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Original article

Motivation of elite cuban boxers: a performance indicator

Motivación de los boxeadores cubanos de elite: un indicador de rendimiento

A motivação dos boxers elite cubanos: um indicador de desempenho

Llilian de la Caridad García Chacón[1*] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2828-4036

Julio Arturo Ordoqui Baldriche[2] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9770-2452

Anabel Lastres Madrigal[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6895-4239

Rolando Acebal Monte[3] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2088-642X

Beatriz Sánchez Córdova[4] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7425-8990

Juan Carlos Arias Cazco[5] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6471-1002

[1]Centro de Investigaciones del Deporte Cubano, Cuba.
[2]Instituto de Medicina del Deporte, Cuba.
[3]Federación cubana de boxeo, Cuba
[4]Universidad de Ciencias de la Cultura Física y el Deporte "Manuel Fajardo". Pinar del Río, Cuba.
[5]Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas ESPE, Ecuador.

[*]Corresponding author: lliliandelacaridad@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The present research characterizes the motivation in an intentional sample of 20 elite Cuban boxers, 10 outstanding and 10 not outstanding. This study aims to determine the development of motivation qualities in elite Cuban boxers. As an empirical method, the Motivational Qualities Questionnaire is used to evaluate thirteen motivation variables. The statistical analysis of the data was carried out with the SPSS, version 21.0, as a measure of association between the level of the athlete and the score reached in the motivational qualities, the Pearson Chi Square test was used. Although levels of statistical significance are expressed in only one quality, a careful review of the data reports the perceived motivational superiority of the outstanding group of boxers over the non-outstanding group. As part of the preliminary results, the presence of a study sample with remarkable motivational potential is considered.

Keywords: psychology; motivation; boxing; elite.

RESUMEN

La presente investigación caracteriza la motivación en una muestra intencional de 20 boxeadores cubanos de elite, 10 destacados y 10 no destacados. Este estudio tiene como objetivo determinar el desarrollo de las cualidades de la motivación en boxeadores cubanos de elite. Como método empírico se emplea el Cuestionario de Cualidades Motivacionales que evalúa trece variables de motivación. Se realizó el análisis estadístico de los datos con el SPSS, versión 21.0, como medida de asociación entre el nivel del deportista y el puntaje alcanzado en las cualidades motivacionales se utilizó la prueba Chi Cuadrado de Pearson. Aun cuando los niveles de significación estadística se expresan sólo en una cualidad, una revisión detenida a los datos, informa acerca de la superioridad motivacional perceptible del grupo de boxeadores destacados sobre los no destacados. Como parte de los resultados preliminares se considera la presencia de una muestra de estudio con destacadas potencialidades motivacionales.

Palabras clave: psicología; motivación; boxeo; élite.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa visa determinar o desenvolvimento de qualidades motivacionais em boxeadores cubanos de elite. Uma amostra intencional de 20 boxeadores cubanos de elite foi tirada, 10 de destaque e 10 não de destaque. Este estudo visa determinar o desenvolvimento de qualidades de motivação em boxeadores cubanos de elite. Como método empírico, o questionário de qualidades motivacionais foi utilizado para avaliar treze variáveis motivacionais. A análise estatística dos dados foi realizada com o SPSS, versão 21.0, como medida de associação entre o nível do atleta e o rendimento alcançado nas qualidades motivacionais, foi utilizado o teste Pearson Chi Square. Embora os níveis de significância estatística sejam expressos em apenas uma qualidade, uma revisão cuidadosa dos dados relata a percepção da superioridade motivacional do grupo de boxeadores destacados em relação aos não-patrocinados. Como parte dos resultados preliminares, é considerada a presença de uma amostra de estudo com potencial motivacional excepcional.

Palavras-chave: psicologia; motivação; boxe, elite.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation in the area of physical activity and sport remains one of the fundamental components of the psychological preparation process inherent in the teaching-educational process (Monroy & Sáez, 2011). In this sense, contemporary sports preparation programs include several actions for the development of motivational strategies that facilitate efficient intervention in the training process, since a motivated organism is an organism prepared to systematically overcompensate itself.

Therefore, identifying motivation and its causes is usually one of the initial actions in the process of directing sports training, (Perera, Åkerlund, & Hägglund, 2019; Bardid, *et al.,* 2016) involving subsequent decision making to maintain the willingness to submit to high physical and psychological loads throughout the athlete's active life.

In combat sports, motivation is linked to a number of interrelated factors, including but not limited to anger, perception of psychological well-being, personality and mood, which are usually linked to different types of motivation, factors that are present in several primary sources of research (Kolayis, 2012).

This research addresses issues related to motivation in general and in the field of sports, according to what was stated by (Romero, X. A. V., & Lara, E. D. C, 2016; Villalba, M. P., *et al.,* 2019) to understand why human behavior is one of the most common questions of scholars throughout the psychosocial evolution. It is the psychological process that responds to this questioning and is responsible for the internal mobilization of the needs of individuals until they are channelled and triggered into action (Pileta, *et al.,* 2019; Calero, Klever, Caiza, Rodríguez, & Analuiza, 2016; Cofer & Appley, 1979).

In boxing, which is classified as a sport of direct contact of the athlete with his opponent, every boxer must overcome the technical - tactical repertoire of his opponent, as well as overcome the unforeseen events that arise during the competition, (Degtiariov & Degtiariov, 1996) the actions in boxing are performed with dynamism and speed within the combat area, which is done in a very short time, the boxer must have a high precision in their movements so that their execution is efficient and effective in all motor actions.

In high performance most of the time athletes are faced with situations that demand the use of physical and mental energy (Enríquez, Morales, Castro, & Alcívar, 2017; Chacón, Ordoqui-Baldriche, Carballido, Monte, & Madrigal, 2018; Rodríguez, Prieto, & Cañizares, 2018). The athlete can reach the limit of his possibilities and it is where motivation is going to play a fundamental role, so that the athlete can go forward (Pileta, & others, 2019; Gencer, 2012; Bozadzhiev, 2019; Sukprasert, 1996).

The evaluation and control of this variable in the athletes is very important to maintain the results achieved over time, so it is necessary to determine the development of the qualities of motivation in Cuban boxers, with a view to subsequently establish the strategic actions of interest. In this sense, it has been established as the purpose of the research to determine the development of the qualities of motivation in elite Cuban boxers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The universe of study will be the 35 boxers who make up the Cuban national preselection of this sport. An intentional sample of the performance variable was selected, divided by 20 boxers, 10 outstanding and 10 not outstanding. The first - "outstanding" - are those boxers who are among the top five in their specialty in the world for three years or more. Those who do not meet that requirement are "un-outstanding".

From the empirical level

To measure the desired variables in, this case the motivational qualities the Sports Motivational Questionnaire (González, 2013) was used which provided a quantitative value of the qualities to be studied.

The athlete must read the narrative, identify it as if it were his own and produce answers of a markedly personalized nature. Then answer each of the 39 items that represent possible answers from the character in the narrative. Each answer marked

in the "yes" column is worth 1 point, which are added up by qualities and the presence of each of them in the subject's motivation is determined.

From the statistical-mathematical level

For the statistical-mathematical analysis, the absolute (no) and relative (%) frequencies were used as a descriptive measure in all cases.

As a measure of association between the level of the athlete and the score reached in the motivational quality, the Pearson Chi Square test was used whenever the limit value of the expected frequency allowed it.

The statistical package used for processing the data was the IBM Statistical Package of Social Science 21.0 for Windows.

RESULTS

After applying the questionnaire to the individuals involved, the group of authors transferred the completed documents and began to process the data that will be shown in tables below (Table 1) and (Table 2).

Table 1. - Distribution of frequencies of achievement motivation in the subjects studied

		Level		total
		outstanding	non outstanding	
medium	No	1	2	3
	%	33,3	66,7	100,0
high	No	9	8	17
	%	52,9	47,1	100,0
total	No	10	10	20
	%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.531*

Table 2. - Distribution of frequencies of non-achievement motivation in the subjectsboxers studied

		Level		total
		outstanding	non outstanding	
null	No	1	0	1
	%	100,0	0,0	100,0
law	No	1	3	4
	%	25,0	75,0	100,0
medium	No	5	3	8
	%	62,5	37,5	100,0
high	No	3	4	7
	%	42,9	57,1	100,0
total	No	10	10	20
	%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.450*

Contingency table 1 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of achievement motivation assessment. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with achievement motivation, since most of them have high motivation regardless of their level, the same is true for non-achievement motivation (Table 2), in both cases *(P > 0.05)*.

Table 3. - Distribution of frequencies of intrinsic motivation in the subjects studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	non outstanding	
MI	medium	No	4	4	8
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0
	high	No	6	6	12
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0
total		No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=1*

Contingency table 3 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of assessment of intrinsic motivation. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with intrinsic motivation, since most of them have high motivation regardless of their level (Table 3).

Table 4. - Frequency distribution of extrinsic motivation in the subjects studied

			Nivel		total
			destacados	no destacados	
ME	nulo	No	0	3	3
		%	0,0	100,0	100,0
	medio	No	1	1	2
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0
	alto	No	9	6	15
		%	60,0	40,0	100,0
total		No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Valor de la prueba Chi Cuadrado de Pearson, *p=0,165*

Contingency table 4 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of assessment of extrinsic motivation. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with extrinsic motivation, since most of them have high motivation regardless of their level (Table 4).

Table 5. - Frequency distribution of the expectation of success in the subjects studied

			Levels		total
			oustanding	non outstanding	
EEX	law	No	1	2	3
		%	33,3	66,7	100,0
	medium	No	4	3	7
		%	57,1	42,9	100,0
	high	No	5	5	10
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0
	total	No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.788*

Contingency table 5 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of the expectation of success. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or non-outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with the expectation of success, since most of them have high motivation regardless of their level (Table 5).

Table 6. - Frequency distribution of the expectation of efficacy in the subjects studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	non outstanding	
EEF	law	No	0	3	3
		%	0,0	100,0	100,0
	medium	No	1	5	6
		%	16,7	83,3	100,0
	high	No	9	2	11
		%	81,8	18,2	100,0
	total	No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.006*

Contingency table 6 shows the level of the boxer in relation to the expectation of effectiveness. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or unassigned) is indeed associated with the expectation of efficacy, as most outstanding boxers show a high power of efficacy, while unassigned boxers possess a low percent (Table 6).

Table 7. - Frequency distribution of the reasons for approaching success in the subjects studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	Non outstanding	
MEF	null	No	1	0	1
		%	100,0	0,0	100,0
	law	No	3	3	6
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0
	medium	No	0	3	3
		%	0,0%	100,0	100,0
	high	No	6	4	10
		%	60,0%	40,0	100,0
total		No	10	10	20
		%	50,0%	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.476*

Contingency table 7 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of the reasons for approaching success. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with the reasons for approaching success, since most of them have high motivation regardless of their level (Table 7).

Table 8. - Distribution of frequencies of the reasons for avoiding failure in the boxers studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	non outstanding	
MM	null	No	1	3	4
		%	25,0	75,0	100,0
	law	No	1	0	1
		%	100,0	0,0	100,0
	medium	No	3	5	8
		%	37,5	62,5	100,0
	high	No	5	2	7
		%	71,4	28,6	100,0
total		No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.221*

Contingency table 8 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of reasons for avoiding failure. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with the reasons for avoiding failure, since most of them have high motivation independently of their level (Table 8).

Table 9. - Frequency distribution of material motifs in the subjects studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	non outstanding	
MM	null	No	1	3	4
		%	25,0	75,0	100,0
	law	No	1	0	1
		%	100,0	0,0	100,0
	medium	No	3	5	8
		%	37,5	62,5	100,0
	high	No	5	2	7
		%	71,4	28,6	100,0
	total	No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.286*

Contingency table 9 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of material reasons. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with the material motives, since most of them have high motivation independently of their level (Table 9).

Table 10. - Frequency distribution of the reasons for recognition in the subjects studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	Non outstanding	
MR	law	No	0	2	2
		%	0,0	100,0	100,0
	medium	No	1	2	3
		%	33,3	66,7	100,0
	high	No	9	6	15
		%	60,0	40,0	100,0
	total	No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.231*

Contingency table 10 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of the reasons for recognition. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with the recognition reasons, since most of them have high motivation independently of their level (Table 10).

Table 11. - Frequency distribution of sports self-affirmation reasons in the studied subjects

			Level		total
			outstanding	Non oustanding	
MAD	law	No	0	1	1
		%	0,0	100,0	100,0
	medium	No	1	2	3
		%	33,3	66,7	100,0
	high	No	9	7	16
		%	56,3	43,8	100,0
total		No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.453*

Contingency table 11 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of the reasons for sports self-assertion. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated to the sports self-affirmation motives, since most of them have high motivation independently from their level (Table 11).

Table 12. - Frequency distribution of personal affirmative action reasons in the subjects studied

			Level		total
			outstanding	non oustanding	
MAP	law	No	1	2	3
		%	33,3	66,7	100,0
	medium	No	3	6	9
		%	33,3	66,7	100,0
	high	No	6	2	8
		%	75,0	25,0	100,0
total		No	10	10	20
		%	50,0	50,0	100,0

Pearson's Chi Square test value, *p=0.189*

Contingency table 12 reflects the level of the boxer in relation to the different categories of evaluation of the reasons for personological self-assertion. The associated absolute and relative frequencies show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is not statistically significantly associated with the reasons for personological self-affirmation, since most of them have high motivation regardless of their level (Table 12).

DISCUSSION

Achievement motivation and not achievement motivation

Once the relationship between these variables was evaluated from the Chi Square test, it was determined that the dynamics established between achievement motivation and non-achievement motivation show the coexistence of motivational contents of both types in the regulation of boxers' behavior.

Eighty-five percent (17 boxers) of the sample investigated reached a high level of achievement motivation. This means that in these athletes the search for excellence goals in situations where evaluation standards are applied predominates. They are motivated to transcend in the practice of boxing, they pursue perfection in the realization of their technical and tactical possibilities, and they aspire to obtain significant results individually and as a team (More & Alonso, 1998).

However, the pluridetermination of the behavior allows other contents, associated to the non-achievement motivation, to be present and to regulate also the behavior of the studied boxers. The problematic situation that gives origin to this research declares the existence of some motivational tendencies that - although they are not generalized in the team - they do affect the sustained accomplishment of efforts in some moments of the preparation, it turns contradictory the behavior in front of the demands and constancy in the search of the progress within the trainings, and it conditions the isolated simplification of activities. In this way, we find that the low presence of these elements is 25 % and that 40 % is located in a medium level of these reasons.

The shared presence of some reasons and others in the motivational configuration of the studied sample is not contradictory, that is precisely the basis of the further development and the homogeneity desired in a team that differs in its members in terms of sports level and psychological development.

Intrinsic motivation

There is not even one athlete in the sample who is at a low level of intrinsic motivation, the whole group is at least at a medium level of development. In the high level of intrinsic motivation, 60% of the boxers show a marked presence of this quality in the sample studied, which includes Olympic and World Champions.

Much of the subjective satisfaction of the practice of boxing for them is represented by the very realization of the execution and the improvement of combinations of tactical actions. In a similar way to the presence of achievement motivation, the intrinsic one permanently pursues excellence which feeds their perception of competition and control over the activity they face (Gutiérrez, 2014). This type of subjective approach does not often need external behavioral reinforcers, nor transcendental facts to maintain the effort in training, it is strengthened by small progresses and partial challenges.

Extrinsic motivation

Once the relationship between these two variables was evaluated from the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level did not influence the extrinsic motivation. The power of extrinsic motivation to generate intensity in behavior is high. It is related to the consequences and benefits that the practice of boxing offers to the athlete (Murcia, Gimeno, & Coll, 2006). From 2014 onwards, a policy of salary stimulation was introduced in Cuba, specifically in Inder, which increased the financial income of Cuban athletes according to their results at different levels of sporting competition (Central American, Pan-American, Olympic and world levels).

This fair measure has as a consequence the increase of this motivation, which is directly related to the increase in the quality of life of the sportsman and his family. Likewise, the participation of Cuban boxing in competitions whose winners receive cash prizes has increased. This constitutes another element that reinforces the extrinsic motivation. Of the 20 boxers studied, 75 % have a high level of extrinsic motivation. In the case of boxers who medium 24.2 years of age, with families constituted and coming from those who constitute their main source of financial income, and immersed in a context of economic remuneration increasingly explicit in the sport, this distribution is expected.

Expectation of success

Once the relationship between these two variables had been evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level did not influence the expectation of success. Within the so-called instrumental motives, the expectation of success plays a determining role, and this is related to the motivational approach that athletes have to competition. (Iglesias, Gasset, González, & Anguera, 2010) Success is assumed as the victory in competition, there is no other way than "winning" and it rests subjectively on a feeling of confidence that the sportsman or woman experiences about his or her high possibilities of victory.

The boxers studied are located in 85 % (17 subjects) in medium and high levels of development of this variable. A winning team -as it is- feeds expectations of success that sustains high self-confidence in its possibilities of victory, although it should be clarified that without a backing of balanced effectiveness expectations little can be done when the competitive fight reaches its highest levels of complexity. This last quality will be discussed below.

Expectation of effectiveness

Once the relationship between these two variables had been evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level influenced the expectation of effectiveness. For the strong regulatory potential of this quality in a boxer leads to a subjective assessment of technical and tactical performance to ensure the perception of competition he has.

The development of effectiveness guarantees that the athlete-affectively and cognitively - enthrones the idea that good performance increases the probability of winning, (Muñoz & García, 2013) this facilitates the attentional processes during the execution and conditions a response of eutrophication over distress: the athlete controls the process.

In the studied sample the 85 % of the subjects are located, at least, in the medium level. Meanwhile, 55 % are in the high level of development. These data complement the ones analyzed previously, since theoretically it is required an adequate balance between one and another type of expectations.

It is clear that these are boxers who are confident in their chances of victory because they are very clear about the processes, techniques and tactical actions that are necessary to obtain it.

Reasons for approaching success

Normally the reasons towards the practice of physical activity and sports are usually varied. (Sailema, *et al.,* 2017; Morales Neira, *et al.,* 2017) Once the relationship between these two variables was evaluated based on the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level did not influence the reasons for approaching success. For 70 % of the boxers studied reached a high level in terms of the presence of these reasons, taking into account both outstanding and unremarkable boxers. These are the contents responsible for the maximum decision in the achievement of sports objectives and the delivery of efforts without conditioning to make them materialize.

Only 30 % of the boxers are at a low level of presence of these contents. It is worth remembering that the sample includes athletes with different competitive results.

Reasons to avoid failure

Once the relationship between these two variables was evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that membership of one or another level did not influence the reasons for avoiding failure. This is because the richness of the analysis of the motivational variables allows us to reconcile the presence, in unison, of reasons for approaching success, as well as reasons for avoiding failure. (Noriega, Germán, Carvajal, Carvajal, & Lam, 2019) It is interesting to note that half of the sample studied (50 %) presents a high level of reasons for avoiding failure, which may be associated with fear of losing the status achieved (some outstanding boxers), or simply with performance areas in which the boxers have lower self-efficacy. In the low and medium level are 9 subjects, who represent 45 % of the sample, in whom there is less presence of anticipation of failure in action, and therefore less mediatization of real failure.

Material reasons

Once the relationship between these two variables was evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that membership of one or another level did not influence the material reasons. Fortunately, the opinion that the true and original values of Olympism and humanism exclude the deserved economic income of the athlete is no longer appreciated (Kokolakakis & Gratton, 2019).

It is now known that an athlete can bring in significant amounts of money while maintaining a system of values attached to the Olympic ideal, if the latter has been carefully nurtured.

The material reasons, the possibilities that a boxer has to increase his quality of life, go largely through the action of these motives. The seventy five percent of the boxers in the sample achieve a medium or high development of material motifs. This is today a concrete reinforcement of the behavior of the boxers, as can be expected.

Reasons for recognition

Once the relationship between these two variables was evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that membership of one or another level did not influence the reasons for recognition. Because the obtaining of samples of admiration and respect are the sources that print energies and direction to the sport efforts. (Moreno-Murcia, Marcos-Pardo, & Huéscar, 2016) Boxing is certainly a very popular sport of social extraction. In Cuba, boxing is almost a national sport and there are many followers of this sport and its main figures. It is not surprising then that 75 % of the boxers are at the highest level of persistence of these motives. A close connection with a healthy and supportive audience can lead to new social stimulation.

Sporting self-assertion reasons

Once the relationship between these two variables was evaluated from the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level did not influence the reasons for sporting self-affirmation. For the leadership that boxing has historically played as the "flagship" of Cuban sport, by participating in multidisciplinary games, or simply by maintaining outstanding results at the international level is undoubtedly one of the sources that imprints energy and direction to the behavior of the boxers studied.

So much so that 80 % of them reach the highest level of these motivational contents, while only 5 % present a low level of sports self-affirmation motives.

Reasons for personological self-assertion

Once the relationship between these two variables had been evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level did not influence the reasons for personological self-affirmation. It shows that the highest level of frequency of these reasons is only 40 % of the sample studied. This quality - as its name indicates - is more associated with the complex processes involving feelings of personal worth and self-acceptance.

Super individual reasons

Once the relationship between these two variables had been evaluated on the basis of the Chi Square test, it was determined that belonging to one or another level did not influence the supra-individual motives. These motives do typify the sample studied, which is based on the representativeness of its country, region of origin and sports guild. A sport with the historical richness of results that boxing has in our country, has at the same time a powerful identity, expression of its sense of belonging. This includes the most genuine motives of a psychosocial nature that include even the representativeness of a coach, family and group of supporters, aspects valued in Sukprasert, (1996).

The presence of a study sample with outstanding motivational potential is considered. However, the outstanding boxers have advantages over the non-outstanding ones in terms of the regulatory and guiding potential of most of the variables studied. These

advantages certainly put them in a better position to achieve the highest sports results and maintain them over time.

A motivational configuration is identified in the boxers studied that stands out for the high presence of achievement motivation and expectation of effectiveness, expressed in a marked and homogeneous way in intrinsic and extrinsic contents, and with predominance of reasons for approaching success and high social representation.

The absolute and relative frequencies associated show that the level of the boxers (outstanding or not outstanding) is associated in a statistically significant way to the expectation of effectiveness, since in the first ones a high development of this quality predominates, which does not happen with the not outstanding ones.

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