

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN HUMAN MOVEMENT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: This study examined psychological factors in human movement. It examined the role of psychology in preparing athletes for peak performance in sports. The study advocates that it is pertinent to expose athletes to psychological training through attributes instrumental to improve performance. The psychological strategies examined are activation, aspiration, commitment, goal setting, positive mental attribute, stress/tension control and skill acquisition. The study concludes that since winning in sport performance is 96% mental and 5% physical training, sports psychologist should form part of the personnel while preparing athletes for physical activities/competition whether at the institutional or professional level. It was recommended that mental and psychological skills are to be specifically taught and mastered by athletes and coaches if performance are to be enhanced.

1. INTRODUCTION

From the psychological point of view, efficiency is influenced by disposition to perform and motivation. Disposition, implies a category of endowments, abilities, skills, trait and the like that are both in born and acquired. Acquired is that aspect that results from non-specific and specific adaption of the organism to a stimulus through a process of intentional training or learning (Agbaraji, 2016).

According to Ikulayo (2012), varied factors affect peak performance of individuals amongst which are skill-demand factors, instructional factors, coach-athletes' relationship factors and psychological factors. The psychological factors consist of personal, motivational and mental factors. The achieve excellence in sporting events, all of these factors have to interact to enable the actor to reach a harmonious state of readiness physically, mentally and psychologically, a state described by singer (1986) as "ideal personal equation".

In working with an athlete, it is no longer considered sufficient to emphasize on the athlete's physical aspect, rather the coach should recognize that the athletes mind and body are inextricably inter-related. The athletes need that extra factor which is inherent in psychological preparation (Oloyede and Akinbile, 2012).

The role of psychological preparation in sporting engagements cannot be over-emphasized. The reason is that the degree of readiness and dedication of sport men/women at sporting encounters is to a large extent dependent on their psychological disposition. Sporting competitions have been won or lost based on the state of psychological preparedness of the competitors.

It is pertinent that athletes are exposed to psychological preparation and this could be achieved through attributes instrumental to improved sports performance. The strategies for achieving this include commitment, Activation, aspiration, goal setting, positive mental attitude, stress/tension control and skill acquisition.

2. ACTIVATION

Activation of the neurohormonal system prepares an organism to react (Haber, 1997). Activation implies a mobilization and readiness of energy resources, enabling an individual to sustain a given level of activity. The level of activation depends not only upon cortical activity built also on coordination between the cortex, the reticular formation and the limbic system. Activation as a result includes both activity of the central nervous system and all the components of the humeral regulation. The level of activation is influenced by chemical, physiological and psychological factors.

Activation is visually matched with the demands of daily activities, although it can be excessive if the individual is exposed to environmental stress. In a more demanding situation, there may be a disharmony between the level of activation and specific requirement of the activity. This may be due to the influence of the psychic state even

during actual physical performance. An individual may overestimate or underestimate the required performance in relation to his disposition to perform or the personal or social relevance of the performance. The resulting discrepancy between the activation and the activity to be performed modifies the psychic state of the individual. With a feedback mechanism, it will influence the dynamics of physiological changes, which include further central activation (Debenedette, 2000). This will affect the efficiency of an individual, which may result in drastic decrease of performance or a complete failure to act. In other instances, where the ultimate activation level is more appropriate an increase, where the ultimate activation level is more appropriate an increase in efficiency may occur.

3. ASPIRATION

This regarded as an anticipatory form of behavior because to some extent, man determines the goals that motivate him. Aspiration can be regarded as an indirect way of expressing self-evaluation based on demand for quality and quantity of one's personal activity. Realization of this set-goal result in a feeling of success or failure, which has great importance for the motivation of further activity (Keul, 1998).

The aspiration level is an integral part of participation of the result of an activity, which is considered to be peripheral component of will power. It is influenced by the former experiences of the individual, his personality, and his socio-psychological background. In sport training, there is a close relationship between aspiration level and efficiency. Aspiration level depends on the nature of the sport and other circumstances.

Physical education program with its many play activities is an important aspect of movement education, where meaningful experience regarding goal attainment can be planned. The idea of success and failure is readily understood by athletes because the goals in the different activities are specific. To be able to achieve the objectives of physical education with regards to the development of one's self, physical educators need a thorough understanding of important psychological variables as aspiration.

Various researchers have shown that level of aspiration has a relationship with a number of factors. Some have indicated that level of aspiration behavior is influenced by a number of reasonability traits while others have focused attention on the effects of gender, peer group, motivation, past performance success, failure and metric ability (Pidgeon; 1980; Spock 1986).

According to Fadoju (2024) the major goal of most coaches and sport psychologist is to aid the athletes in achieving optimum performance. To achieve this, physical educators and coaches should employ various motivational techniques one of which involves the setting of goals. Coaches and psychologist often act as guides to athletes when they set targets for themselves which they try hard to reach. This implies that aspiration is very important towards high athletic performance.

4. COMMITMENT

This is a total submission of oneself to a course of activity in order to achieve one's utmost. It involves dedication, patience, diligence and perseverance. A great amount of effort will be needed sustain motivation especially if the activity is of a complex nature. It requires personal sacrifice and self-denial. In sport, there is no way of attaining success other than by extensive training, regular practice and adequate mental and psychological preparation for each competitive event. (Ikulayo, 2012).

During the training practice periods, athletes require feedback to ensure that they are practicing technically sound techniques. Improves performances should be reinforced. Opportunities for measurement of progress should be made available. Ideally, each athlete should have an achievement chart which should indicate personal rate of improvement made on daily basis. The selection of their performances based on consistency and predictability.

During practice session, emphasis should be laid on the development of physical factors such as muscle tone, energy, strength, stamina, flexibility and ability to cope with fatigue, pressure and stress, and work and should always be with maximal effort. Practice sessions should stimulate the real contest which will require athletes to deal with different degrees of stress and expectations. Coaches should set out to regulate patterns of training and practice schedules. Consistency in skill performance will ensure steady progress and effective execution of planned strategies during competition.

Goal setting

When pursuing a programme of activity, one should prepare plan of events which are geared towards the achievement of a target. In trying to achieve this target a decision has to be made on priorities which will be the determinant factors in setting one's goal. It is advisable to set high goals but such that are attainable over a period

of time. In some cases, people set both short-term and long term goals. The short-term goals are specific objectives which should be obtained within a course of a lesson or a practice session.

Goal setting is such a powerful motivational technique which sustains one's effort on a programme. Having set realistic goals, it is important to design an effective means of reaching those goals. For example, how many hours must you train daily and at what intensity to be able to move closer to one's global goal? There must be an opportunity to evaluate one's success in reaching the set goal.

A goal setting procedure makes one accountable in terms of time and energy management. It also involves personal commitment and dedication. In practical terms, at the beginning of a session, a sport team in conjunction with the coach should decide on what they want to achieve in that session and how they want to go about it. Ikulayo (2012) outlined among other things that they should decide on type of competitions, number of training sessions per week, number of practice period per day per week, specific skills to be acquired and perfected and identify obstacles that are likely to hinder progress in achieving with vigour will ensure the attainment of peak performance.

Positive mental attitude

Positive mental attitude simply refers to having an alert mind with positive attitude towards one's objective. What goes on inside the head is critical to performance. People have performed poorly in competition just because of self-defeating thoughts, doubting of ability, instability of athletes' state of mind and wondering thought. While others have performed excellently in competition because they believe in themselves that they can make it, they develop self-confidence about the accomplishment of their goals and they are achieved.

The development of positive mental attitude towards one's achievement aids performance because such thought assists relaxation and also enables mind and body to blend together to function in harmony. When self-confidence is achieved and concentration is focused on achievement plans with positive mental attitude, a lot could be achieved. It ensures the establishment of right attitudes and readiness for training and competition. It helps in maintenance of concentration and overcoming of competitive stress. It aids psychological preparation to achievement and prevents early occurrence of fatigue (Gauron 2000). Positivity of thought and attitude must be accompanied by corresponding physical training and skills mastery to achieve any result.

Stress/ Tension Control

Coping with the stress of competition has been one of the major problems confronting our sports men and women in Nigeria. Stress has been described as an intense pressure or tension, force on a body, expressed per unit of area, constraining or impelling force. (Oloyede and Akinbile, 2012). Stress has been recognized as a component of competitive sports situation.

Furthermore, many people have equated stress with tension, anxiety and pressure which are also combined to create a psychological feeling of stressfulness in competition. Where such condition is allowed to continue in an athlete, there is tendency for fatigue to occur, there could be breakdown in the athlete's perceptual mechanism and a damage to the body system may also occur. Such persistent condition can lead to mental as well as physical failure.

In essence, stress management is very necessary. Stress management, which involves coping with stress in sports competitions, is more preferred than proposing for an elimination stress. However, care should be taken not to generalize on treatment for stressful condition for all types of athletes. The team psychologist should endeavor to monitor athlete's performance in order to gain an insight into each athlete's stress coping capabilities. This venture will go a long way to assist the coach or psychologist to adopt specific coping capabilities. This venture will go a long way to assist the psychologist to adopt specific coping techniques include mental practice, visualization, positive thinking and relaxation among others.

Skill Acquisition

It has been universally accepted that skill acquisition is very essential to excellent performance in any endeavor; almost every activity of a living creature is essentially an act of skills. Skill has been described as the "learned ability to bring about predetermined results maximum certainty often with the minimum outlay of time, energy or both (Oloyede and Akinbile, 2002).

It should be noted that the player who is skilled physically and psychologically tends to have the advantage having been able to time and anticipate the competitive situation correctly. Furthermore, the acquisition of skill affects an individual movement and is, in turn, affected by individual and environmental variables. From birth to death

human beings perform skills. In fact, our ability to function independently depends upon our ability to perform a wide variety of skills (Oloyede, 1993).

However, having knowledge about skills is not enough. Effective learning involves a conceptual understanding of the components of the skill and an opportunity to use such acquired skills.

5. CONCLUSION

Sport psychologist should form an integral part of learning personnel while preparing athletes for physical activities/competition whether at the institutional or professional level. This is based on the premise that winning in sport performance is 95% mental and 5% physical training (Sugarman, 2016). This implies that sport psychologist should be competitions while applying current scientific techniques to enhance performance.

However, it should be pointed out that although psychological applications to sport is essential for enhanced performance, intensive physical, physiological and psychological dimensions are all important for improved sports performance. If the strategies of activation, commitment, aspiration, goal setting, positive mental attitude, stress/tension control and skill acquisition are integrated into human movement education, training the performance of both the coaches and athletes would be enhanced.

recommendations

1. There is the need to educate sports administrators, experts in the field of psychology of sports and other stakeholders on why there should be cooperation among them to work together and ensure that both physical and psychological strategies are integrated in the programme of athletes and coaches.
2. All that are concerned with sportsmen and women all levels should acquire some knowledge about sports psychology (Training as auxiliary sport psychologists).
3. Mental and psychological skills such as goal-setting, positive mental attitude, will-power and concentration are to be specifically taught and mastered by both athletes and coaches if performances are to be enhanced.

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