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Emotional intelligence as a resource to overcome emotional burnout in sports activity

The study of the various forms of stress and their influence on the health and professional activity of a person is the subject for applied psychology researches over the last decades. The special consideration is given to the matters of stress at work, which has the multifactor nature and a negative influence not only on somatic and mental health of a person but the internal environment as a whole [2].

The occupational stress has different forms; among them is a "burnout" syndrome. Initially this phenomenon has been revealed in "assistant" professions, and this number of specialists subjected to it has considerably increased.

The main research task of the emotional "burnout" syndrome is to study its nature, especially those internal factors that contribute to its occurrence. Most researchers assume that there exist certain personality features of a man that cause the development of burnout symptoms. They are self-concept, anxiety, type A behavior, self-esteem, and the sense of humor, coping-strategies, locus of control, empathy, emotional intelligence and work motivation [3].

Sport is a kind of professional activity of a person that substantially focuses on the high level of achievements being demonstrated under stressful conditions.

Nowadays the elite sport is characterized by the high intensity of athletes activity. There are multistage cup competitions that virtually last the whole year. It certainly demands a lot of physical and mental exercises, so not only sports psychologists and coaches but also high quality athletes are interested in burnout.

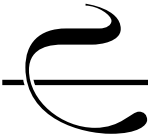
The basic symptoms of emotional burnout in sport are: lack of interest in competition and sports activity, sleep disturbance, physical and mental exhaustion, the lower level of self-concept, mood disturbance, drug abuse, soul-searching, emotional isolation, excessive anxiety, the lower level of physical activity, relationship problems, rigid behavior.

There are various consequences of "burnout". According to A.L. Smith's opinion, stress in sports depends on a person and motivation. One athletes "burns out" and leaves the sport, whereas another prevents difficulties and remain [5].

Nowadays the well-being and achievements of athletes mainly depend on the resources dealing with stressful situations; such resources can be athletes personality features, especially emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social abilities to perceive, assess and manage one's own and others' emotions as well as skill to motivate oneself. All the components of emotional intelligence contribute to effective interpersonal communication [1, c. 26].

The purpose of research is to study interrelations of emotional burnout and emotional intelligence of athletes.



Methods. For revealing displays of emotional burnout the adapted test-questionnaire developed by Maslach and Jackson ABQ-test has been used. It measures 3 scales: reduction of feeling of achievement, an emotional/physical exhaustion, devaluation of achievements [4].

The emotional intelligence has been analyzed by H. Hall's test-questionnaire that reveals the ability to understand other people's emotions and manage them by decision-making. It involves 5 scales: emotional competence, emotional self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and the recognition of other people's emotions.

115 athletes, aged 14-29 took part in the investigation (70 males and 45 females). As they have intensive sport practice from 1 to 15 years, it may cause emotional burnout.

Results. The results of correlation research clear out the significant negative relation between the parameter of emotional burnout «reduction of feeling of achievement» and the recognition of emotions in a male sample ($r = -0.31, p < 0,01$).

The female sample reveals the negative relations between the parameter of emotional burnout «emotional/physical exhaustion» and self-motivation ($r = -0.38, p < 0,01$), emotional self-regulation ($r = -0.37, p < 0,01$); the parameter of emotional burnout «devaluation of achievements» and self-motivation ($r = -0.41, p < 0,01$), of self-regulation emotions ($r = -0.38, p < 0,01$); general parameters of emotional burnout and the self-regulation of emotions ($r = -0.41, p < 0,01$).

The female sample represents the greater number of correlation between parameters of burnout and emotional intelligence than the male one. So it proves the greater influence of emotions on the emotional competence and the burnout development of female respondents.

The results of the investigation reveal the importance of emotional competence for athletes as a factor to overcome the emotional workload. Consequently, the higher level of emotional intelligence athletes has, the lower chances for his emotional burnout occurrence. So there is an urgent necessity to provide psychological assistance and services for training of athletes.

The Literature

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