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I-CReST 2025:083-057 – How Support and Coach-Athlete Intimacy in Closeness Aspect Influence Athletes' Performance

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ABSTRACT

The concept of closeness within the coach and athlete relationship represents a pivotal aspect of interpersonal dynamics in sport psychology and athletic development. Closeness is defined by the presence of emotional warmth, mutual trust, and a strong sense of support, all of which contribute to a meaningful and impactful relational bond. This emotional connection does not arise spontaneously; rather, it is cultivated through consistent interaction, open communication, and reciprocal understanding over time. Coaches demonstrate respect for their athletes by acknowledging their efforts, valuing their growth, and believing in their potential to succeed. Shared experiences, such as the challenges of training, the highs and lows of competition, and moments of personal and professional growth, further reinforce this relational depth. These joint experiences allow both parties to form a deeper understanding of each other's motivations, values, and emotional states. As this bond strengthens, it fosters a relational environment where both the coach and the athlete feel psychologically safe, respected, and empowered to perform at their best. Specifically, athletes performance closely related towards self-definition and motivation and how closeness aspect would affect the specific athletes. Therefore, interpersonal closeness between coach athletes or among athletes should catch the eye of attention for improving performances. The dimension of impact of closeness in team and emotional influence were investigated during execution of performances. The present study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both psychometric assessment and physical performance testing to examine the influence of coach–athlete relational closeness on maximal power output. A total of approximately 60 competitive athletes participated in the research. Participants were first administered a standardized questionnaire designed to evaluate their perceived level of interpersonal closeness with their coaches, based on established constructs within the coach–athlete relationship literature. Following the completion of the questionnaire, athletes performed a maximal power test using the standing broad jump, a validated field measure for lower-body explosive strength. Each athlete completed the test under two distinct conditions: one reflecting a perceived presence of relational closeness and the other in the absence of such influence. This dual-condition approach allowed for a comparative analysis of how the emotional aspect of closeness might influence physical performance outcomes. In this study, two key statistical analyses were employed to support the research objectives. A paired sample t-test was used to compare athletes' standing broad jump performance under two conditions: with and without the influence of perceived coach–athlete closeness. This test was appropriate for identifying significant differences in performance within the same group of athletes. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha was applied to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire measuring relational closeness. This reliability test ensured that the items used in the scale consistently reflected the intended psychological construct, providing confidence in the validity of the responses. This research provides

valuable insights into the critical role of relational closeness between coaches and athletes in enhancing athletic performance. By demonstrating the measurable impact of emotional connection on maximal power output, the study underscores the importance of fostering trust, respect, and support within the coach–athlete dynamic. Consequently, athletes can achieve performance gains more efficiently within a shorter time frame, facilitating a smoother transition to higher levels of professionalism and readiness.

Keywords: Athlete; Coaching; Motivation; Maximal power; Athlete response