



ISSN: 2456-0057
IJPNPE 2018; 3(1): 946-948
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www.journalofsports.com
Received: 20-11-2017
Accepted: 21-12-2017

Dr. Dileep Kumar S Navale
UGC-PDF, Gulbarga University,
Kalaburagi, Karnataka, India

The Relationship between motivation, self- confidence and anxiety

Dr. Dileep Kumar S Navale

Abstract

The research reveals that the relationship between motivation, self confidence and anxiety are correlate components. Previous research indicated some evidence of a positive relationship between motivation and self efficacy beliefs/perceived competence/self perceptions. Therefore, the relationship between self - confidence and motivation was investigated in sport context in this study. Participants of this study were analyze the value placed by rational agents on self-confidence, and the strategies employed in its pursuit. Confidence in one's abilities generally en- hances motivation, making it a valuable asset for individuals with imperfect willpower. There are a number of psychological influences which are said to have an impact on sporting performance and motivation, self- confidence and anxiety are three main components which are vital for shaping success when interacting effectively.

Keywords: Motivation, self- confidence, anxiety

Introduction

There are a number of psychological influences which are said to have an impact on sporting performance and motivation, self- confidence and anxiety are three main components which are vital for shaping success when interacting effectively. The levels of these behaviours within an individual during a performance vary and the balance must be correct for the greatest outcome to occur. Psychological preparation is equally important as physical preparation in sporting situations and can make or break a performance. 'Pre- competitive states are extremely important for athletes as they have an important influence on competitive performance' (Vodicar, Kovac and Tusak, 2012) [13]. This articles looks to demonstrate the relationship between motivation, self- confidence and anxiety and the impact each has on sporting performance.

Motivation is a fundamental aspect of an individual's life and influences when and how effectively tasks are performed both within and outside of a sporting context. Motivation is described as: 'the hypothetical construct used to describe the internal and or external forces that produce the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behaviour' (Vallerand and Thill, 1993) [12]. Motivation can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic depending on whether the source is the individual or another person such as a coach or significant other. Generally, those who rely on extrinsic motivation are less successful and often are performing the task for reward rather than those who are driven by their own motivation. However, all individuals need some extrinsic motivation as ultimately that will be the goal e.g. a gold medal and it is the visualisation of this that drives motivation.

Self- confidence

Self- confidence can both aid and hinder a performance depending on the level and the requirements of the task. Self- confidence or self- efficacy is described as: 'beliefs in ones capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (Feltz *et al*, 2008) [4]. Self- talk, however, is the main method of improving confidence and can be either positive or negative and when used appropriately can be successful in improving an individual's performance. Negative self- talk is usually only beneficial to elite performers as beginners could be disheartened by negativity and lose confidence altogether.

Correspondence

Dr. Dileep Kumar S Navale
UGC-PDF, Gulbarga University,
Kalaburagi, Karnataka, India

Positive self-talk is a useful method for all levels of performer to control the situation and build confidence both prior to and during a task.

Anxiety and the manner in which it is dealt with and controlled can affect an individual's performance positively or negatively. Anxiety is described as: 'an acquired behavioural tendency or disposition which influences behaviour' (Spielberger, 1966) ^[11]. Anxiety is comprised of the personality factor or trait and the situational factor or state and it is the combination of these which can lead to increased anxiety levels. There are a number of factors which affect anxiety and these can occur directly before or during a task or an extended period before the performance. Those who have extremely high levels of anxiety are more prone to choking which can alter and in some cases prevent task performance altogether due to the pressure and loss of control. Arousal is a big factor affecting anxiety in individuals and its levels have different effects on different people and the task outcome.

Goal setting is a positive method of maintaining motivation and also improving self-efficacy levels within athletes, however the goals must adhere to the smarter principle in order to be successful otherwise as Miller found (1993) ^[9]: 'a negative relationship between high self-efficacy perceptions of competitive swimmers and their motivation when they were given unchallenging goals'. Those who strive to achieve goals are more likely to be successful and upon completing the goals will feel encouraged and so more motivated and use the feelings of success to boost confidence. Also, by completing goals the individual will reduce anxiety levels when performing a similar task in the future as they have been successful before. Unrealistic goals usually result in poor performance and usually stem from low self-confidence and high anxiety levels (Martin and Gill, 1991) ^[8]. Many theorists state that setting high level goals will lead to an increase in motivation and confidence: 'to optimise performance' (Latham and Seijts, 1999) ^[6]. However, a number of other psychologists have proved that: 'although a small group of people may experience heightened self-efficacy and satisfaction upon reaching the goal, a much larger group will not achieve the goal and consequently may experience negative effects such as stress, lowered self-esteem, and demotivation' (Soman and Cheema, 2004) ^[10] which therefore means that goals must be set on an individual basis to be achievable to promote motivation and self-confidence and reduce anxiety.

Monitoring performance is a key aspect of self-confidence and reducing anxiety levels. Bandura (1997) ^[1] concluded that mastery experiences are a vital component: 'one's mastery experiences affect self-efficacy beliefs through the cognitive processing of such information' and that success will promote self-confidence for the future. 'If one repeatedly viewed these experiences as successes, self-efficacy beliefs will increase, if these experiences were viewed as failures, self-efficacy beliefs will decrease' which means that performers should view any experience and take positives from it as this will aid future performance instead of becoming disheartened and potentially failing which could lead to sport dropout. Further to this however, Bandura also confirms that over confidence in success may lead to complacency which could be detrimental to performance, especially in a difficult situation.

Reviews of Study

There has been an agreed established link between cognitive anxiety and self-confidence in that anxiety has a negative impact on performance and self-efficacy. It is often the

influence of anxiety which confirms whether a performance was successful or not and this could impact on confidence and motivation in future performances. 'Coping with anxiety is actually coping with change. Potential gain and loss are behind all stress-induced emotional experiences' so an individual must tackle anxiety in order to optimise the positive aspects and reduce the negative. Hanin acknowledged that: 'each athlete has individually optimal anxiety level' (Hanin, 1978) ^[2] and 'a constellation of individually optimal and dysfunctional content' (Hanin, 1997) ^[3] which confirms the necessity for individual coping programmes when considering anxiety which led to the theory of the individual zone of optimal functioning because anxiety is directly linked with performance. 'Therefore, coping in sport should focus on emotion-performance relationship rather than separately on emotions and actions' which confirms that anxiety directly influences performance which in turn alters self-confidence and motivation towards the specific situation accordingly (Hanin, 2010) ^[5].

Conclusion

A successful method of improving self-confidence is through watching videos of past performances. This can be in one of two forms, either of other individuals or self-evaluation. By watching other athletes' performances the individual is able to analyse the performance by looking for positives and negatives and is also able to compare to their own performance: 'observing the performance of one of more individuals, noting the consequence of their performance, and then using this information to form judgements about one's own performance' (Maddux, 1995) ^[7]. This method of evaluation can be used to successfully motivate an individual to perform by seeing the positives of their own performance and striving to perform like an elite athlete. However, these methods, if used by the wrong individual may cause demotivation by highlighting weaknesses in their performance and in turn reduce confidence.

Therefore, there is an important link between motivation, self-confidence and coping with anxiety on sporting performance and how each of these components interlink can predict the success of an athlete. Each factor must be utilised, controlled and improved to be beneficial and different levels work better for different people and the balance of all three is vital for success especially at an elite level. Research has proved that individuality is key when analysing psychological factors of performance and that anxiety must be conquered and utilised in a positive manner to improve self-confidence which will directly increase motivation to perform.

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