

Sports and Exercise Psychology

Motivation

Task 1

P M

Within this assignment I have been asked to look at two participants who are involved in the sport of kickboxing. I must identify three key roles of motivational factors that exist between the two contrasting participants and summarise the relative success of three different motivational strategies upon participants.

Firstly, there are many definitions to what exactly motivation is, below I have listed a few;

“Motive – the desire to fulfil a need” (Cox 1998).

“the study of motivation is the study of all those pushes and prods – biological, social or psychological that defeat our laziness and move us, either eagerly or reluctantly to action” (Millers 1967).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, these are two types to which Derek and Gary use to stay within the sport of kickboxing.

Derek is the first participant, he is a 50 year old man who seems to me enjoys kickboxing very much. Derek has been training three times a week and has been doing so for the past 13 years. He knows he will never be a champion but still participates regularly even though he rarely wins.

It seems to me that Derek has a high arousal level when it comes to physical activity and so is motivated by participating in the sport. He also seems affiliated with the club and as he is a veteran kick boxer has many friends; this also proves that socialising also motivates Derek to participate.

As Derek is a 50 year old he may also be participating to improve his health physically and mentally and this can also be a reason for him to stay motivated as he enjoys the benefits of leading an active and social life.

Derek could motivate himself by setting self confidence goals such as saying “I will train harder to gain that level of belt” or “I will complete 600 punches in fewer than 6 minutes this week”. This type of motivation will or could lead to intrinsic motivation for Derek by giving him the feeling of self – esteem and feelings of achievement in getting better at kickboxing or gaining better physical strength and endurance.

Gary is another member of the club and also trains with Derek. Gary is 18 years old and has been training for a couple years only. Gary is talented and has both ability and youth on this side but never competes after he lost his first competition. He does not

spar in training and seems he is not willing to train hard and regularly as he misses sessions.

Gary gives me the impression that he does not do kickboxing for the intrinsic rewards such as Derek but for the extrinsic rewards so therefore Gary is extrinsically motivated.

This type of motivation is ok until the participant or athlete gets to the point where the motivation must be increased to improve performance as the reward is no longer appetising enough to continue, therefore in most cases the athletes are found to lose interest in giving their all. Most times the reward that is used to motivate athletes extrinsically is money and trophies and therefore must have a limit to how much is given most of the time once an athlete has gained both extremes then the drive to continue and better the reward is lost.

In Gary's case as he lost his first competition he was not rewarded extrinsically and therefore this is the reason that he will not proceed to train and strive to improve his performance, he feels there is no point if he will not receive a benefit of some value. This is a major factor in Gary's training as rewards are not always available and eventually will be stopped all together and in turn will limit his future performances and ability to better his skill.

I do believe that Derek will continue with his training, as he does not expect nor need extrinsic rewards in order to tell himself that he is good at a sport and is noticeably known that he is good, where as Gary strives for external notice of others and affiliation via rewards from either winning competitions or carrying something out to a high level standard.

I feel that if Gary continues to think in this way and continue to strive for external rewards then he will not last as long as Derek, in my opinion Gary needs to understand the principle that even if battles are lost and external expectations are not met that there are still inner achievements that can be made and feel just as good.

However we could look at the flip side and see that Gary has a drive for high level achievement and will not accept anything below his personal set standard, this may be a strive to Gary to continue kickboxing, but only begin to put all his efforts in if some sort of goal or external need is met.

Task 2

P M

The three motivational strategies

Self talk: this is when you talk to yourself in order to motivate yourself by saying positive things rather than negative. For example I could say “I will win this race because I have put my all in training”.

I think this type of motivational strategy could be effective on Gary and Derek, as Gary could tell himself all the good parts about his performance and that as long as he believes in his performance it doesn't matter what others think. In Derek's case, I believe that self talk will just improve even more his motivation in wanting to continue and persevere within kickboxing, as long as he gives himself reassurance that he is good at kickboxing and he can do it.

Goal setting: planning something that you will do and finish at a set time that could be short or long term periods. This will only work if you stick to it and so it will motivate you to push harder and strive for success.

This area of motivational strategy can be very effective, to Gary if he set himself small reachable goals, I believe he would continue kickboxing for a longer period as he would be achieving and have a feeling of success when these short term goals are met, he could build up all the short term goals to end on a long term goal of say; winning a competition or contest bout.

In Derek's case, I feel that if he also sets himself small goals then this may build up his confidence in competing, goal setting can make an individual feel success within smaller expectations, then later the big hope or expectation can be met a lot easier than trying to reach a big goal all at once.

Rewarding: this is when you receive a reward externally or internally for you win or performance such as money or trophies and self-esteem and self-confidence.

I believe that if some sort of rewarding was introduced to Gary's training strategy this may encourage him, however one would need to be careful as to how much rewarding was given. Only if Gary completed a task at a high level or reached a goal set should he receive a reward, this would limit Gary taking part just for an external reward.

Derek on the other hand does not seem to need any external rewarding, however that does not mean that it cannot be introduced, if Derek was to introduce a reward every time he again reached a goal set then this would motivate himself even more to succeed.

The self talk strategy: this is re enforcement of the individual done by them intrinsically setting mental goals.

Gary should use this method and would gain some advantages from doing so; Gary could try to be more positive towards his training instead of being negative when attempting to train hard. Gary could re enforce him self by saying “If I train harder I will win the next tournament because I am able and capable of doing so”.

This type of motivational strategy requires Gary to believe in himself in order to be successful so he must try harder. Derek on the other hand seems positive enough not to self talk but if he wanted he could still use this to motivate himself some more to improve certain key areas of training that needed improving. This would also help in setting himself up with competitions to use the new skills he has learned as he does not compete, this may be a starting point to motivating himself to do so.

The goal setting strategy: if Gary used short and long term goals he would find that it is much easier to achieve the target he wants by doing them in stages such as goals. This would be better and more affective on his training as he is achieving his goals he will also notice his skill and therefore motivate himself to achieve his long term goals which could be to win the next competition. Derek could also use goal setting in order to improve areas of his performance or just to improve his fitness levels such as to improve stamina, strength or just to improve his reaction time.

The rewarding strategy: this strategy would be more suited to Gary because he seems dependent on rewards in order to train and give his all. So therefore if this was used with Gary then he must be pushed in training in order to get maximum performance from him which may prove to be slightly difficult as the reward may not be sometimes enough for Gary. By doing this with Gary it is important to enforce the reward in training by letting Gary know that if he does not give his all then it will not be won and this will help to improve his performance in both training and competitions. Derek on the other hand could also use this strategy but will not be affected as much as Gary as he is not doing it for the rewards but solely for the intrinsic benefits.

Task 5

D

No matter how intrinsically motivated an individual can say they are, motivational strategies are used no matter what situation or environment. Specific strategies can have an immense effect on an individual, especially within a sporting environment.

As we know, with the majority of sports there is an element of psychological competition, some in more sports than others.

As an athlete, I know that when in competition athletes will try all ways to psyche out or over power their opponents mentally before competition in a hope to diminish their performance, a few athletes do find this difficult, thus they find ways to overcome and find motivational strategies.

Goal setting, attribution training, self talk and extrinsic rewards are all motivational strategies; I would have to say, in my opinion, the most used motivational strategy would be; attribution training and self talk. This is because, most athletes already know their skill or sport to be performed and so perform it over and over and any imperfections or adjustments that come up need to be trained correctly according to the 'imperfection', self talk would be another big motivational strategy used by an athlete as most of the time, they must say to themselves, "I can do this", or "keep this up and twist here", "come on I know I can do it", constantly going through mental rehearsals in their head and boosting their confidence.

However this is not to say that the remaining motivational strategies are not used, goal setting can be another effective motivational trick.

Many athletes use the SMART rule in order to achieve their goals or as a way of setting out how to achieve them.

S – Stands for specific, thus we must make the goal specific to what we want to achieve, to simply say "I want to win a gold medal" is too big of a goal (long term).

M – Stands for measurable; make sure the goal is able to be reached easily "I want to run 100m in under 11 seconds"

A – Stands for, agreed, this is when another member of your team or coach can agree that the goal set is good and you are happy with it if not it must be changed.

R – Stands for realistic, this is a goal that can be achieved and is not an unrealistic goal, and you are capable of it.

T – Stands for time, what type of time phase do you have, have you set yourself four weeks to reach it or longer or shorter, this must also be accounted for.

Also looking at extrinsic rewards, this again is another effective motivational strategy, however not one that I admire. I think this is because, one can get dependant on external rewards and 'gifts' in order to complete a task successfully, I also feel there's an age limit with this type of motivation. For children I believe this can be an effective drive to succeed, or behave or complete a task correctly, however once an individual understands the task but has learned that if he completes it well he/she does not get an extrinsic reward then this effort and enthusiasm will be lost, thus we must strive to motivate and encourage individuals of all ages with realistic motivational strategies that can help a person/athlete.