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Both a holistic and external focus of attention enhance the learning of a badminton short serve

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28 **Abstract**

29 Attentional focus research consistently demonstrates a benefit of an external focus
30 relative to an internal focus. However, this dichotomous comparison may oversimplify the
31 variety of attentional focus strategies a learner uses when acquiring a motor skill. Recent
32 research suggests a holistic focus of attention provides a similar benefit over an internal focus in
33 performing a standing long jump, but the generalizability of this effect is unknown. The purpose
34 of this study was to determine how an internal (IF), external (EF), and holistic focus (HF) and
35 control condition impact the learning of a badminton short serve. Novice participants ($N=60$)
36 were randomly assigned to IF, EF, HF, or control groups. They practiced the badminton short
37 serve for 150 trials over five days and completed retention and transfer tests 48 hours post-
38 acquisition. Serve accuracy was analyzed in separate repeated-measures ANOVAs for
39 acquisition and pretest/retention/transfer. All groups improved accuracy through acquisition with
40 the HF group serving more accurately than the IF and control groups. In retention, the HF and
41 EF group served more accurately than the control group, and in transfer the HF group was more
42 accurate than the IF and control groups. The present findings suggest a benefit of both a holistic
43 and external focus in the learning of an accuracy-based task.

44 **Keywords:** Holistic focus, External focus, Internal focus, Badminton, Short Serve.

45 Research in the area of attentional focus consistently demonstrates the benefit of an
46 external focus of attention relative to an internal focus in both the learning and performance of
47 motor skills (see Wulf, 2013 for a review). An internal focus has typically been defined as
48 focusing on the movements of the body, and an external focus is defined as focusing on the
49 effects of a movement in the environment (Wulf & Prinz, 2001). The benefit of an external focus
50 has been reported for a variety of sport skills including golf chipping (Bell & Hardy, 2009; Wulf
51 & Su, 2007), basketball free-throws (Zachry et. al, 2005), standing long jumps (Becker & Smith,
52 2015; Becker, Fairbrother, & Couvillion, 2018; Porter, Ostrowski, Nolan, & Wu, 2010; Wu,
53 Porter, & Brown, 2012), dart throwing (Becker & Fairbrother, 2019; Lohse, Sherwood, & Healy,
54 2010), and volleyball serves (Wulf, McConnel, Gärtner, & Schwarz, 2002). This benefit also
55 appears to generalize to children (Coker, 2018; Perreault & French, 2015), older adults
56 (Chiviacowsky, Wulf, & Wally, 2010), and populations with various disabilities (Landers, Wulf,
57 Wallmann, & Guadagnoli, 2005; McNamara, Becker, Weigel, Marcy, & Haegele, 2019).

58 While the literature comparing an external and internal focus presents a clear benefit of
59 an external focus, some authors have suggested this framework oversimplifies the process of
60 how athletes manage attention in sport performance (Fairbrother, Post, & Whalen, 2016; Toner
61 & Moran, 2015). Attention throughout a sport performance is dynamic, with athletes self-
62 reporting shifting their attention through a wide variety of focus points (Bernier, Trottier,
63 Thienot, & Fournier, 2016; Fairbrother et al., 2016). Importantly, many of the focus cues
64 reported by athletes do not fit within the dichotomous internal/external paradigm employed in
65 research. For instance, golfers have reported focusing on the rhythm of their swing and “the
66 sensation of release in my hands” (Bernier, Codron, Thienot, & Fournier, 2011, p. 333) and
67 figure skaters have reported focusing on “conveying a jazzy feel” and “being fluid and smooth”

68 (Bernier et al., 2016, p. 260). In addition to this self-report evidence of diverse focus strategies,
69 some researchers have suggested that certain tasks (e.g., gymnastics, dance) do not naturally lend
70 themselves to generating meaningful external focus cues (Collins, Carson, & Toner, 2016).
71 Experimental evidence disputes this viewpoint by showing a benefit of an external focus in
72 gymnastics (Abdollahipour, Wulf, Psotta, Palomo Nieto, 2015) dance (Texeira da Silva, Lessa,
73 & Chiviawowsky, 2017), and playing music (Mornell & Wulf, 2018), but generating effective
74 external focus cues for these skills may be more difficult. For skills like a golf shot, a learner can
75 naturally focus on the golf club, or on the planned trajectory or target of the ball. However, for a
76 skill like completing a pirouette, there is no implement or target to focus on, so instruction often
77 intuitively references the body. Based on these limitations, it is critical to understand if other
78 types of attentional focus strategies can be employed to avoid the disadvantages associated with
79 an internal focus of attention.

80 A limited number of studies have explored how alternative attentional focus strategies
81 impact motor learning and performance relative to an internal and external focus. One such
82 example is the use of a holistic focus of attention, which is defined as a focus on the general
83 feeling or sensations associated with completing a movement (Becker, Georges, & Aiken, 2019).
84 This concept emerged from similar work showing a benefit of setting holistic goals relative to
85 part-practice goals in motor performance and learning (Mullen & Hardy, 2010; Mullen, Faull,
86 Jones, & Kingston, 2015). In the performance of a standing long jump, a holistic focus of
87 attention (i.e., focusing on feeling explosive) and an external focus of attention (focusing on
88 jumping toward a cone) have been found to present a similar benefit over an internal focus
89 (focusing on rapidly extending the legs; Becker et al., 2019). This type of cue is also consistent
90 with some athlete self-reported cues in the previous paragraph (e.g., “conveying a jazzy feel” and

91 “being fluid and smooth”) meaning it may be a useful option that resonates with the desired
92 focus of athletes. However, the generalizability of the holistic focus benefit is unclear since
93 recent research also shows a holistic focus while balancing on a stabilometer (focusing on feeling
94 calm and stable) produced no performance benefit relative to an internal focus (Becker & Hung,
95 2020), and no prior study has tested the impact of a holistic focus in a motor learning protocol.

96 Theoretical accounts of attentional focus effects have varied, but the constrained action
97 hypothesis (CAH; Wulf, McNevin, & Shea, 2001) has been the most prominently cited and best
98 supported viewpoint. The CAH proposes that an external focus allows the organization of a
99 movement to occur at a more automatic level by planning a movement at the level of the
100 outcome. In contrast, an internal focus promotes more conscious control of movements that
101 should otherwise be organized at a subconscious level. This inappropriate conscious control
102 impairs automaticity and reduces movement efficiency (Wulf, 2013). Dual-task methodology has
103 provided evidence for higher attentional demand when using an internal relative to an external
104 focus (Wulf et al., 2001). In addition, multiple studies have reported improved neuromuscular
105 efficiency (Lohse & Sherwood, 2012; Marchant, Greig, Scott, 2009) as well as metabolic
106 efficiency (Schücker, Hagemann, Strauss, & Völker, 2009; Schücker, Anheier, Hagemann,
107 Strauss, & Völker, 2013) when using an external relative to an internal focus.

108 The CAH is often presented as evidence for the benefit of using an external focus, but
109 much of the supporting evidence focuses on the *disadvantages* of conscious control from using
110 an internal focus. Several other authors have presented similar hypotheses and theories
111 suggesting that consciously controlling movement disrupts performance, learning, and can lead
112 to choking under pressure (Baumeister, 1984; Hardy, Mullen, & Jones, 1996; Masters, 1992).
113 The CAH presents an external focus as a solution to this problem, but it is important to know if

114 other strategies can also achieve that goal. A holistic focus does not focus on the effects of a
115 movement in the environment, but it could be argued that this type of focus allows for focusing
116 on effects of a movement that occur *within* the body (e.g., sensation of feeling explosive), thus
117 potentially presenting a similar advantage of an external focus of attention.

118 Initial evidence suggests that a holistic focus of attention can provide an advantage over
119 an internal focus for the performance of tasks requiring maximal force production, but it is
120 unclear if that advantage generalizes to tasks requiring accuracy. Furthermore, no study to date
121 has tested the impact of a holistic focus on motor learning. The purpose of this study was to
122 determine how an internal focus, external focus, holistic focus, and no directed focus (i.e.,
123 control condition) impact the learning of a motor task with an accuracy demand (badminton short
124 serve). Based on the results of Becker et al. (2019), we hypothesized that learners using an
125 external or holistic focus would complete the badminton short serve more accurately than those
126 in the internal focus or control groups in acquisition, retention, and transfer phases of the
127 experiment.

128

129

Method

Participants

131 In the current study, 60 right-handed males studying physical education volunteered to
132 participate in the study and were randomly assigned to internal focus ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.53$, $SD = 0.64$),
133 external focus ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.47$, $SD = 0.83$), holistic focus ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.27$, $SD = 1.58$), and control
134 groups ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.00$, $SD = 0.85$). Sample size was selected based on a review of previous
135 investigations with similar designs. All participants were novices in the performance of the

136 experimental task. Study procedures were approved by the university's institutional review
137 board, and all participants provided written informed consent.

138 **Task and Setting**

139 Participants in the study were asked to learn the badminton short serve. During all phases
140 of the study except transfer, participants stood in the right side of a standard badminton court and
141 served diagonally toward the opposite side of the court (see Figure 1). The French Badminton
142 Short Serve Test (French & Statler, 1949) was used as a measure of performance throughout the
143 study. This test involves placing a rope 50.80cm above the net so that the participant must hit the
144 shuttlecock between the top of the net and the rope. This rope was present for all phases of the
145 experiment. The goal of the short serve is to hit the shuttlecock so that it lands as close to the
146 front corner of the service area as possible. Concentric arcs were drawn with the first being
147 55.88cm from the corner, and each successive arc being an additional 20.32cm away. Point
148 values were scored by a research team member based on the proximity to the corner and ranged
149 from 5 (most accurate) to 0 (missing the rectangular service area altogether; see Figure 1).
150 Participants used a standard badminton racquet and shuttlecock, and scores for each trial were
151 determined based on the landing location of the tip of the shuttlecock. In instances where the
152 shuttlecock landed on a line, the larger of the two scores was awarded. Hits that failed to pass
153 between the rope and the top of the net were scored as a zero, but if the shuttlecock hit the rope
154 or net and then dropped into the scoring zone the trial was repeated.

155 **Procedure**

156 Upon arrival to the laboratory, participants were introduced to the badminton short serve
157 task that would be learned. They received basic instructions regarding the rules and scoring of
158 the task, and viewed a demonstration of the task by a researcher. No specific focus instructions

159 were included in this introduction. Next, they completed a pre-test consisting of 10 trials of the
160 task to assess baseline performance levels. Following the pre-test, participants in the
161 experimental groups were instructed that they would be practicing the task while focusing on a
162 specific instruction (i.e., the prescribed attentional focus cue). The internal focus group was told
163 to “focus on the movement of your arm during the serve.” The external focus group was told to
164 “focus on the movement of the racquet during the serve.” The holistic focus group was told to
165 “focus on feeling smooth and fluid when completing the serve.” The control group was given no
166 focus cue to use during acquisition.

167 The acquisition phase consisted of five days of practice with approximately 48 hours
168 separating each session. Each session consisted of three blocks of 10 trials (150 total acquisition
169 trials). During the acquisition phase, for the three experimental groups the focus cue was
170 repeated to the participant prior to every block, and after each block participants were asked to
171 indicate on a 1-5 scale how often they were focused on the cue during practice with 1 indicating
172 none of the time and 5 indicating all of the time. Approximately 48 hours after the completion of
173 acquisition, participants returned to the lab for a 10-trial retention test. Retention conditions were
174 identical to the pretest and acquisition with the exception that no attentional focus cues were
175 given. Thirty minutes after the completion of the retention test, participants completed a 10-trial
176 transfer test that involved serving from the opposite side of the court (i.e., standing on the left
177 side of the court and serving diagonally toward a target on the right side of the court). During all
178 phases of the experiment, a research team member scored the accuracy of each trial from 0-5
179 based on the scoring system of the French Badminton Short Serve Test (French & Statler, 1949).
180

181 Data Analysis

182 The primary dependent variable of interest was the accuracy score of the serve. Scores
183 for trials in each block were averaged for analysis. All data was screened for normality using Q-
184 Q plots, and it was determined parametric tests were appropriate. Acquisition data was analyzed
185 in a 4 (Group) x 15 (Block) repeated-measures ANOVA with repeated measures on block.
186 Pretest, retention and transfer data were analyzed in a 4 (Group) x 3 (Test) repeated-measures
187 ANOVA with repeated measures on test. A secondary dependent variable measured was
188 adherence scores to the focus cues for each block. Adherence scores were analyzed in a 3
189 (Group) x 15 (Block) repeated-measures ANOVA with repeated measures on block. For all
190 analyses, significant main effects and interactions were followed up with Sidak post-hoc
191 procedures to determine the nature of group differences. Greenhouse-Geisser adjustments are
192 reported where violations of sphericity occurred. Partial eta squared is reported as an effect size,
193 and the alpha level was set at .05.

194 Results**195 Acquisition**

196 Table 1 presents the results of each group during all phases of the study. During
197 acquisition, participants in all groups improved across blocks. This was supported by a
198 significant main effect of block, $F(7.91, 443.05) = 33.97, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .38$, with accuracy
199 scores increasing across blocks. The main effect of group was also significant, $F(3, 56) = 6.53, p$
200 $= .001, \eta_p^2 = .26$. Participants in the holistic focus group were significantly more accurate than
201 those in the internal focus group ($p = .006$), and the control group ($p = .003$) across acquisition.
202 Participants in the external focus group did not significantly differ from either the holistic or
203 internal focus group (p 's $> .050$), but were marginally more accurate than the control group ($p =$

204 .069). Participants in the internal focus and control groups did not significantly differ from each
205 other ($p > .050$). The block x group interaction was not significant, $F(23.74, 443.05) = 1.14$, $p =$
206 $.292$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.

207 **Pretest, Retention, and Transfer**

208 To examine the impact of attentional focus on motor learning, a repeated measures
209 ANOVA was performed across the pretest, retention, and transfer phases. The main effect of
210 group across the three testing phases was significant, $F(3, 56) = 5.18$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$, as was
211 the main effect of test, $F(1.59, 88.82) = 68.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .55$. However, these main effects
212 were superseded by a significant test x group interaction, $F(4.76, 88.82) = 4.44$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 =$
213 $.19$, suggesting that the group effect varied across test conditions. Follow-up tests indicated that
214 at pretest no significant group differences in accuracy were observed (p 's $> .050$). In the
215 retention test, the holistic focus group and the external focus group served significantly more
216 accurately than the control group ($p = .008$ and $.034$ respectively), but did not significantly differ
217 from each other nor the internal focus group (p 's $> .050$). The internal focus and control groups
218 also did not significantly differ from each other ($p > .050$). In transfer, the holistic group served
219 significantly more accurately than the control group ($p < .001$) and internal focus group ($p =$
220 $.002$), but did not significantly differ from the external focus group ($p > .050$). The external
221 focus, internal focus, and control groups did not significantly differ from each other during the
222 transfer test (p 's $> .050$).

223 (Insert Table 1 about here)

224 **Attentional Focus Adherence**

225 Adherence scores across the acquisition phase can be found in Table 2. Groups did not
226 differ in their self-reported adherence with using the attentional focus cues during acquisition, F

227 $(2,42) = 0.88, p = .884, \eta_p^2 < .01$. A significant block effect was detected, $F(8.42, 353.74) = 5.29,$
228 $p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$, with participants generally reporting higher adherence as practice progressed.
229 The block x group effect was also non-significant, $F(16.85, 353.74) = 1.24, p = .153, \eta_p^2 = .06$.

230 (Insert Table 2 about here)

231 Discussion

232 The purpose of this study was to determine if the benefit of a holistic focus of attention
233 generalizes to a task with an accuracy demand in a motor learning protocol. The previous two
234 studies testing this concept found differing results, and both focused strictly on motor
235 performance. Based on the results of Becker et al. (2020), we predicted that both a holistic focus
236 and an external focus would lead to improved performance and learning of a badminton short
237 serve relative to an internal focus and control group.

238 The most important finding of this study was that a holistic focus of attention provided a
239 performance benefit relative to the control group during acquisition, and a learning benefit over
240 the internal focus and control group during the transfer phase. This finding extends the holistic
241 focus literature in two important ways. First, this study shows a benefit of using a holistic cue in
242 a task that does not require maximal force production. Previously, Becker et al. (2020)
243 demonstrated a benefit of a holistic focus (focusing on feeling explosive) during the performance
244 of a standing long jump. However, a later study found no benefit of a holistic focus (focusing on
245 feeling calm and stable) when balancing on a stabilometer (Becker & Hung, 2020). The authors
246 of the latter study speculated that the cue selected in that study had poor compatibility with the
247 actual feelings participants experienced. Since they were novices to the task, their performance
248 tended not to be very stable, and feeling calm while bouncing back and forth on the platform was
249 likely difficult. In the present study, participants were required to perform a task with precision

250 as opposed to maximal force and the focus cue “focus on feeling smooth and fluid when
251 completing the serve” appears to have been effective for learners. This finding demonstrates a
252 benefit of a holistic focus of attention with a different type of task, and suggests another possible
253 attentional focus strategy that could be used in addition to an external focus.

254 This study is also the first to demonstrate a benefit of a holistic focus in a motor learning
255 protocol. A related area of research demonstrated that utilizing holistic goals as opposed to part-
256 practice goals provided an advantage for motor learning (Mullen et al., 2015). The holistic goals
257 condition in that paradigm shares some similarities with a protocol promoting the use a holistic
258 focus of attention. However, the part-practice condition fails to distinguish between internally
259 and externally focused goals. Instead, it promotes attending to specific task elements to be
260 performed correctly that may involve both internally and externally focused elements. The
261 present results suggested an advantage over those in a control group with no directed focus in
262 retention, and an advantage over the control and internal focus groups in transfer when they were
263 required to switch to hit toward the opposite court. The transfer results are particularly
264 interesting since previous researchers have suggested that transfer tests that measure the
265 generalizability of the skill may be the most important indicator of successful learning (Schmidt
266 & Bjork, 1992). There are also important practical implications since in the sport of badminton
267 players must serve from both sides of the court.

268 The external focus group in this study experienced a learning benefit over the control
269 condition in retention, and a marginal benefit over control during acquisition. The lack of a
270 benefit of an external over an internal focus is surprising given the extensive reporting of an
271 external focus advantage in a wide variety of skills (see Wulf, 2013 for a review). In analyzing
272 the results visually, the external focus group appears to have higher accuracy scores than the

273 internal focus group on most blocks, but these differences are not significant. One potential
274 contributor to the lack of differences seen between those groups could be limitations with the
275 sensitivity of the measure of the dependent variable used to measure accuracy. Some researchers
276 have called for the use of bivariate measures of accuracy and variability in tasks with two-
277 dimensional error (Hancock, Butler, & Fischman, 1995). In this study, accuracy was measured
278 with a score ranging from 0-5 for each trial based on the proximity to the closest corner of the
279 service area. This measure was selected to maximize efficiency of data collection and preserve
280 ecological validity. In the badminton short serve, the primary goal is to land the birdie as close as
281 possible to the front corner of the service area. When a short serve is interspersed unexpectedly
282 with long-serves, this makes it difficult for opponents to anticipate the correct movement needed
283 to return the serve. The French Badminton Short Serve Test (French & Statler, 1949), is a widely
284 used skills tests in the sport of badminton, and represents the task demand well while allowing
285 for much quicker recording of scores relative to two-dimensional error measurements. Future
286 work should consider replicating this design to determine if more precise measures such as mean
287 radial error or bivariate variable error would improve the sensitivity enough to allow for an
288 observable difference between internal and external focus groups.

289 Theoretical interpretations of attentional focus effects to date have largely focused on
290 explaining differences between an internal and external focus of attention. The CAH, explains
291 the benefit of an external focus as providing a means of avoiding conscious control of systems
292 that should be automated by focusing on the intended outcome of the movement (Wulf & Prinz,
293 2001). This viewpoint is extended upon in the OPTIMAL theory of motor learning (Wulf &
294 Lewthwaite, 2016) where the authors suggest improved “goal-action coupling” as a mechanism
295 of why an external focus is advantageous. What both of these proposals fail to explore is whether

296 the goal of avoiding conscious control can be achieved with other types of focus strategies.
297 Previous literature with skilled participants has proposed that simply distracting learners with a
298 dual-task paradigm can provide an advantage over consciously attending to the execution of the
299 skill (Beilock, Carr, McMahon, & Stokes, 2002). However, in the same study novices
300 experienced the opposite effect with the skill focus improving performance relative to the dual-
301 task condition. Thus, it appears that simply distracting with a dual-task is not a viable focus
302 strategy for early motor learning. The present results suggest that a holistic focus is a strategy
303 that can present benefits similar to those observed with an external focus of attention. By
304 focusing on the feelings or sensations generated when performing the task, participants can avoid
305 the detrimental conscious control of an internal focus without needing to direct attention away
306 from the body. Thus, we propose that the constrained action hypothesis be expanded to consider
307 the possibility that focus strategies other than an external focus might also provide the
308 advantages associated with avoiding conscious control of body movements.

309 The results of the adherence questionnaire in this study suggested that adherence with the
310 focus cues was consistent with previous investigations, and importantly did not differ between
311 groups practicing with different focus cues. It was interesting to note that scores did increase
312 across practice blocks. Adherence scores were somewhat low in early blocks with averages at or
313 just below the midpoint score of the Likert scale. Since these learners were novices, these scores
314 may reflect learners in the cognitive stage struggling to devote their attention to the prescribed
315 focus cue. Cognitive stage learners are attempting to understand *what* to do in the task (Fitts &
316 Possner, 1967), and the attentional demand in performing the task may be great enough that it is
317 difficult to maintain a consistent focus on the prescribed focus cue. Importantly, as learners

318 progressed through acquisition, adherence scores increased and were relatively high during later
319 acquisition (see Table 2).

320 The findings of this study provide an important extension of the literature related to a
321 holistic focus, but the study is not without limitations. As mentioned previously, it is possible
322 that the system used for measuring accuracy may be limited relative to other strategies
323 accounting for the two-dimensional nature of error possibilities. However, with the applied
324 nature of this task we felt that the method chosen provided strong ecological validity. A second
325 limitation that can be recognized with all attentional focus literature is that it is impossible to
326 truly control a human participant's selected attentional focus. As recommended by previous
327 researchers (Mullen, 2007), post-experiment questionnaires can be a valuable tool in interpreting
328 adherence with focus cues, but they are still limited in describing the complexities of how
329 individuals manage their attention throughout a study. While adherence results may have limits,
330 overall across our study we saw acceptable self-reported adherence with focus cues which
331 increased across practice. Finally, since an *a priori* power analysis was not conducted, it is
332 possible that this study was underpowered. However, the number of participants per group
333 exceeds the vast majority of studies employing similar designs and a post-hoc power analysis
334 indicates adequate power.

335 In conclusion, this study provides further evidence for the benefit of a holistic focus of
336 attention. Specifically, this study is the first to demonstrate a holistic focus benefit in a task with
337 an accuracy demand. It is also the first to demonstrate a holistic focus benefit in a motor learning
338 protocol. These results are encouraging in suggesting that there may be alternatives to using an
339 external focus of attention when it is not desirable or practical. Several studies suggest that
340 coaches and athletes do not regularly utilize external focus cues in training or competition

341 (Diekfuss & Raisbeck, 2017; Fairbrother et al., 2016; Porter, Wu, & Partridge, 2010), so offering
342 alternatives such as using a holistic focus may be a welcomed option.

343 **Author Statement**

344 **Rasool Abedanzadeh:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - Review &
345 Editing, Resources, Formal analysis, Project administration, Supervision, Visualization. **Kevin A. Becker:**
346 Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing- Original draft preparation, Validation. **Seyyed Mohammad Reza**
347 **Mousavi:** Investigation, Resources.

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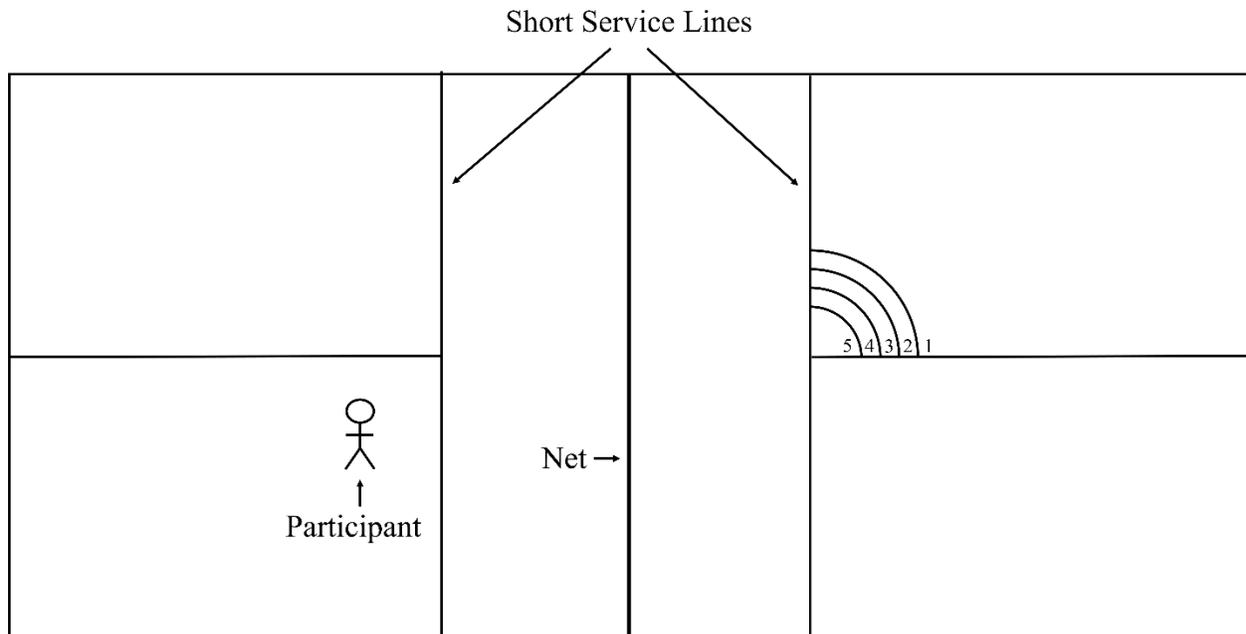
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501 *Figure 1: Court configuration for badminton short serve task. The participant and target were shifted to*

502 *opposite courts for the transfer test.*

Running Head: HOLISTIC FOCUS OF ATTENTION

503 Table 1

504 *Means and standard deviations of accuracy scores during all study phases*

505

| Group | Pre | Bloc k 1 | Bloc k 2 | Bloc k 3 | Bloc k 4 | Bloc k 5 | Bloc k 6 | Bloc k 7 | Bloc k 8 | Bloc k 9 | Bloc k 10 | Bloc k 11 | Bloc k 12 | Bloc k 13 | Bloc k 14 | Bloc k 15 | Ret | Trans |
|-------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| IF | 1.52 (0.49)) | 1.54 (0.45)) | 2.02 (0.63)) | 1.83 (0.71)) | 1.85 (0.42)) | 2.13 (0.47)) | 2.41 (0.52)) | 2.15 (0.76)) | 2.17 (0.42)) | 2.33 (0.43)) | 2.28 (0.49)) | 2.52 (0.78)) | 2.35 (0.55)) | 2.52 (0.71)) | 2.65 (0.72)) | 3.01 (0.76)) | 2.05 (0.73)) | 1.85 (0.72)) |
| EF | 1.35 (0.49)) | 1.87 (0.59)) | 1.83 (0.44)) | 1.89 (0.33)) | 2.24 (0.77)) | 2.27 (0.41)) | 2.43 (0.29)) | 2.56 (0.57)) | 2.61 (0.73)) | 2.65 (0.64)) | 2.78 (0.69)) | 2.75 (0.45)) | 2.91 (0.57)) | 2.99 (0.60)) | 3.04 (0.57)) | 3.22 (0.55)) | 2.38 (0.46)) | 2.10 (0.40)) |
| HF | 1.59 (0.56)) | 1.98 (0.69)) | 2.06 (0.47)) | 2.24 (0.64)) | 2.16 (0.43)) | 2.61 (0.55)) | 2.79 (0.58)) | 2.46 (0.40)) | 2.73 (0.75)) | 3.05 (0.57)) | 2.87 (0.69)) | 2.85 (0.73)) | 3.13 (0.65)) | 2.86 (0.88)) | 2.86 (0.73)) | 3.28 (0.81)) | 2.47 (0.35)) | 2.57 (0.59)) |
| CON | 1.41 (0.45)) | 1.67 (0.32)) | 1.75 (0.57)) | 1.95 (0.61)) | 1.99 (0.33)) | 2.19 (0.43)) | 2.20 (0.33)) | 2.23 (0.44)) | 2.23 (0.37)) | 2.37 (0.44)) | 2.19 (0.29)) | 2.34 (0.42)) | 2.47 (0.31)) | 2.55 (0.43)) | 2.65 (0.37)) | 2.65 (0.48)) | 1.87 (0.30)) | 1.67 (0.16)) |

506

507 Abbreviations: IF = Internal Focus, EF = External Focus, HF = Holistic Focus, CON = Control Condition

508 Table 2

509 *Means and standard deviations of attentional focus adherence scores during all study phases*

510

| Group | Block 1 | Block 2 | Block 3 | Block 4 | Block 5 | Block 6 | Block 7 | Block 8 | Block 9 | Block 10 | Block 11 | Block 12 | Block 13 | Block 14 | Block 15 |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| IF | 2.73 (1.16) | 2.93 (1.22) | 2.80 (1.47) | 2.87 (1.13) | 3.13 (1.13) | 3.47 (1.06) | 3.67 (0.98) | 3.13 (1.13) | 3.13 (0.92) | 3.20 (0.86) | 3.47 (0.92) | 3.40 (0.99) | 3.67 (0.98) | 3.47 (1.25) | 4.13 (0.92) |
| EF | 2.67 (1.11) | 3.00 (0.85) | 2.80 (0.94) | 2.73 (1.16) | 2.80 (0.94) | 2.73 (1.22) | 3.13 (1.13) | 3.13 (1.30) | 2.93 (0.96) | 3.53 (1.13) | 3.80 (0.94) | 3.87 (0.92) | 3.60 (1.06) | 4.00 (0.76) | 3.87 (0.64) |
| HF | 2.73 (1.10) | 2.47 (0.99) | 2.80 (1.08) | 3.27 (1.03) | 3.07 (0.96) | 3.33 (1.11) | 2.53 (1.13) | 3.33 (1.23) | 3.60 (1.24) | 3.73 (1.10) | 3.27 (1.28) | 3.27 (1.28) | 3.53 (1.30) | 3.53 (1.19) | 3.33 (1.45) |

511

512 Abbreviations: IF = Internal Focus, EF = External Focus, HF = Holistic Focus

513