



# Picturing failure and negative self-talk: A perfect combo for choking

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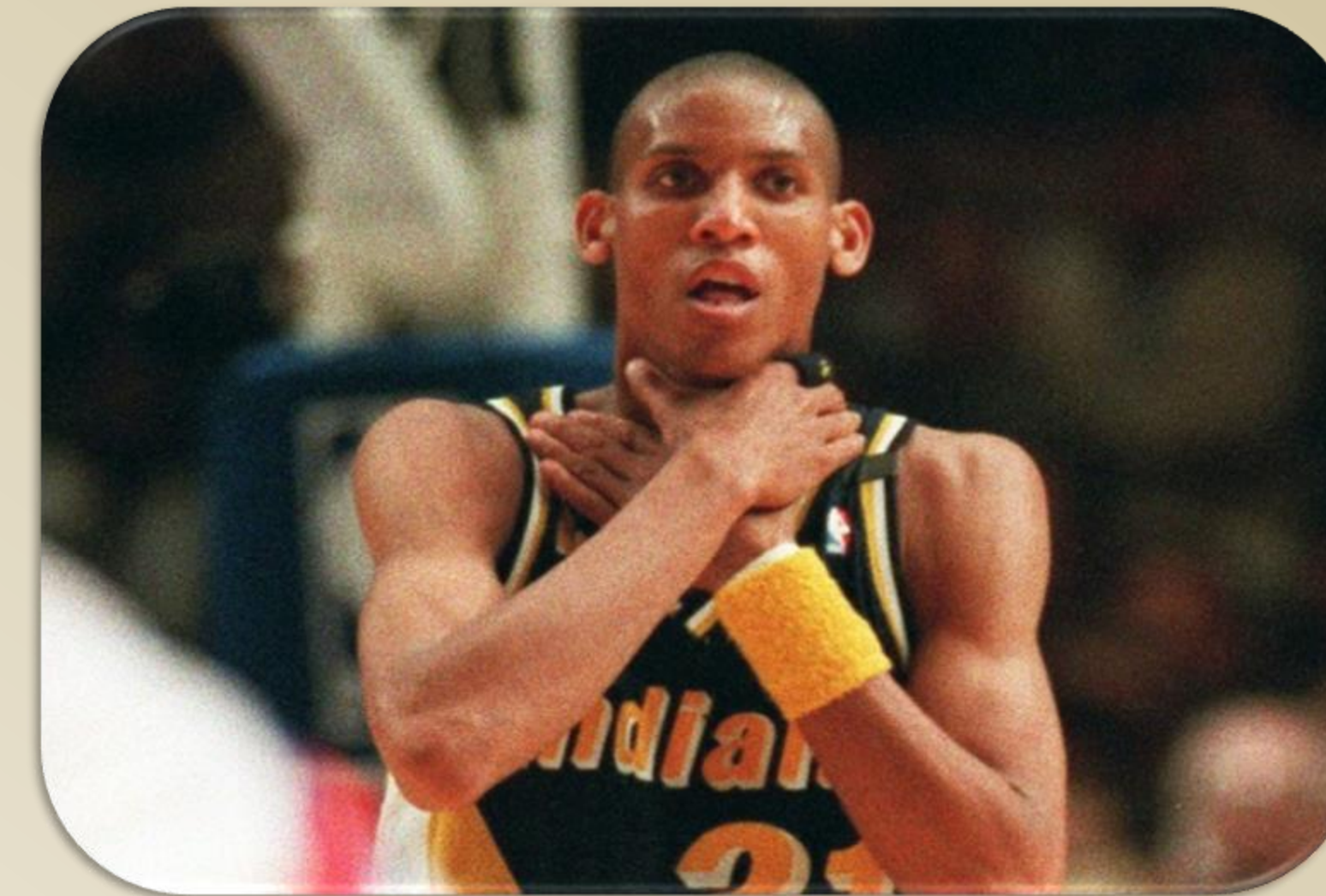
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## Literature Review

- ❖ Choking in performance is a phenomenon experienced by athletes, performers, and competitors where there is a large decrease in skill execution regardless of typical skill ability (Mesagno & Hill, 2013).
- ❖ Previous research suggests that the anxiety created by competitive environments shifts competitors attentional focus towards task-irrelevant stimuli (Englert & Oudejans, 2014).
- ❖ We think mental imagery and other modalities of inner experience may be used in this process, so we looked at the influence of internal factors on the likelihood of a choking event to occur.
- ❖ Hypothesis: Picturing failure and negative self-talk will be significantly more influential to inducing a choking event than other internal factors

## Participants & Procedure

- ❖ Recruited through a Lindenwood Participant Pool and social media platforms.
- ❖  $N = 63$  responses, but narrowed down to just those who reported choking,  $N = 19$  used in analyses.
- ❖ Female  $N = 11$ , Male  $N = 7$
- ❖ Asian  $N = 1$ , African American  $N = 1$ , Latinx  $N = 2$ , Caucasian  $N = 14$
- ❖  $M_{age} = 28$  years,  $SD = 12.09$
- ❖ Qualtrics survey assessing the influence of internal factors on the likelihood of a choking event to occur, participants were asked questions regarding the degree to which the participant believed internal factors influenced a choking event to occur.



## Analysis

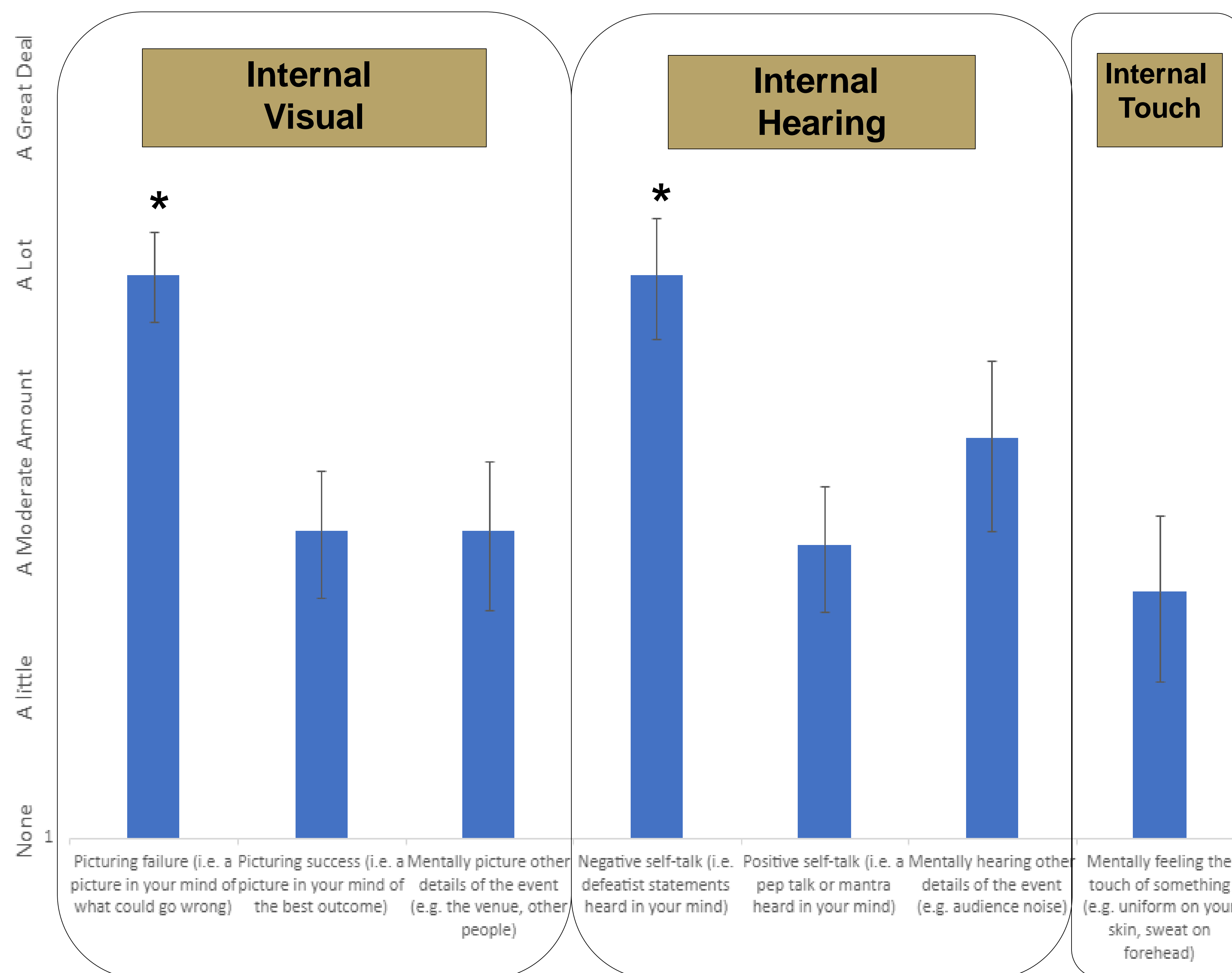
- ❖ Using a repeated-measures ANOVA, we found that picturing failure and negative self-talk were reported to be significantly more influential when compared to other factors,  $Wilks' \lambda = .31$ ,  $F(6, 13) = 4.81$ ,  $p = .009$ ,  $\eta^2 = .7$ .

## Discussion

- ❖ Our hypothesis was supported. Picturing failure and negative self-talk were significantly more influential towards the occurrence of a choking event when comparing to other factors.
- ❖ Previous research has focused on the relationship between choking in performance and anxiety. We widened this body of knowledge by focusing on the relationship of internal factors and their remembered influence on choking in performance.
- ❖ Limitations include small sample size and the use of survey methodology. Future research could gather larger samples and engage participants in a testing paradigm of choking rather than relying on the recollection of past experiences and events.
- ❖ Examining choking in performance could provide insight into opportunities towards mental skills training for skill dependent positions (i.e. athletes, speakers, actors) with heightened pressure in a specific moment.



Self-Report Rating of the Belief that Each Factor Influenced the Choking Event to Occur



## References

- Englert, C & Oudejans, R. (2014). Is choking under pressure a consequence of skill-focus or increased distractibility? Results from a tennis serve task. *Psychology*, 5, 1035-1043. <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2014.59116>
- Mesagno, C., & Hill, D. M. (2013). Definition of choking in sport: Re-conceptualization and debate. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*. 44(4), 267-277. <https://doi.org/10.7352/IJSP2013.44.267>