

“Explain the role of motivation in enhancing a sports performance.”

There are many ways of which motivation can enhance a sports performance. In this essay, I will explore and explain this role of motivation and how the more drive we have, the more motivated we are to be successful.

In 1900, Atkinson proposed a model of achievement motivation. This model showed that the level of achievement is the summation of two factors. One of which is the motivation to achieve success, which is commonly found that the person's personality is categorised as “natch”. The other is the motivation to avoid failure, which is known as the person's personality being “naff”.

Personalities can also be categorised into two other categories, which are introvert and extrovert. Introverts are usually quiet and don't need a lot to be going on to keep occupied. Introverts tend to prefer sports, which are solitary, less active and less competitive. Extroverts on the other hand, need a lot of things to be going on to keep amused and are usually found to be in the centre of attention and loud. They tend to prefer team sports, sports with aggression and action packed competitive sports.

Atkinson's model found that in order to be motivated to achieve, the motive to achieve success must be higher than the motivation to avoid failure. People can be motivated in society and sport in two varieties, which are intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic comes from inside yourself, and is where they have the drive to do well, enjoy the activity and want to experience the fulfilment of winning or taking part. Extrinsic comes from outside yourself, and is the drive put upon you from someone or something else that gives you the need to win or partake. These are common to be either a coach or a trophy.

Arousal levels represent the intensity aspect of motivation. Its commonly shown by increase in sweat production, heart rate and breathing. Arousal can affect performance in many ways. It can help improve performance or even reduce performance.

In 1943, Hull developed the ‘Drive Theory’. This is to do with arousal levels and performance and that the performance increases in proportion to arousal. Hull found that as the arousal levels increase, so does the performance levels. However, if beginners don't take on board their arousal levels, then their performance levels could decrease.

According to Yerkes and Dodson's ‘Inverted U Theory’, as our arousal levels increase, so does the level of our performance, yet only to an optimum level which is usually at moderate arousal levels. If we go beyond these levels, then our performance will decrease. This is also known as being ‘over aroused’. Extroverts usually can cope with higher levels of arousal than introverts.

Paul Gascoin, “Gazza”, is well known for being a rather big extrovert footballer and is remembered for his time when his arousal levels became aggressively too high and made

his performance dramatically fell. High levels of arousal can be supportive to good performance as it makes the player more determined, focused and try harder.

The International Rugby Community is a very good example of the different types of 'natch' and 'naffs'. The England squad is well known for wanting to win for their country, themselves and for the love. Whereas, the Australians feel the need to avoid failure. This could be how the way the country is run and how they've been brought up. But the main reason is that very few past Australian teams have lost, therefore they feel the country depending on them. This is a blend of the 'Naff' and 'Extrinsic'.

The England Rugby team is also a good example of having motivational strengths in sport. The coaching squad contains many specialist motivators for the players. The Visualisation coach could be seen as the key specialist. He makes each player imagine and foresee them winning the game or competition. They also have a time for motivation, which they call "Lombardi Time", whom is a very famous American football coach who is also very well known for his motivational skills. This time could be spent as the team whole, or the players separating with their personalised programme. This is good to have separate motivational programmes as different players react in motivation in different ways.

Paula Radcliff seems to be a good example of an introvert performer. The marathon does not include any aggression or jam packed action, yet it must take a lot of motivation to be able to run such a long distance without losing concentration or forgetting or miss calculating any facts that she may need to take in.

If a jockey fell off a horse badly, it must take a lot of courage and motivation to get back on the horse and back to riding again without having to hold back with fear of falling again.