all,40%(8) of the respondents said once a week,10%(2)of the respondents was answered twice and the rest 10 %(2) said more than twice. Regarding the time allotted 35 %(7) of the respondents said not time allocated for teaching psychological skill training,20%(4)of the respondents said 30 minutes or less,10%(2)of them responded 30-60 minutes and the rest 5 %(1) responded above 60 minutes.

The above presentation shows that most coaches are not implementing psychological skill training in their formal training schedule .as the data shows most of the coaches allocate most their time for coaching other components. It clearly shows that the psychological skill training is neglected by coaches and not given the deserved place in the training program.

Item 4 of table 3 presents the rating of coaches regarding the implementation of psychological skill training,consequently50%(11) of respondents rate poor and 10%(3) respondents rate very poor, whereas 20%(4) of the respondents rate the implementation as satisfactory and the same number 20%(4) rate as good.

As the above data shows the implementation of psychological skill training in the two training centers is not good. As the majority responded 70% labeled the implementation as satisfactory, poor and very poor. When we look back the data regarding planning it is not surprising that coaches labeled the implementation as poor. This is because if the program is not planned properly the problem related to implementing practically in training will certainly come about.

4.3 The coaches knowledge regarding psychological skill training

In this regard the background knowledge of coaches in terms of their formal education at higher education institute and in service training during actual work was analyzed.

Table 4. Training related to coaches psychological skill training knowledge background.

No	Items	Responses	frequency	Percent (%)
1.	The number of sport psychology courses you took in your stay at university is?	One	10	45.5
		Two	8	36.4
		More than three	4	18.2
2.	Does your sport psychology course include psychological skill training?	Yes	9	40.9
		No	12	54.5
3.	The emphasis given to psychological skill training in your course was?	very high		
		High	2	9.1
		Medium	6	27.3
		Low	8	36.4
		very low	6	27.3
4.	Do you think the knowledge you get from school enough to implement psychological skill training?	Yes	1	4.5
		No	21	95.5
5.	Did you take additional in service training (short term) in your stay in the academy?	Yes	9	40.9
		No	13	59.1
6.	If your answer is yes ,was the training psychological skill training inclusive?	Yes	7	31.8
		No	14	63.6
7.	Does the training you get help you to implement psychological skill training in your academy?	Yes	4	18.2
		No	18	81.8

Item 1 of table 4 presents the course taken in higher education on sport psychology and the following result have been found. 45.5 %(10) of respondents said they have taken only one course on sport psychology, 36.4%(8) of the respondents said two and the rest 18.2%(4) said three and more.

Item 2 of table 4 presents response whether the psychology course taken includes psychological skill training or not, accordingly 40.9 %(9) of the respondents approves the inclusion and the rest 54.5 %(12) said psychological skill training is not included in their course.

The data obtained from the two items above (item 1 and 2 of table 2) shows the number of sport psychology courses taken in the university is very low. Majority of the coaches have taken a single course on the subject of sport psychology. It is obvious that it is difficult to cover the contents in sport psychology in a one or two sport psychology courses. Moreover, the course by itself is not psychological skill training inclusive. Results from the interview session also produce the same findings. Coaches during interview describe that the course taken in their higher education institute is not enough to implement psychological skill training. One of the interviewees said

“I have taken a single sport psychology course in my stay at the university; it is the only course I ever attend regarding mental skills. The contents on the course were vast and hard to finish in a single semester. And the course was more of a theoretical nature and limited to memorization of the terms than learning how to apply it.”

The other interviewee stated that

“I have taken two sport psychology courses, first when at undergraduate level as introduction to sport psychology, second when I attended my graduate program as an applied sport psychology. However, I couldn't distinguish the difference between the two courses. I felt as if I have taken the same courses twice. Unfortunately, I didn't realize that the psychological skill training was part of the course or not.”

From the data collected in questionnaire and interview we can realize that the course given in sport psychology in general and psychological skill training is very low. Other components of training can be addressed to the students in many different ways: example the physical aspects of training can be learned in sport and exercise physiology courses, sport specific discipline and courses: techniques can be learned during the specialization of the event (sport), in biomechanics class and in practice as well. However, sport psychology class is the only source of knowledge of mental training for the coaches. Therefore, we can conclude that the knowledge coaches get from universities is not enough to implement psychological skill training. The course given in the higher education institutes are not organized in a way that allows coaches to have the necessary knowledge of psychological skill training that can be applied in their actual trainings.

Item 3 and 4 of table 4 present the emphasizes given to psychological skill training in the university courses and asking whether the knowledge you get from the universities enough to apply psychological skill training ,accordingly the majority of respondents stated the emphasizes is below average 14(63.7%).8 (36.4%) low and 6 (27.3%) very low, where as 2 (9.1%) of all respondents good. the reset respondents evaluated the emphasis given to psychological skill training in average 6 (27.3%).Regarding the knowledge they get from universities ,majority of the respondents said not enough 20 (95.5%) to apply in training and only 1(4.4%) of the respondent answered positively. As the data implies the emphasis given to psychological skill training in higher education institute is very law and the students are not equipped with the necessary weapon to apply psychological skill training in training centers and academies .results from the interview yields a similar findings. one of the interviewee stated that

“In my understanding the emphasis given to psychological skill training is very low .first the number of courses allocated for sport psychology is very minimum, as a vast course it deserves more number of courses. Second as a new subject (I am familiar with the topics in other subjects’ .But regarding sport psychology it was my first experience) more emphasis was needed to familiarize students with the new ideas in the course. Third the teaching method (mostly lecture method) by itself was not convenient to address the most important topics in the course including psychological skill training. I thought that by nature the topic psychological skill training needs more practice than the mere memorization of the terms”

Both data from the questioners and the interview shows the emphasis given to psychological skill trainings in the universities is very low and didn’t allow students to implement the skill confidently as they did in other training components. To sum up the lower emphasis given to psychological skill training in the universities contributes its share in the lower rate of implementation in the training centers.

Item 5, 6 and 7 of table 4 presents interrelated questions regarding in service training. The first asks whether you attended in-service training and the following result was obtained accordingly13 (59.1 %) of the respondents replied no and 9(40.9%) of the respondents replied yes. The second item asks the inclusion of psychological skill training and the result shows out of the 13 respondents who responded positively for the previous question 63.6% replied no and the rest 31.8 answered yes .again out of the 63.3% who replied positively for item 6; 81.8 %of

respondents said the training they get didn't help them in implementing psychological skill training, whereas the rest 18.2% of the respondents replied positively.

As the data shows, first in-service training (refreshment course) arranged by the academy for coaches is very low. Second, although they attend some refreshment courses, the topics are not including psychological skill training. and third even very few in-service trainings include psychological skill training they are not well organized and not more than introducing the skills theoretically.

As the one of the interviewees said

“Actually in different times trainings are arranged by the academy and other stake holders, but mostly the issues raised are different from what is directly applied in the training process. In my stay at the center I have attended a very few refreshment courses that have direct relationship with my job (coaching). If trainings related to our job is conducted mostly the focus areas are on planning, physiological aspects of training, on training methods and the like. Trainings related to sport psychology in general and psychological skill in particular is rare. The only course regarding psychological skill training I attended was in 2004 e.g., which is provided by a scholar whose name was MR Mesafint, who was studying abroad, and was invited by senior coach named Buzayehu. The course was very interesting and has got the attention of all coaches who attended the training. Then after no more training is given on this issue as I remembered.”

From the data obtained from questionnaire items and the interview answers, we can conclude that in-service training regarding psychological skill training is not organized by the academy. It certainly contributes to the knowledge gap of coaches on psychological skill training and which was one of the challenges in the implementation of psychological skill training. The above findings also support the findings of (D. Gould, R. Medbery, N. Damarjian, L. Lauer, 1999) which stated a lack of PST knowledge was suggested to be a primary reason why coaches often fail to implement PST programs with their athletes.

4.4 perception of coaches on psychological skill training

Here under respondents' perception regarding psychological skill training would be presented and interpreted accordingly.

Table 5. perception of coaches on psychological skill training

No	Items	Response									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagreed		Strongly disagree	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	Incorporating psychological skill training is beneficial to athletes to perform best in training	21	95.5	1	4.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Psychological skill training improve athletes performance in competition	18	81.5	4	18.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Athletes should learn the skill to improve their level of mental skill.	11	50	6	27.3	3	13.3	2	9.1	-	-
4.	Psychological skill is important only for elite athletes	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	36.4	14	63.3
5.	Psychological skill training should provide quick fix solutions	3	13.6	9	40.9	5	22.7	1	4.5	4	18.2
6.	Psychological skills are innate and cannot be taught	1	4.5	7	31.8	-	-	9	40.9	5	22.7
7.	Psychological skill training is important only for problem athlete	-	-	1	4.5	2	9.1	6	27.3	13	59.1
8.	Psychological skill training requires more time to teach than fitness and technique	3	13.6	8	36.4	6	27.3	4	18.2	1	4.5

Item 1 and 2 of table 5 presents coaches perception regarding the benefits of psychological skill training in training and in competition respectively, accordingly vast majority of coaches 21(95.5%) for the first item and 18(81.5%) for the second item responded strongly agree and the rest 1(4.5%) for the first and 4(18.2%) for the second items responded agree.

As the data shows above and from the interview result the perception of coaches regarding the benefits of psychological skill training intervention is positive .they strongly believes that

incorporating psychological skill training is beneficial for athletes' to perform best both in training and competition. During the interview session one of the coaches said

“During my stay in the academy as an athletic coaches I observed the importance of psychological skills specifically self confidence, focus and concentration, and anxiety control for the athletes for better performance in training and in competition as well .I repeatedly witness athletes who are good in training but underperform in competition and vice versa due to their difference in the level of mental skill. And I strongly believe teaching mental skills certainly can help to wipe out such kinds of problems.”

The other interviewee said

“I have no doubt in the importance of learningpsychological skills.. As a coach I observed athletes who are physically competitive in training but repeatedly lose in competition and vice versa. This because they lack self confidence, experiencing competition anxiety and inability to concentrate. If they were trained mentally they certainly get benefited”.

To conclude coaches perception regarding the importance of psychological skill training is positive and is not a challenge in the implementation of the program.

Item 3 of table 5 presents the perception of coaches in the idea that athletes should learn mental skills to improve the level of the skills, in view of that 11(50%) of respondents strongly agree, 6(27.3%) respondents agree 3(13.3%) of respondents have neutral level of agreement and the rest 2(9.1%) responded disagree .

According to the data the vast majority of the respondents 17(77.3%) shows agreement with issue raised in item 3 of table5.this clearly shows that coaches' perception regarding the need for teaching psychological skill training to increase the athlete's level of mental skill is positive with a few objections. By referring the majority of respondents we can conclude that this is issue is not a challenge for the implementation of psychological skill training.

Item 4 of table for present's coaches perception on the idea that psychological skill training is important only for elite athletes, accordingly 14(63.3%) responded strongly disagree and the rest 8 (36.4%) responded disagree. This implies that coaches' perception regarding the described issue is positive. As (Weinberg & Gould, 2007) stated misperception on the importance of psychological skill training for younger athletes as one of the problem in the implementation

process. However the data shown above approves coaches in the two training centers have positive perception on the importance of psychological skill training for younger athletes.

Item 5 of table 5 shows that 3(13.6%) of respondents replied strongly agree, 9(40.9%) of respondents agree, 5(22.7%) neutral, 1(4.5%) disagree and 4(18.2%) strongly disagree on the question that psychological skill training should provide a quick fix solution. Although the data shows the difference in the perception of coaches on this regard still majority of the respondents shows their agreement 12(54.5%).this shows that expecting that PST provides 'overnight' performance solution for athletes is a misperception by many coaches and this expectation makes coaches to lose their patient to practice the skill as it requires; as Frey, Laguna, and Ravizza (2003) put it, "just as physical skills require time, patience and practice, mental skills require demands as well".

Item 6 of table 5 presents the response in the perception of coaches on the idea that psychological skill training is innate and cannot be learned, accordingly majority of the respondents 14(63.6%) shows their disagreement with 5(22.7%) of respondents strongly disagree and 9(40.9%) of the respondents disagree .whereas 7(31.8 %) of respondents replied agree and the rest 1(4.5%) agree. As the data indicates most coaches' show disagreement on the innate nature of psychological skill training.

Item 7 of table shows that vast majority of the respondents 19(86.4%) showed their disagreement with a very few 1 (4.5%) respondents agreement. This clearly shows that the misperception regarding psychological skill training is minimal. And all the coaches have a positive perception for psychological skill training with the exception of the last item, which is a misperception that psychological skill training requires more time for practice than other components of training.

On item 8 of table 5 out of the total respondents, 3(13.6%) strongly agree, 8(36.4%) agree 6(27.3%) have neutral view 4 (18.2%) disagreed and 1(4.5%) disagreed strongly .As the data describes most coaches have misperception that psychological skill training requires more time than teaching other components of training like physical fitness and technique.

The same result have been found from the interview of the coaches .as one coaches described *"In my opinion the biggest obstacle that a coach faces regarding implementation of psychological skill training is the lack of knowledge, take me as an example my only educational*

background is in sport psychology course when I am attending degree program. It was my first experience. The course was very interesting and full of new ideas. However I did not take additional course in my stay at the university there is only one course of sport psychology throughout the 3 year stay in the university. To be honest regarding specifically on psychological skill trainings I fail to remember anything from the course. Either it was not included or given less emphasis''.

The other coaches said that

“The lack of time is the main challenge in the implementation of psychological skill training in the training academy. Every coach in the academy is expected to take part in every task related to the trainees. For example the coach plan and implement the fitness the techniques and the tactical aspects of training by himself, moreover he is expected to follow the nutrition of the athletes, has to visit the dormitories and also expected to actively participate in administrative tasks. Therefore even if the coaches want to implement psychological skill training all the above mentioned activities takes his time and refrain from implementing the program”.

4.5 Challenges of coaches in the implementation of psychological skill training

Table 6.challenges of coaches in the implementation of psychological skill training

No	Items	Response										Mean
		Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		
		freq	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities	10	45.5	8	36.4	3	13.6	1	4.5	-	-	4.22
2	Luck of qualified sport psychologist	6	27.5	11	50	4	18.4	1	4.5	-	-	4.09
3	Resistance of psychological skill training from coaches	1	4.5	11	50	1	4.5	6	27.3	1	4.5	3.22
4	Resistance of psychological skill training from athletes	3	13.6	11	50	1	4.5	6	27.3	1	4.5	3.40
5	Resistance from sport administrators	-	-	7	31.8	6	27.3	6	27.3	3	13.6	2.77
6	Lack of necessary awareness from coaches	-	-	13	59.1	4	18.2	4	18.2	1	4.5	3.31
7	Lack of necessary awareness from sport administrators	-	-	1	4.5	2	9.1	6	27.3	13	59.1	3.36
8	Lack of necessary awareness from athletes	2	9.1	15	68.2	3	13.6	2	9.1	-	-	3.77
9	Insufficient emphasis given for psychological skill training in higher education institutes	8	36.4	9	40.9	3	13.6	1	4.5	1	4.5	4.00
10	Lack of practical teaching method in higher education institutes.	9	40.9	10	45.5	2	9.1	-	-	1	4.5	4.18
11	Lack of trained coaches to implement psychological skill training	7	31.8	11	50	2	9.1	1	4.5	1	4.5	4.00
12	Limited support from the center administrators.	3	13.6	12	54.5	4	18.2	2	9.2	-	-	3.63

(Key: \bar{x} =4.00-5.00=very high; 3.50-3.99=high; 2.5-3.49= medium; 1.5-2.49=low; less than 1.49 very low)

In table 6 about 12 problems that were considered to affect the implementation of psychological skill training were presented and respondents were asked to rate the extent to which these factors affect the implementation of the program in their academy and training center. Accordingly, the responses provided by respondents were calculated by using mean scores (weighted mean) as statistical tools.

In this regard problems such as : Shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities (\bar{x} =4.22),lack of practical teaching method in higher education institutes (\bar{x} =4.18), luck of qualified sport psychologist (\bar{x} =4.09), insufficient emphasis given for psychological skill training in higher education institutes (\bar{x} =4.00), lack of trained coaches to implement psychological skill training (\bar{x} =4.00), was found to be high factors that affected the implementation of psychological skill training in EYSA and ATDSTC . Moreover, Lack of necessary awareness from athletes (\bar{x} =3.77),, Lack of necessary awareness from sport administrators (\bar{x} =3.36), Resistance of psychological skill training from athletes (\bar{x} =3.40),, Limited support from the center administrators(\bar{x} =3.63) were identified to be moderate factors. This shows that, the major challenges that affect the implementation of psychological skill training in EYSA and ATDSTC were Lack of trained coaches to implement psychological skill training, Shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities, lack Insufficient emphasis given for psychological skill training in higher education institutes, Luck of qualified sport psychologist, Limited support from the center administrators, lack of necessary awareness and practical involvement of athletes in the implementation.

The same challenges are mentioned by the respondents in the open ended questioner and in the interview session. Moreover some emphasis was given by the respondents as: shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities, lack of practical knowledge to apply psychological skill training, absence of sport psychologist in the training centers and limited support from the center, lack of special trainings based on the need of the coaches, unavailability of teaching aids as books, audio visual aids and others as the major challenges in the implementation of psychological skill training .Accordingly the respondents forward the following as a solution to lessen the above described problems.

- Awareness creation programs for all coaches, technical staffs and athletes on the importance of PST
- Continuous training for coaches on the implementation of PST (focusing on how to conduct PST intervention practically in their formal trainings.)
- Improved access to training materials like books ,audio visual aids, training manuals...
- Improved emphasis by higher education institutes....

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study was intended to examine the practices and challenges of implementing psychological skill training program in Ethiopian youth sport academy and Athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training centers. In order to realize the purpose of the study four basic questions were raised.

The basic questions were:

1. What is the current status and practices of psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA?
2. What is the training level (knowledge) of coaches working in ATDSTC and EYSA regarding psychological skill training ?
3. What is the perception of coaches towards psychological skill training?
4. What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA?

Accordingly, 22 copies of questionnaires were distributed to 18 coaches, and 4 technical staffs and interview was carried out with 2 of the coaches (one coach from Ethiopian youth sport academy and one from Athlete Tirunish Dibaba sport training center) to collect information on the practices and challenges of psychological skill training program. Furthermore, document related to planning and related materials such as training manual, annual and weekly plan were observed to enrich the data obtained through questionnaires and interview.

The data obtained were analyzed using percentage and mean value as a statistical tool by using SPSS version 25.0. Hence, the following major findings and conclusions were made based on the analysis.

Major findings

- Even though both academies are lead by the same governing body (ministry of youth and sports), Ethiopian youth sport academy doesn't have a leading training manual. Findings

from the questioner reveals that athlete tirunish dibaba athletics training center have its 'own training manual for all training events separately.

- Regarding annual, weekly and session training plans all coaches prepare the plans. But No annual, weekly or session plan is psychological skill training inclusive except few weekly plans mentioned the word psychology training in their theoretical classes.
- The researcher noticed some coaches have misunderstanding about the difference between psychological skill training and the subject sport psychology (some even uses the words interchangeable).
- Almost all coaches appreciate (value) the contribution of psychological skill training in the improvement of their athlete's performance.
- Majority of coaches lack the practical knowledge to implement the program. Answers from coaches reveals that even though they have taken sport psychology course in their undergraduate or post graduate program the emphasis given to psychological skill training is very low and also impractical. Generally majority of the respondents agrees that the knowledge they get from school is not adequate enough to implement psychological skill training in their academy.
- Most respondents reply that the overall implementation of psychological skill training in the two academies is very poor.
- Regarding the session plan most coaches' response shows that more emphasis is given to the physical and technical aspects of training and least emphasis is given to the mental aspects of training.
- Most coaches replies that they attend some in-service trainings organized by the academy in collaboration with other stake holders, however the focus area of most in-service training is planning ,physical and technical aspects of training and rarely psychological aspect
- Regarding the perception of coaches on psychological skill training the following findings are revealed from the response of the questioner item and the interview.
 - All coaches strongly agree on the fact that incorporating psychological skill training is beneficial to the athletes to perform best both in their training and in their competition
 - Majority of coaches believes that athletes are having a natural ability to have high level of psychological skill training just like physically talents

- It is observed that most coaches have a misperception on the fact that psychological skill training helps athletes' to perform beyond their physical capacity and psychological skill training gives a quick fix solution.
 - Majority of coaches strongly disagree on the fact that psychological skill training is important only for elite athletes, is innate and cannot be learned, and psychological skill training is important only for problem athletes.
 - Most coaches have a misperception that psychological skill training requires more time to teach compared to that of fitness and technique training.
- Regarding the challenges of implementing psychological skill training the following findings are obtained. Coaches reveals a number of challenges they face to implementing psychological skill training in their academy .the challenges are listed in their level of strictness from the highest to the list
- Insufficient emphasis given for psychological skill training in higher education institutes.
 - Lack of practical teaching method in higher education institutes
 - Lack of trained coaches to implement psychological skill training
 - Lack of trained sport psychologist to plan and organize the program
 - Shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities
 - Lack of necessary awareness from athletes
 - Resistance from athletes to learn psychological skills,
 - Limited support from the centers administrators, are the challenges coaches facing in implementing psychological skill training.

5.2. Conclusion

In light of the findings stated above the following conclusions are drawn.

- Regarding the current status and practice of psychological skill training conclusion is drawn based on four categories

Planning and implementation of psychological skill training

- From the research findings it is observed that only one of the sport academy have a training manual which is introduced to the center in 2009 .The training manual was prepared by fitness consultancy group. However the training manuals main

emphasis is the fitness, technique and tactical aspects of training. Lack of the necessary emphasizes given might be one of the reason for the poor implementation of psychological skill training in the two academies.

- The same is true in implementing psychological skill training. Majority of coaches are not implementing psychological skill training in their formal training schedules.

In general by referring the findings regarding planning and implementation it is concluded that the status of psychological skill training implementation is very poor in both training centers. And also we can conclude that the planning by itself is not complete because it neglects one of the important components of sport training, which is mental training.

➤ Regarding coaches perception about psychological skill training

Robert Weinberg, Daniel Gould (2011) stated that the perception of most coaches is distorted regarding psychological skill training. And this misperception is a barrier for PST implementation. However majority of the respondents know and strongly believe the systematic intervention of psychological skill training is beneficial to the athletes to perform best both in training and competition. However there is still misperception by coaches regarding psychological skill training in issues like that psychological skill training helps athletes' to perform beyond their physical capacity, psychological skill training gives a quick fix solution ,and misperception that psychological skill training requires more time to teach compared to that of fitness and technique training. This implies that the above mentioned misperceptions play their own negative role in the poor implementation of PST.

➤ Concerning the knowledge of coaches about psychological skill training

A few coaches have better understanding about psychological skill training. However majority of coaches' understanding about psychological skill training is very low, they clearly mention that they didn't know how to apply it. Although they have taken sport psychology courses in their stay at the university at different levels most coaches agree that it is not practical enough to implement it in training. Moreover the emphasis given to psychological skill training is very low in higher education institutes and by the training centers.

Most coaches appreciate the importance of psychological skill training, and also they want to know more about and try to apply it on their training .But still a few coaches believes it is not their job to implement it .In general the knowledge gap of the coaches regarding psychological skill training is the main challenge in the implementation of psychological skill training.

➤ Regarding the challenges of psychological skill training implementation

Based on the findings the most challenging factors for neglecting the implementation of psychological skill training in Ethiopian youth sport academy and Athlethe Tirunish Dibaba sport training centers were identified as:

- A lack of time for the coaches to teach psychological skills and shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities. The two academies expect coaches to carry out all the athletes' related jobs ,and assigned to manage relatively large number of athletes Therefore they prefer to neglect psychological skill training to have more time for the other tasks.
- A lack of psychological skill training knowledge of coaches. It is the most challenging road block for the implementation of psychological skill training by coaches. Most coaches described that even though they know the importance of psychological skill training in athlete's performance, they didn't know how to conduct PST.
- Lack of necessary awareness regarding psychological skill training from coaches, athletes, and center administrators. The lack of awareness from athletes is the most prominent. Because they are not willing to give time for the practice of psychological skill training. They simply think that it is a waste of time.
- Limited support from the centers administrators is also among the challenges coaches facing in implementing psychological skill training.
- Although it is a challenge even for higher level sport clubs (in all sports) lack of qualified sport psychologist is also a challenge to implement psychological skill training in the academies.
- Lack of necessary material and facility for psychological skill training implementation like; audio-visual aids, books, favorable training areas...

5.3. Recommendation

The findings and conclusions of the study show that there are challenges that hinder the implementation of psychological skill training in Ethiopian youth and sport academy and Athlete Tirunish Dibaba athletics training center. Hence, the researcher forwarded the following recommendations hoping that they could provide an insight on how the problems will be addressed.

- First of all the deserved attention should be given to mental preparation of the athlete. All stakeholders and specifically coaches should be convinced that unless they devote the necessary time to train the mental side of the athletes they are letting their athletes compete half armed. Therefore; it is suggested that Sport leaders, coaches and athletes to realize that although an athlete's success comes from physical talents, mental factors also plays a hugely important role. And they should understand that Psychological training should be an integral part of an athlete's training process carried out in combination with other training elements like the physical skill and fitness.
- It is difficult to have a qualified sport psychologist in every level of sport training institutes recently for many reasons (unavailability is the major problem). Therefore coaches are suggested to be convinced that teaching PST is not the only responsibility of the sport psychologist .Moreover they should understand that literatures advocate the advantages of coaches over the sport psychologist in the teaching of psychological skills for different reasons (Stonecypher et al.,2015 ;Judge et al., 2010; Holliday et al., 2008).Therefore, besides being proficient in training the necessary sport skills and physiological systems coaches should learn and conduct PST in their formal training schedules in order to prepare their athletes to reach the highest performance level.
- As the finding of the research revealed coaches educational background in psychological skill training is mostly limited to their Sport Psychology academic courses. However the way the course is given is not practical enough as it is required to implement it in athletics training .Therefore it is recommended that the universities way of delivering the course to be reconsidered in a way that allow coaches to apply it in their later carrier. Since psychological skill training (also called the psychology of coaching) alone is a very vast part of sport psychology and having direct relationships with performance, it is therefore recommended to be given as a single course at least during specialization.

- As the findings of the study revealed that one of the major challenges in the implementation of psychological skill training is lack of necessary awareness and the subsequent resistance from athletes. Hence the academy leadership and the coaches are expected to organize a consistent awareness creation programs to effectively change the attitude and perception of athletes towards psychological skill training.
- As it is shown in the conclusion the perception of coaches regarding psychological skill training is positive and they value the importance of psychological skill training for the improvement of performance. As the finding indicates the biggest problem that coaches have in PST is the lack of scientific knowledge to conduct the process. Therefore the sport academy is expected to organize in service training based on the need of the coaches. In this regard the sport academy should work closely with higher education institutes and the national federation to organize an effective training program that can provide the coaches with the necessary knowledge to conduct PST in their training centers. Moreover besides valuing the importance of PST coaches should strive to teach themselves the knowledge of psychological skill training through different means like reading, watching videos, attending courses, communicating and working together with sport psychologists...etc.
- As a long term solution for alleviating the challenges .It is suggested that the sport academy to prepare its own training manual specifically designed for teaching psychological skills. It can be achieved by collaborated effort and communication with scholars in the field of sport psychology. And communicating with similar academies abroad, which have their own training manuals.
- Even though this research work may have its own contributions in understanding the current practice and implementation of PST and may serve as lesson for coaches who want to practice PST in the future, due to many reasons the findings of this study addressed only a few training centers and a single type of sport (athletics) . Therefore the researcher recommended that there is a need for other researchers to conduct further study on a larger setting (clubs and training centers) and on more sports.

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Appendix I

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND COMPUTATIONAL
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT SCIENCE

Questionnaire to be filled by coaches

General Information

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the practices and challenges in implementing psychological skill training in ATDSTC and EYSA. Hence you are kindly requested to give genuine and full responses for all questions. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purpose. Please do not mention your identity in any part of this questionnaire.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Part one

Personal information

1.1. place of work

ATDSTC EYSA

1.2. Sex

Male female

1.3 Age

≤ 25 26 -35 36 – 45 46 ≤

1.4. Occupational status

Coach technical director other

1.5 .work expriance in coaching athletics

Below 5 years 5 to 10 years above 10 years

1.6. Education status

Diploma Degree masters phd

1.7. level of IAAF coaching course attended

2nd local IAAF 1st IAAF 2nd IAAF 3rd and above

PART TWO

For the following questions show your answer by putting “x” mark in the box.

1. Does your training center have a uniform training manual for your event?

Yes NO

2. If your answer for question no 1 is yes, dose the training manual includes psychological skill training?
Yes NO
3. Do you think the way that the manual presents the topic enough to apply psychological skill training in the academy?
Yes NO
4. Do you prepare annual training plan?
Yes No
5. If your answer for question no 4 is yes, does your annual training plan include psychological skill training?
Yes No
6. If your answer for Q no 5 is yes ,for which period of the training cycle do you plan psychological skill training?
Competition pre competition preparation transition in all period's
7. Do you prepare a weekly training plan?
Yes No
8. If your answer for Q no 7 is yes ,does your weekly plan psychological skill training inclusive?
Yes No
9. Do you prepare a daily session plan?
Yes No
10. If your answer for Q no 9 is yes ,does your session plan psychological skill training inclusive?
Yes No
11. What training contents have the highest number of sessions in your most weekly training plan? Put in order (1 for the highest ...4 for the least)
Physical technical tactical mental
12. How frequently do you apply psychological skill training in a weekly basis
Once twice more than twice not at all
13. How many minutes do you allocate for psychological skill training in your daily session?
Not allocated less than 30 min 30-60 min greater than 60 min
14. How do you rate the implementation of psychological skill training in your academy?
Very good good satisfactory poor very poor
15. The number of sport psychology courses you took in your stay at university is?
One two more than two

16. Does your sport psychology course include psychological skill training?

Yes No

17. The emphasis given to psychological skill training in your course was?

Very low low average high very high

18. Do you think the knowledge you get from school enough to implement psychological skill training? Yes No

19. Did you take additional in service training (short term) in your stay in the academy?

Yes No

20. If your answer is yes ,was the training psychological skill training inclusive?

Yes No

21. Does the training you get help you to implement psychological skill training in your academy?

Yes No

PART III

The following are statements that reflect the perception of coaches and directors regarding psychological skill training implementation. Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response (agreement and disagreement Level) by using “X” mark in any of the boxes against each statement

No		Strongly agree	agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Incorporating psychological skill training is beneficial to athletes to perform best in training					
2.	Psychological skill training improve athletes performance in competition					
3.	Athletes should learn the skill to improve their level of mental skill.					
4.	Psychological skill is important only for elite athletes					
5.	Psychological skill training should provide quick fix solutions					
6.	Psychological skills are innate and cannot be taught					
7.	Psychological skill training is important only for problem athletes					
8.	Psychological skill training requires more time to teach than fitness and technique					

PART IV

The following are statements that reveal the most common challenges in implementing psychological skill training in sport academy and centers. Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response (agreement and disagreement Level) by using “X” mark in any of the boxes against each statement

No		Strongly agree	agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Shortage of coaches to involve in all coaching activities					
2	Luck of qualified sport psychologist					
3	Resistance of psychological skill training from coaches					
4	Resistance of psychological skill training from athletes					
5	Resistance from sport administrators					
6	Lack of necessary awareness from coaches					
7	Lack of necessary awareness from sport administrators					
8	Lack of necessary awareness from athletes					
9	Insufficient emphasis given for psychological skill training in higher education institutes					
10	Lack of practical teaching method in higher education institutes.					
11	Lack of trained coaches to implement psychological skill training					
12	Limited support from the center administrators.					

PART- IV

Write your Comments on the following question

1. . If you have extra Comments on the practices and challenges in implementing psychological skill training in your center please describe it-----

2. What solutions do you suggests to get rid of the challenges in implementing pst. _____

Thank you once again for spending time and completing this questionnaire.

Appendix II

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND COMPUTATIONAL
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT SCIENCE

Questionnaire to be filled by technical staffs

General Information

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the practices and challenges in implementing PST in ATDSTC and EYSA. Hence you are kindly requested to give genuine and full responses for all questions. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purpose. Please do not mention your identity in any part of this questionnaire.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Part one

Personal information

1.2. place of work

ATDSTC EYSA

1.2. Sex

Male female

1.3. Occupational status

coach technical director other

1.4. years of service (in coaching).

Below 5 years 5 to 10 years above 10 years

1.5. Education status

Diploma Degree Masters phd

1.6. Level of IAAF coaching course 2nd local IAAF 1st IAAF 2nd 3rd and above

PART TWO

For the following questions show your answer by putting “x” mark in the box.

1. Do your training center have a uniform training manual for all events?

Yes NO

2. If you answer for question no 1 is yes, Does the training manual includes psychological skill training?

Yes NO

3. If you answer for question no 2 is yes ,Do you think the way that the manual presents the topic enough to apply psychological skill training?
Yes NO
4. How do you rate the implementation of psychological skill training in your academy?
Very good good satisfactory poor very poor
5. Your awareness level about psychological skill training?
Very high High Average Low Very low
6. The number of sport psychology courses taken in your stay at university is?
One two more than two
7. Does your sport psychology course include psychological skill training?
Yes No
8. The emphasizes given to psychological skill training in your course was?
Very low low average high very high
9. Do you think the knowledge coaches get from school enough to implement psychological skill training? Yes No
10. Do coaches take additional in service training (short term) in the academy?
Yes No
11. If your answer is yes was the training psychological skill training inclusive?
Yes No
12. Do you think the training they get helps them to implement psychological skill training in the academy?
Yes No

PART III

The following are statements that reflect the perception of coaches and directors regarding psychological skill training implementation. Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response (agreement and disagreement Level) by using “X” mark in any of the boxes against each statement

No		Strongly agree	agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Incorporating psychological skill training is beneficial to athletes to perform best in training					
2.	Psychological skill training improve athletes performance in competition					
3.	Athletes should learn the skill to improve their level of mental skill.					
4.	Psychological skill is important only for elite athletes					
5.	Psychological skill training should provide quick fix solutions					
6.	Psychological skills are innate and cannot be taught					
7.	Psychological skill training is important only for problem athletes					
8.	Psychological skill training requires more time to teach than fitness and technique					

PART IV

The following are statements that reveal the most common challenges in implementing psychological skill training in sport academy and centers. Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response (agreement and disagreement Level) by using “X” mark in any of the boxes against each statement

No		Strongly agree	agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Shortage of coaches to conduct all training activities					
2	Lack of sport psychologist					
3	Resistance of psychological skill training from coaches					
4	Resistance of psychological skill training from athletes					
5	Resistance of psychological skill training from sport administrators					
6	Lack of necessary awareness from sport administrators					
7	Lack of necessary awareness from coaches					
9	Insufficient emphasis given for psychological skill training in higher education institutes					
10	Lack of practical teaching method in higher education institutes.					
11	Lack of trained coaches to implement psychological skill training					
12	Limited support from the center administrators.					

PART- IV

Write your Comments on the following question

3. . If you have extra Comments on the practices and challenges in implementing psychological skill training in your center please describe it-----

4. What solutions do you suggests to get rid of the challenges in implementing pst. _____

Thank you once again for spending time and completing this questionnaire.

Appendix III

Interview questions for coaches

1. What is your opinion about the importance of PST in athletics?
2. What is your educational background regarding sport psychology in general and psychological skill training in particular?
3. What is your ability to conduct PST programs
4. Is psychological skill training implemented in your academy or center?
5. In your opinion what are the major roadblock to PST implementation?
6. What do you suggest to wipe out the challenges?

