

Relationships between pre-competition mood and swimming performance: Test of a conceptual model with an emphasis on depressed mood

Marc A. Janover and Prof. Peter C. Terry,
Department of Psychology, University of Southern Queensland

A conceptual model of mood-performance relationships, which emphasises that the effects of tension and anger on sport performance are moderated by depressed mood, was tested on 354 adolescent swimmers at an inter-schools carnival. Pre-competition mood was assessed using the Profile of Mood States – Adolescents, a 24-item measure of six subscales (anger, confusion, depression, fatigue, tension, vigour). Participants were dichotomised into depressed mood ($n = 122$) and no-depression ($n = 232$) groups. Mood responses were generally more positive among the no-depression group, and interrelationships among mood dimensions were stronger in the depressed mood group. Mood scores accounted for 25% of the variance in swimming performance, which was self-referenced against personal best and target time. A positive vigour-performance relationship and inverse fatigue-performance and confusion-performance relationships were found for both groups. While an inverse tension-performance relationship was found for the overall sample, the relationship was curvilinear among the no-depression group. Anger scores were associated with poor performance for the overall sample, and the hypothesised moderating effect of depressed mood on the anger-performance relationship did not emerge clearly. Findings suggest that the interactive effects of pre-competitive mood states impact upon swimming performance, and that interventions designed to enhance swimming performance should particularly target depressed mood.

Correspondence to:

Marc Janover
janover@usq.edu.au

Peter Terry
terryp@usq.edu.au