

Theoretical principles of motivation in coaching psychology essay



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Coaching is a multi- disciplinary science, enabling the production of a strategy to enhance performance through co-ordinating contributing factors effectively. The coach is required to develop an athlete's physical, technical and tactical skills. They should be able to enhance an individual's psychological and theoretical knowledge of a particular sport. As suggested by Bompa (1994), the optimisation of these factors is important to an athlete's readiness for competition. The performance coach should treat each individual athlete as being unique and plan training accordingly. As confirmed by Russhall (1985), he states, the ' principle of training' is one of seven principles of coaching. Additionally, Cross (1999), suggests individualisation is described as an ' essential element' of the coaching process. Numerous coaches will obviously have to accommodate the differing needs of individual athletes and operate in various environments and have constraints such as several athletes at one time. Subsequently, these constraints can affect the overall effectiveness of the coaching. As supported by Lyle (1997), each coaching process is unique for a number of reasons. These being an athlete's aspirations, capabilities and personal circumstances differing, as will organisational, resources and occupational circumstances within which the coach operates.

Performance coaching can be defined as a beneficial factor to improve competitive sports performance via a detailed planned programme of preparation/competition Lyle (1999). An input from a variety of specialists is required. In order to obtain effective coaching behaviour contributions, an athlete's development may need to be monitored in various areas.

Dependent on the requirements of a particular sport, these may be areas

such as technique, to include skill learning. Other factors are physiology, psychology, theoretical knowledge of the sport, lifestyle management to include time/management/tactics. Coaches will need to address the difference between the varying factors, which include the type sport i. e. team/individual, differing ages/gender, as some female athletes may be susceptible to certain traits such as eating disorders.

Other relevant principles for the coach to consider, some of which may be in depth, include law within sport, ethics, mentoring techniques, communication, detraining and the safety of the environment in which they are to perform, how to address injuries/overtraining. As suggest by Sherman & Sands (1996) the principle of consequence that requires coaches to consider the possible outcomes for example injury, which may result from an immense training programme.

Smith, Smoll & Hunt (1977) utilised The Coaching Behaviour Assessment (CBAS) to undertake several studies to examine the impact a coach's influence may have on the psychological of youngsters through sport. Subsequently, studies using this technique or an adapted version have according to Allen & Howe (1998); Black & Weiss (1992) illustrated that coaching behaviours do have a significant influence on the athlete's psychological profile. They clearly affect self-esteem, capabilities and overall fulfilment. In relation to data obtained for the CBAS, Smoll & Smith (1984; 1989) proposed a model to study coaching behaviours in youth sport. The model specifies in addition to the individual coach, athlete and environmental conditions that coach behaviour is also influenced by player

perception/recall and the ability of the coach to evaluate reactions.

Furthermore, observations of player's attitudes are particularly important.

Leadership style is an important factor in coaching as it can enhance the athlete's confidence and create a good social environment in which to learn. To this end coaches need to be flexible to influence an athlete's perception of control. If for example, a coach adopted a collaborative style and use it effectively one would be able to build confidence to achieve shared goals and help provide contingent reinforcement and informative feedback.

The introduction of the Multidimensional Model of Leadership, Chellandurai (1984; 1993) implemented a large quantity of coaching effectiveness studies. The main component of this model identifies three types of behaviour in coaches that preferred by athletes, actual and required behaviour. These are influenced by three precedent variables, the coach's characteristics, the athletes and actual situation. Subsequently, The Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) was developed by Chellandurai & Saleh (1980) to test the specified relationship in the multidimensional model and whether the model is applicable in predicating leadership effectiveness in sport. This method has been utilised extensively to assess the influence of gender, age, or personality on preferred/perceived leadership.

If a coach is able to provide effective social support for the athlete this confirms that there is a good understanding of resources available to assist with various demands in competitive sport. If handled correctly these problems can be addressed through team building and education.

Due to various coaching demands, coaches should be able to apply numerous strategies to deal with varying situations this aspect has been studied by Cox & Noble (1989); Gould, Gianni, Krane & Hodge (1990), in order to obtain a clearer understanding of coaching demands, investigators have requested information from coaches about their attitudes towards coaching, adequacy or educational background/ needs. In general the studies suggest coaches face varying demands and that their educational are not clearly defined. Further studies as suggested by Gould, Hodge, Peterson & Gianni 1989; Weinberg, Grove & Jackson (1992) have identified that mental strength, positive attitude, motivation and concentration were the most important skills that needed to be addressed by coaches in order to develop an individual athlete's overall skills and success.

A lack of theoretical structures outlining the key variables affecting the work of coaches has been identified as a critical issue lacking research. The theoretical structures proposed by Smoll & Smith (1984; 1989); Chelladurai (1984; 1993) and Cote, Salmela, Trudel et al (1995) share common variables. However, they do not provide a complete account of all points affecting the coaching process. Thomas (1992) suggests that by providing an account of the most important issues in the coaching process, identifying a base for establishing a general theory of coaching. In order to achieve this goal a more comprehensive framework, the Coaching Model (CM) is utilised. The CM is able to identify theoretical knowledge of coaching and incorporates six components: competition, organisation, training, coach's and athletes personal characteristics and background related factors. A cognitive approach, organising these components and their actual relationship is used

to describe how coaches proceed to obtain their objectives of an athlete's development. In general a coach should be able to evaluate their own personal attributes, the athlete's characteristics to identify an estimation of an athlete's potential. This mental model can then be utilised as a to illustrate what types of knowledge and behaviours are essential for competition, organisation skills and training regimes.

Obviously it is difficult for a coach to mentally maintain an athlete's potential in their mind but they should be able to retain a mental representation of an athlete, images or assumptions. These models enable the coach to interact with the athlete to determine what course of action to undertake also how to behave with the athlete. They may consist of generalisations or complex theories. Therefore, two coaches with different mental models working with similar athletes can identify various details, and provide effective coaching as they look at the situation differently.

Age is another important when planning as it has tremendous bearing on optimal training loads. As suggest Hagger (1999), it is critical that coaches recognises that biological age is more relevant when planning training loads than chronological age. According to Rushall & Pike (1990) athletes may respond differently to the physical environment therefore, coaches must be able to modify training programmes to suit an athlete's tolerance.

Therefore, the objective for a coach is to understand the value psychological knowledge and provide theoretical context for application. They should be able to offer an athlete with a sense of control in an environment that promote personal perceptions of competence and the opportunity to set

goals and judge performance against realistic objectives. Coaches should allow athletes to gain confidence by both achievement and personal management, together with social interaction. They should attempt to manage anxiety at an environmental/ organisational level

Lifestyle variations will affect athletes and coaches will need to take into account underlying stress problems. Anxiety can change in intensity/frequency and may be detrimental to performance. As stated by Hanton et al (2004); Thomas et al (2004), findings suggest that athletes can alter the way they view their mental status during lead-up to performance. Therefore, coaches need to identify this and help elevate this problem by integrating psychological skills such as goal-setting/ cognitive restructuring seven days pre-competition.

Psychology

As suggested by Dishman (1983) sport psychology may suffer from identities criticise. However, it is a noted tool to provide athletes/ coaches with the required mental skills to manage the demands within training/competition, helping them to reach their full potential. Feltz & Kontos (2002) describes sport psychology as the study of people's behaviour and thoughts in a sporting context.

Motivation is a key factor in sports coaching. It refers to personality traits, social variables and is fundamental in competition. As suggest by Kingston et al (2006), the personal drive that leads individuals to innate direct and sustain human behaviour. It can be viewed from various points, self-

determination theory, (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and achievement goal theory
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(Nicholls 1989). Both of these theories emphasize how an individual perceives social factors and applies themselves both physically/quantitatively to an activity.

The self-determination is based on the fact that individuals have tendency towards psychological development. As suggested by Deci & Ryan (1985) three universal psychological needs are fundamental to motivation and mental well-being. The achievement goal theory has become one of the popular approaches when researching motivation in sports coaching. According to Nicholls (1989) an individual's perceived competence is central to determining motivation when partaking in a coaching exercise.

Confidence in sport is important and two approaches are relevant to the coaching process, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and sport-confidence (Vealey 1986; 2001).

Bandura's (1977), self-efficacy theory is concerned with an athlete's perceived ability to perform specific sports skills at a given time. This theory indicates that self-efficacy will predict performance if the athlete feels appropriate skill levels and incentives are present, thereby making it a good indicator in the coaching process. As there were limitations to this theory, Vealey (1986) was prompted to propose a sport specific model of confidence. This model indicated that self-regulation; achievement and social climate were true predictors of performance through their impact on effect, behaviour and cognition. It also takes into account the indirect influence of gender, age and personality together with social and organisation factors of the development and maintenance of sporting-confidence. As suggested by

Vealey (2001) self-regulation the management of one's behaviours, thoughts and feelings provides a further domain, which the coach can strive to foster performers confidence

The majority of coaches would consider individual athletes in their charge to be unique. Savage et al (1981) produced research data that highlighted that all athletes are physiologically unique. As suggested by Rushell & Pike (1990); Cross (1999) they will have different physiological characteristics, psychological traits and social lifestyles.

The findings of McGowan et al (1990) concludes that some individualisation occurred in the training of the 1984 united states volleyball team, indicating once again the importance of identifying these traits in coaching.

Coaches should also identify/analyse an athletes personality traits and work capability to find their optimum tolerance effort according to Bompa (1999). This evidence should help assist the coach in the decision making process in regards to relevant training loads. However, it should be considered that there is a limit to the physiological, anatomical development that can be achieved through training. This is confirmed by Costill et al (1992), in which it is suggested this is a factor probably determined by genetics. Obviously, athletes may have varying abilities with regards to strength, endurance, co-ordination and timing as a consequence of genetic/physiological development, which will play an important role the planning of coaching.

Conclusion

When a coach is planning an optimal training programme individualisation is a key concept. Athletes are unique both physiological and psychologically, are able to tolerate varying environments and training regimes, together with competition goals.