

Grit and Competence among Swimming Coaches in the Philippines: An Explanatory-Sequential Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

The concept of grit has been understudied in the local literature in the Philippines compared to other international nations. Furthermore, studies that focused on grit to swimming coaches has not yet been documented. In this regard, this research probes the dynamic relationship between grit and competence among swimming coaches (n=207) of Central Luzon Philippines, aiming to analyze the impact of these key factors on coaching effectiveness and athlete development. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to gather data from a diverse sample of experienced swimming coaches in the Region. Quantitative measures will assess coaches' levels of grit through the Grit Scale and self-perceived competence through the Coaching Competency Scale, while qualitative insights will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced and strategies employed in the demanding field of swimming coaching. As hypothesized, results from this research revealed that Grit influences Coaching Competency ($F(3, 203) = 20.251, p < .001$). However, Ambition did not register a significant relationship to Coaching Competency ($\beta = .141, t = .889, p = .375$). Coaches are very willing and highly enthusiastic in sharing the knowledge and skills to their swimmers towards improving their athletic abilities. Amidst adversities, coaches defined their resiliency in developing strategies to cope. Central Luzon coaches share their vision to their athletes towards achieving their goals through motivational strategies towards productive transformation. Lastly, coaches share the importance of serving as a role model towards improving motivation, game strategies, technique and character building of swimmers. Results of the study may be used to formulate programs for further enhancements on coaches' grit and competencies. It is recommended to conduct parallel researches to other regions in the Philippines and other nations.

Keywords: Grit; Coaching Competence; Swimming Coaches; Long-term Goals

INTRODUCTION

Sports coaching is a dynamic and intricate process that necessitates ongoing professional growth because of the coach's multifaceted and essential role in athlete development (Tan & O'Connor, 2023). Coaching requires making difficult decisions, selecting players and solving problems on a daily basis under significant time constraints (Altfeld & Kellmann, 2015). Researches about sports coaching has drawn a lot of interest from the sports literature and empirical studies (Myers et al., 2010). However, the concept of grit and competence among coaches has been understudied in the local literature in the Philippines as compared to other international nations.

Swimming Coaches' Grit

Wang et al. (2021) defined the concept of grit as the consistency of interest and perseverance of effort towards and ambition. It is a combination of resilience, ambition, and self-control in the pursuit of goals that takes months, years or even decades. *Grit* makes an individual brave enough to overcome the fear of failure, to work harder, to make commitment and efforts toward their interest and goals and, to accomplish a given mission (Fabelico & Afalla, 2020). Grit is said to be an important aspect in sports training activities since it helps people cope with a variety of challenges (Luthans et al., 2019). Research suggests that developing grit can improve health and physical fitness, as well as increase motivation to learn sports skills (Cosgrove et al., 2018; Ueno et al., 2018). An individual with well-developed grit has a strong spirit, perseverance, or fighting spirit in the long run, which can be exploited to obtain ideal results. On the contrary, individuals with inferior grit may fail in their careers (Frontini et al., 2022). It is only in recent years that researchers have started to investigate the grit trait generally, and specifically in the sport setting, more so, for studies involving swimming coaches.

Coaching Competency

Competency refers to the knowledge, skills, and performance qualities necessary to do a job well that is referring to motives, traits, skills and abilities (Chiu et al., 2013). In the field of sports, a competent coach should be able to select the appropriate method, technique, and language to communicate with their athletes (Moen & Federici, 2011). Coaching is a complex undertaking that requires the employment of many tactics and actions in order to meet a wide range of objectives. To produce quality athletes, sports coaches must have solid knowledge, build competencies or abilities, and be highly motivated to carry out their obligations (Dalmitros et al., 2023). Swimming is primarily an individual activity, with high-level success requiring significant physical and mental effort, as well as certain anthropometrical, biomechanical, and technical criteria (Ben-Zaken et al., 2022). In relation, swim coaches must manage four strokes across numerous competitions and distances. Numerous studies have analyzed competitive swim coaches' perceptions of training and physiological practices, including resistance training, competition preparation, warm-up protocols, and recovery strategies (Dalmitros et al., 2023). Several studies have analyzed competitive swim coaches' perceptions of various training and physiological practices, including resistance training, competition preparation and warm-up protocols and rehabilitation techniques (Raineteau et al., 2024). On the contrary, there are limited studies that focuses on swimming coach's competency.

METHOD

Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to probe the dynamic relationship between grit and competence among swimming coaches of Central Luzon Philippines, aiming to analyze the impact of these key factors on coaching effectiveness and athlete development. Specifically, the researchers sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the profile of Central Luzon (Region III) Swimming Coaches be described in terms of;
 - Age;
 - Sex;
 - Years of Experience as Swimming Coach;
 - Highest Educational Attainment;
 - Highest Meet Coached?
2. How may the level of Grit of Central Luzon Swimming Coaches be described?
3. How may the level of Competence of Central Luzon Swimming Coaches be described?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the grit and competence of Central Luzon Swimming Coaches?
5. How do Central Luzon Swimming Coaches Describe their willingness to share their knowledge and skills to their athlete's improvement?
6. What are the strategies of Central Luzon Swimming Coaches in coping up with challenges?
7. How do Central Luzon Coaches share their vision to their athletes towards achieving their goals?
8. How do Central Luzon Coaches describe their strategies in terms of motivation, game strategies, technique, and character building?

The researcher hypothesized that Grit has a significant relationship on swimming coaches of Central Luzon's (Region 3) perceived Coaching Competence (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14, H15, H16, H17, H18, H19, H20,).

Research Design

This present study have utilized Explanatory mixed-method approach. This method used the quantitative descriptive survey and qualitative phenomenology. A quantitative method is primarily concerned with the treatment of data, in terms of comparative analysis, statistical analysis, and repeatability of data collection to verify reliability. The frequency count classifies the items accordingly to a particular scheme and an arithmetical count was applied to the number of items. Furthermore, in order to determine the direct influence of grit to sports competency, Multiple Regression was performed. It is a statistical technique that uses several explanatory variables to predict the outcome of a response variable. Meanwhile, the qualitative method used the Conceptual Content Analysis that focuses on how many times the concept occurs.

Participants

Purposive sampling was utilized to select n=207 swimming coaches from Central Luzon (Region III) who are most likely to provide suitable and helpful information (Campbell et al., 2020), and it is a method of discovering and selecting cases that will make the best use of limited research resources (Andrade, 2021). The inclusion criteria identified respondents as active swimming coaches that has established a career in coaching or has either experienced coaching in a school setting. Most of the swimming coaches sampled were middle aged, which ranges from 31 – 40 years old, which totaled to 106 (51.2%). Coaching in the region was dominated by male with 146 or 70.5%. Coaching experience is often regarded as a key factor to develop competence and as indicated in the criteria; most swimming coaches included in the study has 1 – 5 years of experience in the field with 92(44.4%). Educational qualification level can also influence coaching competencies and the coaches in Central Luzon showed an indication that they value education as manifested in the 181(87.4%) who were able to obtain their bachelor's degree. There were 19(19.2%) coaches who did not stop in their quest for development as they pursued a higher degree and finished their Master's). In terms of the level of competition that Central Luzon swimming coaches reached, a number of 90 (43.5%) were able to reach the national stage.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	Items	N (%)
Age	<i>20 years and below</i>	12 (5.8%)
	<i>21–30 years</i>	61 (29.5%)
	<i>31–40 years</i>	106 (51.2%)
	<i>41–50 years</i>	14 (16.8%)
	<i>60–above</i>	14 (16.8%)
Sex	<i>Male</i>	146 (70.5%)
	<i>Female</i>	61 (29.5%)
Years of Experience	<i>1 to 5 years</i>	92 (44.4%)
	<i>6 to 10 years</i>	47 (22.7%)
	<i>11 to 15 years</i>	20 (9.7%)
	<i>16 to 20 years</i>	28 (13.5%)
Educational Attainment	<i>21 and above</i>	20 (9.7%)
	<i>High School</i>	7 (3.4%)
	<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	181 (87.4%)
	<i>Master's Degree</i>	19 (19.2%)
	<i>Inter Club</i>	49 (23.7%)
Highest Meet Coached	<i>Districts</i>	7 (3.4%)
	<i>Divisions</i>	12 (5.8%)
	<i>Regionals</i>	35 (16.9%)
	<i>Nationals</i>	90 (43.5%)
Total	<i>Internationals</i>	14 (6.8%)
		207 (100.00%)

Instruments

The research study utilized a pre-validated questionnaire that is composed of four (4) sections: (1) *Coaches Demographic Profile*, (2) *Grit Scale*, (3) *Coaching Competence Scale*, (4) *Open-ended questions*.

1. The *Grit Scale* is a brief, self-report measure of an individual's level of grit that is composed of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest for a long-term goal (Duckworth et al., 2007b). This focuses on measuring how swimming coaches work strenuously, maneuvering through challenges while maintaining their enthusiasm over the years despite of failures, adversity and lack of progress. Coaches were asked to consider different statements on how true they are on a 5-point scale ranging from "Not like me at all" (1) to "Very much like me" (5).
2. *Coaching Competence Scale* was developed by (Myers et al., 2010) aimed to measure the core competencies. The CCS consists of four dimensions which are Motivation Competency, Game Strategy Competency, Technique Competency, and Character-Building Competency. Coaches were asked to respond to a 10-point scale from statement "Not at all competent" (0) to "Extremely competent (10).
3. Open ended questions were included to solicit swimming coaches of Central Luzon's experiences in their field. The semi-structured questionnaire comprises the following open-ended questions: (1) How would you describe your willingness to share your knowledge and expertise to athletes in improving their swimming skills? (2) How do you describe your coping mechanism in the challenges that you are facing in coaching? (3) How do you share your vision to your athletes in terms of achieving your goals? (4) How do you describe your strategies in terms of athlete motivation, game strategies, technique, and character building?

Statistical Analysis

Frequency distribution and percentage count was utilized for the demographic profile of the swimming coaches of Central Luzon (Region 3). The frequency count categorizes the items according to a specific scheme, and an arithmetic count was applied to the number of items. Multiple Regression was used to assess the direct relationship between grit and sports skill. It is a statistical method that employs multiple explanatory variables to forecast the result of a response variable. Meanwhile, the qualitative method employed Conceptual Content Analysis, which focuses on how many times a concept appears.

Ethical considerations

For ethical considerations in the conduct of collecting data for this research, a confidentiality agreement, a non-disclosure agreement, to protect the privacy of the swimming coaches of Central Luzon (Region 3) was included in the dissemination of questionnaire. It also aims to build trust and rapport with the study participants to maintain the integrity of the research process. The participants are to be oriented that they are to answer the survey with all due honesty and to the best of their ability. The survey instrument was presented in a Google Form format and the link was disseminated through Google Mail or Facebook Messenger of different swimming coaches' organization within the region. Data gathered is to be stored in a secured data bank and shall be destroyed 2 years after the research was published.

RESULTS

Quantitative Phase

Observing the results, swimming coaches of Central Luzon's (Region 3) Grit level registered an overall mean of 3.73 which translates to an interpretation of "Highly Gritty" in their task of leading their athletes in the preparation and actual participation in different swimming meets. Overall SD of 0.62 is indicative of the coaches' common ideas on the responses to the statements that aims to measure their grittiness. However, it is noticeable that in their "Consistency of Interest", a mean of 3.00 that translates to verbal interpretation of "Moderately Gritty" shows that they are not that locked on to their long-term goals. This may be associated to the changing calendars of swimming meets that they need to prepare their swimmers and at the same time the different phases of the development of their athlete where they need to augment their training program designs. An SD of .79 provides the idea that the insights that they provided for this parameter is homogenous among the coaches.

Table 2. Level of Grit of Swimming Coaches

Variable	Sub-variables	Mean \pm SD	Verbal Interpretation
Grit	Ambition	3.87 \pm .56	Highly Gritty
	Perseverance of Effort	4.34 \pm .52	Highly Gritty
	Consistency of Interest	3.00 \pm .79	Moderately Gritty
	Overall Mean	3.73 \pm 0.62	Highly Gritty

Swimming coaches showed that they are "Extremely Competent" as indicated by the 8.32 overall mean. An overall SD of .89 also means that their thoughts on the different variables that measures their competence is at the same perspectives. Among the sub-variables, it is noticeable that the "Technique Competency" registered the highest mean with 8.59 that translates to being "Extremely Competent". This could be associated with the fact that the sport of swimming is highly technical for athletes' maximum performance outputs. Coaches need to be well equipped with knowledge and skills about the different swimming strokes (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle) that they teach their athletes. Proper dive, start, correctness of forms in the different strokes, and finishes must be taught to the swimmers to elevate their performances and lower their personal best to a new achievement.

Table 3. Level of Competency of Swimming Coaches

Variable	Sub-variables	Mean \pm SD	Verbal Interpretation
Competency	Motivation Competency	8.41 \pm .85	Extremely Competent
	Game Strategy Competency	8.03 \pm 1.06	Extremely Competent
	Technique Competency	8.59 \pm .71	Extremely Competent
	Character Building Competency	8.26 \pm .95	Extremely Competent
	Overall Mean	8.32 \pm .89	Extremely Competent

Based on the findings as represented in Table 3, it was observed that GRT predicts COMP ($F(3, 203) = 20.251, p < .001$), suggesting that GRT positively leverages COMP. The $R^2 = .480$ indicates that the model accounts for 48.0% of the variance in COMP. This can be postulated that the higher the grit possessed by coaches, their competency is being influenced. In this regard, H_1 has been supported. Additionally, the coefficients were also examined in order to explore each constructs direct influence to COMP. Firstly, it was observed AMB does not predict COMP ($\beta = .141, t = .889, p = .375$), suggesting that AMB does not directly influence COMP. H_2 has been rejected. Also, it was observed that PE and CI predict COMP, in which PE positively influences COMP ($\beta = .564, t = 3.456, p < .001$), while CI negatively influences COMP ($\beta = -.255, t = -3.504, p < .001$). Ergo, H_3 and H_4 were supported.

Furthermore, According to the results, it was observed that GRT predicts MC ($F(3, 203) = 12.003, p < .001$), suggesting that GRT positively leverages MC. The $R^2 = .388$ indicates that the model accounts for 38.8% of the variance in MC. In this regard, it can be hypothesized that the higher the grit of the coaches, their motivation competency is positively influenced. Therefore, H_5 has been supported. Additionally, it was observed that AMB do not influence MC ($\beta = -.057, t = -.337, p .737$), while PE ($\beta = .596, t = 3.427, p < .001$) and CI ($\beta = -.187, t = -2.412, p = .017$) both positively and negatively leverages MC. Based on these findings, H_6 has been rejected, and H_7 and H_8 were supported.

Moreover, it was observed that GRT predicts GSC ($F(3, 203) = 24.667, p < .001$), suggesting that GRT positively leverages MC. The $R^2 = .517$ indicates that the model accounts for 51.7% of the variance in GSC. In this regard, it can be hypothesized that the higher the grit of the coaches, their game strategy competency is positively influenced. Therefore, H_9 has been supported. Furthermore, it was observed that AMB ($\beta = .489, t = 2.485, p = .014$) and PE ($\beta = .561, t = 2.770, p = .006$) positively influences GSC, while CI ($\beta = -.301, t = -3.325, p = .001$) negatively affects GSC. In this, H_{10} , H_{11} , and H_{12} were supported.

Additionally, it was observed that GRT predicts CBC ($F(3, 203) = 24.940, p < .001$), suggesting that GRT positively leverages CBC. The $R^2 = .519$ indicates that the model accounts for 51.9% of the variance in CBC. In this regard, it can be hypothesized that the higher the grit of the coaches, their character-building competency is positively influenced. Therefore, H_{13} has been supported. Furthermore, it was observed that AMB does not influence CBC ($\beta = .141, t = 1.071, p = .285$), suggesting that H_{14} has been rejected. Meanwhile, it was found that PE ($\beta = .430, t = 3.167, p = .002$) positively influences CBC, while CI ($\beta = -.318, t = -5.249, p < .001$) negatively affects CBC, postulating that both H_{15} and H_{16} has been supported.

Lastly, it was found that GRT predicts TC, suggesting that GRT positively affects TC ($F(3, 203) = 11.721, p < .001$). The $R^2 = .384$ indicates that the model accounts for 38.4% of the variance in TC. In this regard, it can be hypothesized that the higher the grit of the coaches, their technique competency is positively influenced. Therefore, H_{17} has been supported. Furthermore, it was unraveled that AMB does not influence TC ($\beta = -.318, t = -5.249, p < .001$), while PE ($\beta = .618, t = 3.156, p = .002$) and CI ($\beta = -.239, t = -2.735, p = .007$) both positively and negatively affects TC. Therefore, H_{18} has been rejected, and H_{19} and H_{20} were supported.

Table 3. Multiple Regression analysis and Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F	t	p	Decision
H ₁	GRT → COMP	–	.480	20.251	–	<.001	Accepted
H ₂	AMB → COMP	.141	–	–	.889	.375	Rejected
H ₃	PE → COMP	.564	–	–	3.456	<.001	Accepted
H ₄	CI → COMP	-.255	–	–	-3.504	<.001	Accepted
H ₅	GRT → MC	-	.388	12.003	–	<.001	Accepted
H ₆	AMB → MC	-.057	–	–	-.337	.737	Rejected
H ₇	PE → MC	.596	–	–	3.427	<.001	Accepted
H ₈	CI → MC	-.187	–	–	-2.412	.017	Accepted
H ₉	GRT → GSC	-	.517	24.667	–	<.001	Accepted
H ₁₀	AMB → GSC	.489	–	–	2.485	.014	Accepted
H ₁₁	PE → GSC	.561	–	–	2.770	.006	Accepted
H ₁₂	CI → GSC	-.301	–	–	-3.325	.001	Accepted
H ₁₃	GRT → CBC	-	.519	24.940	–	<.001	Accepted
H ₁₄	AMB → CBC	.141	–	–	1.071	.285	Rejected
H ₁₅	PE → CBC	.430	–	–	3.167	.002	Accepted
H ₁₆	CI → CBC	-.318	–	–	-5.249	<.001	Accepted
H ₁₇	GRT → TC	-	.384	11.721	–	<.001	Accepted
H ₁₈	AMB → TC	-.035	–	–	-1.85	.853	Rejected
H ₁₉	PE → TC	.618	–	–	3.156	.002	Accepted
H ₂₀	CI → TC	-.239	–	–	-2.735	.007	Accepted

**p* <.05. Note: GRT- Grit, COMP- Competency, AMB- Ambition, PE- Perseverance of Effort, CI- Consistency of Interest, MC- Motivation Competency, GSC- Game Strategy Competency, TC- Technique Competency, CBC- Character Building Competency.

Qualitative Phase

Emerging Themes:

THEME 1: Coaches' Experience and High Level of Enthusiasm

Coaches are regarded as second parents of the athletes that strive for greatness and in their responses, there was a clear indication that they very much willing to share their knowledge and skills to their swimmers. They serve as beacons that guide the development from the grassroots level to the competitive stage. In that notion, swimming coaches of Central Luzon shares their knowledge and expertise to swimmers in their most passionate way:

C1 I am passionate about helping athletes improve their swimming skills, and I am committed to sharing my knowledge and expertise with them. Whether it's through 1-on-1 coaching sessions, team/club session, or online resources, I believe that every athlete has the potential to achieve their goals with the right guidance and support.

As such, most of the coaches anchor their teachings on their experiences both as a former athlete and a coach. They find it effective to mold their athletes on how they reached their pinnacle of success in their own swimming careers:

C17 Very willing, it has been a long-term goal of mine to share what I have accomplished before and a student of mine who exceeds my own experience in the sport is already a bonus for the goal I have set for them.

Moreover, coaches' selflessness in sharing their craft is evident as they want to impart what they know for athletes to improve and reach their short-term and long-term goals:

C24 Coaching is sharing and imparting all that we know that could help our athletes. my willingness is more than a 100% if I may say.

C22 Like an open book I share my experience knowledge and expertise so that I may give an example what's really happening in real competition. Placing myself in their shoe.

Swimming coaches that participated in the study described their commitment in the strive for progress of the swimmers through their enthusiastic sharing of experience. They mirror their success to the athletes and aims that their products reach higher milestones than what they have earned as former swimmers.

C126 To share to them my experience as a former swimmer for them to reach higher level competition than what I have achieved.

THEME 2: Resiliency: Identifying Strategies Towards Adaptation to Challenges

Undeniably, coaching is one of the professions that faces a lot of adversity. Facing these hurdles in their careers towards developing their athletes requires thorough planning and actions. Participants of the study saw the need to identify what works best for each of their swimmers and utilize these plans to their gain:

C111 It's essential to identify what works best for each individual and incorporate those strategies into their practice to manage challenges effectively.

Coaches evaluate, assess and analyze each problem to arrive at the best possible solution in athletes' development.

C23 Evaluating every situation, because it is non-stop. Assessing every detail is a crucial part of coaching and yet the most challenging, however, I am learning a lot from it.

C83 When it comes to game strategies, I come into details on how to improve their own techniques, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their chosen event.

In the process, swimming coaches developed resiliency in addressing to different challenges in their careers:

C55 I also teach them how to handle adversity with resilience and grace, as this is an essential part of athletic success as well as life success.

C171 Eventually, coping mechanism should help them remain resilient, focused, and empathetic towards their needs.

Swimming coaches also specified that being flexible is a key element in overcoming hardships in their profession:

C27 Flexibility and open communication are key elements in overcoming coaching challenges. It is a never-ending story, challenges differ every day, that is why as a coach I have to be adaptable at any given situation that brings different challenges.

C18 Problem-solving and flexibility are key aspects of my coaching strategy.

A manifestation of coaches' support group is observed in their interaction, sharing of best practices and ideas during consultations, conferences and swimming meets. An exchange of advice that would address issues in their profession helps their coping mechanism and develops a strong bond towards adaptability and resilience:

C31 By asking all the coaches that I think they can help to solve my problem, I believe that listening to others is one of the most important to improve yourself. there are many kinds of approach or technique that maybe I cannot know yet, by asking them I have lot of situations I can see how to solve my problem in coaching.

THEME 3: Motivation: Defining and Setting Goals Towards Athlete Transformation

Central Luzon Coaches share their vision to their athletes towards achieving their goals in a very dynamic way. Sharing common goals and objectives is vital towards periodical improvement in their performances. Swimming coaches shared that to effectively convey their vision to the athletes, they open their communications during practices:

C151 I communicate a clear and inspiring vision, emphasizing the collective goals we aim to achieve. Through regular team discussions, setting realistic milestones, and fostering a sense of shared purpose...

C181 I communicate a clear vision to athletes by outlining specific goals, emphasizing teamwork, and highlighting the benefits of individual and collective efforts.

Swimming coaches shared, through their coach-athlete communication channel, that they share encouraging words to boost confidence and uplift motivation of the swimmers:

C132 Encouraging them by giving good insights and different examples that will boost their confidence to keep them motivated in reaching their goals.

C22 I usually do it by motivating them to exceed their dreams, that it is attainable through hard work and trusting the process.

Trough the confidence boost and motivational talk of the coaches, swimmers are expected to develop mindset that achieving goals is a product of discipline and hard work:

C51 I instill them discipline and let them realize that setting and achieving goals are one of the keys to be successful in their chosen craft. Through their journey and years of training, it will mold them into something great.

C101 Give them motivation and words of wisdom they can help them achieve more. Train there mindset as well to stay focus on everything that they do.

C31 I share my vision by mind setting to all swimmers how to achieve their goals and what are the thing that can help to improve their performance as an athlete.

Further, the coaches also made mention that athlete's mental imagery of them competing in an actual swimming meet aligning with their targets helps to create concrete foundation towards their goals:

C28 Their goals actually, imagining they are in a competition while they are in training. We intensely discuss with them where we are right now and where we want them to be at certain period of time.

THEME 4: Coach as Role Model: Improving Motivation, Game Strategies, Technique and Character Building

Coaches describe their strategies in terms of motivation, game strategies, technique, and character building through multifaceted approach towards athlete development. Different processes that take dedication and time to implement to athletes towards their objectives were shared by the participants. Collectively, their thoughts on nurturing motivation through reinforcements and recognizing achievements were highlighted:

C151 Motivation is nurtured through positive reinforcement, recognizing achievements, and fostering a supportive team environment.

C32 As a coach I always give rewards whenever they achieved something in our trainings, it helps them build an eagerness to be at their best as always.

Capitalizing on individuals' strengths was the focal approach of the coaches for instilling winning game strategies to the swimmers:

C51 Game strategies are tailored to capitalize on individual strengths while addressing weaknesses.

C81 ...implementing dynamic game strategies that capitalize on strengths...

As swimming coaches work on the progress of the athletes, considering their strong points, technique is being developed through the process of combining basic fundamentals and innovative practices in practice sessions:

C5 Technique refinement is an ongoing process, blending innovation with fundamentals.

C8 ...refining techniques through focused practice...

Coaches view the importance of developing soft skills to their athletes as sports serves as a tool to improve behaviors of individuals. Discipline, resilience and building teamwork were the main highlight of their insights:

C115 Character building involves instilling values like discipline, resilience, and teamwork, creating well-rounded athletes.

C188 ...prioritizing character building through discipline, resilience, and sportsmanship.

C100 An athlete should have enough practice and discipline to prepare for any competition

Moreover, many of the coaches considers that it is a holistic approach to develop competencies in their profession:

C81 It's a holistic approach aimed at overall athletic development

DISCUSSION

Quantitative Phase

The purpose of this study was to probe the relationship of grit to the perceived coach competence of the swimming coaches of Central Luzon (Region 3). Levels of the components of grit and perceived coach competence were also identified. This study is significant since grit is a predictor of success in

many areas of life, including athletics, education, and professional and job experiences (Nothnagle & Knoester, 2022). Coaching competence, is defined as the capacity to complete specific activities in accordance with the appropriate criteria. A study specific for swimming coaches' competence is understudied and results of the current study is valuable for basis in developmental activities for competency enhancement. Coaches' best practices and challenges were also solicited through interview questions.

According to Duckworth et al. (2007a), grit is a multidimensional personality trait that involves maintaining interest and focus on a goal over time, as well as persevering in the face of adversity and boredom. Coaches are channels for athletes' development and performance, the implication of grit is undeniably evident as swimming coaches of Central Luzon (Region 3) are keen in their persistence in overcoming challenges, setbacks, and failures to reach their fullest potential (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). Based on the findings of the study, swimming coaches overall grit registered as Highly Gritty ($\bar{X}=3.73$, $SD=0.62$). Previous studies have found that higher levels of grit lead to increased motivation and participation in sports (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014; Santana-Monagas & Núñez, 2022; Schmidt et al., 2019). Perseverance of Effort ($\bar{X}=4.34$, $SD=0.52$) and Ambition ($\bar{X}=3.87$, $SD=.56$) of swimming coaches both recorded a highly gritty interpretation. On the other hand, their consistency of interest ($\bar{X}=3.00$, $SD=.79$) revealed that they are moderately gritty. This agrees with the study of (Braun et al., n.d.), where consistency of interest among participants generated the same. This coincides with the study of Cazayoux and Debeliso (2019) where the results demonstrated that perseverance of effort to be the more important factor of the grit subscales. Components of grit varies among the coaches, and one probable reason is the different calendar of preparation the coaches follow as they prepare their athlete for various swimming meets. Hence, there is a possibility that consistency of interest is measured in the pursuit of different goals and timeline of the swimming coaches of Central Luzon (Region 3).

The coach is a figure with significant meaning for each athlete. In the realm of sports coaching, it is believed that athletes' high and low performance reflect the high and low quality of the coaches' knowledge and skills, and what athletes create in competitions reflects what their coaches have given them in training. Research on elite athletes using the Coaching Competency Scale (CCS) indicates that a positive perception of the coach's competence leads to greater satisfaction and improved performance (Moen & Federici, 2013).

Swimming coaches registered a perceived level of competence of $\bar{X}=8.32$ with $SD 0.89$. This is an indication that coaches see themselves as "Extremely Competent" in their chosen profession. This is cognizant to the result of the study of Ikpató et al. (2021) where coaches view themselves as competent relating to practice and competition for their profession. Among the sub variables of the coaching competence scale, Technique Competency recorded the highest mean of $\bar{X}=8.59$ with $SD=.71$ and a verbal interpretation of "Extremely Competent." Technique competency refers to the coach's capacity to apply basic technical knowledge and abilities specific to the sport (Tahki et al., 2022). According to the study of Ginting et al. (2021) the importance of mastering swimming technique is dependent on the coach's ability to teach basic skills appropriately and accurately. Swimming coaches recognize swimming as a challenging motor skill that necessitates the persistent repetition of a movement pattern. Thus, developing practice activities to improve skill development is considered as important to allow athletes to succeed.

It was revealed in the findings that Grit affects coaches perceived competency with $F(3, 203) = 20.251, p < .001$. This suggests the assumption that swimming coaches in Central Luzon (Region 3) high grit level translates to their competence. However, it was evident that among the components of grit, ambition was found to not directly influence competence as indicated in the $\beta = .141, t = .889, p = .375$. This is an indication that coaches' goals are diverse, including the ambition to train athletes towards sports excellence while contemplating on their achievement (Dohsten et al., 2020). It also indicates that athletes have different needs and coaches need to adjust training goals to suit their objectives as to the kind of meet they are to participate.

Qualitative Phase

Swimming coaches of Central Luzon shared that one of their coaching strategies was anchored on their own personal experience. They assume that their expertise in coaching was honed by their own experience as former swimmers and find it effective to share to their athletes. This is supported by the study of James (2007) as some coaches may benefit from having playing experience in order to better grasp the emotions and competitive stress involved, as well as what is going on in sports. However, if a person has been a really skilled athlete, he may struggle with his coaching role because he tries to compel players to do things his way or compares everything to his own notions of how it should be done (James, 2007).

Coaching profession is one of the most difficult careers as they face a lot of challenges. Assessing athletes needs and keys from improvement is the baseline for them to plan and work ahead for development. Planning involves both short-term and long-term goals that would enhance athletes' enhancements. On a broader level, according to Bird et al. (2024), the coach examines the team's season calendar to prioritize physical, psychological, tactical, and technological objectives while on the micro level, it is primarily focused on individuals' session planning. In the process, as coaches drive around the obstacles in athletes' success, they develop resilience. In the study of Dahiya and Gupta (2021) resilience was defined as the ability to recover or skip back from adversity, hardship, and disappointment, or even specific events, progress, and increased liability. Swimming coaches of Central Luzon showcased their resilience in their problem-solving ability involving team concerns and specific athlete as they believe that sports performance is a predictor of sports performance (Dahiya & Gupta, 2021). Coaches also develops a network of group that extends their best practices and ideas through consultations and exchanges of advices.

Motivation for sport is one of the most crucial components in an athlete's effective training; in recent years, it has emerged as a very relevant research topic in sports science (Weinberg, 2013). Swimming coaches in the region discussed the value of motivating their athletes towards their goals and aspirations. Clearly communicating the vision and streamlining their goals to the coaches' programs are the pathway to reaching realistic and timely milestones. Encouragement with a fine line between discipline and their accomplishment, uplifts the confidence of the swimmers. The study of Dragos (2014) established the connection between motivation and individual performance where the strongly motivated are always efficient. They succeed in everything they do and they become real professionals, irrespective of their activity domain. The more motivated they are, the sooner they succeed, the better they become, and all this without apparent effort.

Swimming coaches revealed that serving as role model to their athletes would foster an improvement in their motivation, game strategies and technique. They use several tactics such as positive reinforcement through recognizing their athletes' achievements and promoting a supportive team environment. In the study of Haugan et al. (2021), all coaches are considered as role models and carries responsibilities that affords opportunities to positively influence players in developing their games, character and life skills.

CONCLUSION

Results of the current study suggest that swimming coaches of Central Luzon (Region 3) are Highly Gritty. This translates that the coaches showed a great deal of Consistency of Interest and Perseverance of Effort. However, the coaches Ambition is Moderately Gritty as coaches have different timelines on their athlete's development. Self-assessed Coach Competency Scale revealed that they see themselves Extremely Competent. This may be associated with their vast experience as a coach for the different levels of swimmers and competition. The interplay between grit and competency recorded a positive correlation. However, among the sub-variables of Grit, Ambition did not influence the sub-variables of competence. Coaching experience was a factor on how the respondents of the study convey their knowledge and skills to the athletes for their improvement. They remain resilient despite of the adversities encountered and they formulate effective strategies for them to adopt to challenges. Motivating their athlete through defining and setting attainable goals were mentioned as means to share their vision to their swimmers. Central Luzon swimming coaches identified the importance of being a role model to describe their strategy for games, technique and character building.

The results of the study are not generalizable as the researcher limited the study to Swimming Coaches in Central Luzon (Region 3). It is recommended that a similar study that would include coaches in other regions or the whole Philippines or Internationally. Other variables could be included in future studies, such as the relationship of the coaches' profile to Grit and Coaching Competence. In summary, this research study provides the knowledge that grit influences coaches' competence

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