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A Study of psychology in sports

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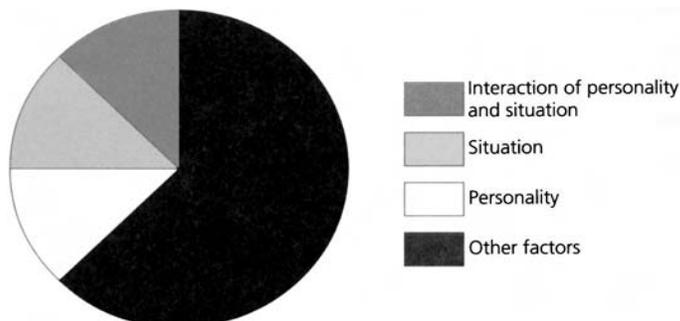
Abstract

This paper is designed to understand the role and importance of psychology of sportspersons in achieving the sports excellence. Psychology of the sportsperson is very important for achieving the heights in sports. It includes various components physical, mental, spiritual and good emotional health of the sportsperson. Psychology includes the various components like personality; attitudes, anxiety, aggression and stress also play an important role in sports. This paper identifies all these factors and their importance for the sportsperson to become the elite and successful sportspersons in their life.

Keywords: Psychology, personality, attitude, anxiety, stress etc.

1. Introduction

It is an important area of study because psychology plays a great role in sports. To become a good sportsperson one should have good physical, mental, spiritual and good emotional health. Sport Psychology includes the various areas like personality; attitudes, anxiety, aggression and stress play an important role in sports. In addition social influences, motivation and skills also play an important role in becoming the good sportsmen. European Federation of Sport Psychology (*FEPSAC*) in 1996 defined it as the study of the psychological basis, processes and effects of sports and it states that Sport psychology is the study of the psychological basis, processes and effects of sport. As per the definition given by *FEPSAC* defined sport as a physical activity of competition, recreation, education or health. On the other hand (*Gross 1996*) defined Psychology as 'the science of mind and behavior'. American sport psychologists defined sports psychology of two types one is applied sport Psychology and other is academic sport psychology (*Cox 1998*)^[3]. Now academic sport Psychology is that type of psychology which focuses on all the factors affecting participation and performance in sports. Another type of Psychology is applied sport psychology stresses on applying psychology to enhance athletic performance (*Scully and Kremer, 1994*)^[2]. Now as a layman psychology is defined as all people are different. Pervin (1993)^[4] defined personality which represents those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of behaviour. From this definition four factors arise which defined the behavior of a person are; first our genetic make-up, second our past experience, the third nature of the situation in which we find ourselves and last our free will.



Source: Cox (1998)

Fig 1.0

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1.1 The relative importance of personality, situation and other factors in athletic performance

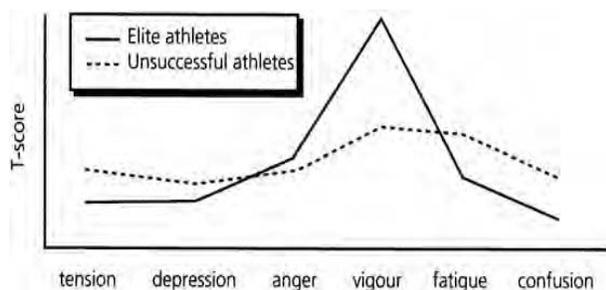
Cox (1998) [8] found the importance of various factors in sporting Performance and these factors are Personality, situation and the interaction. He further stated that personality and situation account for less than half the variance in athletic Performance.

2. Review of Literature

From the review of literature we found that Bandura (1977) proposed that learning of behavior takes place in two ways: one is operant conditioning and other is modeling. Now Operant conditioning involves learning by reinforcement and it has four possible outcomes one is positive reinforcement, second negative reinforcement, third neutral response and fourth punishment. Now these four can be further elaborated as below.

1. Positive reinforcement involves the behavior being rewarded.
2. Negative reinforcement involves failing to be punished for the behavior.
3. A neutral response means that no positive or negative consequences result from the behavior.
4. Punishment involves introducing an unpleasant consequence.

Morgan (1979) produced the mood profile for elite athletes, Morgan measured it on the POMS scales. It is shown in the figure given below.



Source: Morgan (1979) Mood of elite and unsuccessful sportspersons

Fig 1.1

From the above list it is found that Elite athlete's score lower on most mood measures, preferably on tension and depression, but they score higher on vigour side. This figure also states that unsuccessful sportspersons score is more on the flat nature and there is not much difference available on their score in the various moods like tension, depression, anger, vigour, and fatigue and confusion state. But in good athletes from the above figure it is found that they have low tension, low depression, slightly higher anger, high vigour, low fatigue as well as low in confusion in their decision making. As per the study done by Baron and Byrne (1994) [5] suggest four aspects of aggression that are important which should be understood by the sportspersons by learning: first they should understand how to be aggressive, second who is an appropriate target at that time for aggression, third what type of actions require an aggressive response and finally in which situations aggression is appropriate for the sportspersons.

3. Anxiety in Sports

Anxiety also plays an important role in sports. Spielberger (1966) defined anxiety of two types: one is state anxiety and another is trait anxiety. Trait anxiety is an aspect of personality. A person high in trait anxiety which is inherited in

nature will be consistently anxious in all types of situations. These types of people are genetically programmed to react more to threats in their environment. On the other hand Martens (1977) found that the other type of anxiety is state anxiety which defines the state of mind of the person on the basis of type of sports. This anxiety differs with the sports to sports and it varies from place to place and from time to time. State anxiety refers to the emotional state of anxiety which includes cognitive and somatic state.

5. Social Impact in Sports

Social groups also play an important role in sports. The term socialization as defined by (Durkin 1995) describes socialization as a process in which people acquire and adopt the rules of behavior and the systems of beliefs and attitudes that equip a person to function effectively as a member of society'. We are being affected by the different sections of the society and the main is our family. Family has a great influence on a person. Socialization means socialization by the family, by our parents, by our brothers as well as sisters. Other influences in the society are our friends, teacher's classmates etc. A sportsperson is also being influenced by other athletes, coaches and team-mates. This type of influence is known as secondary socialization. Hence capability of the sportsperson depends and being influenced by all these influencers in the society. Cultural differences in socialization also play an important role in the process of civilization. The factors like cooperation, competition, achievement and winning differs from culture to culture. Now a culture is differing from country to country from city to city and from place to place.

6. Conclusion

From the above we can say that psychology plays an important role for the success of the sportspersons in their life. Sportsperson should be in good psychology state to achieve good growth and heights in their life. Sportsperson psychology will include the different components like personality, attitude and good physical and good mental state of mind plays an important role for achieving the success in their life. In addition to this various components like anger, anxiety, cooperation, confidence, cultural factors also plays an important role in the life of the sportspersons. So it becomes important for the sportsperson to include a mix of these in a manner so that they can attain maximum growth in their life.

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