

**Section III: Sport and Society**

Answer ONE question from this section.

**Social Psychology**

8. The diagram shows the kinds of *attributions* thought to be common in sport.

		LOCUS OF CAUSALITY/CONTROL	
		Internal	External
S T A B I L I T Y	Stable	ABILITY	TASK DIFFICULTY
	Unstable	EFFORT/ PRACTICE/ FORM	LUCK

Source: Weiner, 1972

- (a) What are *attributions*? (2 marks)
  - (b) How are emotional reactions thought to be related to the types of attributions made in sport? (7 marks)
  - (c) With reference to sport examples, explain what is meant by the *self-serving bias* in attribution theory. (5 marks)
  - (d) Those who fail in sport may, at some time, experience *learned helplessness*. What is learned helplessness and what role do attributions play in its development? (6 marks)
9. (a) Explain what is meant by the term *group cohesion*. (4 marks)
- (b) Briefly identify **two** methods of measuring the cohesiveness of a sports team. (2 marks)
- (c) “Two heads are better than one.”  
“Too many cooks spoil the broth.”  
Discuss these apparently contradictory statements in relation to sports groups, with specific reference to group size and cohesion. (8 marks)
- (d) Are cohesive groups in sport always more successful? Explain your answer. (6 marks)

8. (a) Attributions are the perceived reasons or causes/equiv; (1 mark)  
 given in response to a particular behaviour or  
 outcome/equiv; (1 mark)

Note: An example might be:-  
 Why did they score against you?  
 Attribution - Luck!

\*\* Allow example as an alternative method of  
 explanation as long as it is clear that the  
 candidate has understood the point.

- (b) The way people attribute outcomes/events in sport have  
 consequences for their emotions (and thoughts/  
 behaviour); (1 mark)

Such emotional reactions are thought to be related to/  
 equiv; (1 mark)  
 the locus of causality/control dimension of attributions;  
 (1 mark)

Internal attributions tend to  
 intensify emotional reactions; (1 mark)  
*e.g. ability / effort;* (1 mark)

External attributions tend to  
 reduce the intensity of emotional reactions; (1 mark)  
*e.g. luck / officials* (1 mark)

These emotional reactions can be either positive or  
 negative; (1 mark)

The importance of the event/ outcome is likely to affect  
 the strength of the emotional reaction; (1 mark)

- (c) self-serving bias is when people attribute successful  
 events/ outcomes to themselves; (1 mark)

and unsuccessful events/ outcomes to others; (1 mark)

**Examples:**

Successful: "I won because I had trained hard"; (1 mark)

Unsuccessful: "I failed to score because the referee  
 was badly positioned"; (1 mark)

The self-serving bias may result from:  
 conscious decisions as people tend to think they are  
 responsible for positive events rather than negative  
 ones; (1 mark)

or, a motivational bias to protect their own self-esteem;  
 (1 mark)

(Mark to a maximum of 5 marks for section c.)

- (d) Learned helplessness is a strong reaction to failure or other negative events; (1 mark)
- the individual gives up in the 'face of failure' (even when success is still possible); (1 mark)
- believing that success is not possible/ controllable; (1 mark)

It is thought attributions can assist in the development of learned helplessness; (1 mark)

since it is the way people think about failure that will affect their subsequent efforts to change the situation; (1 mark)

Attributing failure to lack of ability is thought to be particularly damaging; (1 mark)

This reflects attributions that are internal and stable; (1 mark)

internal attributions reflect self-blame; (1 mark)

but when these are also stable, the individual sees little chance of changing things/equiv; (1 mark)

therefore failure is predicted for the future; (1 mark)

(Mark to a maximum of 6 marks for section d.)

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9. (a) Group cohesion may be defined as:

- a set of forces acting on the members of a group; (1 mark)
- which tends to keep them within the group; (1 mark)
- also involves resistance to group disruption; (1 mark)
- and commitment to group goals; (1 mark)

(b) Alternative methods are:- (candidate to select two);

sociogram,	}	
questionnaire,	}	2 x (1 mark)
observation of group behaviour.	}	

(c) Groups can function successfully or unsuccessfully depending on a number of different factors; (1 mark)

Group size:

Successful groups combine to make a more effective force than an individual; (1 mark)

Disorganised or poorly-led groups; (1 mark)  
may perform worse than smaller groups or individuals; (1 mark)

As a general rule, the larger the group the greater the productivity; (1 mark)  
up to a certain point, beyond which the group becomes too large; (1 mark)  
resulting in the formation of cliques/sub-groups; (1 mark)  
which do not work well together; (1 mark)

Group cohesion:

To be successful, a group needs to be cohesive; (1 mark)  
or have effective leadership; (1 mark)

Conclusion:

\*\* The question invites the candidate to come to some conclusion about the apparently contradictory nature of the two statements.

The obvious conclusion is that 'more heads' are better than one, but only up to a point. After this, cohesion suffers and leads to a 'spoiling of the broth'.

Allow up to 2 marks for an 'argued' concluding statement/observation; do not award marks for simple re-iteration of the preceding points.

(Mark to a maximum of 8 marks for section c.)

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- (d) It has remained unresolved as to whether; (1 mark)  
cohesive groups become successful or successful groups  
develop cohesion; (1 mark)

Generally, research has shown that cohesive groups are  
more successful but there have been exceptions (eg German  
rowing eight, Holmes & Redgrave); (1 mark)  
In these cases joint goal/ desire to win over-rides  
personal dislikes in the group; (1 mark)  
with task cohesion over-riding lack of social cohesion;  
(1 mark)

Cohesion can be viewed as commitment to the task; (1 mark)  
and/or commitment to social goals of the group; (1 mark)

There are many factors which can contribute to group  
success in sport; (1 mark)  
of which cohesion is but one; (1 mark)  
Therefore cohesion alone cannot guarantee the success of  
a sporting group/equiv; (1 mark)

(mark to a maximum of 6 marks for section d.)