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STRUCTURE OF SPORT MOTIVATION IN KICKBOXERS AND ITS DIAGNOSTICS

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Abstract. This paper examines the structure of sport motivation in kickboxers and the ways of diagnosing it on the basis of self-determination theory (SDT). Drawing on an analysis of the scientific literature and the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-28), a three-stage procedure for assessing kickboxers' motivation is proposed. The procedure combines a quantitative motivational profile, a qualitative analysis of leading motives and the grouping of athletes by motivation type, and it links each group to a specific coaching strategy.

Keywords: kickboxing, sport motivation, self-determination theory, SMS-28, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, amotivation, diagnostics.

Introduction. In kickboxing, high performance is determined not only by physical and technical-tactical preparation but also by psychological factors such as self-confidence, motivation and mental toughness. Research shows that these factors distinguish successful kickboxers from less successful ones [3]. Kickboxing is a full-contact combat sport with a high training load, a significant risk of injury and intense competitive stress. Under such conditions, the quality of an athlete's motivation largely determines whether they will persist through long-term training and cope with defeats and setbacks.

However, a survey of highly skilled martial arts athletes revealed that among kickboxers the motive of material gain ranks first [4]. According to self-determination theory, the predominance of externally controlled motives is associated with lower persistence, a higher risk of burnout and dropout from sport, whereas autonomous (intrinsic and identified) motivation supports long-term engagement and psychological well-being [1]. At the same time, domestic studies have examined kickboxers' preparation mainly from a physical perspective [5], while the psychological preparation of athletes has received considerably less attention [6].

Therefore, identifying the structure of kickboxers' motivation and diagnosing it on a regular basis is an urgent task. It is essential both for preventing early dropout and for individualising the training process.

Aim: to provide a theoretical rationale for the structure of sport motivation in kickboxers and to select appropriate diagnostic tools.

Objectives: 1) to analyse the theoretical approaches to sport motivation within self-determination theory; 2) to evaluate the suitability of the SMS-28 for kickboxers; 3) to develop a step-by-step procedure for diagnosing motivation and translating its results into coaching practice.

Methods. The study employed analysis of scientific literature, comparison and generalisation. The Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-28) developed by L. Pelletier and colleagues was analysed as the diagnostic instrument. The scale consists of 28 items grouped into seven subscales of four items each. It measures three types of intrinsic motivation (to know, to accomplish and to experience stimulation), three types of extrinsic motivation (identified, introjected and external regulation) and amotivation [2]. Responses are given on a 7-point scale ranging from "does not correspond at all" to "corresponds exactly".

The choice of the SMS-28 is justified by three considerations. First, it is grounded in SDT and reflects the full motivational continuum, from amotivation to intrinsic motivation [1; 2]. Second, it is specifically designed for the sports context. Third, its subscale scores can be combined into an

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integrated self-determination index, which allows athletes' motivation to be compared and monitored over time.

Results. Based on the analysis, a three-stage procedure for assessing kickboxers' motivation was proposed:

1. **Determining the motivational profile:** scores on the seven SMS-28 subscales are calculated, and the ratio of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation is established. A self-determination index is computed to obtain a single indicator of how autonomous the athlete's motivation is.
2. **Identifying leading motives:** an individual interview is used to determine the athlete's reasons for taking up and remaining in the sport (material, social, skill development, enjoyment) [4]. This qualitative stage complements the questionnaire data and reveals motives specific to kickboxing, such as prize money, status or a professional career.
3. **Grouping by motivation type:** athletes are divided into three groups, "predominantly intrinsic motivation", "predominantly extrinsic motivation" and "at risk of amotivation", and a coaching strategy is defined for each group.

According to self-determination theory, when the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied, extrinsic motivation is gradually internalised and moves closer to identified and intrinsic motivation [1]. Accordingly, the following coaching strategies are recommended for each group:

1. **"Predominantly intrinsic motivation":** maintaining interest through varied and challenging training tasks, setting mastery-oriented goals and involving athletes in planning their own preparation.
2. **"Predominantly extrinsic motivation":** expanding opportunities for choice, providing feedback that highlights skill progress and offering team support. The coach should explain the personal meaning of training tasks so that external goals become personally valued.
3. **"At risk of amotivation":** an individual conversation to identify the causes, setting short-term achievable goals, and psychological support and preparation methods [6]. Repeated diagnostics after 6–8 weeks is advisable for this group.

Conclusion. Assessing kickboxers' motivation as a multidimensional, SDT-based structure makes it possible to identify athletes with predominantly extrinsic motives in a timely manner and to apply an individual approach to them. The proposed procedure combines quantitative (SMS-28) and qualitative (interview) methods and links diagnostic results directly to coaching strategies. In the next stage, the procedure will be tested through an empirical study involving kickboxers of different skill levels and age groups.

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