AN IDIOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE FLUCTUATION OF APPRAISALS AND COPING DURING A TRAPSHOOTING COMPETITION
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1. INTRODUCTION
Emotions and behaviours are the result of a dynamic, interactive process between individuals’ cognitive appraisals, coping efforts and contextual characteristics (Lazarus, 1999). Athletes use a combination of strategies to deal with the demands of competition (Gaudreau et al., 2001).

Primary cognitive appraisals (threat, loss, challenge and benefit) are thought to be related to how athletes cope with ongoing changes in the person-environment transaction. Positive appraisals (i.e., challenge, benefit) are thought to be associated with positive emotions, while negative appraisals (i.e., threat, loss) are associated with negative emotions.

Purpose:
• To describe fluctuation of emotional states during competition.
• To describe sequences of appraisals and coping mechanisms occurred during competition using an event-sequenceal approach.

2. METHODS

Shooter A
• Veteran, 68 years old
• 4th category (regional level)
• 28 years of experience

Shooter V
• Veteran, 59 years old
• 1st category (International level)
• 30 years of experience

Procedures and Data Analysis
• Affect grid (Russell et al., 1989) after each target (25 targets x 6 sets).
• Delayed verbal report (Ericsson & Simon, 1993) after each set.

• Definition of critical and non-critical periods of competition.
• Coding of Verbal reports
  • Negative Appraisals (NEGA): verbalizations conveying the possibility of future damage occurring as a result of an action or the perception of damage that has already occurred.
  • Positive Appraisals (POSA): verbalizations expressing about the struggle to overcome obstacles or perception of benefits that have occurred.
  • Problem-focused coping (PFC): attempts to primarily manage or alter the problem causing the distress.
  • Emotion-focused coping (EFC): attempts to primarily regulate emotional responses to the problem.
  • Withdrawal (WTH): mental disengagement from the stressful situation.
  • Others: verbalizations that did not fit into the previous categories.

Performance
• Objective: Hit target with the first shot (H); hit target with the second shot (H2); competition after 1st category (International level) does it only in non-critical periods.

3. RESULTS

Figure 1. Fluctuation of hedonic tone (“pleasure”, □) and activation (“arousal”, ▲) (above) and perceived performance (below) after each shot during shooter A’s first competition.

Figure 2. Event-sequence analysis during (a) non-critical, and (b) critical performance periods of shooter A.

Figure 3. Fluctuation of hedonic tone (“pleasure”, □) and activation (“arousal”, ▲) (above) and perceived performance (below) after each shot during shooter’s A first competition.

Figure 4. Event-sequence analysis during critical performance periods of shooter V.

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

• V has higher emotional stability than A (Golden et al., 2004).
• V reports not remembering specific thoughts during non critical performance periods; less information processing associated to positive affects (Illies, 2001).
• During non-critical periods, A deals with threat focusing on the problem; during critical period, he appears to cope less often, but when he does, he focuses on coping with the affective state; Threat (negative appraisal) as a motivational function (Jones & Swain, 1995) vs. increased cognitive workload (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992).
• V does not appraise the missed target negatively; V attempts to use distancing and accepting responsibility, A uses more venting of emotions and self-blame.
• After a hit target, V engages in self-reassurance while A does it only in non-critical periods.
• There is a considerable intra-individual variability as a function of the context.
• An idiographic approach is suggested with a event-sequence analysis of cognitive and emotional processes measured online as it provided more detailed information for individually tailored interventions.

5. REFERENCES