

INTRODUCTION

Sports are forms of exercise or physical activity that have a specific goal. Sports can also be defined as physical activities that involve exercise with the goal of overcoming adversity and winning. A person who participates in sports will have strong bones even in old age. Maintaining our health and physical fitness is critical to our well-being, so participating in activities such as sports and games is extremely beneficial. Playing sports increases our endurance, which leads to the fact that they also help us get stronger by assisting us in losing weight and unwanted fat, as well as gaining muscle. Furthermore, participating in physical activities such as sports improves heart function, lowers the risk of diabetes, regulates blood sugar, and reduces tension and stress. It also adds positive energy, discipline, and other admirable characteristics to your life. (Arnold P.J., 1999; Jarvie G, 2013).

Sundberg (2013) points out that many important life lessons are taught through sports, including discipline, focus, dedication, hard work, commitment, perseverance, teamwork, honesty, and responsibility. Students who participate in sports early in life are more agile and fit, which improves the cognitive and memory functions of the brain and helps them perform better in school. Given the importance of sport in human life, Universitas Negeri Semarang provides opportunities for its students to develop their talents and interests through the Student Activity Unit (UKM), one of which aims to develop students' potential and talents in sports. Actually, there are 23 Student Activity Units in UNNES that foster and develop sports activities such as athletics, karate, tennis, pencak silat, petanque, bad-

minton, volleyball, football, swimming, etc. However, not all UKM athletes at UNNES are active and excel at the local, national, and international levels. This is due to a number of factors, including athletes' lack of motivation in the self-development process, a less structured training schedule, a lack of budget allocated for sparring and try-out, and poor communication between coaches and athletes.

Sport Communication

Sports communication is a branch of communication studies that focuses on communication in a sporting environment. It includes the study of interpersonal and organizational communication (both verbal and non-verbal) among participants in a sport (e.g., players, coaches, managers, referees, and trainers), supporters, and the media, as well as how sports are represented and conveyed in the media. Sports communication is not limited to professionals; it occurs at all levels of play, from preschool to college. Communication happens all the time in sports, and it works best with people who are eager to work together as a team. It is critical to a program's success. Communication in sports can be both positive and bad, according to studies (Wikipedia, 2021).

Interpersonal Communication

The verbal and nonverbal contact between two (or more) interdependent persons to achieve a variety of instrumental and communication goals such as informing, persuading, and providing emotional support to others is known as interpersonal communication (Berger, 2008; DeVito, 2019). Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information between persons who are "linked" in some way. Thus, interpersonal communication encompasses interactions between a son and

his father, an employer and an employee, two sisters, a teacher and a student, two friends, coaches and athletes and so on. Although interpersonal communication is primarily dyadic (two-person), it is sometimes extended to include small intimate groups such as the family. Individuals are not only "linked," but they are also interdependent: what one person does has an effect on the other. The activities of one individual have consequences for another. A child's run-in with the cops, for example, affects the parents, other siblings, extended family members, and possibly friends and neighbors in a household. DeVito (2019) further defines that human communication occurs when one or more people send and receive signals that are distorted by noise, occur in a context, have an effect, and provide an opportunity for response.

Interpersonal communication according to DeVito (2019) however entails the exchange of both verbal and nonverbal signals. In face-to-face interaction, your words, as well as your facial expressions, eye contact, and body posture, as well as your online text, photos, and videos, send interpersonal messages. Similarly, you receive interpersonal messages using all of your senses—hearing, vision, smell, and touch. Even silence conveys interpersonal signals. According to most communication theories, interpersonal communication has six components, as shown in the figure below:

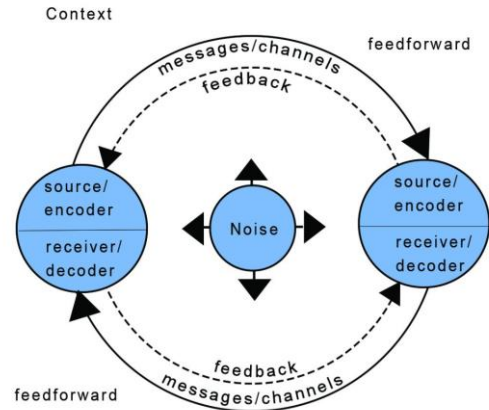


fig. The process of interpersonal communication

Graphic source:

<https://www.businessstopia.net/communication/interpersonal-communication-examples>

Based on the figure above, the elements of interpersonal communication comprise (1) source-receiver, (2) message, (3) channel, (4) feedback, (5) noise, and (6) context.

Interpersonal Communication in Sports

Sport is distinguished by the formation of a complex multi-level network in which competition, support, conflict resolution, and the formation of new contacts are constantly converged, resulting in a wide range of interpersonal relationships. Sport, according to Turman (2017), can be considered an interpersonal relationship because it allows for the mediation of relationships between athletes, coaches, families (in the case of children who participate), and so on.

Interpersonal communication is critical to sporting success. The coach and his/her athletes are two key players in sports communication. The latter one can be viewed as the human resources that a coach must manage. These human resources are the property of a sports club or team. To improve his/her management, the coach must communicate

with the athlete(s), a face-to-face interaction that defines the nature of sport. Rosca (2010) emphasizes that the better the management and interpersonal communication, the better the sporting results. The coach can achieve these improvements by passing on his knowledge to the athlete or even exchanging knowledge with him/her, depending on the level of sport at which the two actors are competing.

The athlete's relationship with the coach is critical to his or her success in sports. The athlete must learn and gain experience from the coach, whose role includes communicating knowledge and experience to the athlete (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Jowett, 2017). The athlete and coach should maintain a proper relationship, and if they both want to be successful in sports, they must both invest in it.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches can more effectively lead, direct, and manage their teams or athletes when they communicate clearly. In exchange, both the team and individual athletes can freely express ideas and concerns for the benefit of all. One of the effective ways in sports communication is interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is one method for changing someone's attitude, opinion, or behaviour. Interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication between the sender and recipient of information that can result in interaction or feedback between the sender and recipient of the message, with one influencing the other. Interpersonal communication in sports is a dynamic process that takes place both actively and interactively as well as playing a key role in

obtaining success in sports (Rosca, 2010). When the sender throws the message, the recipient has the option of accepting or rejecting it. Interdependent communication occurs in sports, and the interactions that occur have both verbal and nonverbal feedback. The presence of motivation, instruction, providing solutions, and giving hope to the recipients is the expected effect of sports communication. It is also in line with Cherubini (2019) that remarks if communication is essential for improving the sporting experience between coach and athlete, as well as between coaches, athletes, sports medicine personnel, parents, and significant others. The quality of the coach-athlete relationship and the interactive nature of communication processes (e.g., listening, observing, analyzing) between individuals are inherent in successful sports coaching. The coach-athlete relationship, according to Jowett (2007), is a social situation in which a coach's and an athlete's feelings of closeness (i.e., an emotional connection reflected in trust, like, and respect), thoughts of commitment (i.e., motivation to maintain a close relationship over time), and behaviors of complementarity (i.e., behaviors reflected in responsive, relaxed, and friendly interactions) are mutually and causally interconnected. (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Kim & Park, 2020). Regardless of a coach's technical and tactical expertise, his or her knowledge may not be successfully transferred to his or her athletes without a solid foundation of communication skills and strategies.

Based on the description and explanation above, researchers have the opportunity to conduct research related to patterns and processes of interpersonal communication between coaches and athletes of UNNES's

Student Activity Unit (UKM) for athletic, pencak silat, tennis, and petanque as it plays a key role in obtaining success in sports in addition to its challenges and constraints. Those UKM were chosen because they are the ones that become the mainstay of UNNES in getting medals in every sports competition both at local and national levels. Thus, by having such findings under the studies, it is expected that the researchers share some input to other UKMs so that they can upgrade their performance by practicing a better coach-athlete communication.

METHODS

This paper is qualitative descriptive research that elaborates the practice and implication of interpersonal communication between coaches and athletes of Student Activity Unit (UKM) of UNNES that focus on student-athletes development. The respondents of this study were 18 people that include 6 coaches and 12 athletes (male, n=6; female, n=6) spread from

UKM Petanque, UKM Tennis, UKM Pencak Silat, and UKM Athletics. Purposive sampling was then chosen since it can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Campbell, et.al, 2020). The semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain the intended data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers divided the data of findings based on the six elements of interpersonal communication (DeVito, 2019) among coaches and athletes of UNNES's Students Activity Units (UKM) for Athletics, Pencak Silat, Petanque, and Tennis. The respondents comprised 6 coaches and 12 student athletes that were interviewed periodically from February until July 2020. Unfortunately, in March 2020, Indonesia began to be attacked by the Covid-19 pandemic which made training activities and competitions experiencing constraints.

The following table describes the findings of interpersonal communication practiced among coaches and athletes of UNNES's Student Activity Units (UKM).

Table 1 Coach-Athlete Interpersonal Communication

RE-SPONDENTS	TYPES OF SPORT	ELEMENTS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION					
		Source-Receiver	Message	Channel	Feedback	Noise	Context
Coach	Athletics Pencak Silat Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach becomes both source and receiver within interpersonal communication The coach seemed to be the main source of the communication The coach seemed to be dominant within the communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training program information The direction of techniques, tactics, & strategy Statement of Motivation Statement of athletic purpose Statement of athletic progress Mental toughness Reinforcement Recommendation and suggestion Character building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face (verbal & nonverbal) Telephone WhatsApp E-mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportiveness Motivation Empathy Corrective instruction & evaluation Tips & Tricks Statement of disagreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological Noise (mood, emotion) Physical Noise (others' talking at both training and competition venues) Semantic Noise (when coaches continually talk in Javanese language) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situational context (training, competition & post competition) Psycho-social context (the status of coaches and athletes)
	Petanque						
Athlete	Athletics Pencak Silat Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The athletes tend to be more receptive rather than being active as the source of communication The athletes become less dominant than the coaches within the coach-athlete interaction The athletes be- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions about athletic performance Questions about training program Questions about techniques, tactics and strategy expressions of thanking expression of asking and giving opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face (verbal & nonverbal) Telephone WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> argument of positive and negative feedback from coaches expressions of thanking and apologizing expression of reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological Noise (mood, emotion) Physical Noise (others' talking at both training and competition venues) Semantic Noise (when coaches continually talk in Javanese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situational context (training, competition & post competition) Psycho-social context (the status of coaches and athletes)
	Petanque						

RE-SPONDENTS	TYPES OF SPORT	ELEMENTS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION					
		Source-Receiver	Message	Channel	Feedback	Noise	Context
		come the source of interpersonal communication when they personally have problems with their performance and accomplishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ expressions of apology ▪ request of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-mail 			language)

Based on the findings reflected on the table above, it seems to be that the coaches are more dominant than the athletes in establishing interpersonal communication. In other words, because the athletes felt inferior, they were more receptive as receivers rather than sources in coach-athlete communication. This is possible because all coaches have the status of lecturers at UNNES. Furthermore, this could be due to the cultural context of how young people in Indonesia should respect elders, in this case the coaches. However, Jowett (2007) emphasizes that mutual trust, respect, and support are regarded as important factors in satisfying and successful coach-athlete relationships. Furthermore, Coach-athlete relationship is defined as interpersonal relationship where the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of the coach and the athlete are causally and mutually interconnected (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Adie & Jowett, 2010; Isoard-Gautheur, Touilloud, Gustafsson & Guillet-Descas, 2016). It means that the student-athletes should not feel inferior and insecure when communicating and interacting with the coaches as the theory mentions if both coaches and athletes must have mutual trust, respect, and support as well as interconnected emotions, thoughts, and behavior.

In terms of messages delivery, the coaches convey some input to athletes in the forms of commanding, requesting which deal with training program, technical & tactical correction, athletic motivation, athletic progress, reinforcement, mental toughness, character building, etc. Meanwhile, the student-athletes deliver the messages in the forms of questions of training program, techniques, tactics and strategy. Furthermore, the student-athletes used expressions such as asking and

giving opinions, thanking, and apologizing to express their personal thoughts, emotions, and moods, even though the messages delivered differed depending on the sport character. During the interaction, both coaches and athletes used both verbal and nonverbal communication. To maintain the coach-athlete relationship, they chose communication channels such as face-to-face communication and virtual communication. The virtual communication is practiced by using WhatsApp platform, email, and telephone. It is in line with (Sagar & Jowett, 2012; West, 2016) who stated that good communication between a coach and an athlete increases the likelihood of the athlete developing feelings of closeness and improves the athlete's perception of the coach. Communication will also improve their training and performance satisfaction, physical self-concept, achievement goals, intrinsic motivation, and passion for the sport. Clear and precise communication improves understanding of the player's role, skills development, and the development of a trusting relationship. Therefore, it can be understood if the messages conveyed by either coaches or athletes of UNNES's UKM represent a good coach-athlete communication/interaction.

The presence of feedback in all communications between coaches and athletes ensures that the interpersonal communication process runs smoothly. It is in accordance with (Shipherd, et.al., 2019; Kim & Park, 2020) that explain trust and friendship between the coach and the player and constructive feedback are the factors that have a positive effect on the athlete's performance. In addition, mutual respect and effective communication between the coach and athlete are also important factors that establish a suc-

successful relationship.

There were, however, interferences or noise in the coach-athlete communication. According to the data, there are three types of communication noise found in this study: psychological noise, physical noise, and semantic noise. Psychological noise occurs when coaches and athletes are unable to control their own emotions, moods, and attitudes. Athletes who are under pressure during training or competition, for example, are more emotional and easily offended than those who are less concerned about their performance. The second type of interference is physical noise, which occurs when coach and athlete communication is disrupted during training sessions and competition due to a variety of factors such as other people talking at training and competition venues, as well as crowd yells and chants. The third type of interference is semantic noise, which occurs when coaches speak in their native languages, such as Javanese. As a result, some athletes from outside Central Java Province do not fully comprehend what the coaches are saying.

The last discussion is dealing with the context of coach-athlete interpersonal communication. The context of communication between coaches and athlete in this study divided into two dimensions such as situational context and psycho-social context. The situational context explains when and where communication between coaches and athletes occurs most frequently, during training, competition, and post-competition. Meanwhile, the psycho-social context reflects coaches becoming dominant in communication because they sometimes without being aware position themselves as lecturers in class instead of as partner.

CONCLUSION

Interpersonal communication is one of the most important aspects of the coach-athlete relationship. There are 6 elements of interpersonal communication such as source-receiver, message, feedback, channel, noise, and context. Coaches can more effectively lead, direct, and manage their athletes when they communicate clearly. In exchange, both the team and individual athletes can freely express ideas and concerns for the benefit of all.

Coaching is not about demonstrating your knowledge of a sport and producing winners. It is all about establishing rapport, bringing out the best in people, and allowing them to achieve their full potential. This will be possible with effective communication. Because everyone is different, communicate with them. It is also expected that other coaches and athletes of UNNES's UKM which concern about student athlete development practice a proper relationship by having such interpersonal skill to achieve better sport accomplishment.

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