

The Effects of a Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention on a Sport Performer's Appraisals of Organizational Stressors

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of a cognitive-behavioral based intervention on appraisals of organizational stressors in a sport performer who typically experienced threat or loss appraisals. In addition, this study aimed to evaluate whether changes in the performer's appraisals contributed to desirable changes in emotions and subjective performance satisfaction. A case study research design was adopted. One high-level field hockey player participated in the intervention, which consisted of four phases that were conducted over a period of 26 weeks. Phase I included rapport-building and observation, Phase II involved baseline monitoring of appraisals, emotions, and subjective performance satisfaction, Phase III included the education and acquisition of a cognitive restructuring technique, and Phase IV entailed the integration of the technique within actual sport performance. A three months post-intervention follow-up was conducted to assess the participant's retention of the intervention effects. Reduced threat and loss appraisals and elevated challenge appraisals were observed immediately after Phase III had been introduced. In addition, pleasant emotions increased and unpleasant emotions were reduced. Subjective performance satisfaction increased throughout the intervention. Social validation immediately post-intervention and at the end of the follow-up phase indicated adaptive changes in each of the outcome variables. To conclude, challenge appraisals and pleasant emotions appear to be linked with increased subjective performance satisfaction. Cognitive restructuring represents a promising technique for improving high-level athletes' appraisals and thus, sport psychologists should examine the effectiveness and efficacy of this technique with other populations in order to develop a robust evidence base for appraisal optimization in sport.