COMMUNICATION ASPECTS OF SPORT IN THE CONTEXT OF SAMBO: BASICS OF ATHLETE RECRUITMENT AND DYNAMICS OF THE FEDERATION’S COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. Sambo is a martial art whose popularity is growing every year. Therefore, it is important to encourage and recruit potential sambo players for the further development of the sport. A prerequisite is the establishment of communication links to improve existing communication strategies implemented by sambo federations. This is the reason for the relevance of the study, in order to improve the recruitment of athletes and thereby contribute to bringing sambo to a new level using the research findings and recommendations. That is why, in view of all the above, the purpose of this research is to analyse the communication aspect of sambo, identify the main aspects of athlete recruitment and a detailed analysis of the factors that influence the effectiveness of current communication strategies for recruitment; characterise the dynamics of communication of federations and identify successful communication practices; identify the features of the correlation between effective communication and the success of recruitment processes. It is also important to analyse the potential impact of improved communication on the growth and development of sambo. The final question is to provide practical suggestions for improving communication during the recruitment of athletes based on the findings. To achieve this purpose, a number of scientific methods were used, including the general philosophical method, methods of system analysis and synthesis, the method of deduction and induction, and the dialectical method. As a result, we have obtained scientifically significant conclusions and developed practical recommendations for improving communication skills in terms of implementing effective strategies and recruiting.

Keywords: sambo, effective communication, federation, recruitment, strategy

1. INTRODUCTION. By its very nature, is a martial art form that emerged and began to develop in the early 20th century and is now considered an international martial art. Sambo did not gain popularity overnight, but today it is a well-known sport and is actively practised in different countries. Moreover, it is recognised as an Olympic sport. In short, sambo is a versatile martial art that combines techniques from several other martial arts, including judo, wrestling and boxing, and also contains some throws from other martial arts, such as jiu-jitsu or karate (What is sambo, n.d.).

In terms of historical events, sambo was developed as a direct alternative to Japanese judo and Greco-Roman wrestling. In sambo, much attention is paid to throws and takedowns. Athletes learn a variety of techniques to throw their opponents off balance and bring them to the ground, earning points in the process. Although sambo originated as a martial art and self-defence system, it has evolved into a popular sport with its own rules and competitions (What is sambo, 2023). Practitioners can do sambo both for self-defence and as a competitive
As in any sport, effective communication is essential for the development of athletes’ techniques and the achievement of results. It aims to facilitate many conditions, the first of which is to build trust between the athlete and coach, as well as between team members. Trustful and open communication has a positive impact on developing and enhancing cohesion, strengthening interpersonal relationships and directly affecting athletes’ morale. Moreover, the coach has the important task of planning plans and strategies that can lead the sambo athlete to victory, and therefore active communication has a direct impact on their implementation (Hanson, 2019). Coaches, by virtue of their duties, should inform players about improvements in their skills, or vice versa, about problematic issues, detail information about direct areas for growth, and accordingly provide advice on how to implement these recommendations. We should not forget about constructive criticism and its proper delivery, which encourages many players to achieve more.

Motivation plays an important role in effective communication, which also has a positive impact on the achievement of results. Communication during the competition itself or during training can boost morale and give athletes confidence in their ability to win. Clear and concise communication helps athletes stay focused during training and competition. It minimises confusion and allows players to concentrate on their tasks (The importance of Communication in Sports, 2021).

It is also worth noting that effective communication in any sport encourages the quick resolution of conflicts, taking into account the interests of each of the parties involved. Moreover, when open channels of communication are available, it makes it easy to resolve conflicts before they reach their final point of development, preventing many negative aspects and maintaining a healthy atmosphere for further sporting achievements.

Within the framework of our research, it is also worth noting that effective communication between a coach and an athlete serves as a guarantee of injury prevention, prevention and management. A trusting relationship facilitates openness about one’s physical condition, which directly affects further training and athlete performance (Ya’u Sule & Olaitan Ridwanullah, 2023). Given the above arguments for effective communication, it is important to add that it is often the catalyst for success and victories. It affects team dynamics, strategy implementation, player development, and overall performance. If we look at effective communication from the perspective of sambo itself, this sport has a certain set of challenges in its community, and therefore is subject to our analysis.

Firstly, sambo is an international sport and is practised in different parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds and languages. For these reasons, effective communication can be difficult, and this can be especially evident in international competitions. Secondly, the presence of professional jargon and terminology. Ensuring that coaches, athletes and officials are on the same page regarding terminology and techniques is crucial for effective communication. This is especially true when innovations and additions or changes to existing rules are made. Communication should aim to respond quickly and notify coaches, officials and players of innovations so that all individuals are aware and prepared for any changes (The Importance of Communication in Sports, 2018).

Thirdly, due to its nature, sambo is not widely covered by the media. Therefore, in some
ways, this can create a specific vacuum in terms of communicating strategies, rule changes and values of the sport to the general public. In the case of new potential athletes, this can create problems of not fully understanding the nature and rules of the sport. Therefore, there is often a need for effective communication strategies to educate spectators and newcomers about the rules, scoring system and nuances of the sport.

Like every sport, sambo has its own community. Taking into account the above argument, i.e. due to the fact that sambo is a kind of „niche“ sport, and therefore there is a problem in maintaining global communication networks and platforms. Therefore, the creation and active involvement of athletes and fans on a global scale may require targeted communication efforts (The Importance of Communication in Sports, 2018).

Furthermore, there is a direct challenge in terms of refereeing decisions and referees. It is the achievement of clear and effective communication about the basic criteria, the rules set as the athlete’s behaviour itself, the rules of sambo and the criteria used for judging that is essential to prevent misunderstandings and disputes.

In terms of financial challenges, sambo faces the problem of communicating the essence of the sport and its attractiveness to potential investors and sponsors. Articulating sambo’s unique aspects and excitement to attract financial support requires targeted communication efforts (Ya’u Sule & Olaitan Ridwanullah, 2023).

These challenges are solvable, but they require not only time, but also the full involvement and willingness of the coaches and athletes themselves. Moreover, as noted, effective communication also has a significant impact on the recruitment of new athletes in terms of recruitment. Therefore, in the following, we will also discuss the influence of federations on the development of communication skills and processes. That is why, in view of all the above, the purpose of this research is to analyse the communication aspect of sambo, identify the main aspects of athlete recruitment and a detailed analysis of the factors that influence the effectiveness of current communication strategies for recruitment; characterise the dynamics of communication between federations and identify successful communication practices; identify the features of the correlation between effective communication and the success of recruitment processes. It is also important to analyse the potential impact of improved communication on the growth and development of sambo. Finally, based on the findings, we will provide practical suggestions for improving communication during the recruitment of athletes

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was carried out in accordance with the stated purpose and with the help of a number of scientific methods, including the general philosophical method, methods of system analysis and synthesis, the method of deduction and induction, and the dialectical method. The general philosophical method is used at all stages of this research to formulate qualitative scientifically significant conclusions in accordance with the tasks and purpose.

The method of systematic analysis was used to identify the features of the communication aspect of sambo and the main aspects of athletes’ recruitment. Moreover, the factors that influence the effectiveness of current communication strategies of recruitment were analysed. In combination with the synthesis method, conclusions were drawn on the
dynamics of communication of federations and the features of successful communication practices were identified. The method of synthesis was also used to identify the features of the potential impact of improved communication on the growth and development of sambo as a progressive sport.

Using the method of deduction, a conclusion was made about the peculiarities of the correlation between effective communication and the success of recruitment processes. The method of induction was used to draw conclusions about improving communication during the recruitment of athletes. To achieve this goal, the dialectical method was also used. It was used to identify and study the problematic issues of establishing effective communication.

Together, all of the above methods helped to form not only scientifically significant conclusions, but also a general understanding of the importance of effective communication. In particular, recommendations were made to improve communication during the recruitment of athletes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Recruitment of athletes and factors influencing the effectiveness of current recruitment communication strategies

Naturally, the process of recruitment for sambo involves meeting certain criteria for the availability of the necessary skills and abilities of those who wish to engage in sambo. There is no doubt that possession of high communication skills can help to identify individuals with great potential for this sport. However, other key characteristics should also be taken into account when directly recruiting sambo players. These include the following:

- It is much easier and faster to learn sambo techniques, perform throws, wrestle on the ground, etc. if you have high physical fitness, which will allow you to learn sambo techniques and techniques, than if you do not have such physical fitness. Moreover, sambo is a sport that requires agility, strength and endurance to master the necessary techniques. The access to technical skills in the future is something that recruitment should aim to achieve, and communication skills are one of the ways that can contribute to this at the stage of selecting potential athletes (Zabora et al., 2022);
- Having some experience in similar sports, such as judo or traditional wrestling, would be a positive aspect. The positive aspect is that these sports are partially related and have similar techniques and moves, which can further contribute to a successful sambo career;
- Potential athletes should be adaptable to different situations and quickly switch from one strategy to another, while not losing concentration and following the recommendations of coaches (Khatsayuk et al., 2022);
- Competitive experience - people who have had competitive experience in the past will be able to master sambo much easier and participate in competitions in the future, because such experience and the competition itself require moral fortitude and the ability to perform under certain pressure. It would be appropriate to recruit athletes who have participated in various tournaments and shown results in their weight category (Tubić et al., 2022);
- Discipline - motivation from the coach does have a positive effect on athletes, but what really leads to victories and good results in competitions is discipline. It is worth
focusing on those potential sambo wrestlers who are dedicated to training and constantly work on improving their already developed skills, and therefore it will not be a problem for them to devote time and effort to achieve success in sambo. At the same time, an important emphasis also falls on the athlete's desire to constantly learn new techniques and improve communication skills, which will be important for achieving the desired results;

- The presence of specific signs of psychological stability is an indicator that the candidate will be able to respond to difficulties both mentally and physically. The recruitment of athletes with psychological resilience, endurance and the ability to stay focused under pressure is crucial for success in this sport (Zabora et al., 2022);

- Sambo is based on respect for one's opponents and the ability to strictly follow the rules. Therefore, athletes who share these values are able to better integrate into the team and produce the desired results;

- Given that there is a lack of attention to sambo as a sport, it is also worth paying attention to those athletes who will promote this sport among the population and contribute to the increased demand and mastery of sambo skills;

- Getting to know successful sambo athletes inspires people to join sambo. The achievements and skills of admired athletes can influence the attraction of new participants, and direct meetings with them can increase the number of people willing to learn sambo (Drid et al., 2021).

From the recruitment point of view, we have analysed the specific important aspects of selecting potential athletes. However, from the point of view of the athletes themselves, they can take into account both the aspects analysed above and some other key factors regarding the future of sambo training, which include:

- The presence of a direct interest in sambo as a martial art due to its dynamism and versatility, or in martial arts and self-defence in general;

- The variety of techniques offered by sambo is of interest to many athletes and is therefore an important aspect when choosing a sport to devote most of their time and effort to;

- Similarly, having previous experience in wrestling or judo is crucial for both sides - the recruiter and the athlete - as it is an advantage over other athletes and a higher guarantee of faster success (Tubić et al., 2022);

- The athlete's physical fitness is a key attribute that will help during training, development of new techniques and movements, and subsequently competitions;

- The presence of experienced coaches, a favourable training environment and a well-organised programme can greatly influence an athlete's decision to join sambo. A positive and encouraging coaching staff can improve the overall experience. And the communication between the coach and the athlete from the very first meeting can influence their further cooperation and results;

- The social aspect of training and competing with like-minded people can be quite motivating (Khatsayuk et al., 2022);

- For athletes who are looking for opportunities for growth and development, sambo can be a good space to improve themselves and become a professional athlete.

Of course, the decision to choose sambo as a direction for development is up to the athlete, but the use of the various techniques and incentives described above can significantly
influence their decision. In particular, communication skills and recruitment strategies have a significant impact. Accordingly, their effectiveness can also be influenced by certain factors. These factors play a crucial role in how well an organisation can attract, engage and retain potential candidates. Let’s analyse a few of these important factors.

First and foremost, conciseness and clarity are important when communicating the values of the sport and the desired outcomes. On the contrary, confusing and rather ambiguous messages can scare off potential candidates, so it is worth paying attention to the writing of instructions, rules, and requirements that are subsequently communicated to candidates. Moreover, it is advisable to tailor communication to the relevant target audience, taking into account various aspects of the job, potential knowledge and skills, etc. (Andriytsev, 2016).

Due to rapid technological developments, social media and various online platforms are important for effective recruitment communication, as they can positively contribute to increasing the reach and impact of recruitment messages. It is important to add that these types of messages can better provide a dynamic and interactive experience to potential candidates. Moreover, all messages broadcast on different platforms should be consistent not only with each other, but also with all guidelines and regulations.

The reputation of coaches and officials involved in the sport should also be taken into account. The absence of known conflicts, abuse of office, or substance abuse will only have a positive effect on hesitant athletes, and a good, clean coach’s name will increase confidence in sambo in general. The ideal option would also be to broadcast feedback on teamwork with coaches, creating a comfortable atmosphere for training and building credibility (Fias education guide for sambists developed by cscf sport integrity group, n.d.). In this study, it is important to emphasise the fact that effective communication strategies will only be effective if they provide for two-way communication and a quick response to inquiries with comprehensive answers. This requires the creation of feedback mechanisms, such as questionnaires, surveys, and simple stories about your experience.

As always, personalised communication and tailoring messages to each individual candidate is a good tool. In addition, candidates appreciate the transparency of the recruitment process and clear information about the stages, timeframes and other necessary processes. Let’s also not forget the importance of adapting existing communication and recruitment strategies to changes in the athlete environment, various trends and the labour market itself (Drid et al., 2021). Taking these factors into account, organisations can increase the effectiveness of their recruitment communication strategies by creating a positive and engaging experience for potential candidates.

3.2. Study of communication structures in sambo federations and identification of successful communication practices

In the context of sport and sambo in particular, federations and the dynamics of their communications play an important role in the effective management and development of sambo. In turn, communication structures in federations include specific ways of disseminating information to athletes, potential sambo players, coaches, sponsors and other stakeholders. The key aspects that are directly related to the dynamics of communication in sambo federations are as follows:
1. Internal communication, which consists in establishing communication links between internal management structures that will have positive results in policy implementation and coordination of activities. This includes the activities of committees, executive boards, and staff. Internal communication is also manifested in direct and consistent communication with athletes regarding training data, changes and updates to information, etc., as well as communication with coaching staff regarding training methods, recommendations for improvement and any changes to regulations (Moon et al., 2022).

2. External communication is primarily about relations with the public, including the athletes’ families, fans and future potential athletes. In general, this can be done through campaigns on online platforms, social media and public events. The involvement of the media is also an effective way to spread awareness among the population and promote sambo as a sport. Managing positive relationships with journalists and the media is essential to creating a positive image of sambo and attracting the attention of sponsors and investors. Furthermore, considerable attention is paid to establishing connections with them, providing them with the necessary information to maintain a stable and long-term relationship. Moreover, as sambo has already become an international sport, establishing international communication is an extremely important area. That is why federations need to communicate with international governing bodies, participate in discussions on rule changes and coordinate activities with other national federations (Polyakov et al., 2022).

3. Creation of communication platforms, such as social networks and websites, which are necessary for the promotion of the sport and the achievements of athletes.

4. Conducting educational and training programmes - consists in conducting various trainings on the basis of federations for their officials, as well as sambo wrestlers and their coaches. Such programmes are aimed at attracting new potential athletes and delivering important messages to the public. The development and dissemination of sambo-related educational materials, including rules, training manuals and promotional content, helps to raise awareness among the community. It is also important to use information technology to conduct webinars and video conferencing, which can easily facilitate communication between federations at the international level (Moon et al., 2022).

5. Crisis communication - aimed at creating a crisis communication plan to further manage events that occur unexpectedly and may negatively affect the reputation of the federation (Khatsaiuk et al., 2022).

6. Establish feedback mechanisms that are necessary for absolutely all parties and take the form of direct communication channels, questionnaires and forms to be filled out.

7. Developing effective and diverse communication strategies (practices) that take into account the interests of all parties. This includes an understanding of the role of communication in athlete recruitment, talent development, event promotion and the creation of a positive sport culture.

Successful communication strategies of sambo federations can serve as models for increasing engagement, promoting the sport and developing positive relationships with stakeholders. Of course, all strategies differ from each other, but there are details that are common to each strategy. In general, these include the clarity and timeliness of information dissemination, user-friendly interfaces of apps and websites, an active presence on social media, audience
engagement through surveys, advertising campaigns, adding entertainment content, creating awareness of the sambo federation, federations investing in educational initiatives, which has a positive impact on stakeholder relations, and establishing relationships with the media. Moreover, in order to implement effective communication strategies, federations also engage coaches and athletes directly, taking into account their opinions on the further development of sambo. By implementing these successful communication practices, sambo federations can create an active and engaged community while effectively promoting the sport at the local, national and international levels (Khatsaiuk et al., 2022).

3.3 The impact of improved communication on the development of sambo and practical suggestions for improving communication during the recruitment of athletes

For the purposes of our study, the relationship between federation communication and organisational effectiveness in the context of sports federations, including sambo federations, is important. Effective communication is a key element that contributes to the success of the federation itself and to the greater involvement of potential athletes.

This relationship is manifested in ensuring a transparent and uninterrupted flow of information both within the federation itself and outside the federation at the public level, as well as in establishing international relations. Moreover, effective communication is essential for coordinating the various activities and initiatives undertaken by the federation. Taken together, all of the above has a direct impact on the implementation of strategic programmes and policies, as well as the successful implementation of initiatives. Effective communication contributes to member satisfaction and retention. Athletes, coaches and other members who feel well informed, valued and involved are more likely to stay with the organisation and contribute positively to its development (Havryliuk, 2018).

It is logical that all of the above has a direct impact on the growth and development of sambo as a martial art. Clear and effective communication strategies can improve various aspects of the sport, contributing to an increase in the number of participants, popularity and overall development. What are the implications for the development of sambo of good communication? It’s simple, because first of all, it means increased awareness of the sport, increased awareness of the specifics of techniques and manoeuvres. Moreover, informing people about the benefits of sambo, the training programmes available and the overall experience of coaches and athletes can easily attract new athletes. Improved communication strategies can effectively convey the unique aspects of sambo, making it more attractive to potential participants (Gusev, 2015). Highlighting the positive impact of sambo and showcasing the results of sambo athletes can create a favourable perception, attracting support from the public, sponsors and potential partners. Effective communication helps sambo federations to align their goals and activities with national sports policy. Engagement with relevant authorities, government agencies and sports agencies ensures that sambo is included in national sports development plans and funding initiatives (The Importance of Communication in Sports, 2018).

Within the framework of our research and with the aim of achieving this goal in mind, we would like to provide practical recommendations for improving communication during the recruitment process of potential athletes:
The first message to a potential candidate is the most important - it should contain all the necessary information about the coach, training environment, benefits, and unique aspects of the training programme. It can also include competitive advantages and experience of the sambo fighters themselves. Also take into account the unique characteristics of the person to whom the message will be sent. There should be a standard basic part and a variable that will be adapted in each individual case.

- Have a comprehensive recruitment package that includes information about the programme, training schedules, opportunities to participate in competitions, success stories, and any available support services. This should be designed in a visually appealing way using trigger colours, phrases and text layout. It is worth involving a marketer and designer to be sure of the final result.

- All social networks, online platforms and websites should be easy to find information and use without complicated interfaces. It is advisable to cover current events, victories, training sessions, interviews with current athletes, etc.

- All platforms must include contact information. They should be placed in a way that makes it easy to find them.

- Organise virtual information sessions or webinars to give interested athletes and their families the opportunity to learn more about the sambo programme. Invite key members of the coaching staff and allow them to answer questions and concerns;

- Create a system of automatic basic questions and instant answers to save time for both parties and to give and receive the necessary information. After that, start a dialogue without predefined algorithms, but directly to meet the candidate’s need for information based on the data already obtained.

- Analyse the feedback you receive, both from those who have decided to join sambo and from those who have refused. Based on this, improve your communication strategy.

- Implement a systematic process for keeping in touch with potential recruits.

- It is also an effective solution to hold „open days” so that potential candidates can immerse themselves in the atmosphere of sambo.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Sambo, by its very nature, is a martial art form that originated and began to develop in the early 20th century and is now considered an international martial art. Sambo is a versatile martial art that combines techniques from several other martial arts, including judo, wrestling and boxing, and also contains some throws from other martial arts, such as jiu-jitsu or karate.

As in any sport, effective communication is essential for the development of athletes’ techniques and the achievement of results. Trusted and open communication has a positive impact on developing and increasing cohesion, strengthening interpersonal relationships and directly affecting athletes’ morale. Moreover, the coach has the important task of planning plans and strategies that can lead a sambo wrestler to victory, and therefore active communication has a direct impact on their implementation.

When recruiting potential candidates, the following key characteristics are required from both recruiters and athletes: high physical fitness; some experience in similar sports
such as judo or traditional wrestling; adaptability to different situations and the ability to quickly switch from one strategy to another, while not losing concentration and coaching recommendations; competitive experience; discipline; specific signs of psychological stability; the ability to meet new people; and the ability to make friends.

The decision to choose sambo as a direction for development is, of course, up to the athlete, but the use of these techniques and encouragements can significantly influence his or her decision. In particular, communication skills and recruitment strategies have a significant impact. Accordingly, their effectiveness can also be influenced by brevity and clarity, which are important when communicating the values of the sport and the desired results. Social media and various online platforms can be used for effective recruitment communication and can positively contribute to the reach and impact of recruitment messages. The reputation of coaches and officials involved in the sport should not be overlooked. It can also be ideal to broadcast feedback on teamwork with coaches, creating a comfortable atmosphere for training and building credibility. Effective communication strategies will only be effective if they provide for two-way communication and a quick response to inquiries with comprehensive answers. This requires the creation of feedback mechanisms, such as questionnaires, surveys, and simple stories about your experience. Let’s also not forget the importance of adapting existing communication and recruitment strategies to changes in the athlete environment, various trends, and the labour market itself.

In the context of sport and sambo in particular, federations and the dynamics of their communications play an important role in the effective management and development of sambo. In turn, communication structures in federations include specific ways of disseminating information to athletes, potential sambo players, coaches, sponsors and other stakeholders. Federations implement a policy of establishing communication links both internally and externally. Successful communication strategies of sambo federations can serve as models for increasing engagement, promoting the sport and developing positive relationships with stakeholders. The success of the strategies is determined by the following factors: clarity and timeliness of information dissemination, user-friendly interfaces of apps and websites, active presence on social media, audience engagement through surveys, advertising campaigns, adding entertainment content, creating awareness of the sambo federation, investments of federations in educational initiatives, which positively affects stakeholder relations, and establishing relations with the media. Moreover, in order to implement effective communication strategies, federations also engage coaches and athletes directly, taking into account their opinions on the further development of sambo. By implementing these successful communication practices, sambo federations can create an active and engaged community while effectively promoting the sport at the local, national and international levels.

Effective practical recommendations for improving communication during the recruitment process of potential athletes include: planning the first message to the recruit; having a comprehensive recruitment package that includes programme details, training schedules, competition opportunities, success stories and any available support services; all social media, online platforms and websites should be easy to find information and have simple interfaces; highlighting current events, victories, training sessions, etc.
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