

Sport Psychology: Measuring Psychological Dimensions of Physical Education and Sport

Dr. Ghanshyam Dokrat: Lecturer, BPCAs, College of Physical Education, Wadala Mumbai

Psychology is the study of human behavior. A dominant focus of psychology has been the mental aspects of behavior; indeed, the field of cognitive psychology has become a strong subfield of the general field of psychology. Sports psychology is the application of psychology to issue and problems in the field of sport. The manner in which sport psychology and exercise psychology have developed indicates that there are two major approaches to the fields; the academic study of sport and psychology. Sport psychologists can help athletes learn to do mental rehearsal, visualization, and goal setting.

The consulting sport psychologists use psychological interventions to improve the performance of athletes and to increase their psychological wellbeing. Many national and international professional appoint sport psychologists. Most of the teams participating in international competitions might travel with sport psychologists. Some sport psychologists tends to focus primarily on the mental aspects of sport performance. They use imagery, mental rehearsal, and other such techniques with athlete. Other sport psychologists prefer to deal directly with the behavior of athletes, using techniques from the field of applied behavior analysis. These consultants focus on actual physical rehearsal, behavior shaping strategies, and behavior approaches.

What Do Sport Psychologists Do?

Sport psychology is a healthy field with bright future. There is no doubt that the field currently divides between people who study the psychological aspects of sport performance and people who work with athletes in the capacity of sport psychologists. The former are academic sport psychologists, the latter are consulting sport psychologists.

The consulting sport psychologists often fill two roles, although the roles can be filled by different persons. One role utilizes psychological strategies with athletes to improve performance directly the *performance enhancement role*. Within this role, the sport psychologists might teach the athlete to relax during the competition, to overcome a competitive fear, to cope with competitive stresses, or mentally to rehearse positive performance. The second role, the consulting role, is less difficult; it involves counseling athletes to help them to overcome problems, to adjust to situations, and to deal with stresses in their lives.

In these two primary roles, the consulting sport psychologists focus on distinct areas of assistance to coaches and athlete. One area is the immediate improvement of performance – for instance, by using mental imagery just before competition. A second area is helping athletes cope with the pressure of the competition – for instance, using one of several strategies.

A third area is assistance with injury rehabilitation, helping athletes to deal with both physical rehabilitation and the psychological stresses of not being able to participate. A more general focus is working with teams on general mental and behavioral preparation for a season of

Variorum, Multi- Disciplinary e-Research Journal
Vol.-02, Issue-I, August 2011

competition. The sport psychologists might also work with teams to improve communication among teammates and to resolve conflicts among players and between players and coaches.

Measuring Psychological Dimensions:

Measuring psychological dimensions is of interest to physical education teacher, exercise specialist, sport psychologists, and researchers. However, psychological dimensions are difficult to measure in a reliable and valid manner.

Measuring Attitudes:

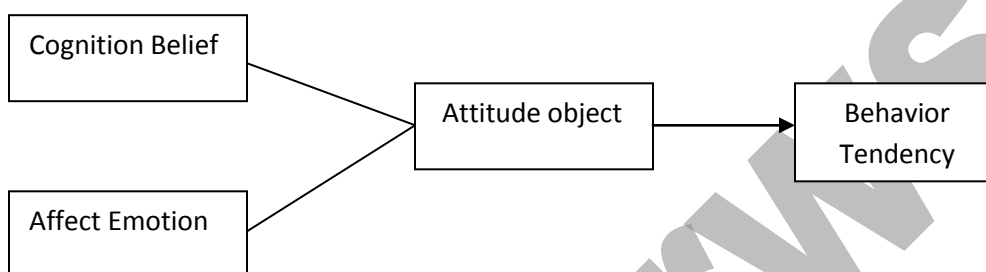


Figure shows that the attitudes are a function of beliefs and emotions. An attitude scale is used to measure a person's feelings towards the object. The true validity of the attitude scale is determined by the individual's behavior.

Much of physical education research in the affective domain has focused on attitudes and their measurement. "Attitudes concern feeling about particular objects – physical objects, types of people, particular persons, social institutions, government policies (Nunnally 1978). Attitudes are generally measured with scales that require a student to agree or disagree with a series of statements, worded both positively and negatively. Several types of scale are used to determine a respondent's degree of affect. The most common offer is two alternatives i.e. (agree, disagree) or use five alternatives i.e. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree)

Six Dimension:

The descriptions of the six dimensions measured by the ATPA are as follows:

Dimension-1. Physical activity as a social experience. Physical education teachers and exercise specialists maintain that physical activity meets certain social needs individuals who score high on this factor would value physical activities "whose primary purpose is to provide a medium for social intercourse, that is, to meet new people and to perpetuate existing relationships." The internal consistency reliability mates for this scale are about 0.70.

Dimension-2. Physical activity for health and fitness. The importance of physical activity for maintaining health and fitness is generally recognized. Individuals who score high on this factor would value physical activity for its "contribution to the improvement of one's health and fitness." The internal consistency reliability estimates are about 0.79.

Dimension-3. Physical activity as the pursuit of vertigo. The pursuit of vertigo is the search for excitement: "those physical experiences providing, at some risk to the participant, an element of thrill through the medium of speed, acceleration, sudden change of direction, exposure to

Variorum, Multi- Disciplinary e-Research Journal
Vol.-02, Issue-I, August 2011

dangerous situations, with the participant usually remaining in control." The internal consistency reliability estimates ranges are about 0.88 for men and 0.87 for women.

Dimension-4. Physical activity as an aesthetic experience. Many people believe that forms of physical activity have a certain beauty or artistry. People who score high on this factor perceive the aestheticism of physical activity. The internal consistency reliability estimates were 0.82 and 0.87 for men and women, respectively.

Dimension-5. Physical activity as a catharsis. Many believe that physical activity can provide a release from the frustrations of daily living. The validity of this factor has not been fully established. A negative relationship was reported between catharsis scores and preference for "physical activity for recreation and relaxation." The internal consistency reliability estimates were 0.77 and 0.79 for men and women, respectively.

Dimension-6. Physical activity as an ascetic experience. Individuals who score high on this scale value the type of dedication involved in championship-level performance. Such activity demands long, strenuous, often painful training and competition, forcing a deferment of many of the gratifications of general physical activity. The internal consistency reliability estimates were 0.81 for men and ranged from 0.74 to 0.78 for women.'

Kenyon's work is especially important. The publication of the ATPA scales marked a departure from using physical education as the attitude object. Rather, Kenyon's scales were designed to measure the reasons why individuals exercised. He recognized that exercise motives were multidimensional, that there were different reasons why people were physically active. The methods used to develop the six scales of the ATPA provide an excellent example of the use of construct validity.

Reference:

- Ted A Baumgartner, Andrew S Jackson.(1995) Measurement for Evaluation in Physical Education and Exercise Science, Brown and Benchmark, Dubuque (US\$)
- Daryl Siedentop.e001), Introduction to Physical Education, Fitness and Sport, Mayfield, California.
- Barry, K. & King, L. (1998) Beginning Teaching and Beyond, Social Science Press, Australia
- Corcoran, K. & Fischer, J. (1987) Measures for Clinical Practice - A Sourcebook, the Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc