

## OVERVIEW of Sports Psychology

**Discuss the  
statement:  
Psychology has a  
significant part to  
play in sporting  
success**

## Overview of Sports Psychology

### A. Attitude

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- Attitudes are mainly formed through experiences. For example, an enjoyable experience in PE is likely to promote a positive attitude
- There are three components of attitude: Cognitive: knowledge and beliefs about the subject; Affective: positive or negative emotions and feelings toward the object; Behavioural: the intended behaviour towards the subject
- Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger): If a person holds two ideas that oppose and conflict each other an element of discomfort arises. Emotional conflict is called dissonance
- Persuasive Communication, in the coaching environment there are several factors that need to be considered before someone will change their attitude: Persuader needs to be expert; Message needs to be clear; Recipient needs to be open to change; Situation needs to be safe and non-threatening.

## B. Overview: Aggression and social facilitation

- Aggressive behaviour tends to be the consequence of one or more contributors: Nature of the game; Crowd; Frustration; Past experiences; Level of competition; Rewards
- Assertion is behaviour that is intended but non-violent, controlled and within the rules
- Aggression can be classified into three forms; Hostile (or reactive) aim: harm or inflict injury; instrumental (or channelled) aim: execution of skill, there is an intention to harm; assertive behaviour aim: execution of skill
- Instinct Theory (trait perspective); aggression is genetically inherited, trait of violence lies within everyone, aggressive energy constantly builds up and needs to be released
- Social learning Theory Bandura 1966: aggression is not biologically based, nurtured through environmental forces, learned by watching and replicating role models
- Frustration-Aggression hypothesis: Interactionist perspective, frustration develops when goal-directed behaviour (NACH) is blocked, instinctive to fulfil the need to release frustration, aggression = successful = catharsis, aggression = unsuccessful = more frustration
- Social Facilitation is the presence of an audience having an impact on arousal levels and affecting performance
- Home field Advantage – large supportive home crowds have a positive effect on performance for the home team.

## C. Overview: Group dynamics and leadership

- Groups need to have interaction, interdependence, interpersonal relationships, identical norms/goals/values, identity and independence
- For a group of people to become a team, they must go through four developmental stages: Forming; Storming; Norming; Performing
- Group cohesion is the extent a group pursues a common goal together, cohesion can be sub divided into: task cohesion the way team members work together to successfully complete the task; social cohesion which is the personal relationships within the group, enjoying social interaction
- Sports groups which interact will have THREE common characteristics: collective identity; sense of shared purpose; clear structure for communication
- Ringelmann effect is whereby as the group size increases, individual productivity decreases, this is linked to motivation fault and is associated with athletes 'hiding' in large groups and not being accountable for their own performance
- Social Loafing refers to a group member not giving 100% effort in a team/group situation; this is generally due to a loss of motivation
- Four factors that affect team cohesion: environmental factors – groups that are closer in terms of location; personal factors – individual characteristics important for group cohesion; leadership factors – leadership style, behaviour needs to be compatible with athlete's personalities; team factors – length of time a team is together, allowing them to experience success and failure together.
- The best leaders can match their styles, behaviours and qualities to different situations. The following qualities will contribute to making a good leader: Vision, Communicate, Decision maker
- Leaders are either prescribed or emergent: Prescribed leaders are those who are appointed by some form of higher authority; Emergent leaders are those who achieve leadership status by gaining the respect and support of the group
- Theories of leadership debate the concept, whether a leader is born or made.

There are three main theories: Trait theory often referred to as the 'Great man theory'. It suggests that leaders are born with the traits and qualities needed to be a leader; Social learning theory argues that a good leader is made, not born, and that anyone can be taught to be a good leader; Interactional theory considers other factors that could affect the effectiveness of leadership, mainly the interaction between the individual and their situation.

- Two main types of leader are identified through the interactional theory: Relationship-orientated leaders are focused on developing relationships with individuals in the group; Task-orientated leaders are more concerned with meeting goals and objectives.
- Styles of leadership: Autocratic (authoritarian style, task orientated); Democratic (shares responsibility within the group); Laisser-faire (allows group to make own decisions)
- Fiedler's Contingency Model
- According to Fiedler the correct style of leadership is dependent on the favourable of the situation. AUTOCRATIC LEADERS are more effective in both the MOST FAVOURABLE and the LEAST FVOURABLE situations. DEMOCRATIC LEADERS are more effective in MODERATELY FAVOURABLE situations.
- Chelladurai's multi-dimension model of leadership
- The multi-dimensional model says the team's performance and satisfaction with the leader will be highest if the leader's required behaviours, preferred behaviours and actual behaviours all agree.
- Chelladurai believed that the effectiveness of the group could be judged on: The degree of success accomplished during a task; the extent to which the group experienced satisfaction while being led to the goal.

## D. Overview: Attribution theory

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- Attribution theory looks at the common reasons coaches and players give for their success or failure in sport
- Attributions are important because of the way in which they affect motivation, which in turn affects future performances.
- Attribution Theory (Weiner): Coaches and players tend to put the success or failure into four classifications, or combinations of them, ability, task difficulty, effort and luck.
- The athlete only has control over effort; the coach can alter task difficulty and have an impact upon ability. These aspects can be controlled and therefore attributing failure to them can avoid learned helplessness.
- Learned Helplessness – is the belief that over time one has no control over the events and therefore failure is inevitable.
- Self-confidence is defined as a person's belief that they have the ability to meet the demands of the sport/activity.