

Cultural Psychology in Sports: How Understanding Culture May Help Sports Psychologists Augment Athletic Performance

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Abstract : Sports psychology, as a niche area, has, since the last two decades, found for itself a space within the outer peripheries of the discipline of traditional psychology. It has aimed to understand the many variables that push athletes to enhance their performances. While sociological aspects have been duly represented in academia, little has been written about the role of culture in shaping the psyche of athletes. The impact that cultures of different communities and societies have towards specifics like gender, castes, religion and race and how that helps evolve an individual has not been fully addressed. In the case of Sport, culture has made itself felt in the form of stereotypes, traditional outlooks towards sects and its implication on the engagement with sports. Culture is an environment that an individual imbibes. It is what shapes him, physically as well as mentally. Their nurture and nature both stem from it and depend on it. To realize the linkages between their nurture, nature and sports efficiency, cultural studies must collaborate in scholarship with psychology and practical sports. Cultural sports psychology would allow sports psychologists, coaches and even athletes themselves to understand the behavioural variations that affect their performance. The variations in the performance of athletes from different cultures and countries could be attributed to their socio-political, economic and environmental differences. These cultural influences shape and impact the athlete's behaviour and might lead as a gateway to understanding their skill sets and internal motivational factors. With that knowledge in mind, this paper aims to understand and reflect on how, in the present times of heavy sporting competition, shifting cultural equations and changing world dynamics, it is mandatory to infuse Cultural Studies with Sports Psychology to understand how Sports Psychologists can help and augment the performances of athletes.

Keywords : sporting performance, Asian sports, sports psychology, cultural psychology, society

Conference Title : ICSPSP 2024 : International Conference on Sport Psychology and Sporting Performance

Conference Location : Manila, Philippines

Conference Dates : February 19-20, 2024