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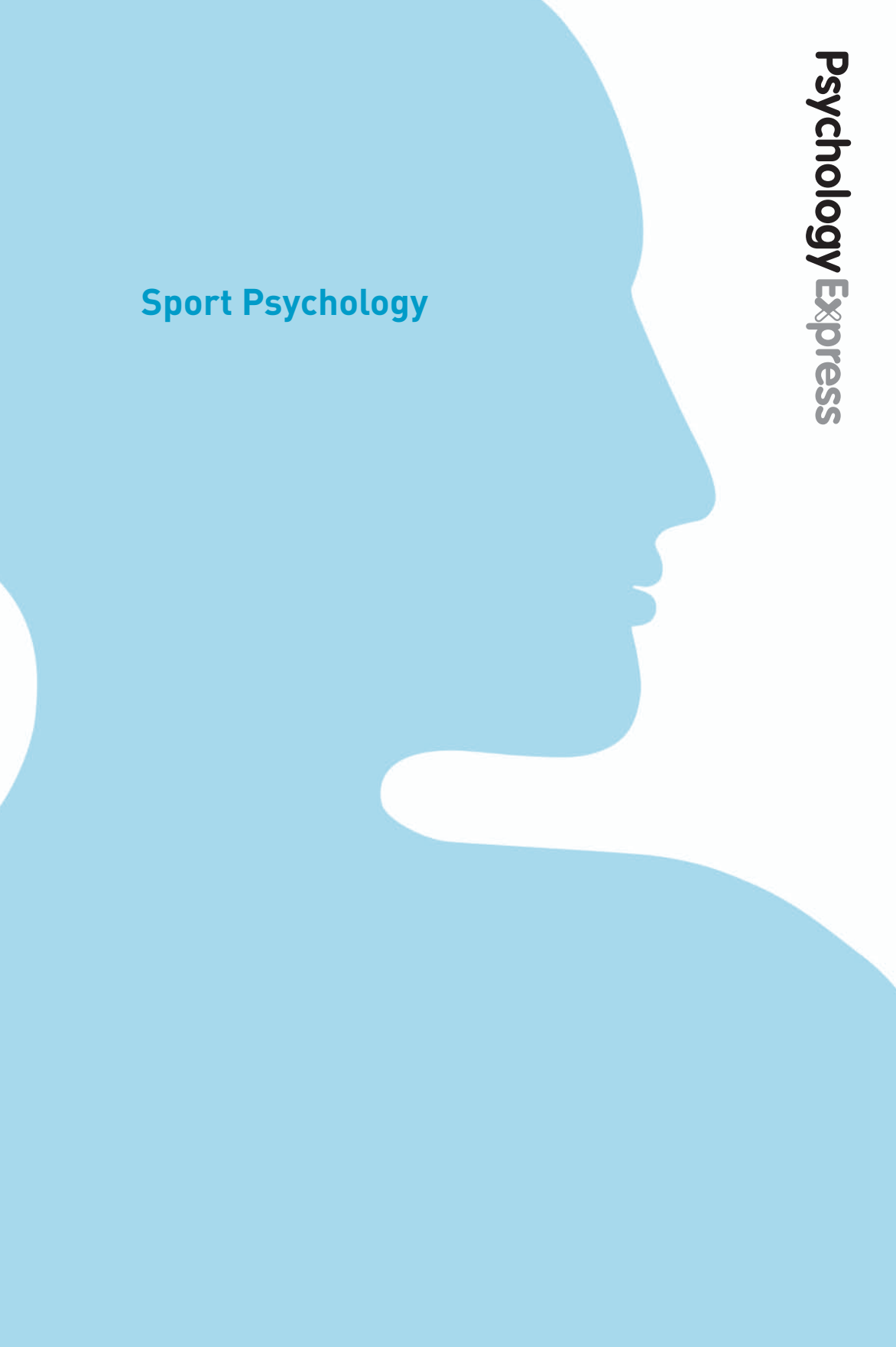
Sport Psychology

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Sport Psychology



Make your answer stand out

Well-written answers follow a logical structure. Open your answer with a brief description of what will follow for the reader. This allows the reader to follow your argument, flowing carefully from one key point to the next. Watch for non sequiturs in your writing. These are arguments in which the conclusion does not follow from its premises. You can demonstrate your knowledge of the chosen models/theories by presenting examples of recent studies that have tested components of these models. It can be useful to describe the sample used in the study, the general procedures used, and the main findings. A brief description of a study might only take a few lines of text but it will demonstrate to an examiner that you have read critically into the area.

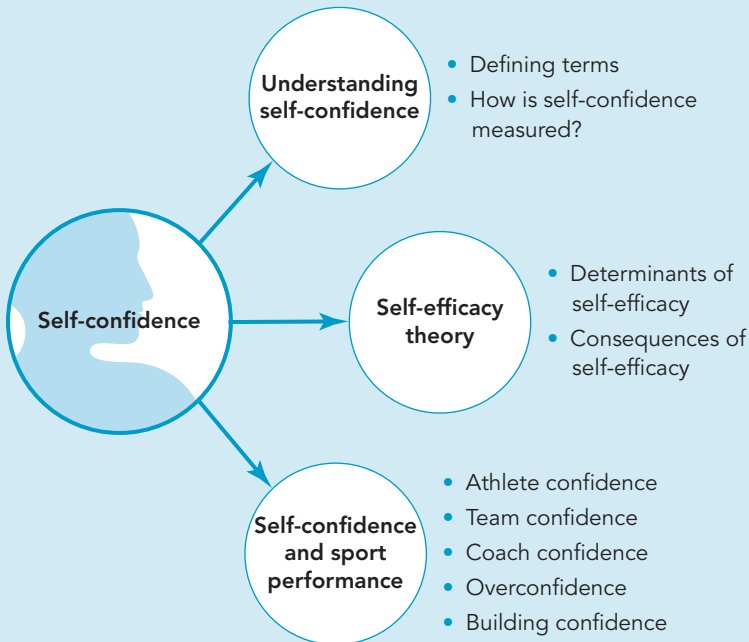
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- Prepare more effectively for exams and assignments using the answer guidelines for questions from this chapter.
- Test your knowledge using multiple choice questions and flashcards.
- Improve your essay skills by exploring the You be the marker exercises.

Notes

Notes

Self-confidence



A printable version of this topic map is available from
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Introduction

The US athlete Carl Lewis once said, 'If you don't have confidence, you'll always find a way not to win'. As this quotation illustrates, most professional athletes recognise that to be successful in sport you must have exceptional self-belief. Self-confidence is something that varies considerably within people (across situations) and between people. It is therefore unsurprising that self-confidence has been one of the most heavily researched topics in the social psychology of sport. This chapter considers the various factors that might affect a person's self-confidence and how self-confidence can affect the way we feel, think and behave when approaching and participating in motivated performance situations. The key areas we cover are self-efficacy theory, psychological skills to develop or control self-confidence, the relative importance of self-confidence for peak performance, self-confidence among team sport athletes, self-confidence among sport coaches, and how overconfidence might on occasions lead to negative performance consequences.



Revision checklist

Essential points to revise are:

- ☐ What is meant by the term 'self-efficacy'
- ☐ The antecedents and consequences of self-efficacy
- ☐ How we can measure self-confidence and self-efficacy in sport
- ☐ The reciprocal nature of the confidence–performance relationship
- ☐ How collective efficacy and coaching efficacy can affect sport performance
- ☐ How to build self-efficacy in sport performers

Assessment advice

- Self-confidence represents a major field of research inquiry in sport. Therefore, we are only able to cover the basics in this chapter. If a particular topic or relationship that you think is important has not been described here, make sure you follow up on the suggested readings.
- Although it is important to have an understanding of the four determinants of self-efficacy, you also need to be aware of the relative importance of each one, be able to define each one with examples, and be able to describe how several techniques can be used to manipulate each one.
- Be aware that research showing a significant relationship between self-confidence and performance will not necessarily address causality. Although it may be confidence affecting sport performance, it could just as easily be performances affecting self-confidence.

- When outlining the research on confidence and sport performance it can be useful to describe how athlete confidence, coaching confidence and team confidence can each have different effects on performance, and to provide examples to illustrate your points.

Sample question

Could you answer this question? Below is a typical essay question that could arise on this topic.



Sample question

Essay

To what extent has self-efficacy theory advanced our understanding of sport performance? Critically discuss with reference to theoretical models and empirical evidence.

Guidelines on answering this question are included at the end of this chapter, whilst guidance on tackling other exam questions can be found on the companion website at www.pearsoned.co.uk/psychologyexpress

Understanding self-confidence

Confidence is something that is familiar to us all. We have all been in situations where we have felt unprepared and unconfident as well as situations where we have felt relaxed and very confident. When people talk about confidence they will often use terms such as self-belief, self-control, high expectations and even self-efficacy. However, in psychological circles different terms can often have different meanings and therefore it is important to be aware how one term differs from another.

Defining terms

Students are often unclear about how self-confidence differs from another commonly used term – *self-efficacy*. According to Bandura (1997), 'perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (p. 3). To most people, this definition would appear to be describing what laypeople refer to as self-confidence. Bandura (1997) does attempt to distinguish self-efficacy from self-confidence by describing self-confidence as a 'strength of belief but does not necessarily specify what that certainty is about' (p. 382). However, this definition of self-confidence does not reflect how people typically use the term and is not widely accepted among researchers. Most researchers consider self-efficacy and self-confidence as the same construct; however, 'confidence is a catchword used

in sports rather than a construct embedded in a theoretical system' (Bandura, 1997, p. 382). Because sport-based research is often grounded within *self-efficacy theory*, researchers will often use the term 'self-efficacy' in place of 'self-confidence'. Nevertheless, conceptually the two terms are interchangeable.

Perceived self-efficacy should, however, be distinguished from other constructs such as *self-esteem* and *outcome expectations*. Perceived self-efficacy is a judgement of capability and self-esteem is a judgement of self-worth. They are entirely different phenomena. Self-efficacy also differs from performance expectations. Self-efficacy is a judgement of capability to execute given types of performance, whereas outcome expectations are judgements about the outcomes that are likely to flow from such performances. However, the outcomes that people anticipate depend largely on their judgements of how well they will be able to perform in given situations (Bandura, 2006). Therefore a person's expectations and self-efficacy beliefs are strongly related.

How is self-confidence measured?

There are a number of assessment methods available to researchers to quantify a person's self-confidence. Self-report measures are the most common, given the difficulties in judging another person's self-confidence, but these are heavily influenced by social desirability effects. That is, sport performers are often reluctant to report that they have low self-confidence, particularly before an important competition. Despite this limitation, self-report measures are generally deemed more accurate than other-report measures or observation techniques.

A number of questionnaire assessments have been used to assess confidence in sport. The CSAI-2 (Martens et al., 1990), CSAI-2R (Cox, Martens, & Russell, 2003) and State Sport Confidence Inventory (Vealey, 1986) assess general competition self-confidence, and include questions such as 'I am confident about performing well' that are rated on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much so). Although the specificity of efficacy measures depends upon the level the researcher wishes to generalise (Bandura, 1997), sport-specific measures are generally preferred to general measures of confidence and show greater predictive validity in athletic samples.

Bandura (2006) outlined that self-efficacy varies in *level*, *generality* and *strength*. People can differ in the difficulty of tasks that they believe they are capable in performing (level), efficacy beliefs associated with one activity can be generalised to similar ones within the same activity domain (generality), and people can differ in their confidence in attaining a given level of performance (strength). Measures of efficacy strength are most common in sport and exercise research. Self-efficacy strength is usually measured as a percentage and will often focus on a number of performance qualities essential for success in a given sport. For instance, a self-efficacy measure in golf might include an assessment of confidence in the following areas: driving off the tee, recovering from mistakes, putting, pitching/chipping, maintaining concentration, escaping from bunkers, approach shots to green and emotional control.