



COMPREHENSIVE SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND SPORTS RESULTS IN STUDENT ATHLETES

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Abstract

This study develops a theoretically grounded and empirically supported framework for analyzing the relationship between motivation and sports performance in student athletes, conceptualizing motivation as a multilevel regulatory system that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral components within the broader context of sport activity and educational demands, and the research aims to identify the structural and functional mechanisms through which intrinsic and extrinsic motivational constructs influence performance stability, adaptive capacity, and long-term athletic development, employing a mixed methodological design that combines psychometric diagnostics, longitudinal monitoring, and multivariate statistical modeling to capture dynamic interactions between motivational variables and performance indicators, while the findings reveal that intrinsic motivation operates as a dominant predictor of sustainable performance growth, psychological resilience, and self-regulation efficiency, whereas extrinsic motivation demonstrates situational effectiveness but lacks long-term stability and may even contribute to performance variability under conditions of cognitive and emotional overload, and based on the obtained results a conceptual model of motivational optimization is proposed, emphasizing the systemic role of autonomy, competence, and social relatedness as key determinants of performance enhancement, leading to the conclusion that the scientific management of motivational processes constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for achieving high-level sports performance and maintaining psychological balance in student athletes operating under dual academic and athletic demands.

Keywords: Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, sports performance, self-regulation, athlete psychology, adaptive capacity, performance stability.



Introduction

In the context of the integration of modern sports sciences and the higher education system, there is an increasing need for a comprehensive study of the determinants of sports performance of student athletes, especially in this process, the concept of motivation is considered not only as a psychological phenomenon, but also as a multi-level systemic mechanism that regulates the overall effectiveness of sports activities, since sports activities, by their nature, consist of a high level of voluntary tension, regularly repeated loads and a complex of long-term goal-oriented actions. In order to effectively implement such activities, a person must have a stable internal incentive, i.e. internal motivation, while external motivation factors - rewards, social recognition, competition results or forms of external control - are manifested as factors that support sports activities, but are often unstable in nature. Within the framework of the Self-Determination Theory, which is widely used in sports psychology, motivation is interpreted in relation to basic needs such as autonomy, competence and social connectedness, It is the level of satisfaction of these needs that determines the athlete's internal attitude to activity, which in turn directly affects the stability of sports results, growth dynamics and the level of psychological resilience. Especially in the case of student athletes, motivation is formed as a more complex system, since they are forced to maintain a balance between academic loads, time allocation, social environment and sports activities, which requires a redistribution of motivational resources. As a result, the level of motivation remains a scientific problem that directly affects sports results, but in many cases has not been studied on an empirical basis. Therefore, the main task of this study is to theoretically and empirically substantiate the relationship between motivation and sports results, identify the mechanisms of influence of internal and external motivation components on sports results, and develop a scientifically based model of motivation management.

Method and result

The research conducted to determine the relationship between motivation and sports results in student athletes was organized on the basis of a complex methodological approach, in which 120 student athletes aged 18–24 years, engaged in various sports (track and field athletics, football, wrestling, general physical training), were selected as respondents, their motivation level was determined using validated psychometric tools, including scales for determining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and tests for



assessing the level of self-control, and sports results were assessed based on training efficiency, competition performance, and individual development dynamics. As a result of statistical processing of the data obtained, a significant positive correlation was found between the level of motivation and sports results ($r=0.68-0.81$), especially in athletes with high intrinsic motivation, stability of results and a progressive growth trend were observed, while the influence of extrinsic motivation factors was short-term and situational. It was found that it mainly increases results in the short term during the competition period, but cannot ensure stability in long-term development. During the study, athletes with a low level of motivation were observed to be passive in training, prone to fatigue, psychological stress, and sharp fluctuations in results, which confirmed that motivation is the main regulatory factor in sports activities. The results of the regression analysis also showed that intrinsic motivation is the main predictor of sports results ($\beta=0.74$), while extrinsic motivation appears as an auxiliary but unstable factor. As a result, an empirical model was developed based on the study to explain the relationship between motivation and sports results, in which intrinsic motivation was interpreted as a central determinant, and extrinsic motivation as a modulatory factor.

Discussion

A thorough analysis of the empirical results obtained from the perspective of modern sports psychology and motivation theories shows that the relationship between motivation and sports results in student athletes is not a simple linear relationship, but a complex psychological mechanism with a multi-level, systematic and dynamic nature. In particular, the empirical results on the priority of intrinsic motivation are fully consistent with the basic principles of the theory of self-determination and confirm that the satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence and social connectedness directly affects the stability and effectiveness of sports activities. At the same time, the results on the situational nature of extrinsic motivation and its inability to ensure long-term effectiveness are explained by the concept of “controlled motivation” noted in modern motivational models, that is, activity formed on the basis of external incentives often does not have internal stability and quickly weakens with increasing load, especially in the case of student athletes, this process is further complicated, since academic workload, time constraints and social factors puts additional pressure on the motivational system, as a result of which the level of



motivation affects not only sports results, but also the athlete's psychological stability, fatigue tolerance and recovery processes. The results of the study also show that athletes with high intrinsic motivation have more developed self-management, goal setting and achievement strategies, which increases their chances of achieving long-term success in sports activities. At the same time, the observation of regression and instability of results in athletes with low levels of motivation once again confirms that motivation is the main regulatory mechanism in sports activities. Based on these scientific analyses, a conceptual model explaining the relationship between motivation and sports results was developed, in which intrinsic motivation is interpreted as the central determinant, and extrinsic motivation is interpreted as a modulatory factor, which scientifically substantiates the need to consider the process of motivation management as an integral part of the sports training system.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed the relationship between motivation and sports results in student athletes on a comprehensive scientific basis, proving that motivation is the main psychological regulator of sports activity. The theoretical and empirical analyses conducted showed that intrinsic motivation is the main determinant of the stability of sports results, growth dynamics and the level of psychological resilience, while extrinsic motivation is short-term and situational in nature and cannot be a sufficiently effective factor in long-term sports development. The scientific novelty of the study is that the relationship between motivation and sports results in the conditions of student athletes' activities is interpreted as a multi-level system, in which the central role of intrinsic motivation is substantiated on the basis of empirical data, and a conceptual model of motivation optimization has been developed. In this model, autonomy, competence and social connectedness are identified as the main structural components of motivation, which offers a new scientific approach to managing sports activities. The results of the study also provide a basis for the development of motivation management mechanisms in the fields of sports pedagogy and psychology. It is of significant scientific and practical importance in improving, optimizing the sports activities of student athletes, and ensuring their long-term sports performance.



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