

## **Social-Professional Antecedents and Prevalence of Burnout Syndrome in Tunisian Male Kick Boxers**

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to assess the effects of certain social-professional factors on the burnout syndrome development among 106 Tunisian male kick boxers ( $22 \pm 2.3$  years,  $65 \pm 10.2$  kg and  $1.74 \pm 0.08$  m) belonging to teams of Médenine, Sfax and Tunis, Tunisia. Our results have shown that the Tunisian male kick boxers are affected by the burnout syndrome and the factors 'Team integration', 'Athlete age', 'Athlete height' and 'Years of experience' significantly promote its trigger. The manifestation of this syndrome seems to be particularly the result of its three components' development such as the emotional exhaustion, the cynicism or deshumanization and the reduced personal accomplishment.

**Keywords:** Burnout; social-professional antecedents; kick boxers

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### **I. Introduction**

Kick boxing is a combat sport included in the category boxes fists feet and takes more and more importance in the sporting world. It is a sport that has been the victim of prejudice equating a violent sport, rather reserved for the thugs (Devonport, 2006). But things have changed since the sport was regulated, safety and quality of education have become top priorities and practices of young people has been encouraged and developed dramatically. It is a sport that requires physical, technical, tactical and mental concentrations (Simons and Levin, 1997). However, it is important to remember that the kick boxer is above all a human being who faces his doubts, fears and professional stress etc. but it is necessary to preserve and strengthen its potential to strike a balance between his mind, his body and his ability to achieve best performance (Cordes *et al.*, 1993; Lovallo, 2005). Indeed, because of the imbalance, kick boxers can enter experiencing burnout which may adversely affect its performance (Slimani *et al.*, 2014). The burnout is a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion. Its causes are often environmental or persons (Smith, 1986). Burnout negatively affects vitality, purpose, self-concept, and attitudes towards life and sport (Shaufeli *et al.*, 1993). Due to the nature of sport, athletes are prone to burnout because they are often achievement-oriented, highly dedicated, and very stressed (Feigley, 1984). Unfortunately, burnout is therefore a significant barrier for the athletes to progress. For this reason, burnout is an important issue for everyone. Understanding the psychology of burnout enables us to cope with, and even prevent it more effectively (Hodge *et al.*, 2008; Lemyre *et al.*, 2006; Perreault *et al.*, 2007).

Apart the stress of training and competitions, and like any human being, kick boxers could still be exposed to the life constraints that may predispose it to burnout. Thus, Slimani *et al.* (2014) reported that sporting competitions often increase significantly the level of stress in professional kick boxers but they never clarified the role of social-professional antecedents, which have been always considered as athletes stress factors on the other sport. Indeed, some studies have reported that social-professional factors such as 'age', 'marital status', 'years of experience' etc. can be responsible for the burnout induction in the athletes of individual or collective sport, and that, this negatively influences the physical performance (Brewer and Shapard, 2004; Gillespie, 1991; Vealey *et al.*, 1992).

The objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of certain social-professional factors on the development of burnout syndrome in Tunisians male kick boxers.

### **II. Materials and methods**

#### **Kick boxers**

This study was conducted on 106 professional Tunisian male kick boxers ( $22 \pm 2.3$  years,  $65 \pm 10.2$  kg and  $1.74 \pm 0.08$  m) belonging to teams of Médenine, Sfax and Tunis, Tunisia, whose the numbers of athletes were respectively 27, 32 and 47. Participation in this study was voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

### Burnout dimensions assessment

We have evaluated the burnout in the Tunisian male kick boxers by referring to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) questionnaire developed by Maslach (1996). This test evaluates the burnout through its three components namely emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DEP) and the reduced personal accomplishment (RPA). The questionnaire consists of 22 items. Subscales of burnout respond to the feelings of emotional exhaustion, deshumanization and reduced personal accomplishment. Indeed, each burnout dimension is the result of the addition of scores in a series of data items (Maslach *et al.*, 1996). Each item is assessed according to the scale of Likert scale graduated from 0 to 6 (Likert, 1988). Thus, social-professional factors as 'Team integration', 'Athlete age', 'Athlete height', 'Years of experience', 'Athlete category', 'Athlete marital status', 'Athlete education level' and 'Athlete residence place' were considered in our study.

### Maslach questionnaire validation

Before the start of the actual study, a preliminary test was carried out on sixty athletes fairly choose from the three afore mentioned teams; this to test the psychometric quality of the Maslach questionnaire used to ensure that it is understandable and is also adapted to the Tunisian teams kick boxing context. Thus, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed (Kaiser, 1958).

### Data analysis

The data were analysed by the SAS (Statistical Analysis System) to estimate the share of contribution of regressors such as 'Team integration', 'Athlete age', 'Athlete height', 'Years of experience', 'Athlete category', 'Athlete marital status', 'Athlete education level' and 'Athlete residence place' in the explanation of burnout syndrome of the kick boxers through its three components, i.e. emotional exhaustion, the deshumanization of the relationship and the reduced personal accomplishment of the kick boxers. We specify that the variables to explain that the burnout components are quantitative. However, the explanatory variables are qualitative, i.e. dichotomous or categorical. To do this, we conducted a regression analysis by the ANOVA procedure of the SAS library (SAS Institute, 1984). This method can explain the contribution part of regressors in explaining of the burnout variance. However, it does not specify the sign and magnitude of the influence of independent variables.

## III. Results

Psychometric test has been validated with 60 athletes. The internal consistencies, Cronbach's alpha, were 0.73, 0.71 and 0.76 respectively for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment.

Regression analysis for the three components of burnout syndrome namely the EE, the DEP and the RPA are shown in table 1. They indicate that the three models are significant at the same probability level ( $Pr \leq 0.001$ ).  $R^2$ , which inform on the contribution part of the predictors in explaining the variance of each of the three burnout components are respectively in the range of 0.69, 0.61 and 0.63.

Table 1 specifies the contribution part, expressed as a variance, of each source-social-professional in the explanation of each burnout dimension and the respective significance levels.

**Table 1.** Variances and probability levels according to the source of variation involved in the prediction of EE, DEP and RPA components of burnout syndrome in Tunisian male kick boxers.

Source of variation	Mean square	CPTV (%)	F	Pr
<b>Emotional exhaustion (EE)</b> ( $Pr \leq 0.001$ ; $R^2 = 0.69$ )				
<b>Regression</b>				
Team integration	2789	19	33.31	0.0001
Athlete age	3053	27	46.56	0.0001
Athlete height	1945	23	41.78	0.0001
Years of experience	3012	31	68.19	0.0001
Residual	312	-	-	-
<b>Depersonalization (DEP)</b> ( $Pr \leq 0.001$ ; $R^2 = 0.61$ )				
<b>Regression</b>				
Team integration	2387	21	29.12	0.0001
Athlete age	2412	25	56.91	0.0001
Athlete height	1129	21	39.78	0.0001
Years of experience	2421	33	37.11	0.0001
Residual	191	-	-	-
<b>Reduced Personal Accomplishment (RPA)</b> ( $Pr \leq 0.001$ ; $R^2 = 0.63$ )				
<b>Regression</b>				
Team integration	2879	18	23.32	0.0001
Athlete age	2654	29	37.12	0.0001
Athlete height	2091	21	38.23	0.0001
Years of experience	3113	32	29.22	0.0001
Residual	178	-	-	-

CPVT: Contribution part to the total variance

The contribution parts of social-professional antecedents in the prediction of burnout dimensions are variable. Thus, the factors such as the 'Team integration', the 'Athlete age', the 'Athlete height' and the 'Years of experience' best explain the three dimensions and therefore the burnout problems of Tunisian male kick boxers.

#### IV. Discussion

Burnout or burnout syndrome is a social-professional anomaly that prevails more and more in sports environment. It is expressed by emotional irritability, anger, inability to cope with stress and exhibited a significant loss of energy. Thus, the term burnout in English means wear, run out, crack due to excessive energy demands, forces or resources (Truchot, 2004). It is caused by several social-professional factors (Raedeke and Smith, 2001). Kick boxing is often seen as a sport of aggression and stress which is often at the origin of several problems that can destabilize the psychological balance of kick boxers in his entourage (Slimani *et al.*, 2014).

Our study showed that the Tunisian male kick boxers are affected by burnout syndrome and that the social-professional factors such as the 'Team integration', the 'Athlete age', the 'Athlete height' and the 'Years of experience' are the main causes of his trigger. Indeed, these were at the origin of the expression of the emotional exhaustion, the cynicism or dehumanization and the reduced personal accomplishment in Tunisian male kick boxers which constitute the three dimensions of burnout syndrome. Maslach (1996) reported that the manifestation of the burnout will even just with the expression of one dimension in individuals. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by a feeling of lack of energy and inability to provide assistance to others. The divestment resulted in a negative and detached attitude towards others that can evolve into on reification of the other. The third burnout dimension reflects a decrease in the sense of accomplishment, self-realization or sense of personal and professional effectiveness. The third burnout dimension reflects a decrease in the sense of accomplishment, self-realization or sense of personal effectiveness and professional. The individual will be a particularly negative and demeaning view of most on its achievements. Gould *et al.* (1993) and Scanlan *et al.* (1991) reported that the onset of burnout can occur easily in athletes of individual or collective sport due to effects that are personal origins such as 'age', 'marital status', 'years of experience' etc. and/or to its interactions with its environment. Thus, the expression of the burnout syndrome in the athlete can lead to psychological problems associated with depression and the behavioral states as well as the loss of physical performance (Vealey *et al.*, 1992).

In conclusion, our results showed that the Tunisian male kick boxers suffer from burnout syndrome and the predictors 'Team integration', 'Athlete age', 'Athlete height' and 'Years of experience' are the major stressogenes factors. The manifestation of this anomaly seems to be particularly the result of its three components' development such as the emotional exhaustion, the dehumanization and the reduced personal accomplishment.

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