



**COGNITIVE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS OF
SELF-CONFIDENCE OF NATIONAL ATHLETES DURING
MASS MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
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Degree of Master of Science.**

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DEDICATIONS

I would like to dedicate this work to my both parents who are always there for me at any cost. Dad, thank you for telling me what I'm capable of. For giving me the support that I needed to build a dream to chase after. And for believing that I have the talent to reach my goals. Dad... even though you are not in front of my eyes right now, your picture in my heart will remain beautifully pristine forever. I miss you. Mom, thank you for making me realize that I'm worth everything in this world. That I must be treated like a queen, and that I should never settle for less than what I deserve.

Thank you so much Appa and Amma.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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Faculty: Modern Language and Communication

Sports related issues gain a lot of publicity as well as open the gate for a forum in the media. The public will have the advantage of being informed about the sports activities around their locality through the media. It is also the responsibility of the media to create a platform for the public to interact with sportsmen and sportswomen through publishing interesting stories. This fact is explained by Norman (2011) that foreign athletes are well prepared and positive when facing the media during interviews but this was not so when our national athletes talk to the media. Malaysian athletes have low self confidence in communication. Athletes find it difficult to answer questions posed by the mass media because they lack general knowledge (Vincent & Yahya, 2009). The general objective of this study is to know the relationship between cognitive and environmental factor towards self-confidence of national athletes during mass media interviews. Apart from that, it specifically focuses on the relationship between cognitive factor and self-confidence of national athletes during mass media interviews; the relationship between environmental factor and self-confidence of

national athletes during mass media interviews. Cognitive factor was focused on perception and knowledge of national athletes that leads to self-confidence during mass media interviews. Nevertheless, Environmental factor were emphasised on physical and social environment. Thus, four hypotheses were tested. A quantitative method was applied in this study. The sample of this study consisted of 300 national athletes based on National Sports Council. The sampling methods were convenient sampling and purposive sampling. The location was mainly focused at Bukit Jalil Sport Complex. The study was supported based on the Social Cognitive Theory. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Descriptive statistic and inferential statistic were used in this study. The correlation result for cognitive factor showed that there is a positive relationship between perception and self-confidence during mass media interviews (0.702) and also there is a positive relationship between knowledge and self-confidence during mass media interviews (0.939). Besides that, the correlation result for environmental factor proved that there is a positive relationship between physical and self-confidence during mass media interviews (0.908) and also there is a positive relationship between social and self-confidence during mass media interviews (0.845). Eventually the results revealed that there is positive relationship between cognitive and environment factors towards self-confidence of national athletes during mass media interviews. Today, the media are lurking all around the sports arena. Thus, it is important for athletes to be prepared cognitively and environmentally as these factors contribute in enhancing their self-confidence during mass media interviews.

Keywords: Cognitive, Environmental, Self-confidence, Athletes, Mass Media

SDG: GOAL 4: Quality Education

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**FAKTOR KOGNITIF DAN PERSEKITARAN TERHADAP
KEYAKINAN DIRI ATLET NEGARA SEMASA TEMUDUGA
MEDIA MASSA**

Oleh

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Sukan mendapat banyak publisiti serta membuka pintu untuk forum dalam media massa. Orang ramai akan mempunyai kelebihan untuk dimaklumkan mengenai aktiviti sukan di sekitar kawasan mereka melalui media massa. Ia juga menjadi tanggungjawab media untuk mewujudkan platform bagi orang ramai untuk berinteraksi dengan para atlet kebangsaan melalui penerbitan berita menarik. Menurut Sarimal & Hamedi (2014), media massa Malaysia lebih suka menerbitkan berita atlet antarabangsa berbanding atlet kebangsaan. Fakta ini dijelaskan oleh Norman (2011) bahawa atlet antarabangsa lebih bersedia dan positif ketika menghadapi media semasa wawancara tetapi ini tidak begitu apabila atlet kebangsaan kita berbicara dengan media. Selain itu, Menurut Vincent & Yahya (2009) atlet kebangsaan didapati kurang pengetahuan am untuk menjawab soalan yang dikemukakan oleh media semasa wawancara. Gesture ini menimbulkan persoalan bahawa atlet kebangsaan mempunyai keyakinan diri yang rendah dalam komunikasi. Objektif umum kajian ini adalah untuk mengetahui

hubungan diantara faktor kognitif dan persekitaran terhadap keyakinan diri oleh atlet kebangsaan semasa wawancara dengan media massa. Selain itu, secara khususnya kajian ini menumpukan kepada hubungan diantara faktor kognitif dan keyakinan diri para atlet kebangsaan semasa wawancara dengan media massa; hubungan diantara faktor persekitaran dan keyakinan diri terhadap atlet kebangsaan semasa wawancara dengan media massa. Faktor kognitif difokuskan kepada persepsi dan pengetahuan am para atlet kebangsaan yang membawa kepada keyakinan diri semasa wawancara dengan media massa. Manakala faktor persekitaran ditekankan pada persekitaran fizikal dan sosial. Oleh itu, empat hipotesis telah diuji. Penyelidikan ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif. Terdapat dua kaedah persampelan digunakan oleh penyelidik iaitu persampelan mudah dan persampelan bertujuan. Sampel kajian ini terdiri daripada 300 atlet kebangsaan berdasarkan Majlis Sukan Negara. Lokasi yang ditumpukan adalah Kompleks Sukan Bukit Jalil. Kajian ini disokong berdasarkan Teori Kognitif Sosial (Social Cognitive Theory). Kesemuaan hasil kajian telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan Pakej Statistik untuk Sains Sosial (SPSS) versi 22.0. Statistik deskriptif dan statistik inferensi telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk mengenal pasti nilai-nilai peratusan, min, purata dan sisihan piawai. Manakala, statistik inferensi digunakan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan yang dapat menyumbang kepada pemboleh ubah kajian ini. Hasil keputusan didapati, ujian korelasi untuk faktor kognitif menunjukkan terdapat hubungan positif antara persepsi dan keyakinan diri semasa wawancara dengan media massa (0.702) dan juga terdapat hubungan positif antara pengetahuan am dan keyakinan diri semasa wawancara dengan media massa (0.939). Selain itu, hasil ujian korelasi bagi faktor persekitaran pula membuktikan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif antara persekitaran fizikal dan kepercayaan diri semasa wawancara dengan media massa (0.908) dan juga terdapat hubungan positif antara persekitaran sosial dan keyakinan diri semasa

wawancara dengan media massa (0.845). Oleh yang demikian, hasil kajian membuktikan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif antara faktor kognitif dan persekitaran terhadap keyakinan diri oleh atlet kebangsaan semasa wawancara dengan media massa. Pada zaman sekarang, media banyak memberi penempuan disekitar arena sukan. Oleh itu, pentingnya bagi atlet kebangsaan untuk disiapkan secara kognitif dan persekitaraan kerana faktor ini menyumbang dalam meningkatkan keyakinan diri atlet semasa wawancara dengan media massa.

Kata Kunci: Kognitif, Persekitaraan, Keyakinan diri, Atlet, Media Massa

SDG: *GOAL 4: Quality Education*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This section contains background of study, problem statements, research questions, objective of study, significant of study, scope and limitation of study, definition of keywords.

1.1 Background of Study

According to Dinesh Saini (2015) there are many positive aspects in sports relationship with the media. Among the positive aspects is the ability of the mass media to get closer to the public as well as sports personalities. The mass media has become an important tool to connect the audience of various sports. Nevertheless, mass media is a medium planned for huge audience.

People from all walks of life, from the urban and rural areas, have the opportunity to access sports. Magazines and newspapers together with broadcast media like radio and television are excellent platforms that provide news on sports. The latest innovative social media as well as online portals have also played a big role in providing sports updates instantly (David Stead, 2002)

Sports related issues gain a lot of publicity as well as open the gate for a forum in the media (Andrew Cave, 2016). Sportsmen, sportswomen, coaches and trainers get

opportunities to voice their opinion and comment on several aspects involving sports. The public will have the advantage of being informed about the sports activities around their locality through the media. The media is a link between sports enthusiasts and sports personalities. It is also the responsibility of the media to create a platform for the public to interact with sportsmen and sportswomen through publishing interesting stories (Mark Wysocki,2012).

Deborah Brake (2010), stated sport is not only about the game but also athletes, coaches, administrators and other support staff. The mass media has the ability to make the athletes famous and become icons and respected (Pamela Bass, 2016). The successful athletes have the chance to be in the limelight. For example, Malaysian athletes like Datuk Nicol David and Datuk Lee Chong Wei can be considered as two of the most famous sports personalities. All these accolades are results of the mass media providing extensive coverage on their success in the international arena.

Interesting facts can only be gathered through interaction or interviews. According to Helen Jefferson Lenskyj (2012), to come out with interesting stories, the media must love talking to people. Another element for media to publish a good story is from interesting and reliable feedback. Devito (1989) described that the feedback received should be precise and understood. To get the desired feedback or answers, the mass media has to have close ties with athletes. The mass media should gain the confidence of the athletes.

Richins & Marsha (1991) had stated that media can be positive or negative. Positive reports are encouraging and inspiring to athletes. However, they seem to be uncomfortable when there are negative reports. Although some may be skeptical about the media, athletes must realise that they cannot ignore attention from the same. The positive reports will be loved by the public as well as athletes. For the athletes, it is important to have excellent communication skills. They must be able to express their views, whether in victory or defeat, with detailed account.

According to Frias, J.M. (2003), communication is gradually becoming more important in the developing world. Information can be interpreted in a different manner and can lead to a lot of misunderstanding and confusion. Therefore, feedback from athletes during discussion and interview, is very important.

1.2 Problem Statements

Sport has become a main source of entertainment for many societies (Mark Shugoll, 2015). Today, the media are lurking all around the sports arena. This act also creates a platform for dissemination of information – good or bad. Although the athletes' performance is the media's main focus, they also take the liberty to delve into the athlete's social activities. There is hardly any chance for error as society's interest on the athletes has increased. Whatever it may be, an athlete has to rely on the media to gain celebrity status. The media, through their reports, informs the general public on the athlete's success stories. It generates a lot of interest amongst the readers. With the athlete's increasing success in his or her respective sports, there is a lot of hype

which contributes to building their reputation and status. Eventually, the athlete becomes an icon and hero. The athlete's interaction with the media will make him a high-profile personality (Frank Bartscheck, 2016).

According to Sarimah & Hamedi (2014) Malaysian mass media prefer to publish foreign athletes' stories compared to national athletes. This fact is explained by Norman (2011) that foreign athletes are well prepared and positive when facing the media during interviews but this was not so when our national athletes talk to the media. They show reluctance, apprehension and shyness. The mass media's job is to extract the best from the athlete to make the story interesting and exciting. This can only be achieved through a good communication process (Norman, 2011). According to Crookes (1991), lack of motivation and even emotion may interfere in communication.

Vincent, Yahya & Julianamary (2013) stated, back-up national athletes have low self-confidence in terms of communication. In a study conducted by Benabou and Tirole (2002), a person's self-confidence is improved through motivation. An athlete's self-confidence contributes immensely to his progress in work, sports and academy. Likewise, it also discussed that self-confidence is a vital tool for an athlete when dealing with the media. It was discovered that a person with high self-confidence is motivated when he gets the opportunity to respond to interaction both, positive and negative.

As Crookes (1991) had stated, experience plays an important role in the communication in sharing meaningful information. However, he also believed that communication difficulties could be due to perception. There is a common perception that athletes tend to be apprehensive and cautious towards the media. Kyle Ott (2008) explained the coaches felt the reports, whether positive or negative, will affect the national athletes' performances. The national athletes are advised by the coaches to give short answers instead of having lengthy conversations. This process or censure gives the media a negative perception towards the athletes. It must be noted that the media are interested in stories to attract audience as well as sensation.

According to Vincent & Yahya (2013), Malaysian athletes have low self confidence in communication. Athletes find it difficult to answer questions posed by the mass media because they lack general knowledge. Besides that, Rosyam Nor (2011) said that reading newspapers and magazines provides makes the athletes well versed in general knowledge to be able to communicate with external parties including the media, confidently. Earlier, common people seldom had the chance to meet the media. The rapid globalization and information exchange have led individuals to be more exposed to massive invasion of information integrated with sports development (WYM Tang, 2009). Sports interviews are in various forms including telephone, at the venues, e-mail, social media, radio or television and live programmes. Crookes (1991) had stressed that communication can be difficult if a person lacks knowledge too. This shows that knowledge is important to provide answers as well as express oneself in an effective manner.

Based on Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura (1989) had specified that a person to gain knowledge and skills, the important roles are linked to cognition, the environment and behavior. A person's behavior will have either a positive or negative impact based on social and physical environment. For instance, the athletes' communication skills can be determined by people around them – like their family members, friends and coaches (Sherwyn P. Morraeale, 2000). Thus, athletes also come from different ethnic and regional background. It shows that they came from various surroundings which determine their behavior and attitude (Bandura,1989).

1.2 Research Question

1. What is athletes' perception towards mass media?
2. Which medium are frequently used by national athletes to gain knowledge?
3. How is athlete's self-confidence during mass media interviews?
4. What is the relationship between cognitive and self-confidence during mass media interviews?
5. What is the relationship between environment and self-confidence during mass media interviews?

1.3 Objective of Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between Cognitive and Environmental factors towards the self-confidence of national athletes during Mass Media interviews.

1.4.2 Specific Objective

1. To find out athletes' perception towards mass media.
2. To know athletes most frequently used medium to gain knowledge.
3. To identify athlete's self-confidence during mass media interviews.
4. To find the relationship between cognitive factor and self-confidence of National athletes during mass media interviews.
5. To discover the relationship between environmental factor and self-confidence of National athletes during mass media interviews.

1.5 Significance of Study

1.5.1 Practical

It has been discovered that most of the national athletes are uncomfortable when dealing with the mass-media. According to Sarimal & Hamdi (2014), Malaysian mass media prefer to publish foreign athletes' stories as opposed to national athletes. As Norman (2011) had stated, the national athletes are shy during interviews. As such, they tend to have difficulties when dealing with the media. Individuals with self-confidence will, on most occasions, have a fruitful communication with the media (Benabou & Tirole 2002). The objective of this study is to identify the relationship between cognitive and environmental factor towards self-confidence of national athletes during interviews with the mass media. The athletes will be able to share their experience with convincing and justified explanations.

However, Crookes (1991) believes that perception as well as apprehensions could lead to difficulties in communication. Nevertheless, this study is also to get intense reaction on the national athletes' perception towards the mass media. Besides knowing the athlete's perception towards the media, Crookes (1991) defined the lack of knowledge contributes to difficulty in communicating with someone.

According to Vincent & Yahya (2009), Malaysian athletes have low self confidence in communication. Athletes find it difficult to answer question from mass media because they are lack general knowledge. Even Rosyam Nor (2011) had said that general knowledge, gained through dailies and monthlies, allows the athletes to be well versed with information during interaction, hence interacting with confidence.

The research overall, will focus on elaborating on athletes' opinions towards the media. It will also delve into the relationship between cognitive and environment factors in contributing to effective communication with the media. The focus is on the national athletes as well as athletes in the back-up squad. The reason being, these athletes will have to be well prepared to face the media. It could be during or after competitions or even off season. The purpose of this study is to find out their opinions towards the media. Their feedback will give an insight on their perception which eventually describes their behavior when facing the media.

The study will also enlighten us on the national athletes' general knowledge and their ability to communicate in an effective manner. Newspapers and magazines, Rosyam

Nor (2011) had stated, provide the athletes the knowledge to interact with the media with confidence. Therefore, this study will be able to evaluate whether the national athletes are using the newspapers or magazines to gain knowledge to face the media.

Surroundings or environment also contributes to an effective conversation. A friendly atmosphere can result in an effective and fruitful interaction (Glenn Llopis, 2014). National athletes, as Norman (2011) had observed, are shy during question-and-answer sessions. It could be due to the environment where the sessions take place. If the surrounds are not in a friendly atmosphere, the athletes have the tendency to have difficulties in communications (William Pfeiffer, 1889). In the survey, the athletes will have the opportunity to voice their views on their feelings during interviews when conducted in various situations. The organisations, in this case the National Sports Associations, will be aware of the athletes' shortcomings when dealing with the media. Based on the study's findings, the National Sports Association will be in a good position to guide the national athletes when interacting with media.

1.5.2 Policy

The study will provide ideas on how to educate national athletes on ways to interact with the mass media. According to Kyle Ott, B.S. & Marieke Van Puymbroeck (2008) athletes' perception or views towards the media is pivotal. It provides a platform for the athlete to share his opinion as well as interact with the public. He must not forget, being a national athlete, the media serves as a bridge between him

and the general public. The media, on their part, should be fair towards athlete when disseminating information. The environment could also contribute to effective interaction. It must be friendly atmosphere on both sides – athletes as well as media (Glenn Llopis, 2014).

According to Darian Nourian (2015) the athletes must also know their limits. They must only talk about their own views. To express their views, the athletes should have a high level of self-confidence. Interaction with self-confidence will contribute to the athlete's intellectual conversation. According to Kyle Ott, B.S. & Marieke Van Puymbroeck (2008), the athlete has to trust the media for him to be more effective in sharing his views. At the same time, he has to earn the respect of the media with sensible explanations. Therefore, athletes should have admirable communication skills to contribute to an interesting and exciting conversation.

The study will give an indication to the athlete on their rights. It will also highlight their role towards the media when dealing with them. For example, when they are in foreign countries, they are considered the country's ambassadors. Their interaction with the foreign media will give a positive outlook on Malaysia. The findings will also be helpful to scholars to evaluate the progress the national athletes have made since this study was done. They will be able to look at other ways to improve the policy for a better communication programme.

1.5.3 Theory

With the help of Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1989), researchers believe this study will give a better outcome for the athletes and also National Sports Council (NSC) to identify the shortcomings the athletes face when communicating with the mass media. The environment, behavior and interaction of personal factors contribute to the SCT's definition of human behavior. These three factors also determine an individual's behavior. During communication or interaction with the media, the three factors play an important role for the athlete to communicate with the media (Simon Hudson, 2015). According to Bandura, the three factors are cognitive factors or in layman's terms - personal factor. They are an individual's perception, belief, expectations or intention towards the subject. Based on this study's objective, an athlete's perception will show his belief towards mass media during interviews. Perception could overcome a person's self-confidence (Bandura, 1989).

However, the second factor is the environmental factor which says social influence, beliefs, surroundings and human interaction as well as physical structures could influence an individual interaction towards an issue (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, an athlete's communication with media could be influenced by the environment. It is believed that the environment could also affect an athlete's self-confidence. Overall, a person's reaction is determined by cognitive and environmental factors. This theory will contribute immensely to the study.

1.5.4 Method

The research will be using quantitative method. To convey the conclusion to others this study is aimed to generate data from a large sample of study. (York, 1998). The questionnaire procedure is used to complete the survey. The research was mainly focused in National Sports Council (NSC). It is located at Bukit Jalil Sport Complex. All the respondents are national athletes who are involved in the NSC Training and Development programme. The main focus of NSC is on the preparation of athletes towards the Sea Games, Asian Games, World Championship, Commonwealth and the Olympics. Nevertheless, in Bukit Jalil Sport Complex, under the NSC Training and Development programme, athletes from many sports are based. Therefore, it was a convenient and appropriate location to compile the relevant information.

An acceptable number of 300 subjects were identified to be part of this study. The subject that was chosen in this research is specified and met according the specific criterions. The National Athletes are required to be in Elite or Back-Up programme and should have experienced participating in interview/approach by media. The athletes will be given a set of questions based on the objective which is perception, knowledge and self-confidence as well as the environment. The questions are structured using the Likert format as it allows the respondents to answer the survey in an easy way. With the application of statistics for data interpretation, quantitative approach was allowing the study to be conducted. Five choices – 1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (neutral); 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) – are used in this survey format.

The process of data entry - forms received from the respondent will immediately be transferred to the computer by using the software “Statistical Package for Social Science” (SPSS). This software is intended to facilitate the process of data analysis. These data are also included in the table that contains the descriptive statistics percentage, mean, mode and standard deviation. The study will measure the relationship between variables by using correlation analysis as it helps to determine how Cognitive and Environment factors influence an effective interaction with media.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of Study

The aim of this study is to identify the relationship between Cognitive and Environment factor towards Self –Confidence of National athletes during Mass Media interviews. The participants for this study will be confined to national athletes, who are in the National Sports Council (NSC)’s Elite and Back-up training programmes. Most of the national athletes are based at the NSC Hostel in Bukit Jalil.

1.7 Definition of Keywords

Communication - Julia Wood (2004) has defined communication as a calculated procedure to establish meanings through symbols created by individuals. Communication is a non-verbal behavior, language and human thoughts.

Athlete – According to Kim & Marriem (2004), an individual is classified as an athlete who is actively involved in sports. The person has to train regularly and take part in competitions.

Mass Media – A group of people, as stated by Blythe (2009) working in an organised environment and has the responsibility to relay the same information to a big number of people at the stipulated time. They focus on mass production and mass circulation.

Perception – According to Danili & Reid (2006), this factor can contribute to a person's character which in turn will determine his progress or decline in performance through thoughts, views, concentration and expectations.

Knowledge – According to Gregg Henriques (2013), knowledge is best described as a relationship of reality and thoughts of truth, goodness and beauty.

Interview – It is defined as interaction between two or more parties to share ideas, opinions, experience and facts. (Scott,2006)

Self-confidence – It is a trait for an individual to be bold and brave in expressing his views with conviction. (Benabou and Tirole, 2002)

Summary

Sport is one of the best entertainments for the people all around the world. Athletes are seen as celebrities, idol, mentor, and many more. This has contributed to have many fans all over the world. To be well-known world widely is never easy without mass media. Thus, this chapter explained the problem facing by the athletes during mass media interview. Main focus is to find the relationship between cognitive and environmental factor towards self-confidence of national athletes during mass media interviews. Following chapter is to explore past findings of cognitive and environmental factor that contributes an athlete's self- confidence.

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