

Sport psychology analysis flashcard



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Sport psychology is practiced by psychologists specializing in the domain of sport psychology and by sport scientists specializing in psychological aspects of sport and the athlete. It concerns itself with the maximization of sporting performance by developing the mental strength and addressing the general psychological well being of athletes. Sports psychologists from both backgrounds, have most often worked with athletes on mental or psychological skills training, which deals with topics such as motivation, confidence, arousal control, concentration, mental rehearsal, and life skills; usually addressed through an educational approach.

Additionally, psychologists have become involved in a range of clinical issues with athletes and interpersonal issues between members of a team or between coaches and athletes. However, intuition and clinical experience are also drawn upon, especially when there is no documented theory or significant research findings to guide invention. From a psychological perspective, athletes are best considered first as the same as non-athletes. Athletes have the same amount of psychological problems as non-athletes, although they do tend to have certain problems (e. g. eating disorders) a little more than the general population, while a slightly lower rate of chronic mental health problems (e. g. schizophrenia).

Personality Definitions

* Personality is the sum total of the typical ways of acting, thinking and feeling that makes each person unique.

* Everyone has a uniquely different way viewing the world, other people and themselves.

* There is not “ one reality” but rather a sharing of partial common realities among people.

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It is important for Sports psychologists to have a background from which they can analyse their athletes, and so they will be constantly researching personality to see differences in other situations which they can apply to their athletes, all the extra knowledge they have on the subject is helpful to them, and also to keep updating on new scenarios which have taken place with other sports psychologists. Sports psychologists need to have up-to-date knowledge of personality, as each athlete is different and may require information that you don't have to solve the problem. According to ‘

The task for my assignment is to use psychological testing to find out how sports performers personalities differ and how that affects their performance. Also to find out which sort of personality test is the most accurate in finding out information about a person personality via sport. For example I will have to find out why someone who takes part in rugby at a high level is totally different in personality to that of a long distance yet can still reach the same level of performance.

I have decided to use several methods of testing to find out the differences in personality, I find by using several I will get a good accurate overview of someone's personality and be able to tell how their personality affects their sporting performance. Firstly I will have written-up a set of questions to ask all four performers in an interview style test. This will me their opinions on certain situations involving personality and sport, but it gives than one word

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answers and multiple choice, it really gives me their opinion on their on personality. I believe this is a good place to start my investigation, as I will already have an idea of their personality before I start my own investigation of their personality.

I'm also using several personality questionnaires to get an analysis of different parts of their personality. I'm using cattell's 16pf and a personal attributes questionnaire, which are very similar in that they both inquire about what kind of person you think you are. Both questionnaires are set-up with each item consisting of pair of characteristics, on which you plot exactly where you think you are on a scale. I'm also using Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) that will give me an idea of their level of anxiety.

In addition to them I'm using several personality tests, which deal just general aspects of their personalities unrelated to sport. I am also going to analyse their behaviour in sporting situations to give me an idea of how I think their personality affects their sporting performance. I will use both types of sporting observations covert and overt so I can both sides of their performance one with a scout and one without. I have decided to analyse four subjects all male, a distance runner, a basketball player, a football player and a rugby player.

Before even starting thinking my assignment I needed a background in sport personality research to get an idea into how to complete my investigation and get the best results from my testing procedures.

Several theories have been proposed to explain and predict personality. They range from primitive biological explanations, through more complex

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biological theories, and continuing with the more predominant theoretical representations such as psychodynamic and organismic theories, trait theories, social learning theories, and interactionist theories. It is only necessary for me to concentrate on trait theories, social learning theories and interactionist theories, so I can discard early and biological theories, as they aren't really relevant to my assignment.

Trait theories have generated a lot of research into personality, and most sport personality research has been based on trait theories. A lot of the tests that I'm using to analyse personalities have been based on trait theories, especially Cattell 16PF and the Personal Attributes Questionnaire. What trait theories are basically saying that when a person is an extrovert in school activities, it is likely to spread to the rest of that person's daily life and including sport. So under that assumption if you analysed a person in sport and they came across as being the person who raises his hand for a teammate to pass to them instead of shouting and is generally quiet, you would find if watched them in daily activities such as social gatherings they are not likely to be talking a lot and suggesting ideas.

I have found out though through research into trait theories that in fact they are a very poor indication of a person's behaviour and that they will give a small percentage of someone's overall personality. Someone who has been critical of trait theories is Mischel, "even the most psychometrically sound trait measures at best predict only a small proportion of actual behaviour". This means that someone who plays centre in rugby and is good at rugby and shows a lot of outgoing traits and seems to be an extrovert may in fact be a quiet person in school, as they may not have confidence to extrovert in a

school environment. This means that I have had to use more than just trait theories to analyse my subject's whole personality.

Many of the people that have criticized trait theories have approached personality research with a social learning approach instead as they have found that trait theories do not predict personality very well at all. Social learning theories are based on the fact that a centre in rugby is extrovert because the situation and position demands that he is an extrovert. So you adapt your personality to certain situations.

Bandura (1977) states this “ Psychological functioning is explained in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction of personal and environmental determinants”. One person I researched goes I even further with a social learning and discounts the role of personality altogether. He basically says that when a you analyse a centre in rugby and he comes across as an extrovert and assertive it's because the situation requires him to be that way and because the majority of rugby players who are centre's also have extrovert tendencies so that means that if you put any sort of person in that position they would show assertive behaviour, as the position demands this.

As I have shown above many people have realized that trait theories don't really give an accurate view of personality and so people have tended to move towards social learning theories instead. But they also don't believe that social learning theories holds the key to a person's entire personality either and many personality researchers will use the interactionist theory instead as this combines the theory of both personality factors and situational factors as judges of behaviour. The problem with social learning

theories is that a sports performer may become anxious in highly competitive match but may find important exams easy to deal with.

The interactional approach is a very complicated way of dealing with personality and it considers many different factors to explain personality. For example why some football players have got a reputation of being hard footballers is placed down to numerous personality and environmental factors. Different personality characteristics may have a large number of factors, such as an insult from an opponent, may cause an aggressive response from one player but not from a different player on the team in the same situation, and it might not even result in the same response from the same player again in a slightly different situation. His original reaction good have been as result of outside factors, such as problems at home or a hangover.

“ The interactionist approach implies a complex explanation of behaviour but offers a more realistic explanation than simpler predictions that are provided from extreme trait or situational approaches.” Sports Coach 2001

This gives the conclusion that a person’s personality is complex and is not an easy thing to analyse and cannot be summed up with simple answers and has to be tested in different ways situations to get better idea of it. This brings to me to my testing and why I have chosen so many different tests to analyse my subjects, I feel that I would not be able to evaluate my results from just the cattell 16pf or covert observation I need bring all my testing collectively together so I can get a wide range of aspects of their personality to try and build and overall picture of their personality. I have chosen a wide

range of test, as I don't believe that just using form of testing is enough to get an accurate analysis of someone's personality.

For example if I just analysed a sports performer using overt observation I might not have got their true character they may have 'shown off' to impress or the opposite might have been nervous about someone pacifically watching, this means I wouldn't be able to tell whether what I analysed was actually their true personality. I also feel that just interviewing would not help to find accuracy into someone's character as they might lie to make themselves look better or look differently, with an interview there are no set answers to choose from so the performer can easily make up answers. This is why I think questionnaires are good as they give the athlete set answers to choose and they can't differ from this, so it gives me a relatively accurate answer. Picking questionnaires that analyse different parts of sportsman personality is very important as obviously I can get overview of their personality from different perspectives.