

The Effect of Personality and Motivation on Athletic Performance

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is key for athletes to perform at their peak performance. However, not all individuals are motivated in the same way. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the current study is to determine the effect of participant's personality traits and applied intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the performance of a high intensity and low intensity physical task. **METHODS:** Fourteen participants (8 women, 6 men), with a mean (sd) age of 20.14 (0.91) yrs, completed the Ten-Item Personality Inventory to determine personality types (neuroticism, conscientiousness). Participants then performed in a random order, a high intensity physical activity (pacer test) and a low intensity physical activity (10-foot golf putt) under three motivation conditions (control, extrinsic, intrinsic). Pacer test performance was measured as the number of laps completed in the required time of a pre-designed route. Golf performance was measured as the number of putts needed complete a 10-foot putting task. Separate 2 x 2 mixed model ANOVAs were used to determine the effect on performance of motivation in groups that presented high and low level of neuroticism and conscientiousness. **RESULTS:** The mean (sd) putting scores were 4.6 (3.2) and 2.8 (2.5) for high neuroticism and low neuroticism groups with intrinsic motivation and 2.0 (0.71) for both high and low neuroticism with extrinsic motivation. The results indicated that golf scores with extrinsic motivation were significantly lower than with intrinsic motivation ($p = 0.04$). The mean (sd) completed pacer laps were 69.9 (17.7) and 69.2 (19.7) for high conscientiousness and low conscientiousness with intrinsic motivation and 80.8 (14.0) and 59.0 (13.5) for high conscientiousness and low conscientiousness with extrinsic motivation respectively. There was a significant interaction between the level of conscientiousness and type of motivation ($p = 0.02$). **CONCLUSION:** Extrinsic motivation may be more effective for performance in individuals with high levels of neuroticism. Similarly, extrinsic motivation may be more effective for individuals with high levels of conscientiousness.