MOTIVATION AND SPORTS PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

A highly motivated person would be more eager to give a better performance than a lowly motivated one with the same skills. Likewise, a person who has less skill but more motivation can train to be better than another who has more skill but is less motivated to put in 100% of effort. However, motivation does not mean that sports performance is definitely increased. The sources of big flops are a lack of motivation, over confidence and over motivation. Over motivation means that a person is so motivated to perform well that he outperforms his limit and flops.

Motivation can be simply defined as the ability to initiate and persist at a task. Motivation is the main feeling that all athletes use in their effort and accomplishments. Without the use of strong motivation and determination to perform well in your sports, all other mental factors such as confidence, focus, intensity and emotions are all meaningless. In order to become the best you can be, you must be motivated to do whatever it takes to maximise your ability and goals.

Motivation is the driving force that causes the flux from desire to will in life. For example: a flower with no water still desires for water to sustain life; however, due to its incapability to move and get water, the flower cannot will for water, hence, suffering from a break in the driving force of motivation; it is not to say, however, that necessarily, the flower lacks the driving force; therefore, all life can said to have, at its very minimal, the igniting spark of motivation. It can be considered a psychological state that compels or reinforces an action toward a desired goal. For example, hunger is a motivation that elicits a desire to eat. Motivation is an inner drive to behave or act in a certain manner. "It's the difference between waking up before dawn to pound the pavement and lazing around the house all day." These inner conditions such as wishes, desires and goals, activate to move in a particular direction in behavior.

Keywords: Motivation; Sports

INTRODUCTION

Motivation

Motivation can be described as an individual’s inner will and dedication or focus to achieve a goal they have set for themselves. Motivation is a very important factor in elite level sports for the simple reason it’s what makes you do what you do, if you’re not motivated to be a top level athlete then you have a chance of not being the best you can be and falling short of your goals. Motivation is started and caused by a motive which is a reason to do things that will require motivation. Below is a more in depth explanation of motivation and its positives and negatives on sports in general and examples of specific areas.

Some motives that are a part of sports are –

Goals – Goals are something that we set to achieve our targets, for example big goals such as, getting a gold medal in the Olympic power lifting, or something smaller such as, improving your 400m running time by 1 second. Goals can be either big ones or as small as little improvements.
Performance – Performance is the big one that comes with being an elite level athlete because one mistake may cost you big. If an athlete has a bad performance in the game before this can be used as a motive to get motivated and improve for the next time they perform.

Persistence – Persistence is also a big part of achieving goals and is often something that we lack because of low motivation levels. If we haven’t got persistence in our training sessions then we won’t get the results that we want which will lead to low motivation levels.

Impression – If an athlete’s performance is good then this will leave a good impression with coaches, fans and possibly other clubs or organisations. Some athletes get motivation by the support of fans and people around them so leaving a good impression is a very important part of motivation.

Each and every person has their own reasons for participating in their chosen sport and below is some of the reasons.

- For the social side of sports, making new friends from playing in teams and working as a unit together.
- Improvements on overall health and fitness for the individual, and a great source of relieving stress from work and other things.
- Personal pride of defying odds and peoples expectations of you and doing something that you thought you might never be able to do.
- Possibly earning money for participating in sports both professional and semi professional sports pay wages, or maybe participating in a tournament of some sort for charity.
- Peer pressure can also be apart of peoples decisions to play sports, your friends might all want to play football but you might want to play rugby more, so the pressure is there for you to follow your friends and do the sports that they do.

This is a very common one in today’s society.

Some factors that may affect the younger generation can also be related to the above ones which are more aimed at teenagers and adults.

Below are some factors that can affect younger people’s motivation

- Sporting role models – They play a big part in younger people getting involved in sports for example David Beckham was the role model for many younger people when he was at Manchester united because everyone wanted to be like him, from his skills even down to his hairstyles, so he provided a role model for people both young and old and gave them motivation to get into football.
- Parental pressure- Some parents can push children into play sports for many reasons, they share the same passion for the sport, the parent never succeeded in the chosen sport so wants their child to do so and to keep kids active and in good health. Parental pressure can be both good and bad depending on the personality of the parent and the child.
- Motivation for the child should be high because he/she has great support from people close to them.
- Prizes – Prizes are a good way of getting younger people as well as older people to get motivated and perform well, for example if a child is playing a football match and their parents said if you score a goal today we will buy you a treat for doing so, well then the child will think I can get something extra out of this and put in a better performance and work harder.
Types of Motivation

There are two different types or forms of motivation that we can use intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Below is a detailed explanation of both forms of motivation and how they relate to sports.

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from within us not from external sources for emotions. Someone who is intrinsically motivated doesn’t require much external motivation from fans, money and expectations of others. They are focused on their own inner goals that they want to achieve and their personal reasons for being in the sporting situation they are in at that moment.

This is motivation from within. A desire to perform well and succeed. The following will be true:

- Desire to overcome the problem or task
- Development of skills and habits to overcome that problem
- Rehearsal of successful habits until they are perfect
- A feeling of pride and enjoyment in performing the skill
- Repeated goal setting in order to progress and maintain motivation

Goals must be all of the following in order to be attainable:

- Smart
- Measurable
- Agreed
- Realistic
- Time related
- Exciting
- Recorded

A sporting example of Intrinsic motivation is a Anderson Silva (MMA), before he enters the octagon he is calm and composed and is deep in thought about his motives, reasons for being there and his hard work and dedication to get this far in his career, that is intrinsic motivation because he is getting motivated by his own sources from within and not from other rewards such as money and fame. One of the main intrinsically motivated motives are personal pride the thought of being able to better yourself and beat the challenges that you set yourself.

People who are intrinsically motivated still want to receive rewards but these rewards are not what keeps the athlete motivated to persevere through the hard times that comes with being an athlete. Intrinsic motivation is a long term reason to get involved in sports because it will take a long time for this form of motivation to die down.

**Extrinsic Motivation:** Extrinsic motivation comes from a source outside of the performer. These are things which can encourage the athlete to perform and fall into two groups:

**Tangible rewards:** Physical rewards such as medals and money. These should be used sparingly with young athletes to avoid a situation where winning a prize is more important than competing well

**Intangible rewards:** Praise, recognition and achievements. These should be used on a regular basis to encourage the athlete to repeat the behaviour which earned the praise.

Extrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from outside of us not from internal sources for example personal pride. Someone who is extrinsically motivated doesn’t require much internal motivation from
personal pride, achieving goals and enjoyment they are only focused on the rewards that come with being an athlete such as money and fame.

A sporting example of extrinsic motivation is Wayne Rooney. Wayne is one of the planets best known footballers and with this status comes a lot of money and fame. Wayne is sponsored by many internationally recognised brands such as Nike, Lucozade, Coca-Cola Zero and PowerAde. He also plays for one of the biggest clubs in world football Manchester United which brings him a lot of media coverage and fame within the public. Recently Wayne was caught in a debate with Manchester United over his weekly wages which saw a massive increase to his previous wage which shows that he is motivated by the money which is extrinsic motivation.

One of the main extrinsically motivated motives is fame, being in the eye of millions of people will leave great fame upon your shoulders and is one of the main reasons people want to be professional athletes.

People who are extrinsically motivated still do it for intrinsic reasons such as improving certain skill sets and becoming a better athlete on the pitch because you are motivated to become better because the better you are the better quality the extrinsic factors become.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. The objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between motivation and sports performance.
2. Identify the self-determined motivation promotes athletes’ situational self-determined motivation before a competition, that in turn, predicts their sport performance
3. Identify the different types of motivation
4. Analyse how motivation can affects sports performance

**Motivation, Arousal and Performance**

Motivation is related to the intensity and direction of behavior. That is, the level of arousal and the way in which we behave affect our motivation and hence performance. There are currently two theories. They are

**Hull’s Drive Theory:** This demonstrates a linear relationship between performance and arousal. This means at low levels of arousal, performance is low and performance increases in line with an increase in arousal. This is shown in the graph below.
Performance = habit x drive (arousal)

**Inverted U Law:** This law states that arousal improves performance up to an optimal point. Past this point, performance begins to decrease. When drawn on a graph this appears as an upside down U shape.

![Graph showing Inverted U Law](image)

There are three rules which surround this theory:

- **Activity:** Some sports are better performed at low arousal, mainly those which require small, precision movements and control, e.g. shooting.

- **Skill level:** Beginners to a sport require all of their attention to be focused on the task in hand and so do not cope as well with over-arousal. Highly skilled individuals have the skill well practiced and so do not require such high levels of concentration meaning they can deal better with the arousal level.

- **Personality:** Extroverts perform better in high-pressure, high arousal situations. Introverts tend to do better in a state of low arousal. This is thought to be connected to part of the brain called the RAS or reticular activating system. This controls the level of arousal. Introverts have a highly stimulated RAS and so avoid stressful situations, whereas extroverts need high arousal situations to stimulate the RAS.

**Signs of Low Motivation**

There are several signs of low motivation:

- A lack of desire to practice as much as you should.
- Less than 100% effort in training.
- Skipping or shortening training.
- Effort that is inconsistent with your goals.

**Three D's**

- Direction
- Decision
- Dedication

Prime motivation means putting 100% of your time, effort, energy, and focus into all aspects of your sport. It involves doing everything possible to become the best athlete you can be.

Prime motivation begins with what I call the three D's. The first D stands for direction. Before you can attain prime motivation, you must first consider the different directions you can go in your sport. You
have three choices: stop participating completely, continue at your current level, or strive to be the best athlete you can be.

The second D represents decision. With these three choices of direction, you must select one direction in which to go. None of these directions are necessarily right or wrong, better or worse, they're simply your options. Your choice will dictate the amount of time and effort you will put into your sport and how good an athlete you will ultimately become.

The third D stands for dedication. Once you've made your decision, you must dedicate yourself to it. If your decision is to become the best athlete you can be, then this last step, dedication, will determine whether you have prime motivation. Your decision to be your best and your dedication to your sport must be a top priority. Only by being completely dedicated to your direction and decision will you ensure that you have prime motivation.

CONCLUSION
Motivation is the foundation all athletic effort and accomplishment. Without your desire and determination to improve your sports performances, all of the other mental factors, confidence, intensity, focus, and emotions, are meaningless. To become the best athlete you can be, you must be motivated to do what it takes to maximize your ability and achieve your goals.

The commonly held view is that motivation is either ‘good’ (intrinsic) or ‘bad’ (extrinsic). However, this understanding is limited and promotes an inaccurate understanding of extrinsic motivation and its varying influences on sport participation. Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory is a popular theory of motivation, which proposes that people seek to satisfy three psychological needs — self-determination (autonomy), perceived competence, and relatedness (sense of belonging) — necessary for personal growth. Self-determination theory also proposes several forms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and a motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is associated with the inherent fun and enjoyment associated with sport participation. For example, some athletes naturally enjoy running fast or striking the ball ‘sweetly’. In contrast, a motivation is a lack of or reduction in motivation. In between these two opposing forms of motivation is extrinsic motivation, which is generally associated with the achievement of some goal, such as winning an Olympic gold medal. Of primary interest here is a more thorough understanding of extrinsic motivation and its influence on sport participation.

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