

**Content Analysis of the Agents of Change “Disposition to Change” after attending  
the Psytool program**

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## **Introduction**

At the heart of the psychoeducational program PsyTool (Cruz, Garcia-Mas, Stambulova, Lucidi, Márquez, Reyes, Serpa and Jaenes, 2017) which is theoretically framed by the concepts of positive training, Boixadós, Cruz, Torregrosa and Valiente, 2004; Smoll, Smith and Cumming, 2007, is the objective of promoting changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the so-called Agents of Change (AoC), with respect to fair-play and the promotion of positive values in grassroots sports.

The performance of PsyTool is framed in the Transtheoretical Model (TTM, Prochaska and DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska and Norcross, 2010) that conceptualizes the process of internal changes in an integrative and biopsychosocial way through the concept of "stages of change", since it has been proved that in order for people to change a certain behavior, they usually have to pass through a series of stages (Chouinard and Robichaud-Ekstrand, 2007; Prochaska and DiClemente, 1992). Also, TTM incorporates elements of the Self-Efficacy theory of Bandura (1977), fundamentally verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences. In this case, it basically refers to the degree of confidence that people have in maintaining the desired behavior even in situations that often trigger relapse. The stages of change are Change Precontemplation (Not ready yet); Contemplation (Getting ready); Preparation (Ready); Action, and Maintenance (Norcross, Krebs and Prochaska, 2011) and have a temporal dimension, although the progression is not always linear, since it can happen that people jump between stages or return to a previous one.

Some instruments have been developed to measure the willingness to change and its predictions on the maintenance of change (e.g., alcohol and tobacco, Gaume, Bertholet, Daepfen and Gmel 2013; drugs consumption, Miller and Johnson, 2008, or in clinical psychology settings, Westra, 2011).

Thus, the objective of this work is to evaluate in a quantitative and qualitative way the Disposition in Exchange of the Agents of Change trained in the Psytool program, in order to find out the degree of impact of the program, as well as the most relevant topics that have been discussed. converted thanks to PsyTool in targets for the change of agents.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants ( $N = 63$ ) were Agents of Change (AoC) trained in the Psytool Project. Their age was 21-58 years ( $M_{age} = 32.39$  years;  $SD = 9.02$ ); professional experience ( $M_{exp} = 9.02$  years;  $SD = 7.68$ ) and gender (56 males and 7 females). All participants voluntarily filled out an informed consent to participate following the Declaration of Helsinki rules.

### **Instruments**

We used an adaptation of the *Disposition to Change Questionnaire* (DCQ, Miller and Johnson, 2008), translated and adapted to Spanish and Portuguese. It is formed by three factors, including one question about the topic of change: “What changes are you considering in your professional practice after the participation in Psytool?”

### **Procedure**

The participants received the full content of the PsyTool educational program (Jaenes, Cruz, Petrovic, Velázquez, Viñas and Reis, 2017) during a period of six weeks, and after they finalized the lessons, they answered the DCQ, and then they were interviewed. After that, we conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the answers.

### **Analysis of the data**

After the descriptive data were extracted from the DCQ, each open answer was transcript, and read critically regarding the context, allowing a first analysis obtaining meaningful units of information (i.e., segments of text that were comprehensible by themselves and contained one specific idea or piece of information), as an open coding on the concept “changing intentions” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Each comment was divided in several information units, considering different intentions to change included in the answer, and several dimensions were obtained, and then refined to form more precise explanations.

In a second step, the categories were integrated and arranged to form larger theoretical dimensions and a more general framework that helped to explain the relationships between the categories (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). To evaluate the

reliability of the coding we used a team of two researchers, who reached an inter-rater agreement of 92 % and an intra-rater agreement of 95 %) with a final consensus about the final categories.

## **Results**

In first place, the quantitative results of the DCQ show that all the AoC declared to be on the top disposition (over 4.5 to 5) to change in the three factors considered (Disposition to Change; Reason to Change, and Behaviors made to initiate the changes). Four AoC expressed the lack of need to change in any way (4.80%).

The qualitative results are based upon answers such as: "Introduce in the training these concepts of fair-play, reinforcing to the coaches the need to put it into practice daily and from the first moment". Regarding cognitive changes (first level of analysis,  $n = 83$ , 8.40%), the topics were: Discrimination (General and Gender, 26.20%); Violence of Spectators (13.10%); Fair play (10.70%); Doping (4.80%) and Racism, Parental Education and Self-Control (1.20% each). In the second level of content analysis, the metacognitive ones ( $n = 12$ , 14.30%), the AoC expresses the categories with phrases such as "To be more attentive to the different situations in order to be able to act in a preventive way". These categories has been been divided into two categories, according to their orientation. First, there are behavioral objectives based on the Promotion of Positive Skills (such as "Ethics general", "Commitment", or "Self-Control",  $n = 32$ , 51%), and goals that are based on Negative Skills Avoidance (such as" Racism, " Discrimination "or" Mistreatment - Coach ",  $n = 31$ , 49%).

## **Discussion**

The grounded approach presented here supports the idea that there is a real disposition to change among the AoC after attending PsyTool program, which promotes a variety of reasons to make changes in the training process. The study findings highlight the multi-dimensional nature of the intentions to change, in a great agreement with the predicions of the Transtheoretical Model, and the Self-efficacy factors involved during the learning process of the Psytool, specially when considering that most of the Agents of Change have real experience in their fields of action. The analysis showed elements of both cognitive and metacognitive conceptualizations of intentions to change. The main objectives to change were: stimulating the personal and social

development of the players, endorsing their own training competencies as coaches, promoting fair play and fighting against discrimination and violence.

There are, also, two behavioural dimensions of change: one, centered on positive promotion of life skills and psychosocial competencies and another focused on avoiding negative behaviours that affect sport participants. Some AoC reported that they don't feel the need to change: most of the participants are active members of intervention projects in this area, being competent regarding positive skill promotion or fighting against several anti-social sport behaviors, introducing inevitably sampling bias.

The strength of this study lies in qualitative methods and tracking intentions to change over time, qualifying a specific program intervention. Another major strength of this study was the identification of meta-competencies between the intentions to change. We acknowledge the fact that this is a small study and we do not know how representative the results are, including a real follow-up of the behaviors really made, in accord with the stages of change (Action and Maintenance) from the Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska and DiClemente, 2010).

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