ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 3| March 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

TRAINING STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES IN COMPETITIVE SWIMMING: OPTIMIZING ATHLETE PREPARATION IN BOHOL

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra20612
DOI No: 10.36713/epra20612

ABSTRACT

The success of competitive swimmers relies on well-structured training programs and strategic coaching approaches. This study investigates the training structures used by swimming trainers in Bohol, and the strategies employed to optimize athlete performance in major competitions. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews and observations of 15 experienced trainers selected through purposive sampling from various swimming clubs.

Findings identify five core training structures: (1) structured and goal-oriented training, focusing on progressive development and periodization; (2) physical conditioning, integrating land exercises and injury prevention; (3) differentiated training approaches, customizing programs based on specialization; (4) precision training, utilizing biomechanical feedback to refine strokes and turns; and (5) capacity building, ensuring continuous coaching education. Additionally, five training strategies emerge: (1) preparing physical readiness, incorporating endurance training and nutrition; (2) monitoring mental readiness, using visualization and pre-competition routines; (3) practicing proper execution, refining stroke mechanics; (4) adapting gradual training, balancing endurance and speed; and (5) simulating competition scenarios, including Ultra Short Race Pace Training (USRPT). The study concludes that structured periodization and tailored training optimize swimmer performance. To enhance performance, the study recommends integrating recovery periods, enhancing coaching development, and addressing behavioral and psychological aspects to support long-term athlete success.

KEYWORDS: *swimming training practices, athlete development, coaching strategies, competition preparation*

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of training programs is critical to any competitive swimmer's success. As American swimmer Michael Phelps once stated, "If you want to be the best, you have to do things that other people aren't willing to do" (Farina, 2020). Swimmers in Bohol, like their counterparts elsewhere, dedicate numerous hours to intense training sessions to achieve success. However, it remains uncertain whether these training programs are tailored to the individual needs and potential of Bohol's swimmers. Understanding the intricacies of these strategies, their alignment with modern sports science, and their adaptability to the unique characteristics of Bohol's swimming talent is vital. Examining existing training strategies can provide insights into enhancing swimmers' physical, technical, and psychological development, ultimately leading to improved performance in the pool.

In recent years, Bohol has experienced a significant increase in interest and participation in competitive swimming. The local swimming community actively engages in various competitions, with numerous clubs and schools fostering talent through training programs and organizing events at multiple levels. Boholano swimmers have demonstrated promise across all four major strokes, achieving commendable timings and rankings in regional championships. However, both trainers and athletes recognize the need for enhancements, particularly in refining techniques, boosting endurance, and strengthening mental resilience.

While extensive research has been conducted on swimming training methodologies, much of it centers on Western contexts or elite international athletes. For instance, a study by Dalamitros et al. (2023) explored swimming coaches' perceptions of professional development and training practices across various countries. Similarly, research by Pagaduan et al. (2022) examined the training practices of Filipino athletes during the early COVID-19 lockdown. However, there is a notable lack of studies focusing on region-specific training practices within the Philippines, particularly in areas like Bohol. This study aims to contribute to the *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* by identifying and analyzing the training structures implemented by competitive swimming coaches. Specifically, it examines the training methods that have been tested over time and proven effective in preparing swimmers for major competitions. By understanding these successful approaches, swimming coaches and trainers can incorporate them into their own regimens, ultimately enhancing athlete performance and career success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to investigate the current structure and training strategies used by swimming trainers in Bohol to cultivate champion swimmers.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the structure of the training practices for competitive swimmers utilized by swimming trainers in Bohol?
2. What are the training strategies utilized by these trainers to prepare athletes for major competitions?

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive research approach to explore the perspectives of swimming trainers and examine how they prepare swimmers for competitions. By documenting their training methods, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the structures and strategies used in competitive swimming programs in Bohol. Data collection involved interviews, documentation, and direct observations of training sessions. The primary data source consisted of interview transcripts from swimming trainers, which were systematically analyzed to identify common themes, best practices, and areas needing improvement. Observations and documentation provided supplementary insights into the actual implementation of training methods.

Through a rigorous qualitative analysis, the study evaluated the effectiveness of existing training practices and identified opportunities for enhancement. The findings serve as a basis for refining coaching strategies and optimizing swimmer development, ultimately contributing to the advancement of competitive swimming in Bohol.

The study employed the purposive sampling, selecting a total of fifteen (15) respondents from the different swimming clubs in Bohol. The primary participants of this study were experienced trainers who had produced winners in swimming competitions within and outside Bohol.

The participants included in the data gathering were individuals who possess knowledge of training methodologies, challenges, and strategies that contributed to the study's understanding of effective training approaches. Moreover, swimming trainers who had produced winners from first to fourth place were considered as participants in the study.

Furthermore, the selection criteria required that the swimming trainer must have been actively training for at least three (3) years in teaching swimming lessons and who produced winners. Those trainers who taught swimming lessons solely for recreational purposes and not for competition were excluded from the study.

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study anytime if they felt their rights were. Should a respondent decide to withdraw from the study, there were no consequences. In the event of the withdrawal, the researcher sought a substitute who met the study's criteria.

This study used thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2013) described, to examine the data. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify patterns and themes in qualitative data by following six key steps: becoming familiar with the data, coding important parts, grouping similar codes into categories, reviewing and refining the categories, identifying and naming themes, and writing up the findings. This structured approach helped organize and interpret the responses of swimming trainers effectively.

The study focused on two main questions (1) the structure of training practices for competitive swimmers, and (2) the training strategies used by swimming trainers to prepare athletes for major competitions, the researcher carefully followed these steps to ensure a clear and accurate analysis. The first step involved thoroughly reading and reviewing the interview transcripts to fully understand the experiences of the swimming trainers. By immersing in the data, the researcher was able to recognize recurring patterns and key points.

Next, the researcher conducted coding, which involved labeling meaningful segments of data based on their relevance to the study. These codes were then grouped into broader categories, ensuring that similar ideas were organized together. Categorization helped systematically arrange the data, making identifying connections between different responses easier. After this, the categories were carefully reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the participants' perspectives.

From these categories, themes were developed to capture the key insights from the trainers' responses. A theme represented a broader idea that connected different responses. The researcher reassessed these themes to ensure they were well-supported by the data and aligned with the study's research questions. Finally, the findings were written in a structured and detailed narrative, incorporating explanations, examples, and interpretations to better understand the data. This final step ensured that the results clearly conveyed the training practices, strategies, and challenges faced by swimming trainers in Bohol.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study delves into the multifaceted world of competitive swimming, where achieving brilliance requires not only inherent talent and unwavering commitment but also a cutting-edge approach to training. Champion swimmers continually seek ways to enhance their skills, constantly pushing the boundaries of what is considered possible. (Douglas, 2024).

The research is primarily grounded in Periodization Theory, a systematic approach to athletic training that involves dividing the training process into distinct phases or cycles. This method optimizes performance, manages fatigue, and reduces the risk of overtraining by systematically varying training stimuli. Originally developed by Russian physiologist Leo Matveyev in the 1960s and later refined by Romanian sports scientist Tudor Bompa, periodization has become a cornerstone of modern sports performance training (Bompa, 1999; Matveyev, 1981). By structuring training into progressive cycles, athletes can achieve peak performance at major national and international competitions. Periodization serves as a foundational practice in sports science, crucial for managing workloads and guiding athletes toward specific performance outcomes while preventing performance deterioration and overtraining (Haff, 2016; Baghurst, 2020).

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A well-structured periodization plan consists of three hierarchical cycles: the macrocycle, mesocycle, and microcycle. The macrocycle is the longest phase, typically spanning an entire season or year, and outlines the overarching training goals and key performance milestones leading up to major competitions (Bompa & Haff, 2009). Within the macrocycle, mesocycles last several weeks to a few months, each focusing on a specific training objective, such as endurance, strength, or power development. The smallest unit, the microcycle, usually lasts about a week and details daily training activities that align with the mesocycle's goals. This structured breakdown allows for progressive adaptation, ensuring athletes develop systematically while maintaining an optimal balance between training intensity and recovery.

Within the macrocycle, training is further divided into three main phases: the preparatory phase, competitive phase, and transition phase. The preparatory phase builds the foundation for athletic performance and consists of two sub-phases: general preparation, which focuses on overall conditioning and fitness development, and specific preparation, which targets sport-specific skills and techniques necessary for competition readiness. Following this is the competitive phase, where training is adjusted to maintain peak performance while incorporating competition schedules and performance optimization strategies. The final stage, the transition phase, serves as a critical recovery period, allowing athletes to rest and prevent burnout before entering the next training cycle (Issurin, 2008). This structured sequencing ensures that athletes progressively build fitness, peak at the right times, and sustain performance throughout their competitive seasons.

By strategically planning training loads, intensity variations, and recovery periods, periodization allows athletes to maximize physiological adaptations while minimizing fatigue, overtraining, and injury risks. A well-designed periodization strategy is essential for ensuring that swimmers and other athletes perform at their highest level when it matters most. As sports science continues to advance, periodization remains a dynamic and adaptable framework that enables athletes to maintain long-term performance, resilience, and competitiveness in their respective disciplines.

Furthermore, Goal Setting Theory (Locke, 1960) plays a pivotal role in the study, highlighting the significance of setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals (Locke & Latham, 1985). This theory is acknowledged as one of the most successful strategies for enhancing performance across various sports and situations. Coaches are encouraged to make goal setting a primary strategy to motivate athletes and drive better performance outcomes (Baghurst, 2020). Goal setting is serves as a self-regulatory skill allowing individuals to monitor progress toward self-determined goals (Zimmerman, 2000). Trainers in Bohol can work closely with swimmers to set both short-term and long-term goals, such as achieving specific time targets, improving stroke technique, qualifying for major competitions. By regularly reviewing and adjusting these goals based on progress and performance, swimmers can stay motivated and engaged in their training.

The process of cultivating champion athletes is deeply rooted in a strategic combination of periodized training and goal setting, both of which play essential roles in developing world-class performance. Periodization Theory ensures that swimmers progressively improve physical capacity, technical proficiency, and psychological readiness by following a structured and science-based training framework. This long-term approach prevents overtraining while maximizing adaptations, allowing athletes to peak at the right moment. Meanwhile, Goal Setting Theory complements this process by fostering a growth-oriented mindset, keeping swimmers focused and motivated as they progress through their training cycles. By integrating SMART goals within the periodization framework, athletes can establish a clear roadmap to success, systematically improving in areas such as speed, endurance, and technique.

In addition to enhancing performance, the synergy between periodization and goal setting cultivates mental resilience and discipline, both of which are critical in high-performance sports. Competitive swimmers must consistently push their limits, overcoming setbacks and refining their skills over time. When structured training cycles align with well-defined performance goals, athletes develop a sense of purpose and direction, reinforcing their commitment to excellence. Moreover, regular performance assessments and feedback loops allow trainers and swimmers to make necessary adjustments, ensuring continuous progress. The combination of progressive training adaptations and psychologically driven motivation creates a sustainable pathway for long-term success, enabling athletes not only to achieve peak performance but also to maintain it across multiple seasons and competitions.

Coaching and Athlete Development

Swimming trainers in Bohol implement various training strategies based on periodization and goal-setting principles to develop elite swimmers through structured programs aligned with competitive goals. Research by Ambag & Camarador (2018) underscored the necessity of organized training programs and systematic training cycles for athlete development. Their findings revealed that a gradual increase in training intensity improves swimmers' performance, minimizes the risk of overtraining, and guarantees they are optimally prepared for competitions. They also pointed out the significance of establishing goals and modifying coaching techniques to facilitate sustained success. On the other hand, Velasco (2021) focused on how coaching methods affect athlete performance. The study showed that effective coaching, motivation, and personalized training help swimmers improve their skills and prepare for competitions. Velasco (2021) also pointed out that regular evaluation and adjustments to training plans are necessary to keep up with an athlete's progress. Both studies emphasize that effective coaching and thoughtfully designed training programs are crucial for nurturing skilled and competitive swimmers, which corresponds with the training methods employed by swimming trainers in Bohol. Additionally, findings from Labarda (2021) on the leadership behavior and challenges of swimming coaches in Albay highlight a strong emphasis on training and instruction-focused coaching behaviors. By integrating these insights, this research contextualizes coaching behaviors and their impact on athlete

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development in Bohol, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of effective coaching practices.

Evolution of Swimming Training Methodologies

Over time, historical shifts in training methodologies have significantly influenced modern competitive swimming. Training approaches such as Ultra-Short Race-Pace Training (USRPT) and High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) have demonstrated substantial benefits in improving both anaerobic and aerobic capacities in elite swimmers (Nugent, 2019; Smith et al., 2020). Alongside these innovations, advancements in periodization training continue to shape performance outcomes. Dry-land training, coupled with strength and conditioning exercises, has also gained recognition as an essential component of swimming preparation, enhancing strength, power, and overall performance (Ribeiro et al., 2018). However, despite these advancements, traditional swimming programs still tend to prioritize endurance over strength training, requiring a balanced integration of different training methodologies to maximize competitive success.

Psychological Aspects of Swimming Training

Beyond physical preparation, the mental aspect of swimming has become an increasingly emphasized area of training. Psychological techniques, such as mindfulness and visualization, are now widely used to help swimmers reduce anxiety, enhance concentration, and maintain optimal focus during training and competition (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2014; Karlsson, 2022). Furthermore, goal setting serves as a self-regulatory skill, allowing athletes to monitor their progress toward self-determined goals while maintaining motivation and engagement (Zimmerman, 2000). Studies on self-regulated learning subprocesses indicate that swimmers who engage in effective reflection and evaluation techniques improve training efficiency, skill acquisition, and long-term performance outcomes (Post, 2022). Encouraging swimmers to take an active role in self-assessment and goal setting fosters autonomy and accountability, ultimately leading to enhanced athletic growth and success.

Structured Training Strategies for Competitive Swimming

Effective training strategies for competitive swimming require structured planning and individualized approaches. A case study by Coach Johnson (2021) underscores the importance of customized training regimens in developing elite swimmers for the Olympics, emphasizing that continuous progress is the primary objective of training. Swimming, though often perceived as an individual sport, is a team-driven endeavor, where coaches play a pivotal role in designing scientifically backed training plans that influence the success of their athletes. Essential strategies such as tapering and controlled training loads are widely utilized to prepare swimmers for peak performance during major competitions (Sokolowski, 2020; Saw, 2018). Additionally, swimming training strategies can be categorized into four key types method type, content type, style type, and task type all of which influence how training is structured and executed (Zhai, 2018). By balancing these various training strategies, coaches can create a comprehensive and adaptable training framework that aligns with the demands of high-performance swimming.

This study examines the training structures and strategies employed by competitive swimming trainers in Bohol to optimize athlete preparation. It explores how structured periodization, goal-setting principles, multi-component training, training load monitoring, and mental preparation are integrated into coaching practices. By analyzing these elements, the study aims to identify effective approaches that enhance training effectiveness and athletic performance.

To achieve this, the research will observe and document the training methods used by coaches across various swimming clubs and teams in Bohol. By gaining insights into how these strategies are applied in real-world settings, the study seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical coaching methodologies. Understanding these training structures and strategies will contribute to the refinement of competitive swimming programs and better athlete development in the region.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1
Structure of the Training Practices of Trainers

Verbatim Responses	Categories	Main Themes
"We have a program or training plan to follow... there has to be a training plan that I follow." (P1)	Structured Training Plans	Structured and Goal-Oriented Training
"It's important to teach athletes over the long term; you can't just train them for a short period and expect them to become very strong." (P3)	Long-Term Development	
"If it's long-distance, we'll give long-distance training; if it's short-distance, then short-distance training, and if it's about speed, then speed training." (P1)	Specialized Training Programs	
"You should have a long-term schedule for events... typically, you should have a recovery period of 2-3 weeks before a competition." (P12)	Long-Term Scheduling	
"Usually, before we start swimming, we always do stretching. Stretching is something we never forget." (P2)	Pre-Swim Routines	Physical Conditioning

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"Every time we swim, we either do stretching or land drills to stretch the muscles, so during their swim, they are more flexible." (P2)	Injury Prevention and Flexibility	
"We don't push them too hard all at once, because if we overwhelm the swimmers, they may experience over-fatigue." (P15)	Balancing Intensity and Recovery	
"Sprinters focus on short distances, middle-distance swimmers focus on 200 meters, and long-distance swimmers focus on 400, 800, to 1500 meters." (P11)	Training by Distance Specialization	Differentiated Training Approaches
"The training for the competitive swimmers includes endurance, drills, and then sprints." (P8)	Multi-Faceted Training Regimens	
"Usually training goes with repetitions. Then of course different drills and specific strokes." (P7)	Technique Refinement	Precision Training
"We apply drills to ensure proper execution of their strokes during training." (P15)	Drill-Based Skill Development	
"What I learned before forms the basis of my training for them, and I also add new elements as I see fit." (P4)	Trainer's Knowledge and Adaptability	Capacity Building
"Of course, first, we need to have a pool for training." (P14)	Resource Requirements	

Structured and Goal-Oriented Training. The swimming Trainers in Bohol utilized an organized, purpose-driven approach training program focusing on building athletes' skills systematically to prepare them for major competitions. Trainers emphasize training plans, goal setting, tailored event-specific routines, and long-term development, believing that structure is essential for maximizing swimmer potential and achieving peak performance. This approach is rooted in carefully scheduled workouts, individualized training focuses, and continuous improvement strategies.

Participants' responses reveal a commitment to structured training, with each session designed to target specific aspects of swimming performance. This organization allows trainers to balance immediate needs with future goals, helping athletes prepare for both current events and long-term competitive success. Trainers consistently noted the importance of individualized training plans and specific routines for different event types, such as endurance for long-distance and sprint workouts for short-distance events. One participant shared, "*Naa tay program nga sundon or training plan…training plan gyud, dapat nay training plan nga sundon nako''.* '' [We have a program or training plan to follow… there has to be a training plan that I follow. (P1)]"

Long-term athlete development was also a priority, with trainers seeing swimmer progress as a gradual process that requires patience and consistency over time. P3 emphasized this, saying, "*Kinahanglan man gud long term ang pagtudlo nimo, dili man pwede na kas.a ra ang pagtudlo nimo mana dayon, kusog na kaayo siya.''* [It's important to teach athletes over the long term; you can't just train them for a short period and expect them to become very strong.] This perspective aligns with long-term athlete development (LTAD) models (Balyi et al., 2013), which emphasize progressive skill development over multiple years to ensure that athletes reach peak potential at the right time. LTAD principles suggest that early-stage structured training enhances both physiological and psychological readiness for elite competition.

Another participant (P1) highlighted the adaptability of these programs based on event specialization, stating, *"Kung long distance, long distance training ihatag, kung ang short distance, short distance training, fast, fast training.''* '' [If it's long-distance, we'll give long-distance training; if it's short-distance, then short-distance training, and if it's about speed, then speed training.]" This aligns with specificity theory in sports training (Bompa & Haff, 2009), which argues that conditioning should be directly related to the demands of the sport. This ensures that physiological adaptations match competition requirements, ultimately enhancing performance.

In addition to focusing on specific event needs, participants emphasized the importance of scheduling and periodization, where training phases are strategically planned to maximize performance at key times and allow for necessary recovery. This was further explained by one trainer who said, "*So naa kay taas na schedule… so naay kay recovery period kasagaran ana 2-3 weeks before sa dula.* '' [You should have a long-term schedule for events… typically, you should have a recovery period of 2-3 weeks before a competition. (P12)]"

Trainers in Bohol show strong dedication to nurturing athletes through structured, adaptable, and growth-focused training. Their strategies prepare athletes for competitions and build a foundation for long-term success in their swimming careers.

Physical Conditioning. Swimming trainers in Bohol focus on physical conditioning and proactive strategies to avoid injuries, preparing athletes for both regular training and high-level competitions. A key component of this conditioning is stretching, which trainers view as crucial for enhancing flexibility, preparing muscles, and preventing injuries. Participants indicated that stretching is an essential part of every session, acting as a regular practice before they head into the pool. As one trainer (P2) noted, *''Usually, before we start gyud sa swim is we do stretching, di gyud na gyud makalimtan ang stretching.''* '' [Usually, before we start swimming, we always do stretching. Stretching is something we never forget.]'' This stresses an injury prevention concept rooted in

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sports physiology, as stretching improves flexibility, reduces muscle stiffness, and enhances range of motion. This practice aligns with research that suggests that dynamic stretching before exercise helps prevent injuries and improves performance, whereas static stretching post-exercise aids in muscle recovery (Behm et al., 2016; Opplert & Babault, 2018).

In addition to stretching, trainers include land drills to improve muscle conditioning and flexibility, which promotes a comprehensive method of physical readiness. P2 pointed out the significance of this practice stating, ‘*’Everytime na mag swim or either you can have stretching or land drills para ma stretch ang muscles para during their swim they are more flexible.’’* ‘’ [Every time we swim, we either do stretching or land drills to stretch the muscles, so during their swim, they are more flexible.]’’

Trainers demonstrate an understanding of the significance of controlled intensity, steering clear of over-exerting their athletes to avoid excessive fatigue. Instead of urging swimmers to reach their limits in a single effort, trainers progressively elevate intensity to enhance endurance safely, as mentioned by one respondent, ‘*’Dilli namo biglaon, kay kung mabigla ang bata murag ma over fatigue.*‘’[We don’t push them too hard all at once, because if we overwhelm the swimmers, they may experience over-fatigue.(P15)]”

By incorporating stretching, warm-up exercises, land drills, and careful pacing, Bohol’s trainers adopt a well-rounded approach for physical readiness and injury avoidance. This strategy addresses to both the athlete’s immediate needs and their long-term well-being, making certain that swimmers are adequately equipped for training demands while also protecting them from possible physical setbacks.

Differentiated Training Approaches. Trainers recognized the importance of customized training strategies, tailoring their approaches to meet the specific needs of competitive swimmers. Training differentiation is centered on specialization for various events, with particular routines and drills tailored to address the requirements of sprints, middle-distance, and long-distance competitions. For example, one coach explained, ‘*’So ang imohang sprinter, focus lang gyud ka sa mga short distance. Ang imong middle distance, focus ka sa 200 meters na distance, and imohang long distance swimmers, focus ka sa 400, 800, to 1500 meters*.’’ ‘’[Sprinters focus on short distances, middle-distance swimmers focus on 200 meters, and long-distance swimmers focus on 400, 800, to 1500 meters.(P11)’’

Aside from endurance, trainers in Bohol include a well-rounded combination of drills, sprint workouts, and prolonged endurance swims to enhance both speed and stamina. One participant commented, ‘*’Endurance ug drills nila sa mga bata. Endurance, drills, then sprint.’’* ‘’[The training for the competitive swimmers includes endurance, drills, and then sprints.(P8)’’

This tailored and recovery-centered strategy showcases the trainer’s dedication to personalized training, catering to the unique requirements of each swimmer while promoting continuous, injury-free progress. By integrating specific endurance, sprint, and recovery techniques, trainers assist athletes in achieving optimal performance during essential competitions, aligning training with both short-term aims and long-term developmental objectives.

Precision Training. Trainers in Bohol focus heavily on improving swimmers' techniques and abilities, understanding that proficiency in form and exactness in movement are essential for achieving high performance. A crucial aspect of this improvement process involves repetitive drills, which are regularly utilized to embed proper technique and ensure swimmers adopt the correct form. As one trainer narrates, ‘*’Kasagaran ang training balik-balikon. Siyempre adunay lahi-lahi nga drills ug specific nga strokes.’’* ‘’ [Usually training, goes with repetitions. Then of course different drills and specific strokes. (P7)]’’

Drills are not only repetitive but also strategically designed to target essential aspects of each stroke, with the goal of achieving smooth and efficient movement. Trainers prioritize proper stroke execution, and one participant stressed, ‘’*Diha namo gi apply ang mga drills aron ma proper ag ilahang strokes sa ilahang training*.’’ ‘’ [We apply drills to ensure proper execution of their strokes during training. (P15)]’’

By implementing focused repetition, practice drills, and careful attention to technique, Bohol’s trainers prepare swimmers with the skills necessary for success in competitions. Their commitment to honing skills guarantees that athletes enhance both their physical abilities and the technical skills needed to excel in competitive environments.

Capacity Building. In Bohol, trainers understand that successful training involves more than just physical conditioning and technical abilities, it also requires guidance, encouragement, and necessary resources. A vital aspect of this assistance is having access to appropriate training environments, as trainers stress that a conducive setting is essential for effective practice. As noted by one participant, ‘’*Siyempre, una, dapat naa tay pool for training.*’’ ‘’Of course, first, we need to have a pool for training. (P14)]’’

In addition to resource support, trainers serve as mentors, imparting knowledge gained from their own experiences and continuously evolving their strategy to meet swimmers’ needs. As one trainer shared, ‘*’Kung unsa akong na learn before mao akong gitrain nila then naa rakoy gipang add something like ginabag.o nako ang uban ba.’’ ‘’[*What I learned before forms the basis of my training for them, and I also add new elements as I see fit.(P4)]’’

Together, these elements resource access, adaptive mentorship, and motivational support create a well-rounded approach that equips swimmers with the physical, mental, and emotional tools needed to excel. Through this holistic support system, Bohol’s trainers not only develop skilled athletes but also cultivate confident, motivated individuals ready to face the challenges of competitive swimming.

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Table 2
Training Strategies Utilized by Trainers

Verbatim Responses	Categories	Main Themes
Before a competition, it's essential to focus on endurance and breathing. (P6)	Focusing on endurance and breathing	Preparing Physical Readiness
It's all about preparation. For me, it's important to prepare the swimmers to allow them to relax as well. (P8)	Preparation and relaxation strategies	
More on drills, warm-ups, kicking, and sprinting. (P10)	Drills and physical conditioning	
Mindset is important, along with their diet, goals, and targets. (P2)	Checking the diet, goals, and targets	Monitoring Mental Readiness
You need to supervise them during the workout training, always reminding the athletes to focus because training never stops. (P11)	Supervision and consistent focus	
You have to encourage the swimmers that they need to do this because they can excel even more, so you really need to motivate them. (P12)	Athlete encouragement and motivation	
My stage involves both basic and advanced techniques, so I'm more focused on stroking at this level. (P9)	Technique development and stroke focus	Practicing Proper Execution to Comprehensive Skill Development
I'm working hard to show my swimmers how to maintain their kicking strength. (4)	Teaching Kicking Strength	
We also focus on strategies and rules for swimming because avoiding disqualification is very important. (5)	Focusing on strategies and rules	
It all comes from practice that an intensity is always going level up. (P7)	Progressive training intensity	Adapting Gradual Training
Our training is set up weekly. The first week is for endurance, and the second week is for speed. (P14)	Structured training phases	
During tapering, we also focus on diving, touching, and executing their strokes. (P15)	Tapering and technical execution	
Our strategy for preparing for the competition involves simulating a competition environment during training. (P15)	Competition simulation in training	Simulating Competition Scenarios
During training, it's mostly about consistent training. You do all-out training regularly. (13)	Consistent and intense training	
USRPT, or Ultra Short Race Pace Training, is very helpful for both pacing in long-distance swimming and maintaining pace for sprinters as well. (P3)	Race pace and pacing strategies	

Preparing Physical Readiness

Physical fitness and endurance are fundamental to success in competitive swimming, concentrating on strategies that improve stamina, breathing management, and overall physical preparedness. As competitions approach, there is an increased emphasis on endurance and breathing practices, which trainers deem essential for maintaining energy and calmness in high-stress situations. P6 noted, ‘*’Before competition need jud pahangin gyud ug taman bitaw.’’* ‘’ [Before a competition, it's essential to focus on endurance and breathing.]’’ This statement emphasizes the importance of aerobic capacity development (Maconyte et al., 2023), which ensures that swimmers can sustain their energy levels throughout races. Scientific research in sports training confirms that progressive endurance training improves oxygen uptake efficiency, helping athletes maintain pace and delay fatigue.

Preparation involves not only physical fitness but also mental and emotional preparedness. Trainers understand the significance of fostering an atmosphere that encourages relaxation and reduces stress, allowing swimmers to enter competitions with assurance. As one participant remarked, ‘*’Pag.abot na sa before a week na competition is preparing. Para nako kay kinahanglan pud e prepare nimo ang bata para kay aron maka relax pud sila ba*.’’ ‘’ [It's all about preparation. For me, it's important to prepare the swimmers to allow them to relax as well. (P8)]’’

Physical conditioning is also maintained through consistent drills, warm-ups, kicking exercises, and sprinting, which trainers integrate to develop both strength and agility. One participant shared, ‘*’More on drills,warm-up, kicking, and sprint jud ko*.’’ ‘’ [More on drills, warm-ups, kicking, and sprinting. (P10)]’’

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 3| March 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

The trainers utilize a comprehensive strategy for enhancing physical fitness and building endurance, combining physical exercises to develop well-rounded athletes. This combination of stamina development, breath regulation, mental toughness, and specific workouts guarantees that swimmers are equipped to compete with power, concentration, and confidence.

Monitoring Mental Readiness. Trainers in Bohol recognize that mental preparedness is as essential as physical training when it comes to optimizing swimmers' performance. This concept stressed the significance of rest, concentration, and inspiration as vital elements of mental readiness.

The mindset is regarded as a vital component of developing endurance, in addition to nutrition and goal-setting, which trainers use to cultivate a focused and resilient mentality in their athletes. By establishing specific goals and objectives, swimmers remain inspired and uphold a disciplined training regimen. An observation made by one trainer noted, *''Mindset kay importante, kauban ang ilahang diet, goals, ug target.''* '' [Mindset is important, along with their diet, goals, and targets. (P2)]''
During regular training, mental focus is reinforced through constant guidance and reminders. Trainers closely supervise workouts, frequently encouraging swimmers to stay attentive and committed to their goals. As one trainer noted, '*'Imo silang gina supervise everytime nga during the work out training, always remind the athlete nga you should focus kay training is never stops.* '' '' [You need to supervise them during the workout training, always reminding the athletes to focus because training never stops. (P11)]''

Motivation is another key aspect, with trainers playing an active role in encouraging swimmers to believe in their potential and strive for excellence. As one participant shared, *''E encourage gyud nimo ang swimmers na kinahanglan nimo buhaton kay mao ni, kaya nimo ni, mas molabaw paka ani, so e encourage gyud nimo sa mga swimmers.* '' [You have to encourage the swimmers that they need to do this because they can excel even more, so you really need to motivate them. (P12)]''

In trainers' training programs, mental preparation integrates mindsets, attentive guidance, and encouraging reinforcement to foster a nurturing and motivational atmosphere. This comprehensive 'for successful competition, thereby improving their preparedness for the challenges of high-level competitions.

Practicing Proper Execution to Comprehensive Skill Development. Trainers understand that having strong technical abilities and a thorough grasp of swimming regulations are critical for achieving competitive success. Throughout different training phases, trainers concentrate on both basic and advanced techniques, making certain that swimmers cultivate a profound mastery of vital skills such as stroking and kicking. One trainer emphasized this balanced approach, remarking, *''Ang akoang stage, mao ni siya nga level, mga basic and advance pa, so more on stroking pako.''* '' [My stage involves both basic and advanced techniques, so I'm more focused on stroking at this level. (P9)]''

Enhancing kicking strength is also a key focus, as trainers aim to boost and sustain their swimmers leg endurance and power, which are essential for propulsion and continued speed. A trainer remarked, '*'Mao nang ako siyang gipaningkamotan na mapakitaan nako siyag paagi or way na ma maintain gyud ilang pag kusog sa kicking*.'' ''[I'm working hard to show my swimmers how to maintain their kicking strength.(P4)]''

Alongside physical abilities, trainers highly prioritize instructing swimmers on the tactics and regulations needed to prevent disqualification and succeed in competitions. As one participant mentioned, *''Strategies for rules sa swimming kay factor man gihapon na, apil gyud na siya kay dili mn gyud pwede ma disqualified ang bata, naa mana siya sa rules.''* ''[We also focus on strategies and rules for swimming because avoiding disqualification is very important.(P5)]''
By providing organized technical training, emphasizing rule awareness, and preparing participants for competitions with support, Bohol's trainers help swimmers develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence required for effective competition. This comprehensive approach enables swimmers to enhance their capabilities while grasping the competitive environment, which ultimately results in better performance and decreased stress during competitions.

Adapting Gradual Adaptation. Trainers employ a progressive training adaptation method by gradually raising the intensity of workouts to improve swimmers' endurance, speed, and power. They methodically modify training requirements over time and use tapering strategies prior to competitions to guarantee peak performance and preparedness. As one participant noted, *''It all comes from practice that an intensity is always going level up*. (P7)]*''*

Training intensity is frequently structured in cycles, with weekly focuses that balance endurance and speed. One trainer explained their method, saying, *''Amoa is weekly. First week is more on endurance. Second week, more on speed. Mao rana speed and endurance. Depende pud sa progressing sa bata.*'' ''[Our training is set up weekly. The first week is for endurance, and the second week is for speed. We keep alternating between the two but adjust based on how each swimmer is progressing. (P14)]''

As competitions approach, trainers shift focus to tapering, a strategy designed to reduce the physical load on swimmers and allow their bodies to recover and peak at the right time. Tapering involves a lighter training load and an emphasis on fine-tuning essential skills, such as diving, stroke execution, and turns. One trainer explained, *''Taper kana bitawng gitudloan na namo sa diving, touching, ug sa ilahang pag execute sa ilahang stroke*.'' ''[During tapering, we also focus on diving, touching, and executing their strokes.(P15)]''

This combination of progressive intensity and strategic tapering enables Bohol's swimmers to build their physical capabilities over time while ensuring they are optimally prepared for the demands of competition. Through careful monitoring and personalized adjustments, trainers create a balanced approach that maximizes swimmers' peak performance potential while minimizing fatigue, setting the

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stage for success in competitive events.

Simulating Competition Scenarios. Trainers prepare swimmers for competitive events by recreating the pressures and demands of a race environment during training sessions. This strategic approach aims to acclimate swimmers to the intensity of competition, helping them manage nerves, pace themselves effectively, and execute skills with precision under pressure. P15 explained, *''So ang amoang strategy ani sa pagprepare sa among competition, pananglitan ga training mi didto sa pool, murag gi act namo nga naa mi sa competition.''* '' [Our strategy for preparing for the competition involves simulating a competition environment during training.]'' This method is supported by research on preperformance routines and simulated races (Richard et al., 2021), which examined elite swimmers and evaluated the impact of pre-competition routines by applying simulated race situations both prior to and following the intervention. The findings indicated that these simulations improved both speed and motor efficiency in actual competitions. This suggests that replicating race-like environments in training can boost performance. Scientific findings further highlight that practicing under simulated competition settings helps athletes build mental resilience and physical readiness, leading to improved execution in real races. In these training sessions, a focus is placed on maintaining both consistency and intensity to reflect the physical and competition. Trainers motivate swimmers to reach their maximum performance levels by facilitating exhaustive training sessions that mimic the effort needed in competitions. One trainer stated, *''During sa training mostly is training ra gyud kanunay. All out training, mao ra gyud nay buhaton nimo kanunay. Maghatag ka nilag adjustment, adto na sa ilang dula, before sa competition especially sa tapering period.''* '' [During training, it's mostly about consistent training. You do all-out training regularly. You will provide adjustments for their performance during the competition, especially in the tapering period. (P13)]''

USRPT (Ultra-Short Race-Pace Training) is tailored to assist swimmers in enhancing their race-specific pacing through repetitive, high-intensity sets carried out at their intended race speed. By emphasizing these repetitive, high-intensity efforts at target race speeds, USRPT (Ultra-Short Race-Pace Training) helps both sprinters and distance swimmers cultivate the skill to maintain an optimal pace, boosting efficiency and endurance while minimizing fatigue to elevate overall race performance. One participant remarked, *''USRPT, Ultra Short Race Pace Training. So ang USRPT kay makatabang sa pacing ug long-distance, ma maintain ang pace ug sprinter pud, ma maintain pud niya ang pace.*'' '' [USRPT, or Ultra Short Race Pace Training, is very helpful for both pacing in long-distance swimming and maintaining pace for sprinters as well. (P3)]''

Simulating training for swimmers incorporates both intensity-based and pace-centered methods to guarantee that athletes are both mentally and physically ready for competition. By simulating a high-pressure environment during training, trainers prepare athletes to perform effectively under pressure, adjust to different race requirements, and carry out their skills with assurance and reliability. This thorough preparation cultivates resilience and confidence, equipping swimmers with the necessary tools to succeed in competitive situation

IMPLICATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE OPTIMAZATION

Improving swimming performance necessitates a well-organized strategy that integrates training periodization, enhancement of technical skills, and mental preparedness. Training periodization enables swimmers to achieve optimal performance at the appropriate moment by adhering to a systematic schedule of preparation, high-intensity training, and tapering phases. This method aids in maximizing efficiency while minimizing the chances of overtraining and fatigue. Trainers in Bohol employ periodization methods tailored to various swimming disciplines, combining endurance workouts, speed exercises, and technical training to ready athletes for competition.

An important aspect of improving performance is the refinement of technique. Consistent biomechanical evaluations assist swimmers in enhancing their stroke mechanics and race performance. Trainers emphasize the importance of stroke efficiency, ideal turns and starts, and correct breathing methods to minimize drag and boost propulsion. Through ongoing refinement of these techniques, swimmers achieve better body alignment, save energy, and uphold suitable pacing. The research indicates that seasoned trainers blend conventional coaching methods with contemporary innovations to promote ongoing skill enhancement.

Mental readiness is also vital for achieving success in competition because confidence and mental strength are key for dealing with pressure in races. Trainers utilize visualization practices, goal-setting methods, and stress-reduction techniques to enhance athletes' mental resilience. Visualization helps swimmers mentally rehearse their races, while goal-setting offers motivation and specific targets. Furthermore, stress management methods such as regulated breathing and positive reinforcement assist swimmers in maintaining composure and concentration during competitive situations.

By combining these components—organized training cycles, enhancement of technical skills, and mental conditioning—swimmers can elevate their overall performance. Nevertheless, obstacles persist, including managing training intensity, sustaining athlete motivation, and tackling resource constraints. To boost performance further, trainers should emphasize recovery times, strengthen mental readiness initiatives, and enhance availability of training facilities and equipment. These approaches offer critical insights for cultivating elite swimmers and optimizing training methods in Bohol.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study features the significance of well-structured and personalized training methods used by swimming trainers in Bohol to optimize athlete preparation. A well-organized training schedule is essential, prioritizing long-term progress to gradually develop strength, endurance, and

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technique. Training programs are customized based on swimming categories, with specialized approaches for long-distance, short-distance, and sprint events. Structured periodization, including 2–3-week recovery phases before competitions, ensures peak performance, while pre-training routines such as stretching and land-based drills enhance flexibility and reduce injury risks. Trainers carefully balance training intensity and recovery to prevent excessive fatigue and maintain optimal performance. Precision training plays a key role in refining strokes, starts, and turns through repetitive drills and biomechanical feedback. Trainers continuously adapt and improve their coaching strategies by integrating past experiences with new methodologies. To prepare swimmers for competition, trainers emphasize both physical and mental readiness. Endurance-building workouts and breathing exercises help swimmers stay relaxed and focused, while nutrition, mindset preparation, and goal-setting contribute to overall performance. Competition simulations, including high-intensity practice sessions and Ultra Short Race Pace Training (USRPT), help swimmers adapt to race conditions and maintain pace in both long-distance and sprint events. By continuously refining training structures and strategies, swimming trainers in Bohol can further enhance athlete preparation, leading to improved performance in major competitions.

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