

Performance critical thinking examples

[Business](#), [Strategy](#)



The influence of psychological state of the athlete on his performance and, therefore, prospects of using various psyching strategies, has for quite a long time been of interest for both practitioners (e. g., athletes, coaches) and sports science scholars. According to Hackfort&Tebenbaum (2006), peak performance in sports is most often associated with such factors as physical preconditions, psychological states, motor skills, as well as mental abilities (e. g., ability to concentrate, attention) and a range of psychological issues as stress resistance, will-power, self-confidence, motivation etc. (11).

Nonetheless, it is still hard to define the extent to which each of above-mentioned factors is capable of exerting influence on the way the athlete will actually perform. Despite the fact that actual correlation is still unclear, it is evident that cognition- and psychology-related factors play an important part among the athlete`s success` preconditions.

The article under study by T. Shelton and M. Mahoney (1978) is aimed at investigating the nature and the extent of influence cognitive `psyching` strategies tend to exert on athletes` performance. The essence of the experiment, conducted with respect to this investigation, lied in comparing performance results of two groups of athletes, where the representatives of the first one (experimental subjects) were asked to use their favourite cognitive “ psyching” strategies before performing, while control group members were not only not instructed to use `cognitive ``psyching`` strategies, but prevented to do so with the help of having been provided with distracting cognitive tasks. According to the authors, results of their investigation showed that athletes, who were engaged in using “ psyching` ` strategies, showed better performance results, than the ones, who were not

using “psyching” strategies and were distracted by extra cognitive tasks. Apart from aiming at getting to know whether cognitive “psyching” strategies can generally influence performance results, authors of the article conducted post-experiment interview, so that most wide-spread favourite cognitive “psyching” strategies can be identified. Results of this interview showed that sportsmen used four basic types of cognitive “psyching” strategies, namely dealing with bearing on self-efficacy, control of attention, preparatory arousal and imagination-related techniques.

Coming to analytical part of this critique paper, I would like to state that at the first sight both the investigation and its results seem to be unquestionable due to clearness of the investigation’s purpose, subject and method, and investigation’s results clearly responding to the purpose of the research. Furthermore, the results of the research, presented in the article under study, prove findings of earlier research related to confirming the importance of cognition- and psychology-related factors for reaching high performance level in sports. Cognitive “psyching” strategies, which were reported to have been used by athletes, are the ones, which are generally used by people in case they are striving to apply maximum efforts to achieve particular result. Despite the fact that effectiveness of techniques, mentioned above, is hardly to be proven scientifically as it may vary depending on particular preconditions and circumstances of task-performing, it is evident that their usage is capable of influencing individual’s mindset and mood at pre-performance period. Objectivity of research results can be also confirmed by variety of tests, which were performed in order to ensure clear evaluation of the sportsmen’s results and application of social science-

based research methods.

Nonetheless, despite “ apparent” clearness of the research under study, let me mention some concerns related to objectiveness of its results. The first one deals with the fact that the sample of the study was limited only to 30 male sportsmen. Furthermore, the sample did not include athletes, engaged in different kind of sports. Limited sample and inability to compare the influence of cognitive “ psyching” strategies on sportsmen, engaged in performing different kinds of sports, does not allow making general conclusions regarding effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of cognitive “ psyching” strategies. Nonetheless, for the purposes of objectivity, let us state that the authors do not claim that the results of their research are universally applicable within sports-related fields. Another concern is related to the fact that the researchers could not prevent representatives of control group from using cognitive “ psyching” strategies, so some of them may have also been using them, even at the unconscious level, despite distracting tasks. Gravity of this concern is confirmed by the fact that some participants of the control group reported they understood the nature and purpose of the experimental study they were involved in. In this regard I cannot help mentioning that the fact that some of control group representatives may have used cognitive “ psyching” strategies levels the value of comparison itself. The last, but not the least to mention, is that self-reporting cannot be considered an effective study tool due to the fact that the way people self-report is highly subjective, which has been proven by relevant scientific research (Brinthaupt&Lipka, 1992, p. 138).

Taking into account above-mentioned concerns, it is necessary to emphasize

further need for researching into the effectiveness of cognitive “ psyching” strategies` application in terms of different kinds of professional sports.

References

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