

The Influence of a Simulated 'Pep Talk' on Athlete Inspiration, Situational Motivation, and Emotion

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ABSTRACT

Coaches routinely use pep talks to inspire and motivate athletes, but the efficacy of this strategy has not been empirically examined. Conceptually based on Thrash and Elliot's [3, 4] inspiration research this study explored the impact of a simulated pep talk on inspiration, inspiration to perform, situational autonomous motivation, and emotion. Collegiate football players ($n = 151$) were randomly assigned to a treatment ($n = 74$, viewed a movie clip of coach giving an inspirational speech) or control ($n = 77$, viewed a movie clip of a coach giving game instructions) group and completed assessments pre and post treatment. A one-way ANOVA revealed an overall significant group effect for the change scores, [$F(6,134) = 6.53, p < .001$]. The experimental group was more inspired by the movie clip [$F(1, 139) = 29.06, p < .001$], more inspired to perform [$F(1, 139) = 24.10, p = .000$], and indicated greater emotional dominance [$F(1,139) = 7.19, p = .008$] than the control group. Motivation, pleasure, and arousal were not influenced by the movie clip.

Key words: American Football, Coach's Speech, Emotion, Inspiration, Motivation, Self-Determination Theory

INTRODUCTION

In today's media coverage of sport, the terms motivation and inspiration are often used superficially and synonymously. Sportscasters often point to inspiration as a source of athlete motivation, describing coaches who deliver inspirational pep talks that motivate their athletes. This anecdotal evidence highlights the perceived importance of motivation and inspiration as well as a possible relationship between the two constructs. More specifically, the casual fan may expect that a pep talk inspires athletes, thus increasing motivation in the

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moment of competition. Scholarship both in and out of sport psychology supports theories that explain motivation change; however, little attention has been given to the role of inspiration [1, 2]. While recent scholarship in psychology has focused on inspiration [3, 4] no research has investigated inspiration in sport or the role of ‘inspirational’ tactics in sport, such as pep talks, on enhancing athlete inspiration, motivation, or emotion. The current study aims to determine if viewing an inspirational movie clip depicting a pep talk inspires, motivates, or influences the emotions of high-level college football athletes in the United States.

COACHES’ SPEECHES

Coaches’ pep talks have long been part of athletics and researchers have begun to study the content and effect these pep talks have on athletes [5, 6]. For example, athletes prefer different content in pep talks depending on if their team is an underdog, favored, or playing an opponent that previously defeated them [5]. Research on the influence of pre-game pep talks has also shown increases in team efficacy. Athletes exposed to an ‘emotional plea’ increased in team efficacy compared to those who received information about the game or game strategy [6]. In summary, initial research indicates that athletes have specific preferences for pre-game pep talks and the talks influence an aspect of motivation, namely efficacy. To date, however, no research has examined the influence of pep talks on athlete inspiration or more specific forms of motivation.

INSPIRATION

Recent scholarship in mainstream psychology has explored inspiration [3, 4, 7], but in a very limited fashion. Thrash and Elliot [3] conceptualize inspiration as an experience that: i) implies motivation; ii) is something that is evoked and not initiated directly; and iii) involves transcendence of one’s usual abilities. Thrash and Elliot [3] examined inspiration from a higher being, inspiration from within, and inspiration from the environment in forming their conceptualization. Conceptually, inspiration differs from motivation. Inspiration is an evoked sense of energy from a source that implies motivation, whereas motivation is the regulation, direction, and energy behind one’s behavior [8]. Inspiration is a psychological phenomenon evoked by an external source and logically could influence motivation [4]. If an athlete is inspired and performs better than usual it is possible that the athlete was motivated by the source of inspiration.

Thrash and Elliot [3, 4] examined both trait and state inspiration. Trait inspiration refers to individual differences in the ability to experience inspiration, while state inspiration is the actual experience of inspiration and what an individual feels in the process. Within the state experience of inspiration, Thrash and Elliot [2] identified two component processes of inspiration, being “inspired by” and being “inspired to”. Being “inspired by” involves transcendence and denial of responsibility (e.g., inspiration from a beautiful image) and being “inspired to” implies motivation evoked from an external source that spurs one to direct his or her behavior towards a certain accomplishment or goal, such as seeing a role model accomplish something or finding value in one’s words or actions [4]. In sport, coaches and leaders assume that pep talks elicit inspiration or motivation, but there is no research available on these consequences. Athletes are assumed to be “inspired by” a pep talk and then be “inspired to” do something or act in a particular manner in the ensuing practice or competition. This study focused on both articulations suggested by Thrash and Elliot [4]. We assessed if the participants are ‘inspired by’ a movie clip of a pep talk and if they were ‘inspired to’ perform in football as a result of the treatment.

Using multi-level modeling, the authors examined the antecedents and consequences of state inspiration [3]. Openness to experience, positive affect, optimism, self-esteem, work mastery, and creativity emerged as antecedents of inspiration. These findings suggest that inspiration can be fostered by a sense of receptivity, positivity, and engagement (all of which might be characteristics of an effective pep talks). Work mastery and perceived competence emerged as consequences of inspiration, suggesting that inspiration impacts motivation. Their findings, however, were not unequivocal as intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and positive affect did not emerge as consequences of inspiration [3]. These findings suggest that motivation is likely related to inspiration, both as cause and consequence, but more research is warranted given the sparse and inconsistent findings and the void of research in a sport setting.

SELF-DETERMINED MOTIVATION

There are numerous theories of human motivation; however, the current study focuses on tenets of self-determination theory (SDT) [9], which recognizes that humans actively engage in their environments toward self-growth and fulfillment of needs. SDT addresses external stimuli and their possible impact on motivation [8], which is one focus of this study. According to SDT, innate psychological need fulfillment is central to human motivation [9]. People need relatedness, autonomy, and competence for ongoing psychological growth and well-being. Relatedness refers to the need for people to be connected and feel bonded with others [10]. Autonomy refers to the need individuals have to originate their own behaviors [9]. Finally, not only do people want to be the source of their own behavior but they desire competence - to interact effectively with their environment insofar as they can produce desired outcomes or prevent undesirable outcomes [10]. According to SDT, when an individual feels autonomous, related to others, and competent at a task, then the person becomes self-determined in their motivation. Self-determined motivation is optimal motivation and is characterized primarily by intrinsic motivation [10].

Deci and Ryan [11] created a continuum of motivation types, characterizing differing levels of autonomous motivation. The continuum begins with amotivation (no autonomous motivation, lowest level of motivation), extends to four levels of extrinsic motivation, based on varying degrees of autonomy, and concludes with intrinsic motivation. Amotivation is performing or doing without any motivation, and intention to perform well becomes compromised [9, 10]. *Amotivation* is the lowest form of motivation as it is the absence of motivation. Extrinsic motivation is defined as actions performed to achieve an end state. According to Deci and Ryan [10], extrinsic motivation can be further classified into four types based on the degree of autonomy individuals have in regulating behavior. The least autonomous form of motivation, *external regulation*, is defined as behavior conducted to achieve a particular end such as a trophy or money or to avoid negative outcomes such as reduced playing time [10]. *Introjected regulation* involves preliminary internalization of the environment. Rather than behaving to achieve or avoid external rewards or punishments, respectively, individuals engaged in introjected regulation behave out of 'obligation', compliance, or to avoid internal punishment [10]. *Identified regulation* occurs when an individual internalizes and finds value in participating in an activity with a sense of choice, thus increasing perceived autonomy [10]. Finally, *integrated regulation*, the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation, is experienced when an individual begins to make decisions because they find internal value with the external demands of the activity [10]. This form of regulation occurs when individuals behave because the behavior helps them define who they are and the behavior is not differentiated from a sense of self. *Intrinsic motivation*

is the highest form of autonomous motivation and occurs when an individual is most self-determined in his or her motivation. When intrinsically motivated, activities are engaged in for the inherent aspects of the activity itself.

Relative autonomy is key to understanding athlete self-determined motivation. Differentiating motivation by levels of regulation and perceptions of personal autonomy affords a more precise understanding of motivation. Ryan and Deci [11] specifically cite that those who are self-determined have “more interest, excitement, and confidence, which in turn is manifest both as enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity...” (p. 69) than their counterparts. Self-determined or autonomous athletes are more invested in their sport. Studies have linked greater self-determination with enhanced interest [12], persistence [13], resilience to failure [14] concentration [15], and flow [16]. Such characteristics are highly desirable in athletes, thus examining the impact of inspiration on self-regulated autonomous motivation is warranted.

Vallerand developed a hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (HMIEM), which integrates the concept of a continuum of motivation with the notion that motivation is exhibited at three levels of generality [17, 18]. From broad to specific, these levels are global, contextual, and situational. Global motivation is the most general over-arching level of motivation. Contextual motivation refers to motivation in specific contexts. A football player’s motivation for their sport is an example of contextual motivation. Situational motivation is the most specific form of motivation representing an athlete’s motivation at the moment he or she is participating in an activity. Vallerand [19] commented that assessing motivation at the situational level is critical because it represents motivation at the moment of engagement. In this study, participants’ situational motivation was assessed prior to and following the treatment.

IMPACTING MOTIVATION AND THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF INSPIRATION

SDT and HMIEM propose that motivation can be fostered by the social environment [20]. In sport contexts, the behavior of coaches has the most powerful influence on motivation [21]. Coaching that supports athletes’ autonomy fosters motivation [22, 23]. Mageau and Vallerand [21] outlined several coaching behaviors that contribute to an autonomy-supportive coaching climate. These include providing the athletes with choice and rationale, acknowledging the athlete’s feelings, providing the athletes with the opportunity to take initiative, providing non-controlling feedback, and minimizing ego-involvement. The impact of a traditional pep talk, heavily utilized in sport settings and partially characterized by these coaching behaviors, on motivation has not been examined.

Of particular interest in this study is whether a film clip of a hypothesized inspirational pep talk influences situational motivation. A powerful speech, quotation, or action clip from a film that tends to energize the intended audience often characterizes inspiration in sport. To date, no one has studied whether inspiration impacts athletes’ self-determined motivation.

INSPIRATION AND EMOTION

While a case can be made for inspiration impacting motivation, inspiration is also likely related to emotion. Citing the work of Haidt [24, 25], Thrash and Elliot [3] identify that self-transcendent emotions have the potential to increase someone’s desire to succeed or be virtuous. For example, if a person observes success it may evoke a desire to be successful in his or her own endeavors, an inspirational quality [3]. In their own work, Thrash and Elliot [3] found a significant positive relationship to positive emotionality and inspiration in college students. Given this relationship, it is possible that those experiencing inspiration

could alter their emotional response during an event or situation and this is considered in this study.

PURPOSE AND DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of a movie clip of a pep talk on inspiration, situational motivation, and emotional responses vicariously in collegiate football players. Due to the difficulty in measuring responses following a speech in the field before or during an actual game, this study relied on a movie clip to elicit inspiration from athletes. The coach depicted in both conditions is a famous actor, with no connection to any of the athletes on the two teams studied. Thus, this study relied on the ability of the participants to immerse themselves in a fictitious situation and imagine the actor was their coach. Any inspiration experienced was vicarious in nature. It is possible that the actor's stage presence rather than the content of his speech was inspiring to the participant and any influence of the coach-athlete relationship cannot be accounted for in this particular study. However, since this study is exploratory in nature, the authors thought it was appropriate to elicit inspiration from a movie clip to experimentally test relationships to motivation and emotion since inspiration can theoretically come from many different sources [3, 4] besides just the coach. This study employed a randomized, two group, pre-test, post-test, field-experiment design.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 151 male collegiate football players from two NCAA Division I universities in the southeast region of the United States. Division I football represents the highest level of collegiate football in the United States. Many athletes on the teams are on scholarship and the games are often shown on television. Participants averaged 19.61 years of age ($SD = 1.24$) and included freshmen (46.6%), sophomores (25.7%), juniors (17.6%), and seniors (10.1%). Participants were predominantly African American (64.9%), but also included White (31.1%), Native American/Alaskan (0.7%), as well as other ethnicities (3.4%).

INSTRUMENTATION

Manipulation Check. Three items were created to assess if the participants were inspired by the treatment. These items included, "I am experiencing inspiration", "I encountered or experienced something that inspires me," and "I feel inspired". In line with the assessment procedures of Thrash and Elliot [3], the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of inspiration was provided in the directions: "Inspiration is defined as a breathing in or infusion of some idea, purpose, etc. into the mind; the suggestion, awakening, or creation of some feeling or impulse of the exalted kind". Each item was responded to on a Likert-type scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very strongly* (7). A mean scale score was computed. Cronbach coefficient alpha suggested the scale was reliable at pre-test (.93) and post-test (.95).

Inspiration to Perform. Thrash and Elliot [3] contend that inspired individuals are 'inspired to' do something. To assess this component of inspiration, we created three items with the stem "I am inspired to". These items were "compete", "play", and "perform". The directions encouraged each participant to reflect on their inspiration "right now". Each item was responded to on a Likert-type scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very strongly* (7). A mean scale score was computed. Cronbach coefficient alpha suggested the scale was reliable at pre-test (.86) and post-test (.93).

Situational Motivation. The 16-item Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS) was used to

measure motivation in the moment [26]. The scale consists of four subscales: intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. In addition, a summary score, called the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) [27] can be calculated (Intrinsic + Identified - 2 × External) to determine an individual's level of autonomous motivation [28, 29]. The instructions direct the participant to reflect on the reason they are engaged in their sport. Each item was responded to on a Likert-type scale ranging from *does not correspond at all* (1) to *corresponds exactly* (7). Cronbach's alpha ranged from .61 and .79 for the pretest subscales and .66-.81 for the post-test subscales.

Emotional Response and Emotion. The 3-item Self Assessment Mannequin (SAM) provided a measure of the athlete's emotional response to the movie clip [30]. The SAM assesses three dimensions of emotion; namely, pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD). Each PAD dimension is depicted in a graphic character arrayed along a continuous 9-point scale. For pleasure, the character ranges from a smiling, happy figure to a frowning, unhappy character. For arousal, the character ranges from sleepy with eyes closed to excited with eyes wide open. For dominance, the image progresses from a very small character representing the feeling of being controlled or submissive to a very large figure conveying an in-control or powerful feeling. Participants were instructed to view each continuum of emotions and indicate how they felt at that moment. To examine the reliability of the measure, Lang [30] correlated each scale of the SAM with Mehrabian and Russell's [31] pictorial scale measuring pleasure, arousal, and dominance. The scales correlated as follows: pleasure (.94), arousal (.94), and dominance (.66). Historically, the SAM is a well-used measure in marketing, psychology, and psychophysiology [32].

PROCEDURE

Prior to collecting data, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained for this study. Teams were contacted via e-mail first, then by telephone to set up an informational meeting with coaches about the study during which time details and the purpose of the study were discussed. Consent procedures, data collection and stimulus viewing took place in the team film meeting rooms at the team training facilities for each school. Consent was gathered before questionnaires were distributed. Coaches were not present for the data collection or stimulus viewing.

Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group ($n = 74$) or a control group ($n = 77$) by splitting the teams into two groups at the time of collection. Participants in both groups completed measures of inspiration, situational motivation, and emotional responses. The experimental group then viewed an inspirational movie clip and the control group viewed a benign video clip. The inspirational video clip (4 minutes, 21 seconds) was edited from the movie *Any Given Sunday* [33], a movie about professional football. In the movie, there is a scene entitled the "Inches Speech" in which Al Pacino plays a coach giving a half-time speech to his players. The team in the movie is losing an important game and the coach delivers a speech that calls on the players to come together and take the game "inch by inch." The coach also implores the team that he cannot win the game, but that the players themselves must be willing to sacrifice for one another (see Appendix for complete transcript). The control stimulus was taken from the same movie (3 minutes, 19 seconds) and involves Al Pacino coaching the athletes in both practice and game situations. The clip contains a montage of instructionally-focused clips. Specifically, Al Pacino focuses on fundamentals and reinforces technique in these scenes. These scenes were chosen after they were piloted with five sport psychology professionals (two with coaching education experience) and four college athletes (one each from football, basketball, soccer, and

baseball) who indicated that the experimental stimulus was “inspirational” and the control stimulus was not inspirational. The clips contain the same actor so as to achieve reliability across the stimuli; however, a limitation is the discrepancy in length of the films. All participants were asked if they saw the movie and the majority of the sample (95% in both groups) replied no (most in the sample were 9 years of age when the movie was at its height of popularity). After watching the clips, participants completed measures of inspiration, situational motivation, and emotional response.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. Descriptive statistics for pre-test and post-test assessments were computed. As the primary interest in this study was to examine how the treatment altered self-reported inspiration, motivation, and emotion, examination of the change scores was deemed appropriate and were calculated for all variables by subtracting the pre-test scores from the post-test scores. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of the treatment on the self-reported data from the experimental and control groups.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and change scores for the outcome variables were calculated for each group. Inspection of the change scores in Table 1 indicates that the control group’s responses decreased for all variables with the exception of external motivation and amotivation, in which cases the scores increased. A less consistent pattern was found for the experimental group. Pleasure and arousal decreased while dominance increased. Intrinsic motivation, identified motivation, and amotivation showed negligible differences from pre-test to post-test. External motivation increased and athlete’s relative autonomous motivation (RAI) decreased.

MANIPULATION CHECK

Significant differences in the change scores for inspiration were found [$F(1, 149) = 28.38, p < .001$]. Inspection of the change scores (see Table 1) indicates that the treatment inspired athletes in the experimental group. Athletes in the control group indicated a decrease in inspiration following their treatment. The findings suggest that the movie clip did inspire the treatment group.

GROUP DIFFERENCES IN INSPIRATION TO PERFORM, SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION, AND EMOTION

Results suggested a main effect for the treatment on inspiration to perform [$F(1, 149) = 25.17, p = .001$], the emotion of dominance [$F(1, 139) = 7.19, p = .008$] and amotivation [$F(1, 149) = 8.36, p = .004$]. The change scores (see Table 1) indicate that the experimental group’s inspiration to perform and self-reported feelings of dominance increased while the mean values for the control group decreased. The control group’s level of amotivation increased while the experimental group’s level of amotivation slightly decreased. The treatment did not differentially influence the change scores relative to pleasure [$F(1, 141) = .90, p = .34$], arousal [$F(1, 139) = 1.31, p = .25$], intrinsic motivation [$F(1, 149) = 3.49, p = .06$], identified motivation [$F(1, 149) = 1.60, p = .21$], external regulated motivation [$F(1, 149) = .19, p = .66$], and overall autonomous motivation (RAI) [$F(1, 149) = 2.09, p = .15$] for the two groups.

Table 1. Summary of Descriptive Statistics for the Outcome and Independent Variables (n = 151)

Variable	Control				Experimental				
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Δ
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Inspiration									
Manipulation	4.71	1.76	4.30	1.86	4.95	1.70	5.87	1.40	.93
Inspired To	5.91	1.63	4.91	1.98	5.85	1.26	6.24	1.31	.39
Emotional Response									
Pleasure	4.00	1.77	3.65	1.59	3.79	1.48	3.06	1.90	-.68
Arousal	6.23	1.98	5.01	1.98	5.06	1.42	4.06	2.33	-1.00
Dominance	5.51	1.80	5.33	2.08	5.68	2.05	5.85	2.20	.17
Situational motivation									
Relative Autonomy Index	6.31	3.78	5.28	4.59	5.77	3.23	5.42	3.53	-.35
Intrinsic motivation	5.81	0.96	5.64	1.17	5.78	1.08	5.85	1.06	.06
Identified regulation	5.78	1.05	5.65	1.09	5.85	1.26	5.89	0.98	.04
External regulation	2.64	1.54	3.02	1.85	2.93	1.39	3.16	1.61	.22
Amotivation	2.06	1.26	2.78	1.71	2.03	1.36	1.96	1.25	-.07

Note: Change scores are reported as means.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the effect of a simulated hypothesized inspirational pep talk on inspiration, situational motivation, and emotional responses in male collegiate football players. Results indicate that the athletes exposed to the inspirational movie clip were inspired while the athletes who viewed a benign movie clip reported less inspiration. In addition, athletes' level of inspiration to compete, play, and perform marginally increased in the group that viewed the inspirational movie clip and decreased in the group that viewed the benign movie clip. The treatment also differentially impacted levels of amotivation and the emotion of dominance. Athletes who viewed the benign movie clip reported an increase in amotivation while those that viewed the inspirational movie clip reported a very slight decrease. Athletes who viewed the inspirational movie clip reported a rise in the emotion of dominance while those who viewed the benign movie clip indicated a decrease in dominance.

These findings suggest that it is possible to inspire athletes with a video clip, but elevated inspiration does not necessarily equate with an increase in motivation. The group of football players who viewed the inspirational movie clip indicated an increase in their overall inspiration and their inspiration to play, perform, and compete. The athletes who viewed the benign video clip indicated a decrease in both of these responses. The differences are likely due to the content of the videos. In the inspirational video clip, the primary character, played by famed actor Al Pacino, exhorts his players to "fight our way back into the light... one inch at a time." He offers an emotional plea to his team to "look at the guy next to you – you'll see a guy who will go that extra inch with you." He ends his speech with the suggestion that "either we heal as a team or we will die as individuals." The speech appears to elicit in the players a sense of purpose, which is consonant with the definition of inspiration. This is in stark contrast to the video that the control group viewed which focused on communicating game instructions to the players. While Al Pacino is emotional in the clip, he does not attempt to infuse some larger idea or purpose in his players.

Our findings do not support Thrash and Elliot's [3, 5] contention that inspiration implies motivation. In this case an inspirational pep talk, albeit one from a movie, did not lead to increased motivation despite an increase in inspiration to perform. While inspiration might have other motivational implications, there was no increase in situational autonomous motivation. The only motivational variable that saw a significant difference was amotivation. The group of athletes who viewed the benign video clip indicated an increase in their amotivation suggesting that poorly chosen inspirational tactics might actually harm the motivation of athletes. Since SDT [9] comes from finding value in an activity, it is likely the athletes who viewed the benign clip found no value in its content and thus were less motivated than before viewing the clip. Hearing coaching instructions may decrease autonomy and competence, because the players are forced to listen to the coach challenge their abilities instead of playing the game without consequences.

A finding of interest relates to the emotional variable of dominance. The participants who viewed the inspirational movie clip reported an increase in the emotion of dominance. Football is a game of power and confidence and feeling more dominant might impact performance on the field, although this point is speculative. Rather than facilitating autonomy, the inspirational video clip facilitated an emotional response from the players. These findings are consistent with some of the coaches' speech literature [6]. While self-efficacy is the focus of Vargas-Tonsing's work on coaches' speeches, her findings suggest that coaches' speeches influence and direct athletes' emotions for their sport. Vargas-Tonsing and Bartholomew [6] write:

A coach's ability to focus athletes on the appropriate emotions associated with challenge appraisal may gain them an important edge in competition. Other research has suggested that emotional patterns characterized by interest and excitement or externally directed anger might help performance (p. 920).

Given the characteristics of American college football, dominance is an appropriate emotion to have prior to a game or practice. While dominance increased in the experimental group, there was a decrease in the control group. The decrease for dominance in the control group could be due to the fact that the actor in the clip, Al Pacino, was merely giving instructions to the players. By doing so he was decreasing their feelings of dominance because he possessed the psychological power in the clip. The athletes were being talked *to* instead of being exalted or imbued with passion, as was the case in the inspirational clip.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this study suggest that coaches should choose the tactics they use to inspire and motivate their athletes carefully. Strategies used to inspire athletes might not necessarily motivate the athletes. Coaches should carefully reflect on the inspirational, motivational, and emotional demands of their sport when considering methods to optimize the performance and experience of their athletes. Athlete inspiration was fostered by the creation or awakening of, in this case, a collective sense of a greater purpose. Since motivation was not increased in this study by prototypical inspirational content, coaches might be well served to consider other methods to optimize motivation. The extent to which they are promoting, valuing, and emphasizing the three basic needs of Self Determination Theory [9] (competence, autonomy, and relatedness) should be considered. Allowing players to feel competent in their abilities, promoting relatedness among the players, and allowing the players to feel that they have a say in their actions can increase motivation.

The findings of this study suggest that inspiration can influence the emotions of a team. Since the inspirational film clip elicited the emotion of dominance, the content inspirational tactics are important. The benign film clip contained coaching instructions and did not have any content that pressed for or elicited emotion. The inspirational film clip involved a coach pleading with players to come together and contained very cinematically strong visual images. Coaches should take care in considering the emotional demands of their sport when developing the tactics they use to prepare their athletes to perform optimally. The findings of Vargas-Tonsing and Guan [5] should be considered along with our suggestions relative to tactics and content of inspirational speeches. They note that athletes' preferences for the content of speeches depended on if they were an underdog, the favorite, or if the team was losing or had the lead [5]. In sum, coaches should be aware of their teams' needs and should adjust their interactions with players appropriately.

CONCLUSION

The use of video clips and the fact that they were of slightly different lengths is a limitation of the present study. Using video clips fails to take into account the existing relationship between the coach and player. Future research utilizing actual coaches would advance this line of research by increasing the generalizability of the findings. It is plausible that some coaches possess the ability to inspire more so than other coaches, and the importance of identifying differences among coaches is also an area that future research should consider. Another area of future research is to look at the effectiveness of traditional speeches that combine emotional pleas and information into the same speech, as information may have

implications for increasing competence in athletes and would extend the findings of Vargas-Tonsing and Guan [5] and help in the practical application of this practice for coaches and practitioners.

This study was delimited to male athletes, specifically football players. Future research needs to examine females in sport and whether or not they are inspired by coaches' speeches. Research also needs to examine other team and individual sports to better understand the types of stimuli that inspire. There could be different consequences of inspiration in different populations, and studying different genders and sports might expose those differences. Using actual coaches in a study with their teams is another area of potential research. Since this study utilized a movie clip, it is difficult to generalize these results widely. Another area of future research is the definition of inspiration and the construct of inspiration in sport. Thrash and Elliot [3, 4] studied college students when creating the construct and measurement of inspiration. This area of study might benefit from qualitative examination of inspiration in sport from athletes across genders and sport type to better define and understand the construct in sport. With a better understanding of inspiration in sport, the construct of inspiration and its relationship to motivation and emotion might become clearer in sport. This might be further illuminated by exploring how trait inspiration influences state responses of inspiration, motivation, and emotion. Furthermore, it is possible that meta-experiences in inspiration, motivation, and emotion fluidly influence athletes' response patterns to pep talks and may point to a need to restructure experiences for athletes over time [34, 35]. Qualitative research could also lead to the development of an inspiration-in-sport measure. The area of inspiration, both in and out of the sport context, is a young and untapped area of study that warrants future research, because of the inclination of society to attribute inspiration to many positive performance gains and emotions in one's life.

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APPENDIX

INSPIRATIONAL STIMULUS TEXT

Coach:

I don't know what to say really. Three minutes to the biggest battle of our professional lives all comes down to today. Either we heal as a team, or we are going to crumble. Inch by inch, play by play till we're finished. We are in hell right now, gentlemen, believe me and we can stay here and get the shit kicked out of us or we can fight our way back into the light. We can climb out of hell. One inch, at a time. Now I can't do it for you. I'm too old. I look around and I see these young faces and I think, I mean I made every wrong choice a middle age man could make. I uh...I pissed away all my money, believe it or not. I chased off anyone who has ever loved me. And lately, I can't even stand the face I see in the mirror.

You know when you get old in life things get taken from you. That's, that's part of life. But, you only learn that when you start losing stuff. You find out that life is just a game of inches. So is football. Because in either the game of life or football, the margin for error is so small. I mean one half step too late or too early you don't quite make it. One half second too slow or too fast and you don't quite catch it. The inches we need are everywhere around us. They are in every break of the game, every minute, every second. On this team, we fight for that inch.

On this team, we tear ourselves, and everyone around us to pieces for that inch. We CLAW with our finger nails for that inch. 'Cause we know when we add up all those inches, that's going to make the fucking difference between WINNING and LOSING. Between LIVING and DYING. I'll tell you this: In any fight, it is the guy who is willing to die who is going to win that inch. And I know if I am going to have any life anymore it is because I am still willing to fight and die for that inch, because that is what LIVING is. The six inches in front of your face!

Now I can't make you do it. You gotta look at the guy next to you. Look into his eyes. Now I think you are going to see a guy who is will go that inch with you. You are going to see a guy who will sacrifice himself for this team because he knows when it comes down to it, you are gonna do the same thing for him. That's a team, gentlemen. And either we heal NOW, as a team, or we will die as individuals. That's football guys. That's all it is. Now, whattaya GOING TO DO!?

CONTROL STIMULUS TEXT

Scene 1:

Coach: Beamen? Ok, Beamen, you're up. Left 2 Zig 21 Top Down. You know what that is? Easy hand off to Jullian. Look at me. Look at me. LOOK AT ME! You're going to be fine. You hold it all inside. Do you feel like throwing up?

Quarterback (Beamen): No, no.

Coach: Last time you puked you had a hell of a game. If you make a ritual out of it people are going to respect you for it. We're going to go at them and we're going to go with the spread. Come here, come here. Focus. Concentration. Down field. Down field. Every inch. Every inch. You see it before you do it. You see it, you do it.

Quarterback: Alright, I got it, I feel it coach. I was just wondering why you all was taking so long we about to let this one slip away.

Coach: Well ok, go ahead let's go. Make me a believer!

Scene 2:

Coach: We just lost two goddamn quarterbacks in one half of football! Because our line couldn't pick up a backside bandit! On max protection. All week long we work on the calls, over, over, over again. You are not fucking focused!

McKenna! What are you doing? You got to keep your head on a swivel man! You've got to slide out there, pick up that robber! I mean roll up those outside linebackers.

Beamen. Know your sight adjustments. Understand? Sanderson and Fox will break off their routes, but you gotta be there, you gotta deliver it. Two goddamn turnovers in one half.

Ok, Defense. Here's what we got to do here. Uh, uuhh, I don't know. You got to do something. You got to do something out there. You got to make it happen. I don't know what you're doing. You got to stop flying around the fucking ball. Do something! Tackle somebody. Don't let these chew up the god damn clock on us. Look, when we put eight in the box you've got to jam those receivers. I don't care, if you're going to make mistakes, make em big. I don't give a fuck. I'm not going to eat your lunch for that. Alright, we got PJ, Mack, Beast Man, Horny, Shark. One less yard each time, they're going to be look at 2nd and eight instead of second and six. We're only down by three, we can win this one.

Scene 3:

Quarterback: Things are just moving too fast, coach.

Coach: Listen. Believe me when I tell you this. You can only get better. Ok? And you don't have to worry about getting the hook, because I got no one left. Ok?

Quarterback: Coach, I'm, I'm playing like shit. I ain't playing like myself.

Coach: C'mon, c'mon. You know how to play this game. You've played this game your whole life.

Quarterback: Right, right.

Coach: Now, where, whe...you grew up in Dallas right? Right?

Quarterback: Yeah.

Coach: So maybe you're back in Dallas right now. I'm mean you're at home, you're enjoying yourself, you're back in the hood just before you're momma calls you in for dinner, alright? I say, "Go to the Buick, turn around, I'll throw it to you." You remember that?

Quarterback: Yeah, something like that.

Coach: All I'm saying Willie is you've got to forget it all. The crowd, the audibles, the goddamn playbook. Just focus on this next one pass. Go to the Buick. Turn around. Turn around.

Quarterback: Alright baby.

Coach: Enjoy it! That's what you're here for.

