

Indicating an athletes arousal levels and performance impact psychology essay



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Arousal is a physiological and psychological state of being awake or reactive to stimuli. It involves the activation of the reticular activating system in the brain stem, the autonomic nervous system and the endocrine system, leading to increased heart rate and blood pressure and a condition of sensory alertness, mobility and readiness to respond.

' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arousal>'

There are 3 main theories' that can indicate a athletes arousal levels and how much it will have an impact on there performance. The 3 theories are the following;

-Drive theory

This theory was researched in 1943 by Hull and Spence and then Spence researched it again in 1966. This theory indicates that if you arousal levels are high then your performance levels will be high too. From this diagram here this shows that the higher your level of arousal then the quality of your performance will be better higher , and indicates that if you was not aroused then your performance will be poor. With the Drive theory hull and Spence discovered that arousal exaggerates a individuals dominant response.

For an example in a sporting situation would be that if a player is a really good shooter when they are not aroused , so when they have a higher level of arousal they will be able to shoot even better because they are skilled in shooting and arousal will exaggerate this skill . On the other hand this suggests that if you had a bad technique at skill then the more aroused you was are the more exaggerated that bad technique is going to be. The

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criticism about this theory is that if an athlete was a beginner and you had a high level of arousal it would not have a positive affect on your performance if you didn't have the correct technique it would allow you to have a high work ethic but then you will be performing bad as the technique is not there. So this would only work if you were a professional and playing at a high level, because you would have the correct technique .

-The inverted U theory

This theory was discovered by a man called Yerkes and Dodson in 1908, this theory accounts for the different types of arousal levels of athletes by indicating the individual difference in their optimal performance. This diagram shows that the arousal levels slowly reach their peak and then they gradually decrease. Relating this to sport would be that a athlete could be really aroused in the first half of the game due to team mates, the crowd and the type of event E. g. play-off. Then after half time they could be tired and fatigued and this would lower their arousal levels and would affect their performance. The criticism of this theory is you cant tell what an athletes optimal arousal levels are because the optimal level is not always at the peak of the curve it could be more or less . Another criticism of this is that it dose not take into consideration of the amount of arousal needed for simple task(E. g . Weight lifting) and complex task (E. g. A layup in basketball). Because for a simple task you need to be more aroused and for complex tasks you need to be less aroused however this theory doesn't accommodate this.

-Catastrophe theory

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This theory was discovered by Hardy and Fazey in 1987 , this theory is very similar to the ' Inverted U theory' so the athletes arousal levels gradually increase to their optimal arousal level and unlike the ' Inverted U theory' instead of slowly decreasing it will drastically drop down. By the athletes arousal levels drastically decreasing then their performance will rapidly decrease. This will affect the athlete psychologically because they will be less aroused and will struggle to up their arousal level up and this will decrease their performance.

Criticism about this theory is it is too extreme for an athlete that has been performing at a high level for the first half of a game and then during the second half the have lost focus and their level of performance has decreased at such a dramatic rate.

Stress

Stress is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response, there are two types of stress these are Eustress & distress.

-Eustress

This is a good type of stress, this type has a positive effect on a situation , for example a participant would be seeks the thrill of the danger but then enjoys the excitement and feeling of satisfaction when it is over. Examples for this would be bungy jumping , free rock climbing ect.

-Distress

This is when the stress becomes too much and is then damaging. This is a bad type of stress .

Causes of stress

-Internal

Stress can also be self-generated internally for example having a low self-esteem. Unrealistic expectations being set and you not being able to meet them maybe Self-criticism. All of them listed are internal factors and you can change them and learn to deal with it this is that ability to cope with the demands

-External

this is when external factors interfere with the situation for example if last time a athlete ran 400 M and their time was bad then they have doubts in the mind because of a past experience and this causes stress.

-Symptoms of stress

There are 3 types of symptoms of stress and they are psychological , psychological and behavioural .

-Physiological

with this symptom we cant control and the symptoms could include increased heart rate , increased blood pressure , increased sweating , increased breathing rate, decreased flow of blood to the skin, increased oxygen uptake and dry mouth.

-Psychological

Psychological symptoms are what we think and how the mind reacts to situations

the symptoms for this may be that you are feeling overwhelmed, your ability to concentrate and make decisions is poor, your attention is not within you sport and you are thinking of other things and you may feel out of control.

-Behavioural

This is what you do and how we act the symptoms of this could include rapid talking, nail biting, pacing, yawning, trembling and raising of your voice.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by cognitive, somatic, emotional, and behavioural components.

Anxiety can be either a short term 'state' or a long term "trait." There are types of anxiety trait and state.

-State

this is situational so it comes and goes depending on the situation. so in a game you might have a state anxiety because you are anxious about the game and then when you start to play you are then fine and don't feel anxious.

-Trait

These individuals are more likely to present state anxiety in circumstances with low anxiety, such as normal day-to-day activities, then they will probably experience higher levels of state anxiety in the presence of anxiety-generating stimuli.

-Symptoms

There are two types of symptoms, cognitive and somatic.

-Cognitive is all thoughts and concerns leading up to an event. This is all negative toward the event symptoms could be, Indecision, Sense of confusion, Feeling heavy, Negative thoughts, Poor concentration and many more

-Somatic, this is physiological response. The symptoms of this are Increased blood pressure, Pounding heart, Increased respiration rate, Sweating, Clammy hands and feet, Butterflies in the stomach, Dry mouth, Muscular tension and many more.