



Extroversion and Introversion at the Basketball Players and Swimmers of the High-Level Senior in Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is mainly to present at the same time a qualitative and quantitative comparative study of personality traits (extroversion and introversion) in individual and collective sports. To measure those two personality traits, we distinguished 8 dimensions (sociability, excitement, domination, objectivity, process of the thought, aggressiveness, placidity, self-control). The results show that there is no difference between basketball players and swimmers concerning the level of extroversion and introversion. However, only the dimension of self-control presents a significant difference between both groups. Concerning gender, the statistical analysis shows no significant difference. We indicate that girls as well as boys have more tendency towards extroversion.

Keywords: Extroversion, Introversion, Sport, Individual sports (swimming), Team sport (basketball).

1. Introduction

The sports psychology is a science; science is not only an accumulation of facts discovered from detailed observations, but rather a process and a method of learning of the universe by a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical filtering of the knowledge acquired by experience. With the application of science in psychology, our purposes are to describe, explain, predict, and allow the control of behavior. Sport is, as for it, a term more difficult to define. In fact sport has no universally accepted definition. The terms «game», «activity» and «recreation» which constitute its definition are difficult to conceptualize. A thing which is certain all the same is that the collective fascination for sports and physical activity reached proportions until unequalled all over the world.

In the psychology of physical activity; as a new science; either you are a follower, a trainer, an arbitrator, or a parent, you are constantly under the influence of several psychological factors which determine your thoughts and thus your behavior. As especially among the sportsmen, artists as the managers of companies, those who are successful obsessed by their efficiency and the performances they give every day. The study of the human behavior in sports context is complex but logical, that is why the sports psychology intrigues people for several years.

Previously, the psychology of physical education dedicated itself to the study of the driving performance, the driving learning and the acquisition of the sports techniques. This orientation ensued from training and from the definition of the centers of interests of psychologists, essentially centred on the experimental psychology, which had particularly turned to the physical education. More recently, the psychology of sports obviously underwent considerable modifications in its general orientation. We observe a clear evolution towards a more free, more phenomenological approach of the psychology of physical activity and sport. And this evolution is translated by an interest more supported for the behavior of the individual to the detriment of the performance in itself, (Alderman. R, 1990).The accent which we put in our present study on the fundamental aspects of behavior, and not on the ways of the performance joins in the line of this change.

In fact, behavior can be defined as the human reactions of the individual to the internal and external stimuli which it receives. Although it joins a prospect too exclusively centred on the plan stimulus - reaction to the stimulus, this definition is useful as far as it places the behavioral approach of the psychology of sport in a context where all that the individual makes, thinks or feels must be considered.

Furthermore, a behavioral analysis in the field of the psychology of sport thus has to consider in general terms the psychological, social and emotional aspects of the individual personality to replace them in the context of the physical activity and sport. In other words, it has to be an approach directed to needs, centers of interests, attitudes, capacities and motivations of the individual and not an approach exclusively centred on the analysis of its performances.

The first objective of such an approach is to understand why an individual behaves as it makes within the framework of the sports activity. An individual is characterized by their personality; they have something recognizable in their behavior, something which is appropriate for them and which thus shows himself with a certain regularity. The psychology of the personality is centred on the individual differences of behavior: why one is extrovert and the other one is introvert.

2. Methodology

Why do people behave as they make it and how does that echo their performances in the field of the physical activity and sport? .It is important to examine the physical activity and sport from a behavioral point of view for the simple reason that it is necessary to try first to understand why certain people practice sport whereas others abstain from it. We can admit that some are more extrovert or introvert than others. Why has training to be adapted to their own individual desires and to their center of interest?

It is to keep present in mind the fact that nobody is only introvert or only extrovert, that each on the contrary possesses both possibilities of orientation, of which he developed only one as function of adaptation. To the introvert extroversion slumbers somewhere in the background, in a lethargic and embryonic state, and as at the extrovert, introversion leads a similar crepuscular existence. The introvert really has a faculty of extroversion, but he is not conscious of it, because the attention of its consciousness is always centered on the individual.

Our intention is to show if there is a specific psychological profile in every sport. In other words we want to know if we turn to such discipline because we possess beforehand psychological predispositions. Those predispositions are "the individual modes of adaptation" which distinguish a person of another one. However, we are attached to determine how the behavioral characteristics of the individual interact within the framework of the physical activities. So, we insist to know if athletes of the individual sports (swimming) are more extrovert or introvert. In the same way for the followers of team sports (basketball). Furthermore, we attempted to study the effect of gender within the same discipline. In other words, to determine if the men's basketball national team are more extrovert than that of women and also for swimmers. So, we plan to bring some clarifications about the personality traits and sports practice which would be useful for trainers and for athletes (basketball players and swimmers).

- 1) The basketball players would have more tendencies towards the extroversion than the athletes of swimming.
- 2) The men's basketball national team would have more tendencies towards extroversion than that of women.
- 3) The men's swim national team would have more tendencies towards extroversion than the women's swim national team.

2.1. Population of study

Our research aims at a population constituted by the basketball players and the followers of swimming of the high-level senior in Tunisia. Obviously, it is advisable to underline that our population covers both genders (male and female).

2.2 Tools

We based our research on two tools of investigation which are very important: observation and questionnaire. Indeed, we used a personality's questionnaire and we proceeded the direct observation through an observation grid of the behavior of sportsmen.

The personality's questionnaire is elaborated by Freiburg (1979), intended for sportsmen and translated into Arabic language by Alaoui Mohamed Hassan (1998).

This questionnaire is of a closed type, the sportsman is asked to answer by "yes" or "no". It consists of 49 questions; it measures 7 dimensions among which each one is measured in its turn by 7 questions.

The observation grid allows us to collect information according to the observable and measurable units of behavior. In the restricted sense, the observation grid will indicate the result coded by observation followed up by interpretation according to a theoretical frame.

The observation grid measures 4 dimensions. Every dimension consists of sub-dimensions.

-Sociability:(Interpersonal Relations, Group activities).

-Excitement:(Self-control, General Relaxation, Impulsiveness).

-Objectivity: (Relationship of the individual to the object, Process of the thought).

-Domination: (Get the general attention, Desire to influence others, Aggressiveness, Anger).

3. Results and Discussion

In our research, we set as goal the comparative study of extroversion and introversion between two disciplines. First of all, the team sports (the basketball national team: girls and boys; category: senior) and individual sports (the swimming national team: girls and boys; category: senior). Second, we examined the influence of gender on the traits of extroversion and introversion within the same discipline each to its part.

Therefore, we preceded the valid questionnaire of Freiburg, which is intended to sportsmen, and the direct observation through an observation grid. We did not find significant difference, according to the obtained results of the questionnaire, between the basketball players and swimmers. Indeed, the hypothesis N°1 is countered because the players of both disciplines aim towards extroversion. This gives some explanation by the fact that the athlete is of sociable nature and they try to make diverse sport relations with their partners.

The majority of the athletes are extrovert because the physical and sports activity forges at the introvert the characters of sociability, more thorough social integration, impulsiveness, domination, general relaxation, a tendency towards actions than reflections, it is in the same order of the idea that Eysenck, H. (1990) defines the extrovert as follows:" Open, impulsive, without inhibition, practicing activities of group, sociable, pleasant. Liking the excitement and having numerous social contacts, tries his luck, acts on the inspiration of moment, shows himself optimistic, aggressive, easily gets angry, laughs a lot and shows himself incapable to control his feelings ".

Besides, the orientation of our athletes and their tendency towards extroversion are confirmed by the following authors; Eysenck. H.J, Nias. D.K.B and Cox D.N (1981), are the most extrovert individuals which turn to sport. This orientation is, according to Reykowski, J (1982) results from the level of comfortable awakening. It is this need for stimulation that, according to Farley. A (1973) pushes the individual towards the research for the domains which can meet his needs; and sport, next to the anti-social behavior, constitutes the most privileged domain.

Concerning observation, the results show us that the hypothesis N°1 is confirmed; the difference is very significant between the players of both disciplines. We have to say that the basketball players aim towards the extroversion more than swimmers. The results of the questionnaire are not in accordance with those of the observation; this can be explained by the effect of the review or the social desirability as regards to the questionnaire. We can explain this phenomenon by the fact that there exists, next to the fundamental tendency at the individual, a secondary tendency. Where in an introvert we find a secondary extroversion and conversely.

No individual is completely introvert or extrovert, but they have two possibilities of which he developed only one as function of adaptation. The secondary tendency, favored by circumstances, interferes with the primary tendency and dominates it for a moment. That the circumstance disappears, the individual is taken back by the dominant tendency and the extroversion or the secondary introversion does not show itself any more. (Jung, 1950). The way of behaving of a sportsman is determined by the perception which he has of his social situation. On the other hand, in sports environment, the individuals show themselves more persevering and feel the advantage of pleasure when they perceive themselves as being at the origin of the decisions which concern them. Besides the personal purposes of the individuals predict better their performances.

Furthermore, the factors connected to the situation and the essential biological needs play an important role. The motivation which an athlete has to succeed or excel will depend not only on his motive for fulfillment (his desire to excel), but also on the good name of his opponents and on the interest of the public for the competition. The sporting competition, sublimating the aggressive drives becomes an essential factor of the formation of the personality; the situation of confrontation which represents the fight of two teams for the conquest of the ball with the aid of which the player tries to destabilize the report of the strengths in presence in his favor, appears as a possibility to enter rivalry with others, thus to protect himself against the danger of destruction and his division.

This opponent's notion remains a specific factor of the practice of the collective sports games; its influence seems essential, because the player, as a member of the team, confronts directly in the other one and becomes aware of his individual and undivided strength in the exhaustion of all his personal possibilities; this fight and the possible subjection which the other enriches him, represent, a decisive shape of the mastery of his own existence. This fight mediatized by the ball thus offers to every individual the occasion to channel his aggressiveness. The results of the observation concerning the hypothesis N°1 are confirmed by different authors: Thill was able to show, since 1970, that the psychological profiles of the sportsmen really depended on the sports speciality which they practised. By using the personality's questionnaire of Zimmerman, he was able to show, for example; that the short-

distance runners in athletics or players of volleyball turned out much more extrovert, that are faster in their reactions, more impulsive and more sociable than athletes specialized in middle-distance running or in tests of long distance as the marathon. Furnham, A (1990) not only demonstrated that the sportsmen are more fundamental than playing this factor in the orientation of the individual towards the choice of the sports practice. He asserted that this factor is a clergyman of the choice of the sport of performance.

Eysenck, H.J; Nias, D. K. B and Cox, D.N (1981) reported that the collective sports attract the extroverts, while individual sports attract introverts. Concerning the effect gender within the same discipline; the results reveal an unsignificant difference according to the questionnaire and according to the observation. We are capable of noticing that the hypothesis N°2 and the hypothesis N°3 are countered. In a more precise way, we can assert that the effect gender has no influence on the traits of extroversion and introversion within both disciplines: Basketball and swimming. The basketball national team girls and boys aims towards extroversion, as well as the swimming national team girls and boys.

By referring to literature, we find that the critical literature regularly considered the differences of personality traits as the least anticipated. (Belle, 1985; Stewart and Chester, 1982). Abigail Stewart and Mr. Brinton Lykes, 1985; by commenting on a series of studies on the gender that they had published themselves, summarize a major argument: "the differences according to genders have relatively not enough importance in the study of the personality. When we observe disparities according to gender, these are due often not to gender by itself but to the other variables which are associated to it (such as the status, employment or the educational context). When these variables are controlled, the differences according to the gender often disappear (Jaclin, 1981; Riger, 1992).

4. Conclusions

The sporting life contributes of its share to the improvement and the development of the feature of the extraversion at the subject by the effect of their relationship inside this sporting environment. The players choose thus a better integration and cohesion with others. Indeed, the behavioral attitude of the athlete extrovert puts forward a general relaxation which tends towards the satisfaction of the needs for affiliation and assertion of oneself. Since the behavioral characteristics of each athlete appear by the degree of investment in the physical-activity, the sporting extroverts contribute to a better harmony within the group.

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