A Narrative Study of Mental Development Process of Athletes through Their Experiences of Turning Points.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to clear the mental development process of athletes through their experiences of turning points by using narrative approach. The interviews about their athletic career, important events, turning points, recent motivation, competitive anxiety, etc., were conducted with twenty-two university athletes. The narratives of their turning points were collected and classified according to the similarity.

Three characteristic narratives, “narratives of self-change”, “narratives of empty period” and “narratives of anchoring events” were found. “Narratives of self-change” is such narratives as “I have held a negative state of mind before the turning point, but after the turning point I have become a positive state of mind.” “Narratives of empty period” is such narratives as “Before the turning point, I had gotten into a slump and lost my way.” “Narratives of anchoring events” is such narratives as “As a result of the turning point, I have become aware of my belief in sport.” What these narratives mean to the mental development process of athletes was discussed.

It was considered that because of those characteristic narratives, athletes could become aware of their development and acquire their belief in sport, and they could keep their motivation against some troubles or doubts they would confront.

Key words: turning point, narrative, mental development process of athletes, motivation, failure tolerance