Current Status of Mental Training Practice in Japan and Related Issues; Search of the Relevant Japanese-Language Literature

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Abstract
To gauge the current status of the practice of mental training (MT) in Japan, a search was conducted of 82 Japanese-language books published in Japan to December 2000 on the topic of MT. The results of this literature search revealed the following.

1) According to an analysis of the number of publications, the volume of MT-related literature has grown continuously since 1975. In the 1990s, the number of original Japanese-language books rose sharply, overtaking the cumulative total of titles translated into Japanese. These figures reveal that MT activities in Japan have progressed from an initial phase of introducing overseas MT practice to the Japanese population through translated literature to a phase in which Japanese consultants report the status of their own practice.

2) An analysis of the MT programs introduced by MT consultants confirms the existence of three training phases: a phase focusing on training of introductory techniques, such as assessment and relaxation; a phase of training in core methods, such as mental imagery; and a phase of training in practical techniques, including mental rehearsal and psychological conditioning.

3) In an analysis of practical reports, MT practice based on theories of behavior therapy, theories of depth psychology and theories of existential psychology were examined. Drawing on the training experiences of MT consultants, variations in underlying psychological theories were seen to be reflected in the selection of MT techniques and their relationship to individual athletes, suggesting that these underlying psychological approaches were key factors in the characteristics of each approach to the MT practice.

Key words: mental training, mental management, mental imagery, literature research