Dynamics of Coaching of Bodybuilding Fitness in an Online Environment: A Social Media Ethnography Approach

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Abstract

Studying Bodybuilding and Fitness as a sport discipline involves an individual and actual approach as most practitioners of these disciplines prefer personal contact and rely on the trust of their coaches and immediate community. As physique and fitness sports involve total connection between coach and athlete, it is important to see the different dynamics of an athlete being self-coached, coached by their immediate partners, or hiring a professional coach. The relationships on the manner of coaching are worthy of interest as there are only few studies that focus on bodybuilding and fitness. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relations of different types of coaching especially on online platforms and how the relationship of the athlete and coach were affected by shifting to online connection. Through qualitative methods such as interviews and field observations, and social media thematic analysis the paper will discuss three different perspectives of coaching: self-coached, coached by their immediate partners, or another professional coach and how the similarities and differences of these relationships matter. It is seen that the dynamics between athletes and coaches, especially in social media and its relation to their coaching and training experiences provides understanding on how Female Bodybuilders find space and empowerment in their industry and how they can be empowered and dependent to their subculture especially their coaches and other influencers.