

Learning aim A

Investigate personality and its effect on sports performance

Assessment criteria

- 2A.P1** Using relevant examples, describe personality, including methods of measurement and three different views.
- 2A.M1** Explain three different views of personality, and how personality can affect sports performance.
- 2A.D1** Analyse three different views of personality, and how personality can affect sports performance.

Topic A.1 Definition of personality



Figure 1.1 A person's personality can affect performance

Personality is the sum of the characteristics that make a person unique. For a sports person to be successful, it is important that the coach knows what personality type he or she is so that the correct psychological training methods can be applied to ensure the performer's success. Performers need to be aware how personality characteristics can affect their performances, for example, mood, anxiety (negative emotional feelings, caused by a fear of a new situation or the fear of failing), arousal level (an increased state of readiness, having motivated behaviour) so that they can deal with them and minimise their impact on performance.

Personality is stable and unique to every person. Personality affects how we respond to different situations. It involves our character, intellect, physique and temperament. Personality can be the link to improving sports performance.

Topic A.2 Structure of personality

Role-related behaviours

Studied

In different situations a person's behaviour will change, depending on the role to be taken on and how the person perceives the environment or situation at any moment in time. Role-related behaviour is the most changeable aspect of personality. Role-related behaviour could explain a person behaving irrationally due to the way he or she has interpreted a situation.

In sport a person may take on the role of a captain and his or her behaviour will change to adapt to that situation. The captain will need to show leadership and confidence. The same person may play as a reserve for another team and show submission, following instructions without question.

Typical responses

Studied

Typical responses are the ways we will usually respond to a situation. For example, a good team captain might always stay positive, even when the team are losing so that he or she can help to motivate team members and ensure that the team goes on to win successfully.

A typical response is learned from repeating the same response over and over again. A person who has failed at a skill may believe he or she can never do it and the typical response would be a negative one towards performing or even trying the skill. For example, if a gymnast attempts to perform a backward roll and fails, tries again and fails and is unsuccessful at every attempt after that, he or she will respond with the same response: 'I can't do it'.

Psychological core

Studied

The psychological core is made up of a person's different attitudes, values, interests and beliefs. This is the real you.

The psychological core contains the idea of the true self and is never revealed. Personality tests cannot penetrate the psychological core and so a true prediction of personality cannot really ever be made. Typical responses to situations can be seen as a measure of your psychological core and they give a good indication of a person's behaviours.

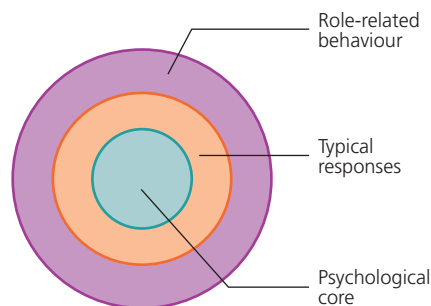


Figure 1.2 The psychological core

Topic A.3 Personality types

Personalities have been described as introverts and extroverts. People tend not to be one or the other but somewhere in between both.

Introverts

Studied

Introverts tend to be inward looking and shy; they are comfortable in their own company. These types of people may prefer individual sports activities with little movement, which require refined skills, and sports with repetitive actions, for example, long distance swimming, shooting or archery. Introverts do not need to be with other people to get them ready, aroused for their competition. In fact introverts try to avoid situations of over-arousal and choose activities which need accuracy rather than force.



Figure 1.3 Some people prefer solitary sports

Extroverts

Studied

Extroverts tend to be outgoing and comfortable in other people's company. These types of people may prefer team sports and activities which use the whole body. These types of people tend to be very confident and enjoy activities with a degree of uncertainty, for example, team games. Extroverts cope much better with arousal and perform better when they are under pressure. They like a challenge and enjoy positions of responsibility.



Figure 1.4 Some people enjoy team sports

Type A and type B

Studied

Personalities have been split into two types. Type A personalities have a competitive drive and are prone to anger and hostility. These people can be impatient, intolerant and have high levels of stress.

Type B personalities are generally laid back and have a calm disposition. These people can be more relaxed, have a tolerant approach and have lower levels of stress and competition. It is thought that type A personalities are more likely to succeed in competitive sports situations than type B, but there is little evidence to confirm whether personality will make a person a better sports person.

Effects of personality on sports performance

Studied

Team versus individual sports

There is little evidence to suggest that there is an ideal sports personality type, but there are some differences between those who play team sports and those who prefer individual sports. Athletes who choose team sports tend to be more extrovert and those who prefer individual sports are often more introverted. There will be exceptions to this and it is difficult to draw conclusions until we have looked at the sports being played.

Athletes and non-athletes

Research might suggest that athletes have higher levels of competitiveness and lower levels of depression and fatigue. To make any definitive statement more research needs to be carried out and on a larger range of athletes and sports. However, from what we know about personality types, successful sports people are more likely to be type A and more extroverted than introverted. Athletes need a drive to push them on to win, this is shown in type A personalities and the desire to win and respond positively to arousal would mean that extroverts would thrive on the pressure of competition.

Knowledge recap



1. What is personality?
2. Why is it important for a coach to know an athlete's personality type?
3. What is meant by 'typical responses'?
4. What makes up the 'psychological core'?
5. What are introvert personality types?
6. What are extrovert personality types?

Assessment guidance for learning aim A

Scenario

For part of your leadership award you have been volunteering as a sports psychologist for a semi-professional sports team. You have been asked to prepare a range of resources that could be used to help improve the team's performance. Your work will need to include information about how personality affects performance.

2A.P1 Using relevant examples, describe personality, including methods of measurement and three different views

Assessor report: The command verb in the grading criteria is describe. In the learner's answers we would expect to see a detailed account of personality, including methods of measurement and three different views.

Learner answer

Personality is the sum of the characteristics that make a person unique.

Personality is made up of lots of different traits or characteristics. It is what makes us, us! Happy, sad, controlled, aggressive or enthusiastic. A football captain needs to be controlled, have leadership qualities, decisive and outgoing to be a good captain.

Personality can be measured by using questionnaires, for example EPI (Eysenck's Personality Inventory), POMS (Profile of Mood States) and carrying out observations, for example observing traits, behaviours. Personality tests and observations can establish if a person is an introvert or extrovert, Type A or Type B, stable or unstable (neurotic). Most sports people will be Type A, these people have the get up and go, they want to be competitive and they want to win. They will probably be extroverts as they want to be with other people, their team mates and are happy with pressure. These people may be stable or unstable and this may depend on the situation they are in.

Observation

You can measure a sports person's personality and behaviours by observing him or her. A sports coach will watch the performer to see which traits and characteristics the sports person is showing. The coach might look for how the sports person copes with successes and failures, different roles in a sports team and how he or she interacts with other people. These can be recorded for the coach to look over. The coach can identify the performer's strongest and weakest traits.

Questionnaires

Personality traits and characteristics can be measured by the sports person or the coach by using a questionnaire such as Eysenck's EPI. The questions are easy to complete and all require 'yes' or 'no' answers. The answers are then used to construct a personal profile for the sports person which will indicate the strongest personality traits.

POMS (Profile of mood states)

This method will show if a performer is in a positive or negative mind set about his or her performance. It is thought that a performer who is positive will perform better than someone who is negative. The sports person's moods (tension, depression, anger, confusion, fatigue and vigour) will be recorded before his or her performance. This will let the sports performer and the coach see where mood is as an indicator of how well the sports person will perform.

Three different views of personality are:

1. **Trait:** relatively consistent way an individual behaves across a range of situations.
Trait views suggest that personality is made up of a set of traits or characteristics and that these will determine how a person responds and behaves. Examples of traits would be extrovert and introvert, stable and neurotic (unstable). Personalities can be identified as being more towards one end of a scale than another, for example someone will be more extroverted than introverted and more stable than neurotic.
2. **Situational:** how behaviour is determined mainly by the environment.
3. **Interactional:** considers both the individual's traits and the situation he finds himself in when determining behaviour.

The different views help us to get an idea of personality and to predict what a person will do in a sports situation.

Assessor report: The learner has briefly described personality. He or she has described methods of measurement in great detail and has produced some description of the trait views. To achieve 2A.PI the learner needs to describe in much more detail situational and interactional views. The learner must include relevant examples for methods of measuring personality and the three different views to show that he or she understands the topic and can identify how it is applied in a sports situation.

Assessor report – overall

What is good about this assessment evidence?

The learner has provided a definition of personality and has given an example. Methods to measure personality have been described and three different views have been mentioned, one with a good level of description.

What could be improved about this assessment evidence?

The learner has not included enough description for all areas of the criteria. Some of the work lacks depth. To achieve 2A.PI the learner could improve the description of how personality is measured by giving examples of the types of results you might expect to see from a team player or an individual athlete. To complete the answer on the three different views of personality, the learner should give a sports example to show how each view is interpreted.