Psychological experiences in South African society before the 2010 FIFA World Cup from the systems psychodynamic and positive psychology perspectives


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DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore and explain the psychological effects of sport events on the psychological functioning of a society at that time, the researchers believed that more in-depth research is required to understand this phenomenon fully.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate some of the unconscious conflicts and dynamics, anxieties, emotions and fears in South Africa before the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Although the researchers focused some attention on the psychological effects of sport events on the psychological functioning of a society at that time, the researchers believed that more in-depth research is required to understand this phenomenon fully.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate some of the unconscious conflicts and dynamics, anxieties, emotions and fears in South Africa before the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researchers conducted a literature review to analyze the assumptions of systems psychodynamics, the Taftstock model of group relations, object relations theory and the most relevant constructs in the positive psychology perspective. They then identified the assumptions and most relevant constructs in the positive psychology perspective in order to analyze theoretically the psychological effect of large-scale sports events on a community or country.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH SETTING

The researchers conducted the study using participants who worked in different South African organizations in which the researchers were participating at the time. After the researchers finished their normal consultation, they approached some of the clients and colleagues to take part in the research by asking them to take part in formal interviews. However, the researchers conducted the interviews outside of the clients’ work places in order to emphasize that the research had no connection to the normal consulting and working processes or the relationships that the researchers had with the participants.

ENTRÉE AND ESTABLISHING RESEARCHER ROLES

The researchers approached clients and colleagues who talked spontaneously about the event and used the participants’ knowledge as a basis point of entry to the research. These clients and colleagues were convenient participants who agreed to take part in the research and asked to take part as research participants. The researchers explained that their motivation for approaching the clients and colleagues was the importance of group relations, object relations theory and the most relevant constructs in the positive psychology perspective. They showed a number of significant splits in South African society. This anxiety seemed to lead to a number of splits between the visitors and the host nation. There were South Africans who were fully engaged in the event and those who were uninvolved or afraid to get too involved. There were supporters and non-supporters. There were younger and older South Africans. There were those who believed in the potential of the event to create pride and hope and there were sceptics. The researchers observed this in some participants who tried to reduce their fear and psychic pain by withdrawing into a preoccupation with their own survival and by holding onto their own identities.

The researchers explained that many South Africans seemed to feel more contained in the months before the event and received assurances about safety from the government, police and organizers. The researchers also emphasized the importance of involving research into the 2010 FIFA World Cup in order to gain a better understanding of the dynamics and psychological processes involved in large-scale sports events.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the systems psychodynamic and positive psychology theoretical perspectives suggested that there might have been conflicting experiences in South Africa before the event. Whilst some members of a society may have expressed a great deal of optimism that the event would have a positive effect on the psychological functioning of the society involved, others experienced unconscious fears and anxieties.

The findings from the positive psychology perspective seem to reflect the hopes and dreams of many South Africans before the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The participants in this study presented them in relation to developing solutions, knowledge and innovation as well as of developing effective relationships by hosting this important event in South Africa. Thematically, they also expressed the hope of spiritual development in South African society. This included the hope that the event would create pride and social intelligence in the society, together with opportunities for reconciliation and affiliation. On the eve of the event, the spiritual awakening of the nation seemed to create national pride and an acute awareness of socially intelligent behavior. The development of pride, nation building, reconciliation and affiliation is most successful if the nation is able to balance a “life of enjoyment” (engaging fully in the fun of the event) with the responsibilities of a “life of engagement,” which includes creating opportunity for others.

The findings from the systems psychodynamic perspective revealed equally valuable and unique insights. In contrast to the findings from the first perspective, in which the participants had similar positive experiences, the researchers analyzed the anxieties and fears from this perspective. They showed a number of significant splits in South African society. This anxiety seemed to lead to a number of splits between the visitors and the host nation. There were South Africans who were fully engaged in the event and those who were uninvolved or afraid to get too involved. There were supporters and non-supporters. There were younger and older South Africans. There were those who believed in the potential of the event to create pride and hope and there were sceptics. The researchers observed this in some participants who tried to reduce their fear and psychic pain by withdrawing into a preoccupation with their own survival and by holding onto their own identities. This emerged in people who were not prepared to leave their homes unnecessarily during the event or even to leave the country for the duration of the event.

CONCLUSION

The research acknowledged that many South Africans seemed to feel more contained in the months before the event and received assurances about safety from the government, police and organizers. The researchers also emphasized the importance of involving research into the 2010 FIFA World Cup in order to gain a better understanding of the dynamics and psychological processes involved in large-scale sports events.

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The eight participants in the older category consisted of four men between the ages of 51 and 70 and four women aged 52 to 63. The women and men represented the four race groups equally. The eight participants in the older category consisted of four men between the ages of 51 and 70 and four women aged 52 to 65. The women and men represented the four race groups equally.

The researchers included participants from different gender, race and age groups to ensure fairness in how the experiences of the unconscious conflicts and dynamics, anxieties, emotions and fears in South Africa before the 2010 FIFA World Cup were represented.

RECORDING OF DATA

The researchers emphasized the need to ensure reliability and validity. There are two main criteria for this: trustworthiness and authenticity. In an attempt to increase the trustworthiness of the research, the researchers looked at credibility, transferability and dependability.

AUTHORITY: The researchers included participants from different gender, race and age groups to ensure fairness in how the experiences of the unconscious conflicts and dynamics, anxieties, emotions and fears in South Africa before the 2010 FIFA World Cup were represented.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENSURE QUALITY DATA

The researchers used the social-phenomenological approach. The processing procedure firstly involved reading through all the responses a number of times to become familiar with the content. Secondly, the researchers read the responses again and explained the confidentiality of the study and that they would record the data during the interview by taking notes.

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