

# Introduction to Sport Psychology

## Brief History

- Coleman Robert Griffith = founding father of sport psychology
- Norman Triplett did first sport psychology study on social facilitation
- Patrick and Howard did study on 'spectator psychology'

## Typical sport and exercise psychologist

- Research role:
  - To advance knowledge and develop existing theories
  - To better understand psychological processes
- Teaching role:
  - Deliver courses at schools/universities
  - Develop awareness of sport psychology in sport settings
- Consultancy role:
  - Clinical sport and exercise psychologists

## Measurement issues

- Qualitative or quantitative techniques
- Reliability and validity of measures

# Personality

## Understanding personality

- *Personality* is described as characteristics of the person that are enduring, reflect the whole person, and are inherent to that person (Pervin & Cervone)
- Qualities that are consistent over time and during situations (enduring), features that differentiate a person (distinctive), reflects all aspects (feeling/thinking/behaving)

## Models of personality structure

- Personality started with Hippocrates and Galen.
  - Based on 4 humors/body fluids and imbalance/getting sick also affected personality (yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, blood)
- Allport = founding father of modern personality theory:
  - Coined the term 'personality'
  - Described personality traits as being within a hierarchical structure (listed many traits/ created trait theory)
  - His work important in modern psychology for personality
- Eysenck and Cattell = 2 theories dominated during 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Eysenck proposed that all personality traits fall within 2 higher-order dimensions, then later added a 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension; *extraversion*, *neuroticism* (degree to which people are emotionally unstable), and *psychoticism* (degree to which people are aggressive/hostile)
- Known as the PEN model of personality.
- Cattell formed the *16-factor model* which was where he classified 4504 personality adjectives within 16 primary dimensions (16PF)
- Used the psychometric technique of factor analysis
- The big 5 = Costa and McCrae
  - OCEAN
  - Costa and McCrae said all personality traits can be classified within 30 lower-order *facets* within these 5 higher-order dimensions
  - Dominated personality research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

#### How personality is measured

- Can use observations, interviews, and questionnaires but questionnaires are the most common for personality
- Use self-report and 'other-report' by family and friends to accompany
- *Type-based* assessments classify people as one type or another (extrovert/introvert) and *trait-based* assessments place people on a continuum from one extreme to another (highly introverted > highly extroverted)
- Trait-based assessments are preferred
- Type-based still used in work settings

#### Personality and sport performance

- Successful and unsuccessful athletes show difference in personality
- Personality cannot predict short-term success
- Related to long-term success in sport
  - There is evidence that personality tests in children can predict whether athletes progress to professional sport settings 7 years later (Aidman)
  - Can also predict the number of goals, assists and total points scored over a 15 year period
- Personality also related to short-term behaviours
  - High conscientiousness + low neuroticism = better coping strategies (Allen)
  - Extroverted athletes perform better in front of an audience
- Piedmont was the first apply the Big 5 in a sporting population by exploring women football players and found that higher conscientiousness + lower neuroticism = performed better (long-term success)

#### Population based differences

- Most common objective in sport personality research is to identify differences between different populations of athletes.
- No personality difference with *type* of sport (e.g. basketball/soccer)
- Team sport = higher extraversion + lower conscientiousness
- High-risk sport = higher extraversion/openness + lower conscientiousness/neuroticism
- Gender and sport position differences found (view articles for more details)

#### Personality and participation in sport

- Psychologists think sport participation may help develop desirable personality characteristics
- Participation in sport may help develop; discipline, fair-play, sportsmanship, cooperation and helping behaviour.
- Clear differences in personality between those who do and don't participate in sport.
- The direction of causality is not known
  - *Change hypothesis* = sport develops personality
  - *Gravitation hypothesis* = types of personality choose to participate in sport

#### Personality development

- Sport included in curriculum; contributes to positive psychological development in children.
- Although personality has a strong genetic component, there is potential for it to be modified through environment (i.e. SPORT)
  - Twin studies in favour of genetic contribution
- Personality and situation are codeterminants of behaviour

#### Interpersonal relationships and group dynamics

- Personality plays an important role in athlete-athlete and coach-athlete relationships.
- *Athletic dyads* (e.g. doubles tennis) have shown that athletes that are more committed to their partner = higher agreeableness/conscientiousness/openness.
- Coach-athlete relationships are better with similar personalities
- Cohesive groups work best when groups have similar levels of high conscientiousness and agreeableness
  - A single disagreeable and unconscientiousness person can affect the whole group dynamic
- Having some narcissists in a group can generate creative outcomes (too many bad)

#### Ethics and personality research

- It will never be ethical to only use personality assessments for the sport selection process.
- Finding right balance of personalities in a team is important coach decision.
- Low agreeableness predictor of exercise addiction
- Personality tests could identify 'at risk' populations who need additional attention.

## Self-confidence

### Understanding self-confidence

- *Self-efficacy* refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the actions required to achieve something (Bandura)
  - *Self-confidence* is a catchword used in sport rather than a construct in a theory
  - The two terms however are recognised as the same thing (interchangeable)
- *Perceived self-efficacy* is a judgement of capability and *self-esteem* is a judgement of self-worth.

### How self-confidence is measured

- Self-report measures are the most common for self-confidence (influenced by social desirability effects)
- The CSAI-2 (Martens), CSAI-2R (Cox, Martens, Russell) and State Sport Confidence Inventory (Vealey) assess general competition self-confidence by using a rate scale with certain statements.
  - Sport-specific measures show greater predictive validity compared to general self-confidence measures
- Bandura said self-efficacy varies in:
  - *Level* = difficult of tasks people believe they are capable in performing
  - *Generality* = efficacy beliefs associated with one activity can be generalised to similar ones within the same activity domain
  - *Strength* = people differ in their confidence in attaining a given level of performance (usually measured as a % and can look at different qualities/tasks of the sport separately)

### Self-efficacy theory

- Self-efficacy theory falls within the framework of Bandura's social cognitive theory.
- It involves how people acquire knowledge and competencies, how they motivate and regulate behaviour and create social systems
- Mastery experiences + vicarious experiences + verbal persuasion + physiological states > self-efficacy > thought patterns + behaviours
- The 4 determinants of self-efficacy: