



Development of Neuro Linguistic Programming Module for Golf Athletes: A Needs Analysis

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Abstract

The aim of the study. The sport of golf demands not just physical skills but also psychological fortitude from players. To succeed in golf, athletes must have mental strength, emotional stability, and appropriate levels of anxiety. A sound psychological training program can help improve their performance, and this is precisely why the current study aims to investigate whether a Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) module would be effective in achieving this goal.

Materials and methods. To conduct the study, the researchers administered a questionnaire to 120 former and current golf athletes. The data collected from the survey was analyzed using IBM SPSS software.

Results. The results reveal that a vast majority of the respondents (86.8%) believe that creating an NLP module that focuses on psychological aspects would be advantageous. The study's findings suggest that there is a pressing need to develop an NLP module that addresses the psychological needs of golfers.

Conclusions. The results have important implications for the design and implementation of psychological training programs for athletes, indicating that an NLP module could be a valuable addition to the training regimen. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential for further research in this area to refine and optimize the NLP module's effectiveness in enhancing golfers' performance.

Keywords: Neuro Linguistic Programming, golf, psychology.

Introduction

Golf is often referred to as a “mental game” due to the significant psychological demands it places on its players. Players must learn to cope with pressure, manage anxiety, maintain focus, and handle setbacks while remaining optimistic and motivated. Research has shown that psychological factors can have a significant impact on a golfer's performance, often more so than physical factors such as strength and technique (Beilock, 2010). One aspect of golf that can be particularly challenging for players is the prolonged periods of concentration required during a round. Golfers must remain alert and focused for several hours at a time, which can be mentally taxing. The ability to manage mental fatigue is critical for maintaining consistent performance throughout a round. Another significant psychological factor that affects golfers is their ability to handle pressure. Golfers often face high-pressure situations, such as playing in front of large crowds or competing in a tournament with high stakes. The pressure to perform can cause anxiety, which can lead to decreased performance if not managed correctly. Golfers must learn to manage their anxiety and maintain their focus despite the pressure they may be feeling.

Malaysia has had some success in golf in recent years, with several golfers making their mark on the international stage. One of the most successful Malaysian golfers is Nicholas Fung, who has won several tournaments and played in the prestigious US Open. Another notable golfer is Gavin Kyle Green, who has also won several tournaments and represented Malaysia in the Olympics. While Malaysia has produced several successful golfers over the years, including Danny Chia and Gavin Green, there is still room for improvement in the country's golf sports achievement. One of the reasons for this is the lack of focus on the mental and psychological aspects of the game. Golf is known as a mental game, and it is widely recognized that a player's mindset can greatly impact their performance on the course.

According to a study by Hayslip and Petrie (2014), golfers must have high levels of mental and emotional strength to remain stable and focused during a round of golf. They must be able to stay calm and relaxed under pressure and be able to control their emotions in order to make effective decisions on the course. This is where psychological training can come in, helping golfers to develop the mental resilience and focus needed to perform at their best.

However, in Malaysia, there is often more focus on the technical and physical aspects of the game, such as swing

technique and physical fitness, with less attention paid to the psychological side. This can put Malaysian golfers at a disadvantage when competing against opponents who have received more comprehensive psychological training.

To address this issue, there is a need for more emphasis on the psychological aspects of golf training in Malaysia. This could involve the development of specialized programs and modules that focus specifically on mental preparation and resilience. Such programs could include techniques from fields such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), which has been shown to have positive effects in other sports (Ahi & Milani, 2016). Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a popular approach used in sports psychology to help athletes enhance their mental and emotional states, and to achieve their goals. NLP is based on the premise that individuals can change their thought patterns and behavior by changing the way they perceive and process information. By changing their internal dialogue and visualizations, athletes can achieve a state of peak performance, or what is often called being "in the zone" (Den Hartigh et al., 2018).

Recent studies have shown that NLP can have positive effects on the psychological and performance outcomes of athletes. A study by Vaitkevicius et al. (2021) found that NLP-based interventions can help athletes reduce their anxiety levels, increase their confidence, and improve their performance in competitions. The study involved a group of elite Lithuanian basketball players who received NLP-based interventions over a period of six weeks. The results showed that the athletes who received the NLP-based interventions had significantly lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of self-confidence compared to those who did not receive the interventions. Furthermore, the athletes who received the NLP-based interventions performed better in competition, demonstrating higher levels of skill and more effective decision-making. Another study by Ahi and Milani (2016) found that NLP techniques can improve the mental toughness and resilience of athletes. The study involved a group of male and female Iranian weightlifters who received NLP-based interventions over a period of eight weeks. The results showed that the weightlifters who received the NLP-based interventions had higher levels of mental toughness, better emotional control, and greater resilience compared to those who did not receive the interventions.

Overall, these studies suggest that NLP-based interventions can have a positive impact on the psychological and performance outcomes of athletes. By helping athletes to manage their anxiety, increase their confidence, and improve their mental toughness and resilience, NLP can help them to achieve their goals and perform at their best. Addition, NLP based modules into sports training programs can be a useful way to enhance the psychological level of athletes. By developing specialized programs and modules that focus specifically on mental preparation and resilience, Malaysian golfers can benefit from the positive effects of NLP-based interventions, and compete at the highest levels of their game.

Materials and methods

Participants

A cross-sectional survey was utilized in this study to collect data from the sample of 120 former and current golfers.

This method involves taking data only once from the study sample over a specific period of time, which can provide a comprehensive overview (Creswell, 2018). The researcher used purposive sampling, a sampling procedure of a group of subjects with certain characteristics, to select research respondents appropriate to the research title, which is golf athletes (Creswell, 2018).

Organization of research

The questionnaire used in this study was constructed by the researcher and approved by experts in the field. This method was selected as it allows for flexible time to answer the questionnaire among the study respondents (Coe et al., 2021). Survey methods, such as questionnaires, have been recognized by Sidek and Jamaludin (2005), Creswell (2018), and Coe et al. (2021) as a suitable data analysis tool for research that identifies needs. It is also useful for examining problems and challenges faced by instructors during the teaching and learning process. The data obtained from the study was analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 26 statistical computing software.

Research Instruments

To obtain data related to the objectives of the study in the need's analysis phase, a questionnaire was utilized as the research instrument. This questionnaire consisted of two parts: part A, which collected information on the demographics and background of the respondents, and part B, which focused on the development of the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) module for golfers. The analysis of part B was conducted using statistical measures such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Results

To collect data on the needs of the assessment module for the study's objectives during the need's analysis phase, a questionnaire was utilized as the research instrument. The questionnaire comprised two parts, with part A focusing on respondents' demographics and backgrounds, and part B consisting of a questionnaire regarding the development of the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) module for golfers. The analysis of part B was conducted through the use of percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 1 discusses part B of the questionnaire which is the requirement of the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) module for golf athletes. This analysis shows that overall golf athletes do need the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) module as psychological training. As many as 83.3% of the 120 athletes who answered the questionnaire admitted to having experienced psychological problems such as emotional disturbances, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of mental fatigue while engaging in the sport of golf. Additionally, a similar percentage also suggests that psychological factors affect golf performance. Furthermore, only 37% of respondents believes that psychological training is given priority in the golf training they follow. This suggests that 63% of respondents state that the psychological training is given less attention and care in their golf training. Therefore, a to-

Table 1. The Need for Neuro Linguistic Programming module (NLP) for Golfers

Question	Percentage
1. I have experienced psychological problems such as emotional disturbances, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of mental fatigue while engaging in golf?	83.3% Yes
2. Psychological factors affect performance in golf?	83.3% Yes
3. Psychological training is given priority in the golf training I follow.	63% Yes
4. Golf training requires a special Module to improve psychological skills.	89.1% Yes
5. There is a Neuro Linguistic Programming training in the golf training program?	8.3% Yes
6. The introduction and integration of special psychological training for the sport of golf is important to overcome psychological problems.	89.1% Yes
7. The Neuro Linguistic Programming module is necessary to improve the psychological level that affects the performance of golf athletes.	86.8% Yes

tal of 107 athletes out of 120 respondents believes that golf training requires a special module to improve psychological skills. Further, only 8.3% of respondents stated that there was Neuro Linguistic Programming training in their golf training program. This proves that a total of 91.7% of respondents still do not implement NLP in the golf training program. Most athletes, 89.1%, agreed that the introduction and integration of special psychological training for golf is important to overcome psychological problems. Moreover 86.8% of respondents think the Neuro Linguistic Programming Module is very necessary to improve the psychological level that affects the performance of golf athletes.

Table 2 shows the need of the Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) module for golfers in terms of mean, standard deviation according to the Likert Scale. It is categorized into five groups based on the Likert Scale, 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (slightly agree), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree). The mean score is very low (1.00-1.80), low (1.81-2.60), medium (2.61-3.40), high (3.41- 4.20) and very high (4.21-5.00) according to Gani, I., & Amalia, S. (2021).

Overall, the mean score for five of the seven questions was very high. The findings of the study prove that there is a need to develop a Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) Module that records a score (M= 4.67; SP = .473). The highest mean score was (M= 4.88; SP = .371) for the question of athletes ever experiencing psychological problems such as emotional disturbances, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of mental fatigue while engaging in golf. Psychological factors affect performance in golf (M= 4.17; SP = .374). Furthermore, golf training requires a special module to improve psychological skills (M= 4.22; SP = .419). In addition, the introduction and integration of special psychological training for the sport of golf is important to overcome psychological problems (M= 4.92; SP = .278). In addition, there are two questions with low scores, namely psychological training is given priority in the golf training I followed (M= 2.54; SP = .766) while there is Neuro Linguistic Programming training in the golf training program (M= 1.34; SP = .628).

Table 2. The Need for Neuro Linguistic Programming Module (NLP) for Golfers

Item	Mean	SD
1. I have experienced psychological problems such as emotional disturbances, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of mental fatigue while engaging in golf?	4.88	0.371
2. Psychological factors affect performance in golf?	4.17	0.374
3. Psychological training is given priority in the golf training I attend.	2.54	0.766
4. Golf training requires a special Module to improve psychological skills.	4.22	0.419
5. There is a Neuro Linguistic Programming training in the golf training program?	1.34	0.628
6. The introduction and integration of special psychological training for the sport of golf is important to overcome psychological problems.	4.92	0.278
7. The Neuro Linguistic Programming module is very necessary to improve the psychological level that affects the performance of golf athletes.	4.67	0.473

Table 3. Mean score interpretation

Implementation Level	Interpretation	
	Frequency	Mean Score
Low	Not Often	1.00-2.33
Medium	Less Often	2.34-3.66
High	Often	3.67-5.00

Source modified from Gani, I., & Amalia, S. (2021)

Discussion

According to Rotella (2012), golf is often referred to as a “mental game,” where athletes require significant mental and emotional strength to remain stable and avoid worrying about the mood of the game. As Hayslip and Petrie (2014) point out, the length of the golf game further underscores the importance of such mental and emotional fortitude. Given that the achievement of golf sport in Malaysia needs improvement, it is crucial to focus on psychological training. While various methods have been utilized to enhance golfers’ performance, it is worthwhile to explore the effectiveness of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) - a model that comprises several techniques used in other fields that have shown positive effects. Therefore, this study aims to develop an NLP module as a psychological training for golfers, which can serve as a guide for both athletes and coaches during the training program.

The analysis phase of the development of NLP modules for golf athletes also reinforces the notion that golfers need NLP modules as psychological training. In fact, 86.8% of respondents in the study indicated that such a module is necessary for athletes and can significantly improve their performance. However, the study also reveals that only 8.3% of respondents have ever undergone NLP training in the golf

training program. Thus, the implementation of the NLP module can offer athletes a new and meaningful psychological exercise to enhance their performance.

One area for future research is to assess the effectiveness of the NLP module on improving the performance of golfers. This study could be conducted through experimental research, where a group of golfers are provided with the NLP module as part of their psychological training, and their performance is measured before and after the training. The study could also include a control group that does not receive the NLP module but receives other forms of psychological training to assess the comparative effectiveness of the NLP module. In addition to performance measures such as scores and handicaps, the study could also measure psychological factors such as confidence, focus, and motivation. Furthermore, a follow-up study could be conducted to assess the long-term effectiveness of the NLP module. Another avenue for future research is to compare the effectiveness of the NLP module with other psychological training methods used in golfing, such as visualization or meditation. This study could involve a randomized controlled trial where golfers are assigned to different groups and receive different psychological training methods. The study could measure the effectiveness of each method on golfers' performance and psychological factors. The study could also investigate the combination of NLP training with other methods to assess whether a hybrid approach is more effective than using a single method. Moreover, the study could investigate the factors that influence the effectiveness of each method, such as the golfers' age, experience, and skill level.

In summary, this study highlights the need for developing an NLP module for golfers to improve their psychological training and, in turn, their performance. As previous research suggests (e.g., Rotella, 2012; Hayslip Jr. & Petrie, 2014), golf is a challenging sport that requires significant mental and emotional fortitude. Thus, this study's findings reinforce the notion that the development of NLP modules can be an effective approach for enhancing golfers' psychological preparation. Moreover, given the high percentage of respondents who recognized the value of such a module, it is clear that there is significant demand for this kind of training among golfers. Overall, this study provides an initial overview of the importance of developing NLP modules for golfers and highlights the potential benefits of such an approach.

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Conflict of interest

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and declare no conflict of interest.

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Розробка модуля нейролінгвістичного програмування для спортсменів з гольфу: аналіз потреб

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Авторський вклад: А – дизайн дослідження; В – збір даних; С – статаналіз; D – підготовка рукопису; Е – збір коштів

Реферат. Стаття: 5 с., 3 табл., 15 джерел.

Мета дослідження: гольф як спорт вимагає від гравців не тільки фізичних навичок, а й психологічної стійкості. Щоб досягти успіху в гольфі, спортсмени повинні мати розумову силу, емоційну стабільність і відповідний рівень тривожності. Надійна психологічна програма підготовки може допомогти поліпшити їх продуктивність, і саме тому поточне дослідження має на меті дослідити, чи буде модуль нейролінгвістичного програмування (НЛП) ефективним у досягненні цієї мети.

Матеріали і методи. У дослідженні було проведено опитування 120 колишніх і нинішніх спортсменів з гольфу. Дані, зібрані в ході опитування, були проаналізовані за допомогою програмного забезпечення IBM SPSS.

Результати. Результати показують, що переважна більшість респондентів (86,8%) вважають, що було б вигідно створити модуль НЛП, який фокусується на психологічних аспектах. Результати дослідження свідчать про те, що існує нагальна потреба в розробці модуля НЛП, який відповідає психологічним потребам гравців у гольф.

Висновки. Результати мають важливе значення для розробки та впровадження психологічних тренінгових програм для спортсменів, вказуючи на те, що модуль НЛП може бути цінним доповненням до режиму тренувань. Крім того, дослідження підкреслює потенціал подальших досліджень у цій галузі для уточнення та оптимізації ефективності модуля НЛП у підвищенні продуктивності гравців у гольф.

Ключові слова: нейролінгвістичне програмування, гольф, психологія.

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