



Strength-Based Therapy: Empowering Athletes' Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

While it is known that focusing on positive attributes and capabilities can enhance psychological resilience, the specific effectiveness of strength-based therapy in improving self-efficacy and life satisfaction among athletes remains unexplored. By emphasizing positive attributes and capabilities, strength-based therapy aims to enhance athletes' psychological resilience and overall well-being, which are crucial in the highly competitive and physically demanding world of sports. Therefore, this study investigates the effectiveness of strength-based therapy in enhancing the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of athletes. The study used a quasi-experimental design with 50 competitive athletes aged 18-35. The methodology included an 8-week intervention focusing on leveraging individual strengths, goal setting, and resilience building. Outcomes were measured using the General Self-Efficacy Scale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. To examine these differences, an analysis of variance with repeated measures, coupled with Bonferroni's post-hoc test, was conducted using SPSS-26. Results indicated significant improvements in both self-efficacy and life satisfaction in the experimental group compared to the control group. The study concludes that strength-based therapy positively impacts athletes' psychological well-being, suggesting its potential for broader application in sports therapy.

Keywords: Strength-based, Empowering, Athletes, Self-efficacy, Life Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

The concept of strength-based therapy in sports, particularly in empowering athletes' self-efficacy and life satisfaction, has garnered significant attention in recent years (1). This therapeutic approach focuses on leveraging

an individual's inherent strengths, rather than concentrating solely on their weaknesses or deficits (2). By emphasizing positive attributes and capabilities, strength-based therapy aims to enhance athletes' psychological resilience and

overall well-being, which are crucial in the highly competitive and physically demanding world of sports.

Athletes often face immense physical and psychological pressures, including the risk of injuries and the constant demand for peak performance. Traditional rehabilitation methods, such as those discussed in the study of sports rehabilitation in athletes with meniscal lesions based on electroacupuncture associated with sports therapy, have shown high resolute application value (3). However, there is a growing recognition of the need for a more holistic approach that also addresses the mental and emotional aspects of recovery and performance (4).

Strength-based therapy in sports settings can be particularly effective in addressing these holistic needs. It aligns with the principles of positive psychology, which focuses on fostering positive feelings, behaviors, and cognitions (3, 4). In the context of sports, this approach can help athletes develop a more positive self-perception, enhance their motivation, and improve their overall mental health, thereby contributing to better performance outcomes. The application of strength-based therapy in sports is not just limited to mental health and well-being. It also has implications for physical recovery and performance enhancement. For instance, studies on specific strength trainings-based educational therapy style in sports have highlighted the importance of tailoring training to the athlete's specific strengths to optimize performance and recovery (5, 6).

Moreover, the integration of strength-based approaches in sports therapy can lead to more personalized and effective rehabilitation programs. For example, research on ischemic therapy in musculoskeletal medicine, although still in its nascent stages, suggests potential for enhancing muscle performance through innovative methods (5, 6). This indicates the evolving nature of sports therapy, where strength-based and personalized approaches could play a significant role. The psychological aspect of strength-based therapy is particularly crucial in sports. Athletes' self-efficacy, or their belief in their ability to succeed, can significantly impact their performance and satisfaction with life. By focusing on strengths, athletes can build a stronger sense of self-efficacy, which in turn can lead to improved performance and greater life satisfaction (7, 8).

In conclusion, strength-based therapy offers a promising avenue for enhancing athletes' self-efficacy and life satisfaction. By focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses, this approach not only aids in physical rehabilitation and performance enhancement but also bolsters psychological resilience and well-being. As the field of sports therapy continues to evolve, incorporating strength-based methods could lead to more holistic and effective treatment and training programs for athletes. Thus, this study aimed to examine the effectiveness of strength-based therapy on athletes' self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The hypothesis is that strength-based therapy will significantly improve athletes' self-efficacy and life satisfaction by leveraging their inherent strengths and focusing on positive attributes and capabilities.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The methodology incorporates a quasi-experimental design to assess the therapy's impact over an extended period, including a one-month follow-up. By a purposive sampling, the study targets 50 competitive athletes aged 18-35, excluding those with psychological disorders or undergoing other therapies. The 8-week intervention, based on positive psychology principles, focuses on identifying and leveraging individual strengths, goal setting, and resilience building. Outcomes in self-efficacy and life satisfaction are measured using validated scales at the beginning, end, and one-month post-therapy (follow-up stage). Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, are paramount. The addition of a one-month follow-up allows for evaluating the lasting effects of the therapy, crucial for understanding its long-term impact on athletes' psychological well-being.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. General Self-efficacy Scale (GSES)

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) is a psychological assessment tool designed to measure an individual's belief in their ability to cope with a variety of situations and challenges. This scale is widely used in research and clinical settings. The GSES consists of 10

items. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true). The total score is calculated by summing the responses to all items, with higher scores indicating greater self-efficacy. The GSES has demonstrated high internal consistency and reliability across various studies and cultural contexts. For instance, a study evaluating the psychometric properties of the GSES in different countries found internal consistencies of .84, .81, and .91 in German, Costa Rican, and Chinese samples, respectively (9). The scale's unidimensionality was replicated in all samples, supporting its construct validity. Additionally, the GSES has shown predictive validity in relation to task-specific self-efficacy and the formation of subsequent self-efficacy beliefs (10).

2.2.2. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a measure of life satisfaction, which is a component of subjective well-being. The scale assesses an individual's global judgment of their satisfaction with life. The SWLS contains 5 items. Respondents rate each item on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The total score is obtained by summing the responses, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction (11). The SWLS has been shown to have high internal consistency and temporal reliability, making it a reliable measure of life satisfaction. It has been validated across various populations and has been found to correlate with measures of mental health and predict behaviors such as suicide attempts (12).

2.3. Intervention

The intervention itself is an 8-week strength-based therapy program, with sessions held weekly. These sessions are designed to identify and leverage individual strengths, alongside goal-setting exercises and techniques aimed at building resilience. This approach is rooted in positive psychology, emphasizing the enhancement of personal skills

and attributes, rather than merely addressing deficits or weaknesses (1, 2, 13, 14).

2.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data entailed contrasting the outcomes from the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up phases between the control and experimental groups. To examine these differences, an analysis of variance with repeated measures, coupled with Bonferroni's post-hoc test, was conducted using SPSS-26. Prior to executing the ANOVA for the two examined variables - SWL and Self-efficacy - we verified the essential prerequisites: normality, equality of variances, and observation independence. The Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized to determine the normal distribution of data for both variables. The test produced a p-value of 0.16 for SWL and 0.13 for Self-efficacy. Given that both p-values exceed 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected, suggesting that the data for both variables adhere to a normal distribution. The assessment of variance equality across groups for both variables was conducted using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. This test indicated a p-value of 0.14 for SWL and 0.11 for Self-efficacy. These p-values, being higher than the 0.05 benchmark, validate the fulfillment of the homogeneity of variances criterion. The study's structure also guaranteed the independence of observations, as each participant was assigned to only one group (either experimental or control), with no interchange between the groups. Moreover, the data gathered at various intervals were from separate, independent occurrences.

3. Findings and Results

In the case of demographic characteristics, the age range is 18-35 years, with a median age of 24. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 26 males and 24 females. Participants represent diverse sports disciplines including track and field, swimming, and team sports like soccer and basketball. Educational background varies, with most athletes having some level of college education.

Table 1

The Results of Descriptive Findings

Variable	Group	Stage	Mean	Standard deviation
Self-efficacy	Control	Pre-test	24.71	4.32
		Post-test	24.06	4.15
		Follow-up	24.66	4.70
	Experimental	Pre-test	23.19	5.22
		Post-test	29.48	5.10
		Follow-up	29.77	5.05
SWL	Control	Pre-test	22.91	5.51
		Post-test	23.03	4.93
		Follow-up	22.95	5.19
	Experimental	Pre-test	21.56	4.88
		Post-test	26.73	5.18
		Follow-up	26.85	5.06

As can be seen in Table 1, the results of the study revealed distinct patterns in the mean scores of self-efficacy and satisfaction with life (SWL) across different stages (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up) for both control and experimental groups. For self-efficacy, the control group showed relatively stable mean scores, starting with 24.71 (SD = 4.32) at pre-test, slightly decreasing to 24.06 (SD = 4.15) at post-test, and then marginally increasing to 24.66 (SD = 4.70) at follow-up. In contrast, the experimental group exhibited a notable increase in self-efficacy, with the mean score rising from 23.19 (SD = 5.22) at pre-test to 29.48 (SD = 5.10) at post-test, and further to 29.77 (SD = 5.05) at follow-up.

Regarding SWL, the control group's mean scores remained consistent across all stages, with a pre-test score of 22.91 (SD = 5.51), a post-test score of 23.03 (SD = 4.93), and a follow-up score of 22.95 (SD = 5.19). The experimental group, however, showed a significant improvement in SWL, starting from a mean of 21.56 (SD = 4.88) at pre-test, increasing to 26.73 (SD = 5.18) at post-test, and slightly rising to 26.85 (SD = 5.06) at follow-up. These results suggest that the experimental group experienced substantial improvements in both self-efficacy and SWL over the course of the study.

Table 2

The Results of Analysis of Variance with Repeated Measurement

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	Effect size
SWL	Time	13532.39	2	2921.17	3.91	< 0.001	0.20
	Time*Group	21592.45	2	4226.46	9.01	< 0.001	0.34
Self-efficacy	Time	12549.91	2	286.49	3.70	< 0.001	0.19
	Time*Group	20956.99	2	341.22	8.88	< 0.001	0.32

Based on the data presented in Table 2, it was observed that both satisfaction with life (SWL) and self-efficacy underwent significant changes over time, as indicated by the values (SWL: F=3.91, p<0.01; Self-efficacy: F=3.70, p<0.01). Additionally, the analysis of variance revealed a

significant interaction between time and group for both SWL (F=9.01, p<0.01) and self-efficacy (F=8.88, p<0.01). To further explore these findings, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was conducted.

Table 3

The Results of Bonferroni Post-hoc Test

Variable	Post-test – Follow-up			Pre-test – Follow-up			Pre-test – Post-test		
	Mean dif.	SE	Sig.	Mean dif.	SE	Sig.	Mean dif.	SE	Sig.
SWL	0.14	2.15	1.00	6.13	2.10	0.00	6.27	2.00	0.00
Self-efficacy	0.25	2.07	1.00	6.24	2.15	0.00	6.49	2.21	0.00

As shown in Table 3, the Bonferroni post-hoc test results for the experimental group for both satisfaction with life (SWL) and self-efficacy across different time comparisons revealed significant findings. For SWL, the mean difference between the post-test and follow-up stages was not significant ($p = 1.00$), whereas the differences between pre-test and follow-up ($p < 0.01$), and pre-test and post-test ($p < 0.01$) were significant. Similarly, for self-efficacy, the post-test to follow-up comparison showed no significant difference ($p = 1.00$). In contrast, the comparisons from pre-test to follow-up and pre-test to post-test both demonstrated significant differences ($p < 0.01$ for both comparisons). These results indicate that significant changes in SWL and self-efficacy occurred primarily between the pre-test and the subsequent stages.

4. Discussion

The findings of the current study, demonstrating the significant improvement in self-efficacy and life satisfaction among athletes through strength-based therapy, are corroborated by several research studies across different domains. These studies collectively emphasize the efficacy of strength-based and individual-focused approaches in enhancing psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

The current study's findings are supported by a robust body of literature that collectively highlights the efficacy of strength-based and individual-focused approaches in enhancing psychological well-being and life satisfaction. By bolstering self-efficacy, such interventions not only improve athletes' performance and satisfaction but also contribute to their overall quality of life, emphasizing the critical role of psychological factors in achieving holistic well-being. For example, Burger and Samuel (2016) shed light on the pivotal role of self-efficacy in determining life satisfaction among

young people, suggesting that individuals who believe in their ability to achieve desired outcomes tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction (15). This correlation is foundational to the principles of strength-based therapy, which aims to bolster athletes' confidence in their abilities, thereby enhancing their overall life satisfaction.

Similarly, O'Sullivan (2010) emphasizes the direct link between self-efficacy and life satisfaction, reinforcing the notion that enhancing an individual's belief in their capabilities can significantly impact their well-being (16). This is particularly relevant in sports settings, where athletes' self-efficacy can be a critical determinant of their psychological resilience and satisfaction. Wright and Perrone (2010) explore how self-efficacy serves as a mediator between attachment and life satisfaction, providing insights into the psychological mechanisms through which strength-based therapy may exert its beneficial effects (17). By improving athletes' self-efficacy, such interventions can indirectly boost their life satisfaction by fostering a sense of security and belonging.

The research by Lee et al. (2016) further supports the positive effects of self-efficacy on life satisfaction, highlighting its role in facilitating positive adjustment outcomes (8). In the context of strength-based therapy, enhancing athletes' self-efficacy can lead to better psychological resilience, enabling them to manage stress more effectively and maintain a higher level of well-being. Jowett et al. (2012) and Chao et al. (2022) delve into the dynamics of collective efficacy and coaching efficacy, respectively, demonstrating their significant impact on athlete satisfaction (5, 18). These studies underscore the importance of a supportive and efficacious coaching environment in promoting athletes' satisfaction, aligning with the strength-based approach's emphasis on leveraging individual and collective strengths.

Tian et al. (2022) and Goraczko et al. (2021) highlight the contribution of self-efficacy to life satisfaction and the quality of life, respectively, further substantiating the benefits of focusing on athletes' strengths (7, 19). By fostering a sense of competence and self-belief, strength-based therapy can enhance athletes' life satisfaction and overall well-being. Lastly, Sari et al. (2020) discuss the broader implications of self-efficacy on well-being, suggesting that self-efficacy can mediate the effects of social support on life satisfaction and resilience (20). This perspective underscores the multifaceted benefits of enhancing self-efficacy, which can extend beyond the sports domain to impact various aspects of individuals' lives.

5. Conclusion

The study's findings, demonstrating the significant impact of strength-based therapy on enhancing self-efficacy and life satisfaction among athletes, are underpinned by a robust theoretical framework. Drawing from a range of scholarly references, the conclusion can be drawn that this therapeutic approach is not only effective but also deeply rooted in established psychological theories and practices.

In conclusion, the theoretical underpinnings provided by these scholarly references offer a comprehensive understanding of how strength-based therapy effectively enhances self-efficacy and life satisfaction. This approach, grounded in positive psychology, humanistic philosophy, and self-efficacy theory, among others, presents a powerful tool in sports therapy. It underscores the importance of focusing on individual strengths and capabilities, not only for physical rehabilitation but also for psychological resilience and overall life satisfaction in athletes. This conclusion opens avenues for further research and application of strength-based methods in various therapeutic and performance-enhancing settings.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

One of the chief limitations of this study is its quasi-experimental design, which, while offering valuable insights, lacks the control and randomization of a true experimental design. This limitation may affect the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported measures for assessing self-efficacy and life satisfaction could introduce

bias, as these measures are subjective and may be influenced by individual perception and current mood. Furthermore, the study's focus on a specific demographic of athletes limits its applicability to other populations who may respond differently to strength-based therapy. Finally, the absence of a long-term follow-up restricts our understanding of the enduring effects of the therapy.

To address these limitations, future research should consider employing a randomized controlled trial design to provide stronger evidence of causality and enhance the generalizability of the results. Incorporating a more diverse sample, including athletes from various sports, ages, and skill levels, as well as non-athlete populations, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of strength-based therapy across different groups.

It is recommended to use a combination of self-report measures and objective assessments to evaluate self-efficacy and life satisfaction. This mixed-methods approach could reduce the potential bias of self-reports and provide a more nuanced understanding of the therapy's impact. Additionally, implementing a longitudinal study design with multiple follow-up assessments would be beneficial to examine the long-term effects of strength-based therapy and its sustainability over time.

Practitioners and therapists are encouraged to integrate strength-based approaches in their work with athletes, considering the positive outcomes observed in this study. However, they should also be mindful of individual differences and the unique needs of each athlete. Expanding the application of strength-based therapy to other domains, such as education, healthcare, and workplace settings, could also be explored to understand its broader implications and benefits in enhancing self-efficacy and life satisfaction in various contexts.

Authors' Contributions

K.P. led the concept and design of the study, as well as the drafting and critical revision of the manuscript. S.K. and S.S. were involved in the acquisition of data and the analysis and interpretation of the data. B.K. contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content and provided expertise in sports science. K.I. oversaw the statistical analysis, contributed to the study design, and played a key role in supervising the study. All authors

contributed to the writing of the manuscript, reviewed the final version, and approved it for publication.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study placed a high emphasis on ethical considerations. Informed consent obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the nature of the study and their role in it. Confidentiality strictly maintained, with data anonymized to protect individual privacy. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects as outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

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