

The role of time perspectives in affective states' dynamics, motivation, and performance in sport: Verification of a conceptual model

Is focusing on one's goals helpful in enduring a higher training load? Can the way in which an athlete views past events have an effect on the result of the upcoming tournament? Are unpleasant emotions and tension before the competition significantly detrimental to sports performance? Questions like those above are the foundations of the current research project, in which the theoretical assumptions regarding the role Time Perspectives may play in athletes' functioning are to be verified.

Time perspective is a process in which events experienced by an individual are put into temporal frames in order to give the sense of coherence and allow to attribute meaning to those events. Despite time perspective being a highly situational factor, people tend to develop specific tendencies to overuse particular time frames while avoiding focusing on other perspectives. Nowadays seven perspectives are distinguished: Past Positive, Past Negative, Present Hedonistic, Present Fatalistic, Present Eudemonistic, Future Positive and Future Negative.

The main aim of the present project is to investigate how each and every temporal horizon may affect athletes' functioning in sport. Specifically, the hypothesized influence of Time Perspectives on sport performance, motivation, emotional states, progress in training plan's realization and appraisal of one's performance will be the main focus in the current project. Additionally, possible differences in the effects of Time Perspectives in different sports will be closely analyzed.

To ensure high ecological validity, all of the studies planned in the present project will be conducted during important competitions in 'endurance' sports (such as triathlon and cycling) as well as in 'skill-based' sports, in which precision is more important than endurance or pace (shooting, archery). Participants will be asked to fill adequate questionnaires in several moments: before the season starts, during the preparation period, just before the competitions, shortly after the competitions and once again, three days after the competitions.

Based on theoretical advances and already conducted pilot studies, several hypotheses can be formulated. Firstly, one may expect that Time Perspectives may significantly influence the performance, especially if Future Positive, Future Negative and Present Fatalistic perspectives are analyzed. Secondly, in 'skill-based' sports the effects of Time Perspectives on performance may be mediated by the emotional state before the competition, while in 'endurance' sports the same effect may be mediated by motivation. Lastly, it can be hypothesized that differences in Time Perspective profiles may lead to diverse ways of appraising, evaluating and reacting to one's performance.