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# Profile of Some Psychomotor Capacities in Top Performance Karate Do Athletes

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## Abstract

The present paper aims at describing the way in which the manifestation of some psychomotor capacities can be correlated with the Karate Do athletes' competitive results. In our research we used the case study method, the observation method and the graphical representation method. We have applied the following tests: ACM (Attention Concentration and Mobility), CMR 1 (Complex Motor Reactivity 1) and VIGILANCE. Testing was performed at the UNEFS Psycho-Pedagogy Lab. We found that the tests administered to high performance athletes can provide an important database that can be subsequently used to establish a correlation between test results, the athletes' training and their competitive results.

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## 1. Topic

By definition, sport is a methodical and systematic practice of both physical exercises and movement games, its goal being to reinforce the body, to develop will, courage, initiative, discipline and to enable performance achievement.

Karate concomitantly embodies sports and competition, by generating a challenge for the practitioners' mind, body and spirit, a challenge that will strengthen their character and help them overcome their fears. It is the challenge that will finally model the performer's life (Healy, 2008, p. 6).

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In karate do, the athlete's preparation is extremely complex, being more than a simple training process. The karate fighter's preparation includes all the components of the sports training process, namely technical preparation, tactical preparation, physical preparation, psychological preparation, theoretical preparation, but also moral and volitional preparation, all of them being in a permanent interdependence relationship.

In this contact sport, all the actions are developed in a continuous dynamics, with techniques performed sometimes at maximal parameters, to which we can add the unpredictable situations emerging from the full contact with the opponent and also the acute time pressure specific to each competitive fighting. That is why we consider that some capacities are crucially important to the karate athlete, and we refer here to motor capacities, as well as to the capacity to anticipate and reaction time, by means of which he can surprise and put his opponent in a position that is disadvantageous to the opponent, but favourable to the athlete himself. This is the clue that can make the difference, at the top performance level, between a world champion and a simple participant in a world championship.

The psychomotricity approach represents the perspective of a process seen from the inside by the subject involved, who must clearly perceive the individual's physical, motor and psychic aspects as a unit. According to Encyclopaedia Universalis, psychomotricity (1990) results from the integration of the motor and mental functions, under the effect of the nervous system, and is focused on the subject's relation to his own body (Dragnea and Bota, 1999, p. 47). Consequently, the motor and psychic dimensions mutually condition each other.

Epuran (2008, p. 216) groups the components of psychomotricity into four categories. Among the aptitudes that can be submitted to an improvement program and that will be differently expressed at the motor performance level, we can mention the psychomotor aptitudes which include: general coordination, segmental coordination, kinesthesia, corporal scheme, laterality, static and dynamic balance, reaction, repetition, anticipation and execution speed, spatial orientation and perception of one's own body movements, motor-perceptual coordination (perception of space and time - tempo, rhythm, perception of the duration - moving objects) and ideomotricity, along with the general motor aptitudes: speed, endurance, strength and mobility. The other three categories are represented by the self-assessment capacity, the confidence in one's personal capacities, the capacity to voluntarily adjust one's actions, the capacity to perform voluntary effort, perseverance, enduring pain etc.

The main phenomena incorporated in the sphere of psychomotricity are represented by: static, dynamic and motor-perceptual coordination – manifested at the level of all the osteomuscular system effectors; corporal scheme; ideomotricity – the conscious or unconscious reflection of the motor potential fixed in the corporal scheme and concretely manifested in the coordination system, motor intelligence represented by the exceptional ideomotricity manifestations, that can be considered the signs of superior motor intelligence – motor creativity; laterality – which reflects, on the motricity level, the functional asymmetry of the brain hemispheres and the movement rapidity (reaction speed included) that is influenced by the genetically conditioned temperamental particularities (<http://www.scrigroup.com/educatie/psihologie-psihiatrie>).

Thus, the programming and planning of the Karate Do athlete's actions rely on the psychic anticipation mechanism, which represents the spontaneous or the elaborated possibility to react before the emergence of some stimuli that create specific situations.

In top performance sports, we talk about precompetitive anticipation, which is submitted to the psychological laws of future prefiguring on the basis of past experiences, subjectively processed through personal filters consisting of cognitive attitudes, requirements, montages, routines, impressions (Epuran, Holdevici and Tonița, 2001, p. 263).

Some authors consider that in combat sports and in sports games, the more experienced athletes are, the more their anticipation capacities are developed, which may increase their anxiety, because they have a better concrete representation of the way a competition evolves.

According to Deliu (2008, p. 49), the prerequisites for a quick reaction in combat sports are represented by: a very good visual, acoustic, tactile and kinesthetic acuity, an optimal condition of the excitation, inhibition and cortical processes involved in the motor response, in general, an appropriate psychic background, physical fitness

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