

Motivation in Football (Part 1)

The components of motivation

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Coaches and managers at all levels are intrigued by one question - how can I motivate my players and team to achieve their maximum potential?

In order to know how to motivate, it is essential that the coach understands the components of motivation and how these fit into a club environment.

Extremely high levels of motivation are necessary to repeatedly produce the kind of high quality training sessions and match activity that are required for elite football performance. Furthermore, maintaining motivation throughout the duration of a tough season, during periods of enforced rest through injury, and following setbacks in competition and training, may be a characteristic that distinguishes elite performers from the rest.

Behaviour can be intrinsically motivated, extrinsically motivated or amotivated.

Much of the research into motivation in sport has focused on two general types of motivation, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction and pleasure that can be derived from it, whereas extrinsic motivation pertains to engaging in an activity in order to obtain rewards or avoid punishment. The third type of motivation, amotivation, refers to a lack of intention to participate in the activity. Sports participants tend to report very low levels of amotivation.

There are four types of extrinsic motivation, namely, external, introjected, identified, and

integrated regulation, along with three types of intrinsic motivation (IM), namely, IM to know, IM to experience stimulation, and IM to accomplish things. Along with amotivation, this makes a total of eight types of motivation. The motives are proposed to lie on a self-determination continuum ranging from lower to higher degrees of self-determination.

A review of the latest research into motivation can go a long way towards helping both player development and team success. This article (comprising two parts) introduces some of the most up-to-date research on motivation and investigates the causes and consequences of motivation, and more importantly the players' perceptions of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which are deemed to be positively associated with enhanced levels of self-motivation.

The Nature of Motivation

Motivation concerns energy, initialisation, direction and persistence - all aspects of activation and intention. In the real world, motivation is highly valued because of its consequences. Motivation produces. It is therefore of preeminent concern to those in roles such as manager teacher, coach and parent, that involve mobilising others to act.

People are motivated to act by very different types of factors, with highly varied experiences and consequences. Players can

genuinely value an activity or participate because there is a strong external coercion. They can be urged into action by curiosity and interest or by a bribe. They can behave from a sense of personal commitment to excel or from a fear of being surveilled. These contrasts between cases of having internal motivation versus being externally pressured are not uncommon.

Comparisons between players whose motivation is authentic (literally, self-authored or endorsed) and those who are merely externally controlled for an action, typically reveal that the former, relative to the later, have more interest, excitement, and confidence, which in turn is manifest both as enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity, heightened vitality, self-esteem and general well-being. This transpires even when the players have the same level of perceived competence or self-efficacy for the activity. In addition, being intrinsically motivated leads individuals to experience pleasant emotions and to feel free and relaxed. They experience little tension or pressure and they are focused on the task.

There are two major components of motivation. The first deals with behaviour performed for itself, in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction inherent in the activity, and is termed intrinsic motivation. This form of motivation is likely to occur when the activity is interesting, challenging, and provides players with clear feedback and freedom with which to perform the task. Players who stay behind after training to practice various skills are representative of individuals who are intrinsically motivated. At Crystal Palace FC, young Northern Ireland international Wayne Carlisle, would often stay out once training had finished to continue practicing. At the same time, sport and physical activity can also be engaged in for reasons that lie "outside" the activity, as a means to an end and not for its own sake. For instance, Academy players may play on team

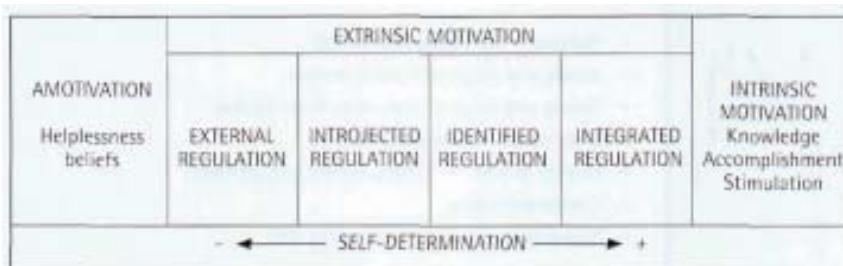


Figure 1 The self-determination continuum

because it brings them popularity at school or because it pleases their parents. This type of motivation, which involves engaging in an activity in order to achieve some separable goal, such as receiving something positive or avoiding something negative, has been called extrinsic motivation. Players who compete in order to win trophies and medals represent one instance of extrinsically motivated individuals.

Despite the observation that elite performers' primary motivation for involvement in sport may be either intrinsic or extrinsic, it appears most unlikely that they would be able to sustain high levels of motivation throughout all the setbacks and "lean periods" that they appear to experience if they did not have high levels of intrinsic motivation for their sport. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that elite performers do indeed sustain high levels of intrinsic motivation throughout their careers.

Intrinsic Motivation

The fact that most people show considerable effort and commitment in their lives appears to be more normal than exceptional, suggesting some very positive and persistent features of human nature. People are curious, self-motivated, inspired, striving to learn, extend themselves, master new skills and apply their talents. It is also clear that the human spirit can be diminished or crushed, and that individuals sometimes reject growth and responsibility.

Perhaps no single phenomenon reflects the positive potential of human nature as much as intrinsic motivation, the inherent tendency to seek novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn. From the time of birth, healthy children are active, inquisitive, curious, and playful, even in the absence of specific rewards. The construct of intrinsic motivation describes this natural inclination towards assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration that is so essential to cognitive and social development, and that represents a principle source of enjoyment and vitality throughout life.

Yet, despite the fact that humans are generously endowed with intrinsic motivation tendencies, the evidence is now clear that the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent inclination requires supportive conditions as it can be fairly readily disrupted by various non-supportive conditions. Ryan and Deci's (2000) theory of intrinsic motivation does not concern what causes intrinsic motivation, rather, it examines the conditions that elicit and sustain, versus subdue and diminish, this innate tendency.

Intrinsic motivation (IM), therefore, refers to engaging in an activity purely for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from doing that activity. When a player is intrinsically

motivated he or she will perform the behaviour voluntarily, in the absence of material rewards or external constraints. Players who go to practice because they find it interesting and satisfying to learn more about their sport, or players who practice their sport for the pleasure of constantly trying to surpass themselves are considered intrinsically motivated toward their sport. Extrinsic factors, such as being rewarded with money for engaging in an interesting activity can lead players to have a lower level of intrinsic motivation compared to non-rewarded players. Positive performance feedback increases intrinsic motivation whereas negative performance feedback decreases intrinsic motivation. IM stems from the innate psychological needs of competence and self-determination. Thus, activities that allow individuals to experience feelings of competence and self-determination will be engaged in because of IM. Three types of IM have been identified as IM to know, IM to accomplish things, and IM to experience stimulation. Individuals who favour one type of intrinsic motivation over another may prefer participating in sports activities that are congruent with such an orientation

Intrinsic Motivation to Know

IM to know relates to constructs such as exploration, curiosity, learning goals, IM to learn, and the need to know and understand. Thus it can be defined as performing an activity for the pleasure and the satisfaction that one experiences while learning, exploring, or trying to understand something new. For instance, athletes are intrinsically motivated to know when they try to discover new training techniques for the sheer pleasure they experience while learning something new. Players who play because they enjoy finding out more about the game display intrinsic motivation to know.

Intrinsic Motivation Toward Accomplishments

IM toward accomplishments can be defined as engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction experienced when one attempts to surpass oneself or accomplish or create something. The focus is on the process of accomplishing something and not the end result. This concept relates to constructs such as effectance motivation, mastery motivation, and intrinsic challenge. Trying to master certain difficult training techniques in order to experience personal satisfaction represents an example of intrinsic motivation to accomplish things in the sport domain.

Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation

IM to experience stimulation occurs when someone engages in an activity in order to experience pleasant stimulating sensations (e.g. sensory pleasure, aesthetic experiences,

as well as fun and excitement) derived from one's engagement in the activity. Research on the dynamic and holistic sensation of flow on the feelings of excitement in IM, on aesthetic stimulating experiences, and peak experiences is representative of this form of IM. Players who participate in their sport in order to live exciting experiences are intrinsically motivated to experience stimulation.

Extrinsic Motivation

Contrary to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation (EM) pertains to a wide variety of behaviours that are engaged in as a means to an end and not for their own sake. Being extrinsically motivated can lead to players feeling tense and pressured, particularly if the goal they aspire to is outside their control. Social approval, for instance, depends on others and is, therefore, to a large extent, outside of one's control. It was originally thought that EM referred to non-self-determined behaviour, behaviour that could only be prompted by external contingencies (e.g., rewards). More recently however, it has been proposed that there are, in fact, four different types of extrinsic motivation that can be ordered along a self-determination continuum. From lower to higher levels of self-determination they are: external regulation, introjection, identification, and integration.

External Regulation

External regulation refers to behaviour that is controlled by external sources, such as material rewards or constraints imposed by others. Players who participate in sport in order to receive praise from their coach or because they feel urged to do so by their parents are motivated by external regulation. In this case, the sport is performed not for fun, but to obtain rewards (e.g., praise) or to avoid negative consequences (e.g., criticisms from parents).

Introjection

With introjection, the formerly external source of motivation has been internalized such that its actual presence is no longer needed to initiate behaviour. Instead, these behaviours are reinforced through internal pressures such as guilt or anxiety. It is as if players replace the external source of control by an internal one and start imposing pressure on themselves to ensure that the behaviour will be emitted. Players who participate in sports because they feel pressure to be in good shape for aesthetic reasons, feel embarrassed or ashamed when they are not in best form, or feel guilty and anxious if they miss training, represent examples of introjected regulation. Motivation is internal but not truly self-determined.