

Literature review on stress and the rugby union



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The chapter will explain topics related to this study. Firstly rugby union will be briefly described to outline the nature of the game then the definition, theories, and measurers of stress, arousal, anxiety and confidence will be explained and their impacts on performance. Finally a summary as to why all the concepts have been discussed, and their relation to the study.

2. 2 Rugby union

Rugby is an invasion game involving two teams of fifteen players, playing over two forty minute periods. Rugby requires a large degree of positional specialisation in terms of skill and fitness requirements (Jenkins and Reaburn, 2000; Bell et al, 1993). Rugby is a field demanding mobility, agility, muscular strength and muscular power. These vary with a positional role also the level of competition” (Reilly, 1997). Teams are split into two general positions forwards (ball winners) and backs (ball carriers)(Holmy and Hazeldine, 1993). Rugby union only turned professional in 1995 and is associated with traditional values. Until the late sixties coaching of the

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players was shunned as was seen to stifle flair (Williams, 1976; Greenwood, 1995). Greenwood (1985) however, believed the opposite to be true arguing coaching gives a team “ a sense of purpose and in the best rugby the whole team is working with purpose. The purpose is often to give a single player (and often a player with flair) the maximum chance to make a break” (Greenwood, 1985, p. 31). With this view in mind there has been a lack of research related to coaching behaviour in rugby (Webb, Weiss and Crib, 1993), which suggests that coaches do not have the best knowledge at hand to improve their players, and areas such as psychology which later on this study will show that coping strategies and the coaching players to deal with the affects of anxiety is highly significant.

2. 3 Stress

Stress

Stress is “ one of the most misunderstood concepts in sport psychology, for example stress tends to be viewed as undersireable , unhealthy, and negative; something to be avoided at all times”.(Anshell, 2003, p136)

Stress is defined as “ a substantial imbalance between demand and response capability, under conditions where failure to meet that demand has important consequences” (McGrath, 1970 p. 20). As seen in figure *

McGrath proposed that stress consisted of 4 stages; environmental demand, perception of demand, stress response, and behavioural consequences.

McGrath explains that the first stage (environmental demand) is where some type of demand is placed on the athlete, this being either physiological or psychological (w/g et al p no), for example executing a newly learned rugby

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skill in front of large crowd, or performing well under pressure in front of scouts. The second stage of the stress process (perception of demand) refers to the way the athlete perceives the demands placed on them in the situation, for example two place kickers in rugby have to take a conversion in front of a large crowd, player A might find the pressure and attention of the crowd as facilitative towards the performance and there successful convert the kick. Whereas Player B might find the demands of situation threatening towards their performance, and so feelings of worry self doubt etc begin to creep in therefore missing the conversion. Trait anxiety plays a significant role when it come to perceiving situations Weinberg and Gould (2007) explain " that highly- trait-anxious people tend to perceive more situations (especially evaluative and competitive ones) as threatening than lower trait anxious people do", and so this stage 2 is incredibly important within the stress process.

Stage three (stress response) is the psychological or physiological response to what the athlete has perceived in stage two, if the athlete perceives the situation as threatening and feel they cannot deal with the demands of the situation an increase in state anxiety can occur along with increases in cognitive state anxiety (worry), and somatic state anxiety (heightened physiological activation) (Weinberg and Gould 2007, p 82) or simply a combination of the two.

Stage four (behavioural consequences) is the behavioural response of the athlete under the stress, at this point the feeling of increased state anxiety may improve performance or have an adverse effect, and so the process feeds back on itself to stage 1.

Other definitions associated with stress come from more recent research, Schafer (1996) defines stress as arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them" (Schafer, 1996 p. 136), and implies that a stressor is " any demand on mind or body while a distressor is any demand resulting in harm to mind or body" (Schafer, 1996 p. 136). Therefore the physical, mental, and emotional demands that are placed on an athlete are usually harmless however even the positive stressor can turn negative. Furthermore athletes who perceive situations as less threatening will in turn produce less anxiety, which suggest that stress should not be avoided, as it is both desirable in life and sporting competition (Anshell, 2003, p136). This definition somewhat differs from Lazarus and Folkman (1984) who define stress as a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well being" (Lazarus and Folkman 1984, p136). This means that the environment plays a significant role in experiencing stress, and it is how threatening the athlete perceives the situation to be will determine the outcome of their behaviour, further more Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explains that stress is controllable as the athlete must perceive the situation and its demands first before a behaviour will result, also that managing stress therefore consists of three process: managing the environment, building resourcefulness (e. g. confidence, optimism, self control, mental toughness, coping skills), and influencing the athletes interpretation (appraisal) of situations."(Anshell, 2003, p136)

The concept of positive stress is most defiantly a point of discussion as some psychologists believe stress to only be associated with negativity such as

Lazarus and Folkman (1984), where Shafer (1996) “ believe that stress can be helpful as well as harmful. Positive stress can provide zest and enjoyment as well as attentiveness and energy.” Shafer (1996, p137) Dr Jim Loehr generated the concept of positive stress, Loehr (1994) challenges that “ stress anything that causes energy to expand.... physically, mentally and emotionally”, stress is “ a form of positive energy” Loehr (1994). Positive stress is comprised of two important points, firstly in order for growth to take place and improvement to occur, there must be a “ taxing on the system physically, mentally emotionally” (Anshell, 2003, p137). Secondly voluntary recovery which is essential in every person, however when greater stress is place on the system the need for recovery is much greater, Loehr (1994) contends that “ balancing stress and recovery is fundamental to becoming a tough competitor” (Loehr (1994, p137). Examples include physical recovery such as ;” eating, drinking, sleep, reducing muscle tension” (Anshell, 2003, p137) mental recovery; “ calmness, increasing fantasy, creativity, decreasing focus”(Anshell, 2003, p137) emotional recovery; “ emotional relief increased positive feelings, personal fulfilment, fun enjoyment, security and decreased fear, anxiety and anger” (Anshell, 2003, p137)

Furthermore Shafer (1996) emphasises this concept of positive stress by defining it as “ helpful arousal- that promotes health, energy, satisfaction and peak performance”(Shaffer 1996, p137), and that that “ moderation” is the key.

In summary stress needs to be maintained at a moderate level and experienced irregularly, failure to cope with stress will lead to “ burnout,

demotivation, poor performance and eventual withdrawal (first mental, then physical) from the activity” (Anshell, 2003, p137).

2. 4Arousal

Arousal is often associated with the words “ drive, activation, readiness, or excitation”, and often defined physiologically as “ the intensity of behaviour on a continuum from sleep to extensive excitement” (Anshel, 2003, p145).

For the athlete to be able to react, move , and think quick enough to the demands of sport then they must establish an optimal/ appropriate level of physical and psychological readiness (Anshell, 2003, p144).

Early research in this area began with Oxendine (1970) who was the first to note the importance of positive and negative feelings associated with being physically ready, Oxedine (1970) categorised words the following words with positive arousal such as:” joy, elation, ecstasy, interest, happiness, and love” (Anshel, 2003, p144). Negative emotion included “ fear, anger, anxiety, jealousy, embarrassment, disgust, boredom” (Anshel, 2003). Following the early research of Oxedine (1970) Anshel (1985) developed this area and introduced the Children’s Arousal Scale in which female gymnast between the ages of 9 to 14yrs “ identified adjectives that described positive and negative feelings of arousal” (Anshel, 2003). Furthermore based on Oxedine(1970) observations and interaction with elite competitors, speculation arose as whether particular sports required certain level of arousal, for example fine motor sports such as golf and bowling would require a lower level of arousal compared to a gross-motor behaviour such as rugby, or any other contact sport (Anshel, 2003, p144). With this in mind

Oxedine (1970) categorised sports with particular required levels of arousal which were placed on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being slightly aroused and 5 being extremely excited, for example sports such as archery, “ bowling, and a basketball free throw” were rated at 1, whereas actions such as “ football tackling or blocking, sprinting 200yrds”.

Theories have been developed over year to explain the relationship of arousal and sporting performance, Hulls (1943) Drive theory, later revised by Spence (1956) was the earliest, the theory predicts that as “ arousal increases the dominant response, whether or not the dominant response is the correct one” (Anshel, 2003). This therefore means the dominant response is correct and the athlete has mastered the skill, or the skill is simple then the increase in arousal should facilitate performance. In contrast as explained by (Anshell, 2003) “ the proper response has not been mastered or if the performed skill is relatively complex, then more arousal will elicit the incorrect response; quality performance will be inhibited”. As seen in Fig

However the falls in this theory are that its suggests that more arousal is better, which has not received much support it in the way of literature, further more all sports require different levels of arousal as mentioned by Oxedine(1970) early in the study, for sporting positions which require rapid actions and responses such as “ divers, figure skaters, and hockey goalies, gymnasts”(Anshel, 2003, p148) require somewhat of high level of arousal, those which require precision such as bowling and golf obtain a lower level of arousal. This therefore would suggest the Hull’s (1943) theory cannot be totally accepted only in particular circumstances as explained by Anshel

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(2003) “ the behaviour of a contact sport athlete or of a weight lifter might support the drive theory. But invariably arousal must be controlled if sport skills are to be perform with optimal effectiveness”.

Inverted-U hypothesis also know as Yerkes-Dodson Law 1908, was the initial theory proposed to explain the relationship between arousal and performance. Originally the relationship between performance and psychological arousal was found in an uncomplicated Inverted-U shape (Yerkes and Dodson, 1908). Yerkes and Dodson proposed that if arousal is too low or too high the athlete will demonstrate a level of poor performance, therefore implying that there is an optimum level of arousal to ensure good performance (as seen Fig).

Oxendine (1970) furthered the findings of Yerkes and Dobson by suggesting that intensity is sport specific. He proposed that “ although moderate levels of intensity were appropriate for most motor tasks, the optimal level of intensity was dependent on the sport specific sport task to be performed” Oxendine (1970). Landers an Arent (2001) provided an extensive review of the inverted-U shape though not totally discarding the concept they did however challenge the shape, and its relatively small samples and few levels of arousal measured (Anshel, 2003, p149). Sonstroem and Bernardo (1982) supported the inverted-U however results concurred with Lander and Arent’s conclusions over the shape, as Sonstroem and Bernardo found that their results took the shape of an inverted-V. Researchers conducted the study of 30 university basketball players, state anxiety was measured using a self report inventory, and “ performance quality based on a compilation of performance statistics of each player over three consececutive games”

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(Anshel, 2003). In support of the Inverted-U theory it was concluded that “ the relationship between arousal and performance is curvilinear with the best performance occurring at an intermediate point within the range of arousal being examined.... arousal is a factor influencing performance” Landers and Arent (2001).

Russian sport psychologist Yuri Hanin shares different views to Yerkes and Dodson, and regards his theory of individualized zones of optimal functioning as a more accurate measure to explain the relationship between arousal states and performance. Hanin(????) believes “ the optimal level of state anxiety does not always occur at the midpoint of the continuum but rather varies from individual to individual”. The “ optimal intensity zone may range anywhere from very low to very high depending on the unique characteristic of the individual athlete” (Ebbeck & Weiss, 1988), which argues the fact that Yerkes and Dodson’s generalisation of athlete’s optimum point is open to criticism, and so “ the optimal level of state anxiety is not a single point but a bandwidth”. A study on successful college track and field athletes conducted by Raglin and Turner (1992) showed that “ 51% of men and 48% of women in their sample reported successful performance when intensity levels were high” in comparison to a study carried out by Wilson and Raglin (1997) found that “ 26% of the participants performed best with high levels of intensity”. Hanin’s approach clearly shows that an individual’s best performance can be generalised and “ hence the optimal level of intensity is considered to be highly individualistic”(Hanin, 2000, p...).

Though the IZOF model has received much support (Ebbeck & Weiss, 1988; Gould & Krane, 1992; Morgan et al., 1987; Raglin, Wise, & Morgan, 1990; <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-on-stress-and-the-rugby-union/>

Raglin & Morris, 1994; Raglin & Turner, 1992; Wilson, 1998; Wilson & Raglin, 1997). Questions have risen as to how well the athlete can accurately recall intensity and on that note the model has received much criticism. Research conducted by Imaly et al., 1995; Raglin & Turner, 1992; Wilson, Raglin & Harger, 2000 have showed “ high positive correlations between actual pre-competition levels of intensity and pre-competition levels of intensity recalled post competition”. However the model fails to consider the components of state anxiety (i. e. cognitive and somatic anxiety), and how they affect performance in the same way.

Criticisms over the “ unidimensional conceptualizations” have enticed theorist such as (Fazey & Hardy, 1988; Gould et al., 1993; Hardy, 1990; Martens, Vealey, & Burton, 1990) into proposing models/theories that integrate multiple factors that can affect performance (Judy et al., 2002).

Anxiety 2. 4

2. 4. 1 Definition of terms

Anxiety is topic within sport psychology that receives great attention (see Jones, 1995; Hardy et al., 1996) anxiety is defined as “ a negative emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension and associated with activation or arousal of the body” (Weinberg et al, 2007). The two subcomponents are Cognitive state anxiety which can be defined as “ the degree to which one worries or has negative thoughts” (Weinberg et al, 2007), and Somatic anxiety which can be defined “ physiological effects of the anxiety experience, such as an increase in autonomic arousal with negative physiological effects, like palpitations, tense muscles, shortness of

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breath, clammy hands” (Morris, Davis & Hutchings, 1981). When describing a change in mood state, state anxiety is the component of discussion and can be defined as an emotion state “ characterised by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1996). Trait anxiety on the other hand is “ part of the personality, an acquired behavioural tendency or disposition that influences behaviour (Weinberg et al, 2007) Furthermore it “ predisposes an individual to perceive as threatening a wide range of circumstance that objectively are not actually dangerous” (Weinberg et al, 2007).

State and trait

Spielberg (1972) was the first to categorise anxiety as state or trait qualities, athletes with high A-trait will display high A state reactions depending on how threatening they perceive the situation these reactions are beyond what it is necessary. Research has proved that the ramifications of anxiety have been shown to have an adverse affect on motor performance. Weinberg and Hunt (1976) and Anshel et al (1993) “ have shown through electromyography, a measure of muscular tension that muscular co-ordination in skilled movements decreases with high A-state”. Therefore athletes with high A-state perceive the situation as threatening compared to high A-trait athletes who have the tendency to react in a certain way when confronted with a threatening situation. Previous research has been proved that “ trait and state anxiety to be moderately to highly correlated usually about . 60 or above”(Gould and Krane 1992). Therefore A-trait affects an

individual's judgment of the situation thus increasing the likelihood that an athlete will view the situation as threatening.

STAI

With this approach towards anxiety research Spielberg (1972) designed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). There a limited amount anxiety inventories developed over the several decades Taylors (1953) Manifest anxiety scale (MAS) is used to determine trait anxiety (Anshel 2003) however there are flaws with in this inventory as it does not predict the difference between athletes with " high and low anxiety with respect to learning and performing sport skills (Martens 1971). Throughout the 1970's and 1980's a more accurate measure of A-trait and A-state was the State- Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberg, 1970) however in more recent psychological research the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory- 2 (CSAI-2, Martens et al. 1990) has been adopted as it asks respondents about their thought and feelings in sporting situations unlike the STAI inventory.

SAS

Trait anxiety has formally been measured by the Sport Competition Anxiety test (SCAT) more recent psychological research has shown that the Sport Anxiety Scale (SAS; Smith et al 1990) has been adopted, Anshel, (2003) explains that the SAS is an improved measure of a trait because unlike the SCAT it measures both cognitive and somatic components of sport specific trait anxiety, for example the SAS includes items such as " my body feels tense, my heart races and my stomach gets upset before and after a competition" Anshel (2003) these are all responses of somatic anxiety . The SCAT inventory only focuses on the cognitive aspects of A-trait, as Smith et <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-on-stress-and-the-rugby-union/>

al explains that “ cognitive and somatic anxiety have differential effects upon the nature of the task”. Both components of anxiety requires various types of approaches to deal with the symptoms, somatic anxiety requires treatment the decreases the physiological arousal, in contrast to cognitive anxiety which use approaches “ such as self instructional training and thought stopping” Anshel (2003).

The Sport Anxiety Scale created by Smith et al 1990 “ brings a much need measure of sport specific anxiety” Anshel (2003) it enables psychologists to treat athletes and more importantly researchers who are trying find ways of treating and predicting anxiety in sport. The issue is raised whether or not somatic anxiety can be measured as a trait as opposed to a state condition. Athletes naturally react physiologically to situational demands that ‘ maybe independent of traits’ Anshel (2003), and if they perceive the situation as threatening certain physiological aspects will be affected for example increase in heart rate and sweating, this raises the question whether it reflects a trait or state response. Smith et al “ found that the somatic component of the SAS was not a strong predictor of performance due in part to cognitive and physical situational demand- a state, not a trait that jointly dissipate somatic anxiety”.

CSAI-2

The Competitive State Anxiety Inventory - (CSAI-2) developed by Martens et al (1990) has ‘ been a measure of choice for most researchers of competition anxiety during the past decade’ (Lane et al, 1999). The CSAI-2 measures three different construct which are somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and self confidence (Jones, 1995). The CSAI-2 has 27 items and is rated on a 4-
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point likert scale. There are nine items for each of the three factors. Despite its heavy use in the anxiety research since its publication recently it has come under severe criticism (Jones, 1995; Lane et al, 1999). This criticism is due to the fact that many athletes perceive some of the items on the questionnaire that are supposed to be negative, as facilitative. Studies have now been published that have drawn further criticism towards the validity of CSAI-2 (Cox, Martens, & Russell, 2003; Lane, Sewell,

Terry, Bartram, & Nesti, 1999). Jones (1995) suggest the use of a direction sub scale , this would therefore enable to test an athlete's intensity and direction of the factors

Multi-dimensional Anxiety

Originally it was thought that the relationship between arousal and performance could be demonstrated in the simplistic inverted- U (Yerkes and Dodson, 1908), however many dissatisfied sport psychologists questioned it simplistic approach and its validity. From here the Multidimensional Theory of Anxiety (Martens et al., 1990), and the Catastrophe Model (Hardy & Fazey, 1987) emerged, however both are in ever ending conflict with one another.

Initially the theory of multi- dimensional anxiety is based around two components; a cognitive component, and a somatic component both of which have different effects on performance. The theory of multi-dimensional anxiety came about through martens et al (1990) as a developments of the competitive state anxiety inventory"(CSAI-2), Martens et al. (1990) proposed that somatic anxiety had an " inverted-U shaped relationship with performance, whilst cognitive anxiety had a negative linear relationship with

performance". Using the CSAI-2 inventory Martens et al. (1990) tested a selection of athletes forty-eight hours, twenty-four hours, two hours, and five minutes before a major event. Finding shown that the cognitive component stayed stable up to the start, however somatic anxiety increasing leading up to the event, both then decrease after performance, as shown in figure 2. This was supported by the research of Parfitt & Hardy (1987) who found that there were positive affects relating to the cognitive anxiety in the days leading up to the event this being when somatic anxiety is at its low. Furthermore Parfitt & Hardy (1987) found that when athletes were asked to complete tasks in the days leading up to the event which relevant relative to that sporting competition, they found that when cognitive anxiety was at it elevated level there was evidence showing positive effect towards somatic anxiety.

Fig2. 2 Martens et al (1990) an approximate representation of the time to event hypothesis

Prior to Martens et al (1990) theory of multi-dimensional anxiety these sub components had been acknowledge in other areas of human behaviour, Hamilton (1959) and later followed by Buss (1962) classified the components of psychic and somatic anxiety, furthermore Davidson & Schwartz (1976) suggested they could effectively counter act the effects of either subcomponent through " selective relaxation therapy".

The Worry-Emotionality Inventory (WEI) developed by Liebert & Morris, (1967) was the first attempt to confirm that cognitive and somatic anxiety were two separate components of state anxiety, however due to high

correlations in six of the studies the research wasn't regarded as a complete success, however Carron, 1980; Park, 1980; Morris, Davis & Hutchings, 1981 did later achieve much lower correlations with a modified WEI.

Catastrophe Model

The catastrophe theory was first brought about by Rene Thom in 1975 to describe a method that could model discontinuities in functions that were continuous, with the aid of this model Zeeman (1976) demonstrated the effectiveness of the cusp catastrophe model and enticed more theorists to implement this theory. The most significant breakthrough in this area is Hardy & Fazey (1987) catastrophe model, unlike multi-dimensional anxiety it assumes anxiety is comprised of 2 sub-components. However Hardy & Fazey (1987) use arousal instead of somatic anxiety, measured by heart rate they found that both components followed the same "temporal patterns". Findings have shown that both sub components have different effects on performance and that physiological arousal has a "direct effect upon performance through the suppression of crucial cognitive and physiological resources (Hardy et al., 1994). In addition Bandura, (1977) explains "that physiological arousal may also cause an athlete to interpret their physiological state as either negative or positive, inadvertently altering their performance".

Hardy & Fazey (1987) proposed that when the athlete demonstrates a low level of cognitive anxiety the relationship between physiological arousal and performance will take the shape of the Inverted-U Hypothesis. However a catastrophe in performance will take place if the individual exhibits high cognitive anxiety for example if they have doubts over their performance,

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this steep decrease in performance is because of the increase in psychological arousal which reaches the threshold and surpasses the optimal point. Hardy (1990) proposed that “cognitive anxiety behaves as a splitting factor that causes the normal factor’s (i. e. physiological arousal) effect on performance to be smooth and small, large and catastrophic, or alternatively falling somewhere within the two extremes”. The model also predicts that performance will be enhanced in the days leading up to the event providing there is low physiological arousal and therefore the cognitive anxiety will in effect enhance the individual’s performance. Hardy & Fazey (1990) concludes that the increase in performance is very much dependant on how high the levels of cognitive anxiety are and its predicted that there will be a negative correlation between performance and cognitive anxiety when physiological arousal is high, and a positive correlation when physiological arousal is low.

Fig. 3: Hardy & Fazey’s (1987) Catastrophe Model demonstratin

As shown in figure 3, explains that when cognitive anxiety is high physiological arousal will have an adverse effect on performance. Fazey & Hardy (1988) explains that “Hysteresis will follow when high cognitive anxiety is present, and a bifurcation set will arise, i. e. the association of the same level of physiological arousal with two alternate levels of performance subject to the decrease, or increase, of the physiological arousal”.

Furthermore Fazey & Hardy (1988) predict that an average level of performance is unlikely to occur when cognitive anxiety is present, and that performance will take two different forms under conditions of high anxiety in contrast to model which is uni-dimensional (e. g. inverted -U hypothesis).

Anxiety Direction and intensity

Previous research has made us come to believe that the effects of anxiety have only a negative impact on performance, however Jones, 1995; Jones, Hanaton & Swain, 1994 have suggested that it is the individuals interpretation of the symptoms that defines the affects. Individuals can view these symptoms as either facilitative (positive) or debilitating (negative), to fully understand the anxiety - performance relationship two aspects must be measured; 1) the intensity of the individuals anxiety 2) the direction (facilitative or debilitating). It has been suggested by Jones (1995) that if the individual views the anxiety as facilitative then the outcome of their performance will be far superior to one who views it negatively.

Jones's (1995) model of Facilitative and debilitating anxiety demonstrates this theory, as show in fig 4. Bb

The amount of stress experienced by the athlete depends on their individual differences for example their trait anxiety or self esteem, the fact that anxiety can be facilitative or debilitating " depends on how much control the athlete perceives" (Weinberg et al, 2007). If the athlete feels that they are in control and that they can cope with the anxiety, then facilitative anxiety will be the outcome. In contrast if the athlete perceives that they cannot cope with the demands of the competitive event then debilitating anxiety will be a result.

Support in this area has been shown through Jones, Swain, & Hardy (1993) they proved that " good balance beam performances have been associated with gymnasts' interpreting cognitive anxiety as facilitative". Furthermore <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-on-stress-and-the-rugby-union/>

support in this area has suggested that “ elite swimmers have reported both cognitive and somatic anxiety as more facilitative and less debilitating than have non-elite swimmers”(Jones & Swain, 1992).

More notable studies carried out by Hanton and Jones (1999a, 1999b) showed that a selection of “ 10 elite male swimmers who were interviewed for consistently maintaining facilitative anxiety revealed that parents , coaches and more experienced swimmer s all played a role in helping the swimmers” (Weinberg &Gould 2007) learn strategies and skills to perceive anxiety as facilitative rather debilitating. Furthermore Hanton and Jones (1999a, 1999b) found that three of the swimmers experienced debilitating anxiety however after methods to combat this experience such as “ goal-setting, imagery, and self talk” all athletes showed to have find anxiety facilitative (Weingberg & Gould 2007). In conclusion the way the athlete “ interprets the direction of anxiety” (Weingberg & Gould 2007) will have an overall effect on the “ anxiety-performance relationship”.

Confidence

Researchers define self confidence as “ the belief that you can successfully perform a desired behaviour” (Weinberg et al, 2007), previous psychologists such as Vealey (1986) have viewed that self confidence is comprised of two components both disposition and a state (Weinberg et al, 2003, p 323).

Vealey (2001) has suggested that “ sport self confidence is a social cognitive construct that can be more trait like or more state like depending on the temporal frame of reference used” . Therefore confidence might be something the athlete feels today but is unstable and so is referred to as state self confidence, however it might be a part of his personality and so is

looked upon as trait self confidence (Weinberg, 2007, p323). Self-esteem is another concept related to self-confidence, however they differ in the fact a person will not have high self confidence but will like themselves, on the contrary an athlete will be very self confident yet will not have same feelings of self worth Smith et (2007, p278).

Albert Bandura's sel