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Comparison of the Effects of a Training Period with Sports Vision, Specialized, and Combined Approaches on Certain Skill Components and Mood in Young Iraqi Volleyball Players under Psychological Pressure

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1. Round 1

1.1 Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The literature review mentions the two-dimensional classification of mood states but does not fully explain how these mood states affect performance in specific tasks, like volleyball serving or spiking. A clearer link between mood states and performance in precision sports is needed, with examples from sports psychology research (e.g., Lane & Terry, 2000).

The claim that "mood states can influence emotions, decreasing positive components and increasing negative ones" is interesting but should be explained more thoroughly. Could you cite studies or theories (e.g., the affective response model by R. H. Furrer, 2006) that specifically demonstrate how mood fluctuations impact motor performance under stress?

The claim that "an invaluable advantage for athletes in competitions is efficient visual skills" could be improved by elaborating on how visual skills specifically enhance volleyball performance. Citing studies such as those by Abernethy (1996) on the role of visual search strategies in volleyball would provide further depth to this statement.

You state that "visual reaction times can enable athletes to perceive environmental events almost in slow motion." While this is a compelling claim, providing quantitative data or examples from empirical research would support the argument. For instance, studies like those of Williams et al. (2004) on visual reaction time in sports could enhance this point.

The description of the study's inclusion criteria is thorough, but the exclusion criteria could be further elaborated. For example, why were only right-handed individuals included? A discussion of how handedness could affect visual processing or motor skills would clarify this decision. Additionally, why was only male gender chosen for this study? This could potentially limit the generalizability of the findings and warrants further justification.

The final sample size is 42, but the withdrawal of 18 participants due to non-cooperation or other reasons may introduce potential bias. Could you provide more details on the reasons for withdrawal and how they might affect the internal validity of the study? Discussing how you accounted for these dropouts in your analysis would improve the transparency of your findings.

The presentation of pre-test and post-test means for different groups is clear. However, in the case of the "serve accuracy" and "spike accuracy" scores, the small standard deviations suggest the scores are highly concentrated, but a statistical test comparing the variances (Levene's test) is not included. It would be helpful to include this to confirm that the assumption of homogeneity of variance holds.

The discussion refers to the "distraction theory" and "explicit monitoring theory" but does not explain these theories in sufficient detail. Briefly defining both theories and providing their relevance to your findings would improve the reader's understanding. Furthermore, comparing these theories with the observed outcomes in volleyball would provide a clearer interpretation of the results.

Author revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

1.2 Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The phrase "choking under pressure" is well introduced, but a more comprehensive definition could enhance clarity. Specifically, it would be beneficial to discuss the psychological mechanisms leading to "choking" and provide references to seminal studies, such as Baumeister (1984), which discuss the theory of self-focus under pressure. Clarifying the psychological underpinnings will strengthen the theoretical foundation of your study.

The sentence, "Psychological pressure in competitions typically affects neuromuscular coordination and can disrupt optimal athlete performance," is a generalization. Could you provide specific studies or examples where psychological pressure has been shown to affect neuromuscular coordination? A detailed citation of studies linking these two aspects would substantiate this claim and improve its scientific rigor.

The phrase "the role of sensory systems, especially the visual system due to its dominance over other senses" requires further elaboration. Why is the visual system particularly important for sports like volleyball? You could expand on the concept of the visual dominance theory (e.g., Elliott & Fairclough, 2017) and provide empirical evidence linking visual processing to athletic performance.

The ANCOVA results are informative, but it would be useful to report partial eta squared values for all significant effects, not just some. Partial eta squared provides a better indication of the effect size, especially when comparing between groups with multiple dependent variables.

Although significant effects were found for negative mood ($F = 5.20$, $p = 0.01$), the post-hoc results for negative mood do not show a significant difference between the sports vision and combined groups ($p = 1.00$). This discrepancy needs to be addressed. Could you explain why there was no significant difference between these two groups, despite the overall ANCOVA suggesting an effect?

You mention that significant differences were found between the combined and traditional/specialized groups for serve accuracy, but not between the sports vision and combined groups. Could you elaborate on why the sports vision group did not outperform the combined group? Does this suggest that the combined training approach is more effective for serve accuracy?

The results show significant differences in negative mood between the combined and traditional/specialized groups ($p = 0.01$). Could you discuss the implications of these results in more depth? Specifically, what does it mean for athletes' psychological readiness in high-pressure situations, and how could this inform future training programs?

You mention that the multivariate analysis revealed significant differences among the groups, but a more thorough comparison with prior studies would strengthen the discussion. For example, how do your findings align or contrast with similar studies on sports vision training in other sports, like football or basketball?

Author revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.