The Task for the Present Social Psychology of Physical Activity, Sport, Athletics, and Physical Education; Realization of its Focus and Originality

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Abstract

"Sport social psychology" (social psychology of physical activity, sport, athletics, and physical education) has met with full recognition as a division of sport psychology. It however remains to be clearly recognized what sport social psychology is. In this article I take up the position that the task for the present sport social psychology is to appreciate its originality. Comparing sport social psychology with its related sciences such as sport sociology, cultural anthropology, and even social psychology, originality of sport social psychology was clarified and discussed.

1) The focus of sport social psychology and the unit of its analysis are individual rather than society, culture, and social system. The individual is influenced by his/her environment, which he/she actively interprets and in which he/she functions. 2) Sport social psychology understands the individual as the social being integrating physical, psychological, and social attributes. Thus the social being in sport social psychology could be most close to the actual human being living in a real world. 3) Sport social psychology is based on physical activity, sport, athletics, and physical education. It does not mean applying social psychology to phenomena in those fields. Instead, sport social psychology attempts to understand the social being functioning in those fields, that is, how the individuals interpret the environment, how they get influenced by their interpretation, and how they react it.

Key words: social psychology of physical activity, sport, athletics, and physical education.