

CHAPTER 6: Attribution theory, self-efficacy and confidence, and leadership

Practice questions - text book pages 107 - 108

1) a) Figure 6.21 partly illustrates Weiner’s model of attribution. Explain the term attribution using a sporting situation. 2 marks

Answer:

- Attribution means the **reasons** that we give for our behaviour.
- The reasons can be **dispositional** (due to the performer’s mood or feelings) or **environmental**.
- They can affect his or her **motivation**.

b) Explain the terms locus of causality and stability when applied to attribution theory. 4 marks

Answer:

- Locus of **causality** = location of **causes or reasons** for the performer’s behaviour.
 - **Internal causes** are dispositional, the reasons are **from within the group** or an individual and are due to his or her **mood** or state of mind.
 - **External causes** are environmental, the reasons are **out of the individual’s control**.
 - The **stability** dimension refers to how **changeable** the reasons or attributions are over the short term.
 - If **stable** - not very changeable.
 - If **unstable** - very changeable.
- c) Redraw the model and place on it relevant attributions for each of the four boxes. 4 marks

Answer:

- See figure Q6.1.

d) What attributions would you encourage if your team were playing well but often losing? 5 marks

Answer:

5 marks for five of:

- Attribute the losing to **external** factors.
- Attribute the fact of losing to the **superiority of the opposition** or the **task difficulty**.
- Emphasise that **tactics** could be changed.
- Losing could be due to **unlucky** events within the game or competition.
- And team members could be **wrongly treated by officials** if this was the case.
- **Emphasise** the positive aspects of their play.
- **Reinforce** their efforts or commitment.
- **Encourage unstable attributions** such as team work or tactics which could be changed.

2) Using an example from sport, explain how attributions can affect a performer’s future behaviour? 4 marks

Answer:

4 marks for four of:

- Attribution means the **reasons** that we give for our behaviour.
- The reasons can be **dispositional** (due to the performer’s mood or feelings) or **environmental**.
- They can affect his or her **motivation**.
- Attribute the losing to **external** factors.
- Attribute the fact of losing to the **superiority of the opposition** or the **task difficulty**.
- Emphasise that **tactics** could be changed.
- Losing could be due to **unlucky** events within the game or competition.
- And team members could be **wrongly treated by officials** if this was the case.
- **Emphasise** the positive aspects of their play.
- **Reinforce** their efforts or commitment.
- **Encourage unstable attributions** such as team work or tactics which could be changed.

figure 6.21 – Weiner’s model of attribution

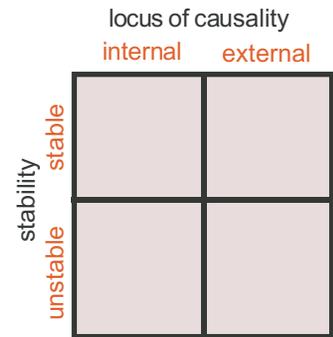
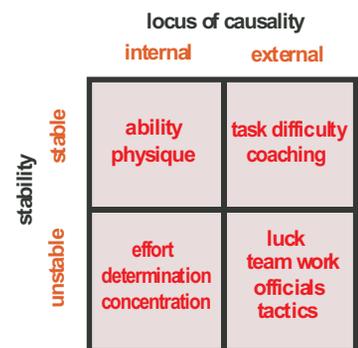


figure Q6.1 – Weiner’s model of attribution



- 3) a) Many young people claim to be hopeless at gymnastics. Suggest three reasons why these youngsters might have a negative attitude to gymnastics.

3 marks

Answer:

3 marks for three of:

- The perceived **high difficulty** or complexity of gymnastics.
- The media highlights the **perceived difficulty** of gymnastics (only expert performers are ever shown on TV).
- The beginner has had **early failure** or a negative past experience at gymnastics.
- The beginner may be fearful of gymnastics as a dangerous activity or one with high risk.
- He or she may have **fear of the unknown** (no past experience).
- The beginner may have **high motive to avoid failure** or have negative personality or trait factors.
- He or she may have been told that he or she is **useless** at gymnastics.
- There may be a race or **gender** or age **constraint** (boys think that it's a girls' sport or there is peer group pressure against the activity).
- He or she may **attribute** (attribution theory) past failure to lack of ability (I tried it before and failed).
- The beginner may have **performance goals** (to achieve a complex move) rather than a learning goal (to achieve a satisfaction through learning something which is achievable).

- b) What is meant by learned helplessness (LH) and how is it caused?

3 marks

Answer:

- LH is a **lack of motivation** due to a feeling of hopelessness.
- LH can be **specific** (to a single sport or activity) or **global** (to all sport).
- LH is caused by **reinforcement of failure**.
- If LH is reinforced by the high status of others who are succeeding, then new peers can be found who are roughly equal in ability.
- Previous experiences are perceived as failing and are internally attributed.

- c) How would you attempt to attract beginners to a gymnastics class, and then change any negative attitudes?

4 marks

Answer:

One mark given for any description of a strategy to attract newcomers:

- Open days or **advertising** or **displays**, which portray a positive image, using desirable **role models** and so on.

Three marks given for changing attitudes:

- The coach may **attribute** early failures to **controllable factors**.
- Attribution retraining or 'you can put right what went wrong'.
- The coach could explain early failure.
- The coach would give **early success experiences**.
- And redefine success.
- By stressing **personal improvement** (or health or fitness or image) rather than competition.
- Make the activity enjoyable (coach must have a positive personality to encourage this).

- 4) Those who achieve little in sport often attribute their failure to factors outside their control and learned helplessness can result.

Using examples from sport, explain what is meant by learned helplessness and identify how self-motivational techniques may help to limit the effects of learned helplessness.

6 marks

Answer:

6 marks for six of:

- **Learned Helplessness** (LH) is a negative feeling of **hopelessness**.
- This perceived inadequacy has arisen from **previous failure**.
- This **failure** if reinforced is more likely to lead to LH.
- **Global LH** is the feeling of hopelessness in all sport.
- **Specific LH** is the feeling of hopelessness in a **particular** activity.
- **Imagery or visualisation** of success may help.
- Set achievable **short-term goals**.
- Raise **self-esteem** by having more self-belief.
- Somatic **stress management** or relaxation.
- Meditation to mentally practise **success**.

5) a) What is meant by the term self-efficacy when applied to sports psychology?

1 mark

Answer:

- **Self-efficacy** is the level of self-confidence an individual has in a given situation (also called state confidence).

b) Bandura suggested that self-efficacy is influenced by four factors. Identify and apply these factors to a sport of your choice.

8 marks

Answer:

8 marks for eight of:

- **Performance accomplishment** which means prior success.
- For example, a hockey pass successfully completed would tend to increase self-efficacy the next time a pass was expected.
- **Vicarious Experience**, which is seeing others of similar standard successfully complete task.
- This is modelling of a task by someone else - seeing the task performed successfully by someone else can increase self-efficacy of the observer.
- **Verbal Persuasion** or encouragement by others.
- This can be by a coach or significant other shouting encouragement from the sidelines during a game.
- Such a tactic can include deception - in which a player is encouraged in spite of faults.
- **Emotional Arousal** which is influenced by level of anxiety.
- For example, feeling anxious before a game can raise arousal and increase or decrease self-efficacy.
- This can also affect and be affected by motivation and determination of the player.
- A more highly motivated (determined) player will have higher arousal and greater self-efficacy when faced with a task such as attempting to beat a favoured team at hockey.

c) As a coach of a sports team, how would you raise an individual's level of self-efficacy?

4 marks

Answer:

- Ensure the performer experiences **success**.
- Show the performer a **model** of similar age or ability being successful.
- **Encourage** the performer or persuade the performer that success is attainable.
- **Calm** the performer down if anxiety is high.

6) How can self-concept affect performance in a sporting situation?

6 marks

Answer:

- The term **self-concept** is a general term used to refer to how someone thinks about, evaluates or **perceives themselves**.
- To be **aware of oneself** is to have a concept of oneself.

The self-concept has three different components:

- The view you have of yourself (**self-image**).
- How much value you place on yourself (**self-esteem** or self-worth).
- What you wish you were really like (**ideal-self**).
- **Self-esteem** should be based on who you are as a person instead of how well you can perform in your sport.
- Or how high you go in a sporting career.
- If you take away the part of you who is an athlete, how would you describe yourself?
- What are your **personal characteristics** that describe you?
- This is what self-esteem should be based on.

7) Drawing on your knowledge and understanding of sports psychology, examine the theories and methods that you might use to raise the levels of confidence of a sports performer. Illustrate your answer with practical examples. 15 marks

Answer:

3 marks for definitions and introduction:

- **Confidence** is a key element of mental preparation for sports performance.
- **Confidence** includes self-confidence or a feature of a sportsperson's attitude towards his or her sporting activity.
- And **self-efficacy** which is a situation-specific form of self-confidence.
- **Sport confidence** is the level of belief a person has in his/her ability to be successful at sport.
- Confidence arouses **positive emotions**, facilitates concentration and enables the performer to focus on the important aspects of the task.

4 marks for theories:

- **Bandura's self-efficacy** theory states that self-efficacy predicts actual performance when skill and motivation are equal, as between yourself and your opponent.
- If you are as motivated and skilful as your opponent whoever has the highest self-efficacy will win.
- **Self-efficacy** can be improved by following Bandura's four component model:
- **Performance accomplishments**, the performer would use past good performances which have the most powerful effect on self-efficacy.
- **Vicarious experiences** show the performer a demonstration of the required skill. This will persuade the performer that the task is achievable.
- **Verbal persuasion**, others would verbally encourage the performer that he has the ability to succeed.
- **Emotional arousal**, a coach or significant other would get the performer to feel confident about his level of arousal and be able to alter the level of arousal to achieve the optimal level.
- **Vealey** used self-confidence and self-efficacy theories to develop a specific model of confidence in sport.
- According to Vealey **sport confidence** can be assessed when the following factors are taken into account:
- **Trait sport confidence** or the level of sport confidence a performer usually has.
- **Competitive orientation** or the perceived opportunity to achieve a performance or outcome goal.
- **State sport confidence** or the level of sports confidence a performer has in a specific sporting situation.
- **Trait sport confidence** and competitive orientation are used as predictors of the confidence of a performer in any sporting situation.
- For example, 'I feel confident in taking part in a penalty shoot out' (state sport confidence).
- 'I feel generally confident in taking penalties' (trait sport confidence).
- 'I am motivated by the opportunity to score winning goals' is an example of competitive orientation.
- Vealey also related **attribution theory** to sport confidence.
- Attributing **success** to factors like ability and effort will increase a performer's sport confidence.
- By increasing the performer's future expectancy of success.

4 marks for critical evaluation of application of methods:

- **Coaches** should realise that performers are individuals and have different levels of trait confidence and different competitive orientations.
- **Performer** should draw on and learn from **past experiences**.
- Coach and performer should ensure adequate **preparation**.
- Performer should be highly **motivated**.
- Performer should **control arousal** level under pressure.
- Coach and performer should carefully select **achievable goals**.
- Performer should focus on **successful personal performance** and not winning.
- Performer should not be **over-confident** or **under-confident** – both will lead to a disappointing outcome.

3 marks for recognition of confidence traits for the elite performer as an aid to raising performer's confidence:

- **Males** have a higher sport confidence than females.
- **Elite performers** have high sport confidence.
- **Elite sporting males** have the same level of sport confidence as elite sporting females.
- Therefore elite sporting females are less affected by traditional female stereotyping and roles.
- Elite performers are more **performance orientated**, which means that their feelings of confidence are based more on how well they perform whether they win or lose.

1 mark for conclusion:

- Confidence is a very significant aspect of **mental preparation** for sport performance.
- It is important that performers are made aware of psychological strategies that will **enhance self-belief** in their ability to be successful in sport.

8) a) How does self-efficacy explain performance?

4 marks

Answer:

4 marks for four of:

- **Self-efficacy** is the level of self-confidence an individual has in a given situation (also called state confidence).
- Self efficacy is a **specific** form of self confidence, it is specific to a person's chosen sport.
- She might be highly **confident** at netball, and play for a top team, but not so confident at badminton.
- So this person has high self-efficacy at netball, but low self-efficacy at badminton.
- This can also affect and be affected by **motivation** and **determination** of the player.
- A more highly motivated (determined) player will have higher **arousal** and greater self-efficacy when faced with a task such as attempting to beat a favoured team at hockey.

b) Describe each of the sections of self-efficacy theory?

8 marks

Answer:

- **Performance accomplishment** which means prior success.
- For example, a hockey pass successfully completed would tend to increase self-efficacy the next time a pass was expected.
- **Vicarious Experience**, which is seeing others of similar standard successfully complete task.
- This is modelling of a task by someone else - seeing the task performed successfully by someone else can increase self-efficacy of the observer.
- **Verbal Persuasion** or encouragement by others.
- This can be by a coach or significant other shouting encouragement from the sidelines during a game.
- Such a tactic can include deception - in which a player is encouraged in spite of faults.
- **Emotional Arousal** which is influenced by level of anxiety.
- For example, feeling anxious before a game can raise arousal and increase or decrease self-efficacy.

c) Provide a sport-based example of self-efficacy theory.

3 marks

Answer:

- She might be highly **confident** at netball, and play for a top team, but not so confident at badminton.
- So this person has high self-efficacy at netball, but low self-efficacy at badminton.
- A more highly motivated (determined) player will have higher **arousal** and greater self-efficacy when faced with a task such as attempting to beat a favoured team at hockey.

9) a) What is meant by a leader and what sort of qualities would you expect to see in a leader within the context of sport?

4 marks

Answer:

- A leader is one who can influence the behaviour of others towards a set goal.

3 marks for three of: qualities of a leader:

- **High ability** or knowledge levels.
- Good **communicator** or socially adept.
- **Enthusiastic** or good motivator.
- Has **respect** for group members.
- **Charisma** or naturally a leader.
- Has a **repertoire of styles**.

b) Using psychological theories describe how an individual becomes a leader.

4 marks

Answer:

- The individual is **born** a good leader, or has innate characteristics which make him or her a good leader.
- The leader has **learned** leadership behaviour via social learning.
- The leader has **copied behaviour** from others of high status.
- The leader has **emerged** via group agreement.
- The leader has been **prescribed** via an external agent (a governing body or team management).

10) a) Name three leadership styles.

3 marks

Answer:

- **Autocratic** or authoritarian or task-oriented.
- **Democratic** or person-oriented.
- **Laissez Faire** or passive style.

b) What factors should be taken into consideration when deciding upon which leadership style to adopt?

6 marks

Answer:

6 marks for six of:

- **Size** of group.
- **Large group:** task-oriented leader. **Small group:** democratic leader.
- **Nature of group** or hostility of group or group conservatism.
- **Personality** of the leader or confidence of leader.
- The **experience** of the leader.
- The **danger** presented by the situation.
- The **importance** of the event.
- **Time** factors.
- The **complexity** of the task.
- The **expectation** of others.

11) Fiedler's Contingency Model suggests that the effectiveness of a leader can change depending on the situation.

Use sporting examples to explain this theory.

4 marks

Answer:

Sporting examples must be used in this answer.

- **Task-orientated leaders** are more effective at the extremes of a game situation.
- This applies to the most or least favourable circumstances.
- For example, in a tough or important game which is a difficult task, the leader has to take control and ignore feelings.
- Also, when playing against weaker opposition (a most favourable situation), the captain needs to make sure the team pulls together and stays focussed and motivated.

- **People-orientated leaders** are more effective in moderately favourable circumstances.
- This means that during a match against equally matched opposition (or a difficult match at which nothing much is at stake), the captain has to cajole individuals in the team and relate to their specific strengths and weaknesses.

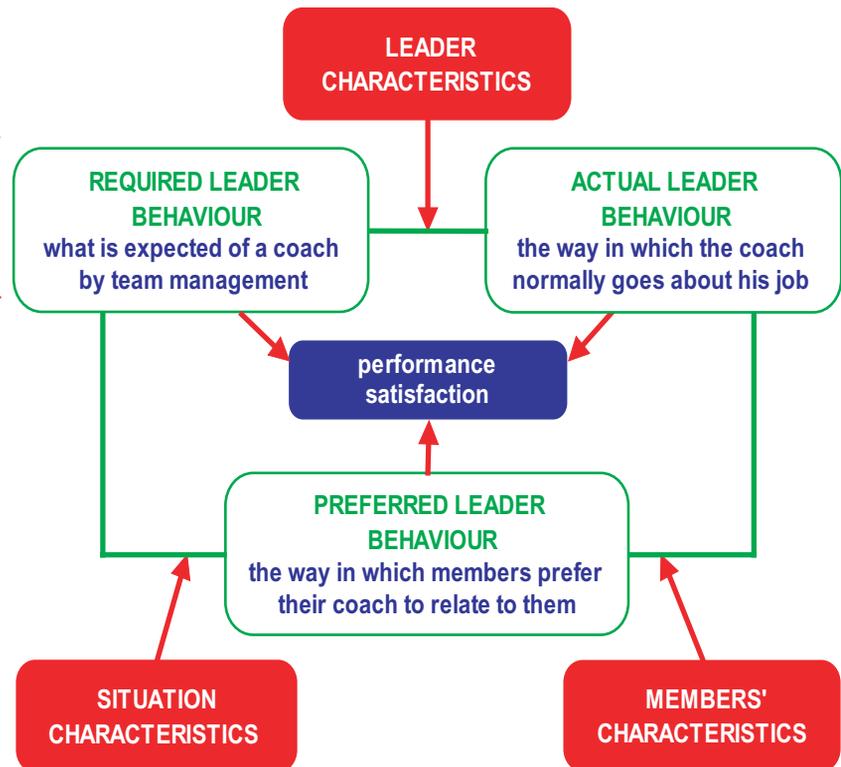
12) Look at figure 6.22 of Chelladurai's multidimensional model of leadership.

- a) Explain each part of the model using examples from sport. 5 marks

Answer:

- The model predicts that **behaviour** is dependent on a leader.
- The model predicts that **satisfaction** from performance is dependent on a leader.
- The model predicts that behaviour and satisfaction from performance depend on **leader characteristics** and other factors.
- **Situational** characteristics (pressure of a game or crowds) affect leadership relationships.
- **Leadership** characteristics (the type of person the leader is, his or her personality, temperament, experience).
- **Member** characteristics with reference to the group or individual involved (personalities or cohesion or experience or expertise or beliefs).

figure 6.22 – Chelladurai's multidimensional model



- b) Behaviour of the group associated with leadership can be viewed from three perspectives. Briefly name and explain each of these perspectives. 5 marks

Answer:

- **Prescribed** behaviour, what does the situation require a leader to do (explained through a sporting example)?
- **Actual** behaviour, what the leader actually does in a situation which may be rational or accountable.
- **Preferred** behaviour, what style of leadership does the group want (autocratic or democratic)?

- c) Discuss the statement 'Good leaders are born not made', and explain whether you agree or disagree in the light of psychological theory. 5 marks

Answer:

- **Trait theory.**
- This is the great man or person theory.
- As opposed to:
 - Situation or **interaction** theories.
 - Behaviour is a function of **person** and the **environment** (or $B = f(P, E)$).
 - **Environmental** or behavioural influences can be associated with leadership.
 - Being taught how to **communicate**.
 - **Learning** through one's **social interactions** or environmental influences or upbringing or education how to be a leader.

Other supporting comments:

- Personality characteristics associated with leadership.
- Having the ability to perceive relationships.