

Operant conditioning usage in a basketball youth team

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Abstract

Background. The need for the continuous improvement of methods for motor skill acquisition has made scientists try to understand the cognitive mechanisms of learning in general. Stimulus-response learning or operant conditioning used in sports environment requires special attention due to the characteristics of the group involved in this type of learning, the identification of the group's needs and affinities for this type of learning being necessary.

Objectives. We aimed to determine whether there was a direct relationship between individual sports performance and the means of application of operant conditioning in sports: a) identification of the group's affinity for certain items and their correlation with the training period; b) development of a possible scheme for the use of items in order to increase sports performance based on the correlation of affinities identified at point a).

Methods. Observation sheets were completed according to the Youth Sports Behavior Assessment System, as well as individual records of the players, from which the percentage of successful shots was extracted.

Results. Following the collection of data, 345 positive reinforcements, 120 negative reinforcements, 465 positive technical instructions and 466 negative technical instructions were obtained. The percentages varied, depending on the athlete and the recording period, from 17% to 69%, with a recorded mean between 36.875% and 50.125%.

Conclusions. The interpretation of the data evidenced a high affinity of the group for all types of reinforcements aimed at preventing some errors. At the same time, a model of correlated functioning between two variables, positive reinforcements and positive technical instructions can be identified from the collected data.

Keywords: operant conditioning, basketball, sport, psychology.