Dynamic Variations in Achievement Goals and in Their Patterns of Synchronization in Combat Sport: A Quantitative and Qualitative Idiosyncratic Study
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Based on Nowak and Vallacher’s (1998) dynamic approach to social psychology, the present study was conducted to capture how mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goals (Elliot, 1999) vary and are interrelated during a practice judo match. Two male national level competitors of judo had a practice match together. They were instructed to maintain flexibility and not refuse to be thrown. Immediately afterward they watched a videotape of their fight. While watching the video, they had to continuously express on a computer their moment-to-moment level of goal involvement, in regard to a single item adapted from Elliot and Church’s (1997) achievement goal questionnaire. This procedure adapted from Vallacher and Nowak (1994) was renewed for each goal. Individual self-confrontation interviews (Theureau, 1992) based on the video images were then conducted to record the participants’ verbalizations about what they experienced during the action. Multivariate and univariate analyses of variance (p < .05) revealed important differences in the scores of each variable, at different moments of the fight. Cross-correlation analyses also showed important variations in the patterns of synchronization between mastery and performance-approach goals (–90 ≤ r ≤ .97), mastery and performance-avoidance goals (–.89 ≤ r ≤ .91), and performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals (–.87 ≤ r ≤ .88), at different moments of the fight. Qualitative data analyses suggested that changes in the level of goal involvement depended on outcomes of previous actions and emerging attack opportunities.