

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY: A REVIEW

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Abstract

Sports psychology, as the study of human behavior in the context of sport and physical activity, is one of the youngest sub disciplines in the field of sports science, as well as one of the youngest sub disciplines in the field of psychology. **Sport Psychology Defined** Sport psychology very simply, deals with the mental aspects of sport. It aims to improve both the sports performance and general well-being of the athlete, through the application of psychological principles and techniques. It has been defined most simply perhaps, as the science of psychology applied to sport. **Development of Sport Psychology in North America** Sport psychology in North America began with Coleman Griffith's early work in the 1920s and then re- mained largely dormant until the 1960s and early 1970s when several organizations were formed that focused on the systematic study of psychological processes in sport. **Self-Confidence** Various terms such as "self-confidence," "self-efficacy," "perceived ability," and "perceived competence" have been used to describe one's perceived capability to accomplish a certain level of performance

Keywords: Sports psychology, Goal setting, Self-Confidence.

Introduction

Sports psychology

Sports psychology, as the study of human behavior in the context of sport and physical activity, is one of the youngest sub disciplines in the field of sports science, as well as one of the youngest sub disciplines in the field of psychology (Shoxrux, S. 2023). In its most generic sense, sport psychology can be defined as the psychological study of human behavior in sport settings. A close examination of the available literature in the field suggests that sport psychologists are particularly interested in the variation that occurs in the behavior of people in such contexts. This topic includes the variation between individuals in the same situation as well as the variation that occurs in the behavior of the same individual across situations. To illustrate variation between individuals, consider the case of two athletes from the same team who are both performing in a crucial athletic contest (e.g., league, state, or regional championship). Despite the fact that both athletes are performing in the same or similar context, their behavior in this situation may differ. That is, they may vary considerably in anxiety, confidence, motivation, and actual perfor- mance. Equally as interesting to sport psycholo- gists is the variation in behavior that occurs when an individual athlete moves from one situation to another. For example, sport psychologists have consistently noted that the amount of anxiety that an individual athlete experiences depends largely on the situation (e.g., practice versus game, home versus away contest). Similarly, an athlete may exhibit a high level of motivation in a soccer prac- tice but be considerably less motivated to achieve in a softball practice. Or a person who coaches both cross- country and track and field teams at the same high school may exhibit significantly differ- ent leadership styles and behaviors across the two sporting contexts (Horn, T. S. 2008).

Sports; Today, it appears before us as a social- integrative phenomenon that includes other meanings besides its literal meaning. This sport takes its place in the balance of power struggles; It was strengthened by guiding countries and peoples. Winning is an important goal in both individual and team sports. At this point, it doesn't matter if the goal is to win or to activate the in- game dynamics. These are interconnected processes.

The paucity of sports research has begun to change with the increasing importance given to sports today. New research in sports aims to close the gap in the field

and bring new perspectives. One of the most important subfields of sports psychology, which has many fields, is the examination of the psychology of the game, players, and fans. However, if we consider all these areas as a whole, we can talk about sports psychology. Sports psychologists should not only work on improving the performance of players in the game. Today, it can be seen that this concept is beginning to change and that learning about the athletes' family, environment and themselves has gained importance, that is, being evaluated within the framework of the system. This article aims to provide an overview of all of these studies and is a collection of studies in this area (

Sport Psychology Defined

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One could argue this point however, as dealing effectively with athletes in an applied setting, still probably remains more of an art than a science! Having said this, the past few decades has seen the steady gathering of quite a significant body of scientific research documenting the positive effects of many sport psychology interventions. Interestingly enough, scientists such as Prof. Tim Noakes, who have traditionally focused on the physiological aspect of sports performance, are now also starting to prove the assumptions upon which the entire discipline of sport psychology has been based (Singh, R. 2022).

Development of Sport Psychology in North America

Sport psychology in North America began with Coleman Griffith's early work in the 1920s and then re- mained largely dormant until the 1960s and early 1970s when several organizations were formed that focused on the systematic study of psychological processes in sport.

These organizations included the International Society for Sport Psychology (ISSP), the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASP- SPA), and the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology (CSPLSP). Also, the establish- ment of the Journal of Sport Psychology in 1979 provided a forum for research in sport psychology and was an ad- ditional impetus in the development of the young field (Vealey, R. S. 1994).

Goal setting research in sport and exercise

Goal setting research in sport and exercise began to flourish following Locke and Latham's suggestion that sport is one of the domains that could benefit most from applying GST, since the foundation of the theory is on improving task performance. However, initial reviews found that the effectiveness of goal setting in sport and exercise is not as robust as in the organizational and business settings Initially, the failure of replication in the earlier studies was attributed to methodological flaws of the intervention, which included using different instructors for different conditions (Hall & Byrne, failure to manipulate control groups and little consideration for other important influences such as social comparison and competition, Weinberg and Weigand claimed the replication failure could

be due to contextual differences and motivational properties of the participants in sports. For example, unlike other domains, feedback can be difficult to control as it is already inherent in sports. Moreover, goal setting could have less impact in sports as the athletic populations have higher baseline levels of motivation compared to those pursuing goals in other contexts (e.g. workplaces). These sport-specific differences were suggested to be critical in achieving internal and external validity, as well as guiding practitioners with practical recommendations. Another explanation concerned the low statistical power arising from small sample sizes in sports settings (Kyllo & Landers). Indeed, Burton indicated that sample sizes in sports research were generally smaller than research from business domains. Later empirical studies reflected on these shortcomings, and more recent narrative reviews with larger sample studies reported stronger support for the effectiveness of GST (Burton & Naylor, Burton & Weiss (Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. 1985).

Self-Confidence

Various terms such as "self-confidence," "self-efficacy," "perceived ability," and "perceived competence" have been used to describe one's perceived capability to accomplish a certain level of performance. Bandura [1] uses the term "self-efficacy" to describe the conviction one has to execute successfully the behavior (e.g., a sports performance) required to produce a certain outcome (e.g., a trophy or self-satisfaction) and, thus, can be considered as a situationally specific self-confidence. In addition, as Bandura [5] notes, self-efficacy is not concerned with the skills an individual has but with the judgments of what an individual can do with the skills he or she possesses. He also distinguishes between perceived self-efficacy and self-confidence. Self-confidence, for him, refers to the strength of the belief or conviction but does not specify the level of perceived competence. Bandura prefers to use the term "self-efficacy" to specify the level of perceived competence and the strength of that belief. (Feltz, D. L. 1988)

Conclusion

In conclusion, sports psychology research consistently demonstrates its ability to significantly enhance athletic performance by addressing mental factors like motivation, focus, anxiety, and self-confidence, allowing athletes to optimize their potential and achieve peak performance while maintaining mental well-being, making it an essential component of comprehensive sports training across all levels of competition; however, further research is needed to better understand the nuances of different interventions and their applicability to diverse athlete populations and sports contexts

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