

Research on the Impact of the Tokyo Olympic Postponement on Athletes' Mental State under the COVID-19 Epidemic

Jingxian Mo^{1, †}, Shijun Yi^{2, †, *}, Hengrui Zhang^{3, †}

¹ The International department of the afflicted high school of SCNU, Guangzhou, 510000, China

² Chongqing Yucai Secondary School, Chongqing, 400050, China

³ Depu Foreign Language School, Chongqing, 400000, China

* Corresponding Author Email: 100842@yzpc.edu.cn

† These authors contributed equally

Abstract. In 2020, the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics was rare, making plenty of athletes surprised and anxious. Examining how athletes feel after the postponement is important since it greatly impacts their psychology. Thus, this paper chooses this topic to research and seek ways to help athletes deal with their problems. This paper uses the literature survey and interview survey. The result part contains the basic impact of the postponement on the world and the impact on the athletes. Then, this paper deeply examines their psychological problems and the cause of their problems. This paper mainly discusses how to deal with athletes' problems and gives some advice to sporting companies and sports competitions. Finally, the paper will use the knowledge gained in the sports management courses to devise a solution to this problem, hoping this paper could provide some ideas to help athletes and give overall expectations for the future Olympic Games.

Keywords: Tokyo Olympic postponement; Athletes' mental state; COVID-19 epidemic.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

In the 125-year history of the Olympic Games, only three have been canceled: 1916, 1940, and 1944 Olympic Games. All three Olympics were canceled because of war. Unlike these three Olympic Games, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics did not choose to cancel due to the COVID epidemic but were postponed for one year to 2021. This is also the first time in the history of the modern Olympic Games that the Olympic Games have been postponed. Unlike the other three Olympic Games that have been canceled, the postponement of the Tokyo Games means athletes have to prepare for another year. Although this seems to give more athletes more time to prepare for the competition, according to data from different sources, the postponement of the Olympic Games also brings a lot of psychological burden to athletes in preparation for competition and in a daily schedule. The 12th National Sports Science Conference paper surveyed 20 Chinese national team athletes from 16 to 28 years old attending the Tokyo Olympics and asked them online about their views on the postponement of the Olympic Games.

According to the results, athletes have more negative views on the postponement, which is reflected in: 1. They are not sure, even if the Olympic Games are postponed to 2021, and the uncertainty of Olympic preparations during the epidemic period, whether the Olympics can be held as scheduled. 2. Psychological fatigue and anxiety brought about by the long-term closed and strict training during the major epidemic; 3. Changes in training cycle and rhythm. The sudden end of a tiring training period for Olympics weakens athletes' motivation and enthusiasm to prepare for competitions. The authors believe that knowing the psychological changes of these athletes due to the postponement of the Olympics is very important because a successful athlete not only needs excellent athletic ability and long-term training but also can adjust and adapt to unknown situations [1]. With this strong adaptation ability, these athletes can prepare as planned, even in the face of an Olympic postponement. At the same time, the future Olympic Games may also be postponed due to

the uncertainty of the COVID epidemic. An in-depth understanding of the changes in athletes' psychological conditions can allow coaches and psychologists better to help athletes during preparations for future Olympic Games. Finally, the postponement of the Olympic Games is a very rare event in its long history. The psychological conditions of the athletes can also allow the Olympic Organizing Committee to better understand the athletes' mental issues and better prepare for future competitions.

However, since the postponement of the Olympic Games is an event in 2020, many research groups do not have enough time to conduct psychological surveys of athletes who participated in the Olympic Games, so there are not many essays on this topic online at present. The authors think that through our group's research in this area, not only can more people recognize and understand the hardships of being an athlete and the ability to be prepared to face the unknown at any time. It can also help psychologists, and the national team Teams get to know their athletes better so they can adjust their training syllabus to maximize their potential. Finally, the International Olympic Organizing Committee can also fully understand the psychological conditions of the athletes so that when the Olympic Games are postponed in the face of emergencies in the future, they can be fully prepared and protect the rights of the athletes.

1.2 Literature review

In 2020, Taku and Arai wrote a paper about the impact of the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics on athletes. They proposed that the postponement has a direct impact on athletes. For some senior athletes, the postponement is a negative affair, meaning they have to retire since they lose the last chance to compete. For the others, the postponement is a good chance to adjust. Whatever the impact is, the most affected is the psychology of athletes. Every athlete has their schedule for training, and the postponement will break the schedule, which affects their psychology or makes them anxious [2].

MacIntyre further examines the psychological impact of the postponement on the athletes. He proposed that the general reaction is characterized by confusion, disappointment, and relief. After the postponement, the athletes start to lack energy and worry about their careers [3].

Asian J proposed that under the pressure of the pandemic, people will mainly have psychological issues, like insomnia and depressive disorder [4].

1.3 Research gap

Most articles mainly look at the effect of postponing the Olympic Games on the condition of the athletes. However, little is written about the consequences of postponing the Olympic Games for the mental health of athletes.

1.4 Research framework

This paper will first understand the historical background of the Olympic Games and the psychological characteristics of athletes by reading literature in different fields and searching for information. Then, by referring to the interviews and data from the existing literature, the authors can know the specific manifestations of the changes in the athletes' psychological conditions caused by the postponement of the Olympic Games, the reasons behind them, and their effects. Finally, the authors will use the knowledge gained in the sports management courses to devise a solution to this problem and give overall expectations for the future Olympic Games.

2. Methods

2.1 Literature survey

The first method is literature survey. Literature survey is an indirect and non-interventional market survey method that collects relevant market information by searching for literature.

In the operation process, enterprises often need to understand the market situation, national economic development, and other information, which is difficult to get from consumers. The literature survey method can help enterprises to obtain such information. This method can inform the Tokyo Olympic Games athletes on the level of satisfaction and suggestions.

2.2 Interview survey

The second method is interview survey. This survey method can obtain further and more valuable information, but the sample is small, and the process is time-consuming and costly. However, this method can be used as an interview for athletes. For different athletes, you can ask different professional questions and learn more about their different aspirations.

3. Results

3.1 The basic impact of the postponement on the world

Hosting a successful Olympic Games requires the host city to invest a lot of money in preparation and good cooperation between staff and volunteers, and a common goal. However, the postponement of an Olympics can have a huge impact on the world from different perspectives, especially on athletes, sponsors, host cities, a country, and residents. The first is the impact on the hosting city of Tokyo and Japan. Tokyo will receive about 20 million tourists during the Olympic Games, including 70,000 Olympic volunteers and 8,000 Tokyo volunteers. At the same time, about 11,090 Olympic athletes and 4,400 Paralympic athletes are expected to participate in the Games. During the Olympics, 14 million meals are expected to be delivered to participants (Gallego, Viviana). Tokyo is expected to significantly increase the consumption of the local tourism and catering industries by hosting the Olympics. Tokyo's per capita GDP, population size, global economic status, and Japan's national prestige and international influence are all expected to increase. But due to the postponement of the Olympics, Tokyo began to experience recession or unemployment, large-scale outdoor events were canceled, and people began to worry that their future living standards would be affected.

The second is the impact on local citizens. The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics affected the happiness of Tokyo residents and people in other countries. Also, it caused a sharp increase in the number of people living in Tokyo getting Coronavirus. Scholarly publishing collective selected a three-quadrant curve showing the change in the total number of people infected with COVID-19 between March 10 and April 10, 2020. Elementary, junior high, and high schools in Tokyo have been closed since March 2, although there were only about 250 people infected with COVID then, and the growth rate is very slow. But due to the impact of COVID, on March 24, the Japanese government announced that the Olympic Games would be postponed for a year. The number of people infected with COVID-19 in Tokyo has surged after the Olympics were announced to be postponed. This led the government to declare a state of emergency on April 7. People are being asked to maintain social distancing and stay at home. At the same time, this website used another graph to show changes in the happiness index of Tokyo residents because of the postponement of the Olympics. They collected data from 58 countries through internet surveys from late March to early April 2020. They surveyed respondents three times about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their daily life and mental health. From the results, the happiness levels of tourism practitioners and restaurants in Tokyo and surrounding areas fell directly after the announcement of the postponement of the Olympics.

Finally, it is reflected in the sponsorship income from the Olympic Games. A company must spend a lot of money if it wants to sponsor the Olympics for a long time. Toyota Motor Corporation paid 200 billion yen to be a 10-year Olympic sponsor (Hasegawa Tomizawa, 2020). For participating six-year sponsors, Gold Partners, Official Partners, and Official Backers must pay JPY 15 billion (USD 128 million), JPY 6 billion (USD 51.1 million), and JPY 1 billion (USD 8.5 million, respectively). The postponement of the Olympics has prevented these companies from getting the rewards they deserve for sponsoring the Games in 2020. This greatly impacts their future development, especially in cash flow and stock price.

3.2 Some athletes have psychological problems caused by the postponement of the Olympic

Athletes are physically stronger than ordinary people but can't escape a novel coronavirus infection. Several athletes worldwide have already been diagnosed with the novel Coronavirus, including 3 athletes from the Chinese sword team. A one-year extension can reassure them. In addition to respiratory infections, musculoskeletal injury is more common in athletes. Second, for players with an injury, the extension offers a chance to recover, and a year later, it can reach its peak again. An increasingly higher-level athlete can also be postponed to disrupt preparation plans. For the Olympic players, the training programs, which are planned four years before the match date, are carefully organized around the Olympic Games. Thus, the skater zhang yu began to prepare for the 2014 Winter Olympics after his victory. During this period, each year's training goals and modalities are different. They must be carried out in the order of post-race adjustment, preparation, and pre-race status promotion. The same year is again divided into three cycles, with the first six months not considering the improvement of the skating speed, but mainly the basic training. In the intervening three months, the training volume is gradually reduced, the intensity increases, and the speed increases. The last three months have been fine-tuned, and the top of the guarantee comes exactly at the time of the Olympic Games. The good is not easy to achieve by adjusting the training, the maintenance duration is short, and some sports are only 1 to 2 weeks. Race forward or pushed will surely disrupt years of planning. The good thing is that there is enough time to reorient the training and get back to the top level in a year.

When asked what the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 will mean for athletes, Chinese badminton player Yoshi Wang replied: "The extension of the Tokyo Olympics is still very important for the athletes. The first is for some older athletes, who take more than a year to prepare for battle and are more difficult to deal with the challenges of physical skills and injuries. Secondly, young athletes each athlete has their rhythm, including the rhythm of training and the rhythm of play. Normally in the four years of the cycle, each has different objectives for the different tasks, which now equal to more than a year later, in combination with the outbreak of athletes' already rhythm will be disrupted. Especially in preparation for the Olympic Games, everyone knows that athletes with some wavy can adapt to the team. For example, in 2020, some athletes can adjust their conditions to the best. However, suddenly the Olympics were not organized, the extension of a year, then he will again with force, then again add energy to the strongest max, for athletes, psychologically or on the body. These effects can also be after the Olympic Games.

However, little is written about the consequences of postponing the Olympic Games for the mental health of athletes. Simone Biles is one of the world's most dominant gymnasts who have not lost her rhythmic gymnastics for eight years, and she also has maximum gymnastics in the history of Olympic gold and world championships. Biles hoped to end her career in the summer of last year with Olympic gold and then retire. But when the games were postponed for a year due to an outbreak, Byers experienced a fight with themselves. The news that the Olympics were being postponed was a big blow to Biles, especially as the outbreak closed her training room. She became depressed and stayed asleep.

"In Texas, 5 square feet of gymnastics training room closed. Biles, she became depressed, sleep, constantly wanting to stop" said Biles, the interviewer of Sharyn Alfonsi. CBS Biles's lenses of these words were never released. However, they have previously talked about depression and anxiety.

3.3 Problems identified

The fact that the Tokyo Olympic Games have been postponed by one year presents national athletes with many challenges in their preparations. Especially for veterans nearing the end of their careers, one year can mean the difference between competing and retiring. However, as the epidemic has spread worldwide, the training and preparation of athletes from all countries have been affected to varying degrees. For many veterans, postponing for a year the Olympic Games in which they were prepared to fight is a huge test of their strength and fitness. Unpredictable injuries are likely to prevent them from performing at their best. The athletes themselves can only feel the pressure and pain.

3.4 Reason analysis of the problems come

Good psychological health is paramount to an athlete. Psychological factors greatly determine the athletes' condition, whether during the preparation or the game. Thus, examining the cause of athletes' psychological problems is imperative.

Healthy psychology tends to be related to four factors: self-consciousness, confidence, attention, and emotion [5]. All these factors may lead to considerable pressure and psychological issues if athletes don't adjust. For instance, athletes tend to practice for a long time and adequately prepare for the game, but if they fail, they will feel depressed that their efforts don't match the consequence. Furthermore, plenty of psychological problems occur during the preparation time. Many athletes feel very nervous and anxious because they worry about the future, especially athletes who prepare for the Olympics. They have a national burden which puts them under more pressure. Thus, athletes try to work hard and make an elaborate plan for practice. Nevertheless, the postponement of the game is a special source of athletes' psychological problems. It breaks athletes' plans and makes them feel confused about the future. The postponement also creates uncertainty, and athletes worry about their career and physical qualification, giving rise to depression and other psychological problems.

4. Discussion

4.1 The ways to help athletes deal with the problems

Since the postponement may cause serious psychological problems, coming up with several ways to help athletes is necessary. The biggest issue is that the postponement breaks athletes' plans and match arrangements [6]. Athletes must make training plans and scientifically arrange matches to solve this problem. They should protect themselves and train moderately before the Olympic Game comes. Another issue is that some senior athletes may have no chance to participate Olympics again because of the postponement. Thus, the Olympic Committee should guarantee the participation of each country and the participating quota to give the athletes who are going to retire a chance to compete. At last, the nation also needs to arrange an expert to carry on psychological counseling to athletes to help them overcome negative emotions. Athletes can enrich their training life through active rest, fun games, and so on.

4.2 Advice to companies

The economic impact on companies due to the postponement of the Olympics is huge, so many companies are using different methods to mitigate the impact. At the same time, it also promotes the technological development of these enterprises. According to BBC news, British technology company Equisave has developed a new ambulance for the Tokyo Olympic Organizing Committee in the fight against COVID-19 during the postponement of the Olympic Games [7]. Equisave is a market-based manufacturer of new ambulances. Founder Bill Fellowes started the company in 2000. Their company's ambulances are manufactured in the UK and currently supply ambulances for the Tokyo Olympics and 17 UK racecourses and the Middle East. Considering the temperature in Tokyo, the ambulances they produce are equipped with air conditioners [8-9]. Equisave will provide six vehicles, two of which were not air-conditioned and had already been shipped during last year's test event in Japan, and four high-tech ambulances. At the same time, other companies have also begun to work with national teams to provide psychological and sports equipment assistance for athletes preparing for the Olympics. High-tech sports companies such as Nike have continuously provided different national teams with the latest sports equipment during the postponement of the Olympic Games. At the same time, they are hiring professional psychologists to provide psychological counseling for athletes to prepare for the Olympic Games with better mental health [10].

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion of key findings

This passage shows that the postponement of the Olympics causes some psychological issues for athletes. These issues, at least, would affect athletes' emotions. At worst would cause mental illnesses like depressive disorder and anxiety. Serious though these problems are, athletes can deal with them by adjusting their arrangements and reasonably exercising, and so on to maintain mental health. Besides their adjustments, the public should also play a role in helping athletes cope with problems. The Olympic Committee should try to set a specific time for the game and guarantee every athlete's participation; the relevant companies should invent some equipment and provide athletes with mental counseling. Through these actions, the athletes could have more probability of being healthy.

5.2 Research significance

Due to the Newcastle pneumonia outbreak, the deployment of the Olympic Game in Tokyo was interrupted, the torch relay was canceled, the competition was postponed for a year, and Japan will suffer huge losses. According to the Japan Economic Research, the Japanese government has invested about 40 billion US dollars in the construction of the site and increased the number of hotels. Suppose the Tokyo Olympics are postponed for a year. In that case, the total loss will be \$5.8 billion for the maintenance and management of the facilities and the cost of organizing the qualifying events for the various athletic groups. According to Nikko Securities, if the Olympics are not held this year, the indirect economic loss will be \$75 billion, or 1% of Japan's annual GDP. Next.

The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics has caused huge losses in Japan, many games have suffered scheduling conflicts, and TV stations have also been affected. It is worth mentioning that in the plans of the Tokyo Organizing Committee, the Tokyo 2020 Games are expected to generate about 630 billion yen in revenue, about two-thirds of which will come from sponsors. However, the sponsorship years of different sponsors may also overlap due to the duration of the Games. In June 2019, Mengniu and Coca-Cola signed a 12-year, \$3 billion contract with the IOC as the first co-sponsor, starting in 2021. And Nihonji Dairy is a national sponsor of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 Gold Partner. TOP sponsors have exclusive rights, which means that no other competing companies can exist during the same period, which has become a major problem for the Tokyo Games sponsor list. In addition to competition, commercial sponsorship rights, and activities, there is also a relationship with sports marketing, spin-off products, and 2D in the area of commercial interests related to the global intellectual property of the Olympic Games. The dominoes slowed by the Tokyo Olympics are beginning to weigh on the nerves.

5.3 Research significance

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the field investigation, interview, and other paperwork have been greatly affected, so the interview sample size is small. In future research, the sample size of interviewees will be increased by utilizing field investigation and interview to ensure more accurate research results.

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