

Role of Sports Psychology on Enhancing Sports: Attitudes Towards Sport

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Abstract

Sports psychology has become increasingly important in the world of sports. Its role is to help athletes maximize their potential, improve their performance, and maintain a healthy mental attitude. Sports psychology applies psychological principles and techniques to help athletes reach their goals. It focuses on the psychological aspects of the sport, such as motivation, concentration, and mental toughness. Sports psychology also plays an important role in developing an athlete's ability to handle stress, pressure, and the demands of competition. It can help athletes handle adversity and gain a greater understanding of their own psychological needs. Additionally, sports psychology can help athletes to develop better communication skills, better relationships with their teammates, and improved self-confidence. Furthermore, sports psychology can assist athletes in addressing issues that are related to their performance and can help them to develop strategies to cope with performance anxieties. Ultimately, sports psychology plays an important role in helping athletes reach their peak performance while also allowing them to enjoy their sport and maintain a healthy mental attitude. The purpose of this report is to provide a foundation which demonstrates how mental skills training can lead to improved performance on the field. This framework is designed to bridge the gap between what athletes and coaches are looking for while also helping sport psychology practitioners promote their services to individual players and teams. The paper concludes by stressing the importance of sport psychology as a scientific teaching method for athletes to enhance their sports performance.

Keywords: Aggression, Sport Psychology, Anxiety, Stress, Attitudes.

1. Introduction

Sports psychology is a field of study that examines the psychological aspects of sports and athletes. It is a combination of psychological theory and research that can be applied to improve athletes' performance (Fransen, 2020). The main goal of sports psychology is to increase athletes' performance through psychological means, such as mental preparation, goal setting, and relaxation techniques. Sports psychologists can help athletes to learn how to focus their attention, manage stress, and cope with competitive pressure. They can also help athletes to develop confidence, build motivation, and use imagery to boost performance. Sports psychology has become an increasingly important part of sports performance, as it has been shown to help athletes to excel in their chosen sport (Brewer, 2009).

Sports psychology has grown significantly in recent decades, with academic courses, content specific publications, and professional governing bodies all emerging in

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substantial numbers since the 1960s. As a result, great strides have been made in our understanding of the relationship between sports performance and mental skills, leading to a strong body of knowledge that supports the use of this field in the pursuit of performance enhancement. Knowledge of sport psychology is essential for achieving optimal performance and provides many benefits, such as allowing athletes and coaches to evaluate the fit between sports and individuals or positions on a team, helping them understand their strengths and become aware of areas where improvement may be needed, aiding in resolving conflicts between athletes and coaches, examining the source of the conflict and creating a strategy to resolve it, promoting inspired and committed behavior, and being useful for athletes and coaches in the areas of life and career planning, self-management, and interpersonal skills (Aoyagi, 2012).

For almost a century, researchers and practitioners have endeavored to gain a greater understanding of the psychological and social factors that influence athletic performance. These internal factors, such as personality, motivation to succeed, and self-efficacy, as well as external factors, such as sports performance and team cohesion, have been carefully examined in order to better comprehend what contributes to and maintains excellence in sports (Danish, 1997).

Sports psychologists use various techniques to help athletes to enhance their performance. These techniques can include cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques, goal setting, imagery, and biofeedback (Gallucci, 2013). Cognitive behavioral therapy involves changing negative thoughts or behaviors that may be hindering a sport's performance. Relaxation techniques involve using calming techniques to reduce stress, improve focus, and increase motivation. Goal setting involves setting and achieving goals to help athletes stay motivated. Imagery is a powerful tool used to help athletes to visualize their success and increase self-confidence. Finally, biofeedback is a technique in which athletes are monitored for physiological responses to help them learn to control their body's reactions to stress (Liew, 2019).

Sports psychology can also be used to help athletes to develop mental toughness and resilience. Mental toughness is the ability to stay focused and motivated in the face of adversity. Resilience is the ability to overcome setbacks and stay committed to the goal. Sports psychologists can help athletes to develop these traits by teaching them to focus on the process rather than the outcome, to stay motivated even when things don't go as planned, and to use positive self-talk to increase confidence (Williams, 2019).

Sport psychologists can be responsible for creating strategies to aid coaches in the mental management of their teams. These strategies may involve helping coaches to foster a sense of unity and commitment within the team, such as amplifying the positive influence of the team leader, encouraging athletes to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, and improving communication between athletes during the competition (Stambulova, 2021). Currently, achieving optimal sports performance requires a multidisciplinary approach. Does this broad strategy open up a new space where coaches and psychologists can work together to create the best possible working environment, share their respective skills and knowledge, and resolve any potential conflicts that may arise within the team?

Overall, sports psychology can be a powerful tool to help athletes to perform at their peak. It can help athletes to develop mental toughness and resilience, set and achieve goals, focus their attention, and manage stress. By using sports psychology, athletes can enhance their performance and reach their full potential (Watson, 2005).

2. Important Psychological Factors that Affect the Physical Performance

2.1 Individual differences among the athletes

Every athlete is unique and brings their own set of physical and psychological traits to the table. Some athletes may be outgoing and confident, while others may be more introverted and hesitant; the level of their mental fortitude can also vary. Some athletes are born with a natural mental strength, while others may struggle more (Burton, 2008). Those who are weaker in the determination may not be able to reach their potential. As such, it is inevitable that performances in sports will differ between individuals, and coaches/teachers should adjust their approach to suit the personality of each athlete (Cottrell, 2009).

2.2 Personality

The human personality is an intricate system of many components, which are all intertwined. It includes aspects like motivations, emotions, behaviours, thoughts and more, which work together to find a balance between the influences of the outside world (Gardner, 2001). Every person's personality is unique, determined by their own experiences, memories, instincts, feelings and more - meaning no two people have the same personality. Personality traits are key when it comes to sports excellence, so it is important to recognize the most beneficial characteristics and nurture them in order to optimize any sports performance (Henriksen, 2020). It is clear that personality has a major impact on the results of any sporting event.

2.3 Intelligence

Individual intelligence is essential to physical performance, as it influences how one is able to interpret and act on complicated, dynamic tasks. This is especially true for athletic events, as they require nuanced movements that need to be understood to be successful (Gee, 2010). Therefore, it is clear that intelligence plays a significant role in achieving any professional achievement, including sporting ones.

2.4 Stress

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, encompassing physical, mental and emotional strain that disrupts the body's homeostasis. It can be experienced in a variety of contexts, such as in a career, schoolwork, marriage, illness, or in coping with the death of a loved one (Gallucci, 2010). According to Hans Selye's model of the effects of chronic stress, the body responds in three stages: a warning phase, a resistance phase, and a fatigue phase. In all these situations, a sense of unease or discomfort is the common denominator, as any change is seen as a potential threat to one's wellbeing (Josefsson, 2019).

When confronted with a threatening situation or stimulus, the alarm stage is activated, leading to the fight-or-flight response. This dissipates once the danger has passed and the body can relax. However, if the danger is not removed, the resistance stage begins, and the individual is forced to sustain a prolonged state of stress. If this state is maintained for too long, the organism's resources and power may be depleted, leading to exhaustion, disease, injury, and other health issues (McGannon, 2021). Liew et al. (2019) believed that the immune system was greatly weakened in this stage, leaving the organism vulnerable.

2.5 Attitude towards Sports

Attitudes are comprised of thoughts and emotions that can be used to predict behavior. Attitudes are evaluative in nature, meaning they have the power to shape how individual approaches and absorbs learning material (Poucher, 2020). Attitudes can also be seen in the likes and dislikes of a given subject. For example, if a child states that they enjoy running, this is reflective of their positive attitude towards the activity. On the other hand, if a child expresses a lack of interest in running, this is indicative of a negative attitude.

Attitudes are formed through direct experience and interpersonal interaction, with positive beliefs and values towards physical activity leading to the adoption of constructive attitudes and improved performance (McGannon, 2021). Attitudes towards the sport can be both positive and negative, depending on the individual. Positive attitudes towards the sport can be seen in people who view sports as a form of entertainment and exercise or who find joy in participating in and competing in sports. Negative attitudes towards the sport can be seen in people who view sports as too competitive or who are not interested in participating in or watching sports. Attitudes towards the sport can also be shaped by a person's upbringing, the people they associate with, and the culture they are a part of (Otte, 2020).

Research has shown that positive attitudes towards sports are associated with better mental and physical health. Studies have found that people who have a positive attitude towards sports are more likely to participate in physical activity and also have better overall health (Samuel et al., 2020). Furthermore, people with positive attitudes towards sports are more likely to have better social networks, increased self-esteem, and higher levels of life satisfaction. On the other hand, negative attitudes towards the sport can lead to a lack of physical activity, which can lead to poorer health. Negative attitudes towards the sport can also lead to a decline in interest in sports, as well as an increase in negative behaviour such as bullying and aggression (Schinke, 2019).

In order to promote positive attitudes towards sports, it is important to encourage participation in sports and physical activity. Schools, organizations, and communities should provide opportunities for people to participate in sports and physical activity, as well as provide support and encouragement (Stambulova, 2021). Furthermore, parents and guardians should also strive to promote positive attitudes towards sports in their children.

2.6 Motivation

Motivation is an essential part of achieving success and reaching one's goals. Without a strong drive or desire to reach a particular outcome, it can be difficult to stay focused and dedicated to the effort required (Williams, 2019). It is important to find ways to encourage and inspire individuals to strive for greatness, as this can be the key to unlocking their potential. Additionally, motivation is necessary for overcoming obstacles and pushing through challenges that could otherwise have a negative impact on results (Watson, 2005). Many of the world's top athletes have to work hard to attain their objectives, and without proper motivation, they would not be able to reach the levels of excellence they currently enjoy.

2.7 Aggression

Aggression is an inherent part of human behavior, necessary in order to survive and strive for greater achievements. Competition, be it for supremacy, excellence, or victory in sports, can often lead to violence (Wylleman, 2019). While it is a natural and inevitable occurrence, when it crosses the line into animosity, it is detrimental to both the individual and society. Aggression can be beneficial to an athlete's performance if it is managed and kept within acceptable limits. When practiced safely, aggression can spur an athlete to greater effort and help them to succeed, while too much of it can be a hindrance to better performance (Schinke, 2019).

2.8 Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by feelings of uneasiness, apprehension, and fear. It is an integral part of any competitive situation, and an athlete's ability to manage anxiety levels is essential for success (Josefsson, 2019). Too much anxiety can lead to poor performance, while too little can lead to a lack of motivation. To maximize success, athletes must work to achieve the right balance of fear, excitement, and focus, which will enable them to remain calm and in control in high-pressure situations (Danish, 1997).

Managing anxiety is an essential skill for athletes to develop in order to perform at their best and reach their goals.

2.9 Attention and Concentration

Attention is the act of focusing awareness on one thing in particular. It is the process of bringing a thought or object into clear focus in mind. It enables mental alertness and readiness, allowing you to be especially alert and focused in order to make the most of your mental and physical capabilities (Aoyagi, 2012). Paying close attention to the task at hand during sports competitions is essential for achieving successful performance. Developing cognitive strategies and thoroughly mastering skills can help increase the ability to focus attention and subsequently lead to better results (Cottrell, 2019). There are many factors that can distract and hinder attention and concentration, leading to a decline in performance.

3. The Role of Sport Psychology in Sports Performance Enhancement

Recently, the field of sports psychology has experienced rapid growth. It is increasingly recognized that sports psychologists are essential members of the coaching and medical teams. They are able to provide athletes with skills to enhance their learning and motor skills, cope with competitive pressure, sharpen the concentration needed for peak performance, and stay focused despite the many distractions of team travel and the competitive arena (Gardner, 2001).

1. The sports psychologist helps the individual athlete deal with both psychological issues and the unique demands of the sport, guiding them to make decisions that could lead to either success or failure during the game.
2. The sports psychologist helps the athlete to manage stress effectively.
3. The sports psychologist is interested in helping the athlete develop their performance to help the learning process; mistakes the athlete makes could be corrected while they are learning the skill.
4. The sport psychologist can be instrumental in helping athletes cope with stress and better their performance. There are various techniques that can be employed to manage stress levels.
5. The sports psychologist will apply their understanding of human behavior in order to spur athletes on. Inspiration should not be confused with material rewards such as money, houses, or cars.
6. Sports Psychology is thought to involve instructing individuals to be compassionate, encouraging, and optimistic.

4. Benefit from Sports Psychology

4.1 Improve focus and deal with distractions.

Sports psychologists can help athletes to improve their focus by teaching them how to recognize and deal with distractions. This can be done through visualization, self-talk, and other strategies that help athletes to stay focused on the task at hand. This helps athletes to stay in the present moment and avoid becoming distracted by outside influences (Henriksen, 2020).

4.2 Develop coping skills to cope with mistakes as well as setbacks.

Sports psychology can help athletes build a repertoire of effective coping strategies. Athletic coping strategies such as visualization, goal setting, self-talk, and relaxation

techniques can help athletes stay focused and in control (McGannon, 2021). Athletes can also be taught to recognize and accept failure as a part of the process and use it as an opportunity to grow and learn. Additionally, athletes can be encouraged to monitor their emotions, be aware of their self-talk, and adjust their expectations as needed so that they don't become overwhelmed by the pressure of competition (Poucher, 2020). Through the use of sports psychology, athletes can develop the necessary coping skills to turn mistakes and setbacks into learning experiences and improve performance.

4.3 Help teams develop cohesion as well as communication skills.

Sports psychology can help teams develop a common language to communicate effectively, recognize and utilize everyone's strengths, and understand how to work together in order to achieve a common goal (Samuel, 2020). It can also help athletes develop the mental skills needed to remain focused and motivated throughout their athletic careers. These skills include developing confidence in one's abilities, managing stress, dealing with failure and success, and learning how to control emotions. In addition, sports psychology can help teams identify areas of weakness and improve individual and team performance (Williams, 2019). Finally, it can help teams develop a greater sense of unity and a stronger sense of identity.

4.4 Improve and balance inspiration for optimum results.

Sports psychology may help you in figuring out the level of inspiration and commitment that you have to take part in a specific sport. It may also help you understand the way to achieve a balance of commitment and inspiration, which will bring about optimum results (Stambulova, 2021). It may also help you understand how to handle the external elements of a sport, such as competition, pressure, and other distractions. With the assistance of sports psychology, you are able to learn how to handle your thoughts and feelings during a game and how to handle pressure and other distractions. In addition, sports psychology can help you in developing an effective strategy which will help you in achieving your goals. Finally, sports psychology can help you in developing the right attitude to be successful in a specific sport (Otte, 2020).

4.5 To put in a proper belief system and determine irrational feelings.

Sports psychology can help athletes to identify ineffective thoughts and beliefs that can limit their performance. This can include developing a healthier belief system, improving self-confidence, managing stress and anxiety, and building effective communication skills (Liew, 2019). Sports psychology can also help athletes set realistic goals, stay motivated and focused, and develop strategies to deal with failure and adversity. Additionally, sports psychology can help athletes to improve their physical performance by learning proper techniques, developing mental toughness and resilience, and gaining an understanding of how the mind and body interact (Gallucci, 2013).

4.6 Find the right zone of intensity for your sport.

The most important thing to remember when it comes to finding the right intensity for your sport is to understand your individual needs. You should know what level of arousal or activation works best for you to produce your best performance. In order to do this, it is important to recognize and understand the signs that indicate when you are at the optimal level of arousal. These signs can include increased heart rate, increased breathing rate, increased focus and concentration, increased alertness and motivation, and increased physical and mental energy (Fransen, 2020). Additionally, it is important to be aware of when you are too aroused and when you are too relaxed. To find the right zone of intensity for your sport, it is important to practice and experiment to identify the optimal level of arousal or activation. You can do this by starting with a baseline of intensity and then gradually increasing the intensity until you reach the optimal level. You can also practice with different levels of intensity to determine which works best for you (Burton, 2008). It may also be helpful to work with a sports psychologist who can provide

feedback and guidance as you practice and experiment to find the right intensity for your sport.

4.7 To create game-specific tactics as well as game programs.

Sports psychology helps athletes to understand the mental strategies which can help them to enhance their performance. It can help athletes to concentrate on their objectives and increase their confidence levels. Sports psychology can also help athletes to minimize anxiety, overcome doubts, and develop mental toughness. It can help athletes to create effective strategies for dealing with mistakes, distractions and other performance-related issues. Sports psychology can also be used to help athletes to develop assertiveness, communication, and team-building skills (Brewer, 2009).

5. Problems Encountered by the Sport Psychologists

Sports psychologists face a unique set of challenges in their work. These challenges can range from dealing with athletes' mental and emotional issues to helping them perform better on the field. While the role of the sport psychologist is to provide psychological support and advice to athletes, they are also responsible for helping to create an environment that is conducive to optimal performance.

One of the primary challenges faced by sports psychologists is dealing with the psychological and emotional needs of athletes. Professional athletes are under a great deal of pressure to perform well and achieve success. This can lead to feelings of anxiety, stress, and, in some cases, depression. Sports psychologists must be able to identify and address these psychological issues in order to help athletes reach their goals (Gee, 2010).

Another challenge faced by sports psychologists is helping athletes to focus on their performance. Athletes can become preoccupied with personal issues, such as relationships or finances, which can interfere with their focus on their sport. Sports psychologists must be able to help athletes to stay focused on their performance and to develop strategies to manage external distractions (Poucher, 2020).

Finally, sports psychologists must be able to help athletes to cope with the physical demands of their sport. Many athletes experience physical injuries, which can be both mentally and physically draining. Sports psychologists must be able to help athletes to manage their physical pain and to develop strategies to cope with the physical demands of their sport (Watson, 2005).

In summary, sports psychologists face a unique set of challenges in their work. They must be able to identify and address psychological issues, help athletes to stay focused on their performance, and help them to cope with the physical demands of their sport. By doing so, sports psychologists are able to help athletes to reach their goals and to achieve peak performance.

6. Conclusion

For years, sports psychology has been seen as a way to improve performance, yet few coaches and athletes truly consider how to maximize their potential. Performance in any sport is determined by a combination of physical, technical, and tactical skills, as well as one's mental state. All four of these elements must be honed to their highest level for optimal performance, though it is the mental aspect which is often overlooked in the final preparations for the competition. It is this factor which can provide the greatest potential for an edge over the competition, especially in a world where athletes are often all highly proficient in the physical, technical, and tactical aspects of their sport.

The power of the mind plays a critical role in achieving success in sports, as much as physical components do. Sports psychologists focus on training the brain to handle obstacles on the field and build trust for high-level performance. Everyone has a great potential for success that can be tapped into to achieve excellent results. Sports Psychology is relevant to many types of athletes, including junior, professional, college, and high school level competitors. These athletes are highly committed to excellence and pushing themselves to the highest level in their sport. They understand the importance of a positive mindset and mental fortitude, and they want every advantage they can get, including a mental edge over their opponents.

The study has shown that sports psychology plays an important role in enhancing sports performance. It can help athletes to develop the skills and strategies needed to improve their performance. It can also help athletes to manage their emotions and stay motivated. Moreover, sports psychology can also help athletes to develop a positive attitude, improve their self-confidence, and develop better relationships with their teammates. These are all important factors in improving sports performance. Therefore, sports psychology is an important element in the development and improvement of athletes, and it should be used in order to maximize their potential.

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