Experience in competitive youth sport and needs satisfaction: The Singapore story (Koh, Wang, Erickson, Côté, 2012)

- **Purpose:** Examine the relationship between sport experience and psychological needs satisfaction.
- **Sample:** 1250 student athletes in Singapore secondary schools.
- **Findings:** 6 profiles of athlete experience.
  - 1. High positive and high negative developmental experience (3%)
  - 2. Highest positive and lowest negative experience (20%)
  - 3. Flat profile (26.7%)
  - 4. Low positive and high negative experience (7.1%)
  - 5. Low positive and low negative experience (28.5%)
  - 6. Extremely low positive and moderate negative experience (14.6%)

Only one-fifth of sample reported overall positive experience.

Motivational climate in youth sport

The environment consisting of motivational cues and expectations that mould the kinds of goals that youth strive for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Practical implication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
<td>• Effort and improvement&lt;br&gt;</td>
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Social agents in sporting environment of youths

Communication and interaction moulds motivational climate of youths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social agents</th>
<th>Widely studied</th>
<th>Need more research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
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Youth sports in Singapore

Roles of a CCA teacher
- Manager
- Makes all decisions
- Mentor to students

No studies looking at the motivational climate created by managing role of CCA teachers.

Research aim
1) To survey good practices, including those related to creating a task motivational climate, by model school sport teams to promote positive youth development in Singapore.
2) Examine the roles that peers and CCA teachers play in promoting positive youth development.

Methods
Qualitative study

Participants
- Student athletes: 64
- Adults: 8 CCA teachers, 7 coaches
- 5 secondary schools

Sampling
- School: Convenience sampling of government schools
- Type of sport: Co-active team sport
- Sport team: Based quantitative scores and recommendation by school leaders (sport achievement and holistic development)

Procedure
- Student athletes: Focus groups interview
- Coaches & CCA teachers: One-to-one semi-structured interview

Data analysis
- Thematic analysis
  - Codes, themes (first-order, second-order, third-order)

Key findings

Desired outcomes of participation in sport CCA
Most participants express the importance of developing positive character traits and life skills rather than sport competence.

S3: I think sports CCA should teach students to never give up because no matter how strong the opponent is, they need to step up and face them. (Good character - Resilience)

T7: Because generally they are always reminded that teamwork is important and it is made up of two bigger terms. They have to understand that every person must be included, no one is to be left out, and they must work hard together. (Life skills – Show effective team work)
Strategies to promote positive youth development

Model school teams layout *routines and practices* that emphasized *values and life skills* instead of focusing on sport competence.

T5: It is intentional, the way I order the *friendly games* my boys play in. I usually have in mind *what type of value or experience* I want them to gain, for example resilience. The intention must be very clear. The *activities have to be centered around* what you want to achieve.

*(Nurturing good values – Through intentional planning)*

T3: We give a lot of *leadership opportunities* to our students. We don’t only have just captain, or vice-captains but also admin in-charge, logistics, publicity. So there are more avenues for them to practice their *leadership skills*.

*(Life skills – Building leadership qualities)*

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Role of CCA teachers

All participants, including CCA teachers themselves *acknowledge the importance* of having a CCA teacher.

T2: It’s more mothering kind of role, I would say. The coaches train drills skills, they lead them in a different way. The [CCA] teachers *complement the role of coaches*. We [CCA teachers] watch and make sure they’re [athletes] *safe*, we watch and make sure it’s *fair*, or as fair as we make it, we watch and make sure that they grow.

*(Promote holistic development – Complement coach)*

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Role of peers

Peers are seen as *influential* to athletes’ behaviour and decision-making.

C2: They’re at that age where their peers influence is very strong. No matter what the teachers say sometimes, the peers influence is *the one that pushes them*.

*(Peers influence – Influence athlete behavior)*

T6: Especially the seniors. I think the *juniors look up to the seniors* so if they see that their seniors doing certain thing then they will follow, *they learn by example*.

*(Peer influence – Influence of seniors)*

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General discussions and conclusions

All teams had strategies that contributed to creating elements of a *task motivational climate*.

S45: He doesn’t scold us if we are bad at something, he scold us if we give up and don’t want to try.

*(Task motivational climate – Effort)*

C8: I make it a point that *if you don’t support your friend* and your friends is lagging behind and if you want to continue like that, then you will be at the slowest place.

*(Task-motivational climate – Cooperative learning)*
There are good strategies to promote holistic development in sport

- Strike balance between sports and holistic youth development
  - Compulsory attendance
  - Valuing effort over achievement
- Help students juggle sport and academic commitments
  - E.g. School policy of banning students with poorer disciplinary record from representing school

Creating a task motivational climate may be crucial to positive youth development in school sport teams

- Teachers and coaches of model school teams agree on the importance of the elements
- Practice routines and intentional strategies that nurtures effort, inclusion of all students, emphasize teamwork

Elements of a Task motivational climate
- Effort and improvement
- Important role
- Cooperative learning

The supporting roles like CCA teachers might be useful to optimize youth development in sport

- Remove administrative load from coaches so they can focus on sport training and character development
- Are able to focus on character and life skill development
  - Train in student management pedagogy
  - They have more contact time with students in school
- Help youth athletes manage other life challenges
  - Academic commitments
  - Disciplinary problems
  - Socio-emotional issues

Peers have a strong influence on the decisions and behavior of youths

- Environment created by peers uniquely contribute to crucial outcomes like sportsmanship, vitality\(^1\), physical self-worth and effort\(^2\).
- Adolescent develop moral compass and identity through social comparison with peers
  - Competing with peers in a team hinder perspective-taking skills and moral development\(^3\).

Future directions

- There is a need for more exchange and communication among school teams to share best practices that develop youth athletes holistically
  - Communities of practice\(^1\)
  - Mentoring in sport coaching\(^2\)
- More research is needed to ascertain the value of a supporting position (e.g. CCA teacher) in youth sports
- More intervention studies to survey how creating a task motivational climates by both important adult and peers influence youth athletes.

\(^1\)Ntoumanis et al., 2012; \(^2\)Vazou et al., 2006; \(^3\)Shields & Bredemeier, 1995.
Conclusion

• Sport can be a fertile ground to develop youths holistically through intentional and strategic planning of activities and routines.

• Studies of positive youth development need to consider the role of important social agents and elements of task motivational climates.

Sports have been known to develop youths in positive ways

Positive outcomes

Life skills and values

Character

Psychological

Socio-emotional

Theoretical model: Positive youth development (PYD) in sport

A movement emphasizing that youths have the potential to grow in positive ways.

Focus of youth initiatives: Building skills and knowledge

Why study Co-curricular activities (CCA) teachers?

• CCA teachers hold equal if not more authority than the coach in CCAs

• Teacher-coaches

• USA, European countries (e.g. Sweden), Asian countries (e.g. Japan)

Roles of a teacher-coach

Roles of a CCA teacher

No studies looking at the motivational climate created by managing role of CCA teachers.

Theoretical model: Motivational climate in youth sport

Motivational climate

The environment consisting of motivational cues and expectations that mould the kinds of goals that youth strive for.

Task

• Effort and improvement
• Important role
• Cooperative learning

Ego

• Punishment of mistakes
• Unequal recognition
• Intra-team rivalry

Practical implication

• Encouraged to strive for learning and personal development
• Effort is reinforced
• Errors are considered a part of development

• Normative comparison
• Outperforming others at all cost
• Least effort possible to achieve one’s goals
• Errors are avoided and punished

Lerner et al., 2005.

Konukman et al., 2010.

SSSC,2015; Konukman et al., 2010.
Sports has also linked to negative outcomes

Results of qualitative results

Themes
- Third-order: 6
- Second-order: 27
- First-order: 119

Interview guide

<table>
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<th>Question section</th>
<th>Sample questions</th>
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<td>Desired outcomes of participation in sport CCAs</td>
<td>What are desired athletes qualities that sport CCAs should strive to nurture?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies to promote positive youth development</td>
<td>What is done in this team to develop those qualities you mentioned?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of peers in youth development through sport</td>
<td>In what ways do you think your teammates contribute to your development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of CCA teachers in youth development through sport</td>
<td>How has the CCA teacher contributed to the development of the athletes in this team?</td>
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Challenges faced

Difficulty balancing sport achievement and student development due to stakes (e.g., funding and resources)

T5: one of the main challenges for CCAs we face for years until now is participation vs results. Because there is a team of 16 girls right, at any one time we can only let 4 girls play. So it is inevitable that the better players get more court time than the players that is not as good. It creates a dilemma because first of all you want them to feel the teamwork, that everyone has a part to play. But some of the girls are not so good, so we can’t give them as much court time.

(Ego motivational climate – Unequal recognition)

Heavy emphasis on academics in Singapore often take priority over sport CCA needs.

T2: There’s always this tension, too much time spent on remedial, extra lessons, enrichment. All these things take them [athletes] away from their training session. And there’s always this conflict that for example, our rugby boys I mean, not all of them, are not academically strong, and they have to attend after-school remedial. So as a CCA teacher, should I ask them to be excused from remedial, or are they supposed to be excused from training.

(School-related challenges – Competing academic commitments)
Delimitations and limitations

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<th>Limitations</th>
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<td>Convenience sampling</td>
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<td>Self-report</td>
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Motivational climate in sports can develop important areas of positive youth development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of youth development</th>
<th>Task Motivational climate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Higher perceived ability</td>
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<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Higher perceived self-esteem</td>
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<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Team cohesion</td>
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<td>Higher satisfaction of the need for relatedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Higher moral functioning</td>
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