

Essays on Personality Sport Performance

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How do the similarities and differences in personality affect sport performance? This information can provide clues as to the potential for young athletes to be successful in team and individual sports.

Sports psychologists suggest the development of personality profiles would be helpful to understand why some athletes succeed and others don't

The following are excerpts from the papers at <http://www.lotsofessays.com>

Sports activity has been characteristic of people throughout history. The area of human endeavor called sports involves great numbers of people, both participants and spectators, in almost all the nations and civilizations of the world.

Sport psychology is an area which attempts to apply psychological facts and principles to learning, performance, and associated human behavior in the whole field of sports (Lawther, 1972, p. 1).

The motivations and emotional reactions of people involved in sports, both as participants and as spectators, form a part of the study of sports psychology.

The psychosocial or group behavior of people concerned with sports performances and competitions form another unit of interest in sports psychology.

The basic psychological aspects of the early stages of sports-skill learning, and the later, somewhat different aspects of high-level skill learning and performance form a part of this subject, too.

The whole area of sport-teaching methods is an attempt to apply educa-

tional psychology to the learning of sport skills. Included as a part of the application of educational psychology to sports are:

- Length and distribution of practice and of rest periods
- Retention of acquired levels
- Size of units most appropriate for teaching at each stage
- Part versus whole emphasis
- Precision and promptness of performance results
- Degree of value of knowledge of mechanical principles

If the generalization of a skill so that it will fit varying competitive strategies works for the elite male athlete, then the same strategy could be applied to the elite female athlete in the same way, with the results assumed to be similar.

However, instead of making these assumptions, sports psychology researchers should include gender as a variable when developing a research line. Recent studies have shown that males and females socialize into sports differently (Pemberton & Petlichkoff, 1988, p. 58).

Through the 1970s, these attempts by the scientific community to explore psychological dimensions of athletic performance were limited. They were generally piecemeal, lacked a solid theoretical rationale, and were not part of any sustained investigative effort.

Fortunately, in the literature produced by physical educators, psychologists, social psychologists, and sociologists of that time, there was some information that was indirectly relevant to many of the psychological and social dimensions inherent in athletic competition.

Personality and Sports Performance Studies

The growing knowledge about aptitude, abilities, and skills has just begun to explain performance differences, in terms of depending to some extent on the individual's unique and personal and behavioral dispositions.

Such dispositions that an individual brings to a performance are not fully understood, neither as to the nature of the predisposition nor as to the predictive value.

This is not surprising, given that the field of personality trait theories within psychology is a complex and imprecise science.

Yet these theories purport to deal with such issues as the permanence of personality states, the effects of cognitive and perceptual styles, the nature of motivation, and the individual's mode of interpreting learning experiences.

The physical education literature dealing with personality factors and their effects on performance is heavy with implied and stated links between personality development and involvement in appropriately conducted programs of planned physical activity, games, dance, and sport.

Some individuals are motivated to achieve and have the determination and perseverance to do whatever work is necessary. This person is more a leader than a follower and may object more than most when restricted or prevented from doing things in his or her own way.

These authors found a similar mode of responding among the various sports. Swimmers were not as aggressive as cyclists or triathletes, and they were not as carefree as runners or triathletes.

They were more concerned with bodily safety than were the triathletes, and they were more autonomous than runners.

Triathletes scored significantly lower than runners and swimmers but did not differ from cyclists on the "harm avoidance" scale.

A study by Howard, Cunningham, and Rechnitzer (1987) used longitudinal data to determine the effects of personality on the natural decline in fitness in 121 middle-aged men.

At the beginning of the study, personality was assessed using the 16PF. Fitness measures included grip strength, predicted body fatness, and predicted maximum oxygen intake.

It was found that the second-order personality dimension, introversion-extroversion, was related to grip strength and predicted maximum oxygen uptake but not to **body fatness**.