

# AFFECTIVE STATES INFLUENCE SPORT PERFORMANCE IN SWIMMING

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Sports activity involves experiencing affective states, which have a substantial effect on actions taken by the athlete. The results of previous studies on the relationship between emotional states and sport performance outcomes are ambiguous. The aim of the study was to establish the relationships between affective states (both emotional states and moods) and performance in swimming. **Material and methods.** The study examined 9 female swimmers and 22 male swimmers competing at the national level aged from 15 to 23 years ( $M = 18.1$ ;  $SD = 2.397$ ). Affective states were evaluated by means of the Profile of Mood States (POMS) completed once a day before the competition and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) completed before each race. The subject's life record was divided by the time obtained in each race and expressed as a percentage. **Results.** Immediately before the races where the best results were obtained, the swimmers experienced the strongest positive emotions and the lowest level of negative emotions. The lowest level of positive states was recorded before the races with the worst performance. The lower the level of negative moods (fatigue, depression, anger, and tension) and the higher the level of positive moods (vigour and kindness) were, the better the results obtained by swimmers were. One exception was confusion, which unexpectedly correlated positively with the swimmers' results. Preliminary analyses showed no indication of statistically significant differences between the women and men surveyed. **Conclusions.** The results of the study suggest that affective states influence performance outcomes in swimming. This influence may vary according to the valence and content as well as duration of affective states (emotional states vs. mood). On the basis of the results obtained, guidelines for coaches and their athletes can be formulated. A properly prepared trainer can choose training tasks in such a way as to optimise the intensity and content of the emotions experienced by athletes. Emotions seem to be important not only with regard to athletes' well-being, but also as indirect and direct predictors of the results they achieve. Expression of emotion and emotional awareness in persons connected with sport should be included in training work.

**Key words:** emotional states, mood, sports competition, swimming