Qualitative methodologies as a vehicle for understanding the emotional process in soccer players

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A descriptive-exploratory investigation with pre-experimental design tried to answer the question how sports performance in competition is influenced by emotions? Lazarus (1991) in the definition of emotion emphasize that, there is only emotion if a relation is established and it is given a meaning to it; the emotional response aims the wellbeing of the person. We consider fifteen emotions (8 negative: anger, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, sadness, envy and jealousy; 7 positive: happiness, hope, relief, gratitude, compulsion and love). Sports performance (SP), which goes beyond the motor performance, considers the process and the result, i.e., considers the entire process of motor execution that begins in the mobilization of the resources of the individual, temporarily adjusted to each one of them which translates a certain degree of motor efficiency - efficiency, understood as the maximum of effectiveness with the minimum of effort - and, culminates in a result.

Two assessing instruments were built – Questionário Emoção e Desempenho Desportivo (QEDD, study 1) and Sistema de Observação do Desempenho Desportivo - (SODD -1, study 3). Interviews were used to identify the emotions’ triggers and which sports performance factors were influenced by those emotions (study 2). Study 4 intended to answer the research question, with two soccer players and data were collected in four different competitions.

For example, player 2 (P2) experienced 83 emotions (28 negative and 55 positive) identified from the QEDD that, during the interviews, reported having influenced the SP, regarding the process. At the psychological level there were 47 competences (63.51%) that were influenced. At the social level there were 7 aspects (9.46%). Twenty technical-tactical skills (TTS; 27.03%) were identified. Curiously, during interviews the athletes speak predominantly of psychological factors having a little significant reference regarding TTS. As opposed to the interview, the observation was the methodology that identified a greater number of behaviours related to TTS (664). For P2 the only observed behaviour, to infer the psychological dimension, was persistence. Although during interviews he does not refer to this behaviour, he identifies a set of psychological factors that relate to persistence as motivation, confidence, concentration, attitude and will, allowing to say that he sought success, acting according to the goals. These data indicates that the attitude of P2 is characterized by the tendency to look for insistently on the achievement of the defined objectives, behaving in a motivated, activated, concentrated, confident, competitive and willing way, indicating his persistence.

For player 1, positive and negative emotions always had a functional effect in sports performance; for player 2, positive emotions had only a functional effect on sports performance, negative emotions had both effects in sports performance (functional and dysfunctional), and some of the studied emotions had no influence in sports performance.

The research allowed to answer, partially, to the problem posed, by the light of the Relational-Cognitive-Motivational Emotional Theory of Lazarus (1991) once we identified some of the mediating variables of the emotional process. It must be kept in mind that the study of emotions is multifactorial and highly complex.

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References