

THE MOTIVATIONAL STRUCTURE OF CHILDREN SKIERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF SEVEN AND ELEVEN

UDC: 796. 92-053.2

(Preliminary communication)

Petar Mitić, Zvezdan Savić and Nenad Stojiljković

University of Niš, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, Niš, Serbia

Abstract:

The aim of this research was to determine the main motives in children to train skiing. The research aimed at determining whether inner motives are more dominant in comparison to the outer motivation in children of this age. The sample of examinees included 49 children, male and female, between 7 and 11 years, who go in for skiing. The survey was conducted at the Developing Camp of the Skiing Committee of Serbia sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Sport of Serbia and realized at Stara Planina. A questionnaire was constructed for this purpose by the authors. The results obtained by the statistical evaluation of the data collected by the questionnaire point to the fact that the most widely spread motive in children is the fact that their parents like them to train skiing. Two social factors follow: making new friends and teamwork at the camps.

Key words: *survey, parents, male, female, training*

INTRODUCTION

The determination of the type and intensity of motives is the central theme when it comes to the human behaviour in general, and it is also highly applicable to sportsmen. Motives are of great importance, because, as stated by Ljubiša Lazarević (1994) in his book *Psychological Preparation of Sportsmen*, motives determine the orientation, strength, content and duration of an activity. When observed from the outside, an identical behaviour in different individuals can be caused by different motives. Furthermore, identical motives can be manifested differently in people.

As many other authors, Ljubiša Lazarević also distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The behaviour caused by intrinsic (inner) motives is the type of behaviour during which the very activity (the performing of the same) causes pleasure. Extrinsic (outer) motivational behaviour is caused by outer rewards and stimulus. It is not necessary to point out that the inner motivation, when compared to the outer, is

more authentic and as such, lasts longer. and that it is also more intense.

Damon Burton and Thomas Raedeke in *Sport Psychology for Coaches* suggest the following types of inner motivation in sportsmen: the need for fun and stimulation, the need for acceptance and belonging, the need for control and autonomy, and the sense of competence and success.

While discussing the reasons and benefits for children and the youth who go in for sports, Richard Cox states the most common reasons which have occurred during researches:

- to have fun and enjoy by participating in a sports activity,
- to acquire new skills and improve the existing ones,
- to be fit and of good health,
- to enjoy the challenge and excitement that appear while taking part in a sports competition,
- to enjoy the team atmosphere and be with friends.

The same authors observe that the possible negative factors which are connected with young people taking part in sports are: excessive competitiveness and the focus on victory, too much stress and anxiety among the participants and the violence in which quite often the fathers of the young sportsmen participate.

The aim of this research was to determine the main motives in children to train skiing. The research aimed at determining whether inner motives are more dominant in comparison to the outer motivation in children of this age.

METHODS

In order to determine the motives that appear among young skiers and also the intensity of the motives, a questionnaire consisting of twenty statements has been created. The examinees express their level of agreement with the statements by using a 3-point Likert-type scale. The examinees' gender, age and period of ski training were used as control variables. When it comes to the formulation of the statements, special attention was paid to their clarity for the target group, i.e. children between the age of 7 and 11. The statements include not only outer, but also inner motivators: the influence of the family, the pleasure caused by performing the activity (training), the expectations connected with the skiing career, social interaction with peers and coaches, balancing the trainings with school requirements and valuing skiing and training in general.

The sample of examinees included 49 children, male and female, from 7 to 11 years, who go in for skiing. The survey was conducted at the Developing Camp of the Skiing Committee of Serbia sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Sport of Serbia and realized at Stara Planina. The survey was conducted during the morning hours, before the scheduled activities for the particular day. The children who were being surveyed are members of the following clubs: SK Nis (Nis), SK Midzor (Piroć), SK Midzor (Knjazevac), SK Kraljevica (Zajecar), SK Cigota (Zlatibor), SK Art (Uzice), BSK Beograd (Beograd), SK Rojal (Beograd), SK Radnicki (Kragujevac), SK Bakar (Bor). The structure of the sample was such that it consisted of 25 boys and 24 girls. On the average, the children have been training skiing for three years.

RESULTS

Certain conclusions and observations have been reached upon the statistical evaluation of the data. The statement which got the highest number of positive responses referred to the question whether the parents of children skiers loved the fact that their children train skiing and not some other sport. Thus, we can draw the conclusion that the support and encouragement of parents, which stand for types of outer stimulations, are highly present in children of this age. Additionally, it has been proven that parents themselves love skiing as a sport, which supports the thesis that they have had a positive influence on the child to start ski training and also that they support the continuation of that process. When referring to the influence of the family on the child to choose a specific activity, it is noticed that the high agreement rate between the parents' aspirations and the child's activity is actually the outcome of a specific method of learning called- learning through modeling. Learning through modeling has been defined by the American psychologist Albert Bandura. The essence of this social learning theory is that the child imitates the characteristics and behaviour of the chosen model (in this case-the parent) through imitation or identification. However, the results of the research show that only a certain number of children come from families where someone trained skiing as well. Since the processes of learning through modeling and imitation in particular refer not only to the family, we asked the children if they liked watching skiing on tv. The results point to the fact that boys watch professional sports much often more when compared to girls.

The statements that have the highest average score are those that refer to the social component of sports training. The children have stated that they have made new friends in the club and that they love going to organized ski trainings (camps). The high social motivation for going in for sports in children of this age is logical and it is in accordance with the findings of developmental psychology and for this reason the high score was expected.

The questionnaire also included the field of balancing and the possible compatibility between the school requirements and ski trainings. The score for the statement that teachers have understanding when pupils miss classes due to their sports activities is much higher than the score for the statement that the ski trainings help them in

learning for school. Furthermore, the statement which got the lowest score when compared to all the other statements from the questionnaire is the one which refers to the good influence that skiing has on learning for school.

The aim of this research was also to determine whether the level of agreement with the given statement differs based on the control variables (gender, age and years of ski training). The results have shown that the sample is quite homogeneous when it comes to the motivation for ski training. The structure of the motives is the same regardless of the exact age of the child or how long the child has been training skiing. When it comes to the difference between genders, a statistically important difference of 0.5 occurred for the statements which refer to the feeling of pleasure which appears after the training and also following skiing through the media. Girls feel much more pleasant after the trainings in comparison to boys, but they follow professional skiing less. One of the possible explanations is that girls enjoy more in the very activity of ski training and they are not burdened by top scores, which points to the higher rate of inner motivation in comparison to boys.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to determine the basic motives in children to train skiing and also to determine whether inner motives are of greater importance in comparison with the outer motivation in children of this age. Furthermore, we were interested whether the motives differ for different sexes, whether they change according to the period of active ski training and whether certain variations appear during the course of time.

The sample was appropriate and it consisted of 49 children, both male and female, aged from seven to eleven years, who go in for skiing. The questionnaire was created by the authors.

The highest agreement between the children appeared for the statement that their parents love them to train skiing. Two factors of social motivation follow: making new friends and teamwork in the camps. This research has come to the conclusion that the group of children aging from seven to eleven years is homogeneous when it comes to the motivation to go in for sports,

regardless of the differences in age and the years of training. Differences do exist, but they didn't prove to be statistically important at the rate of 0.5. The only noticed and statistically important differences occur when it comes to the gender differences, in the sense that girls feel much more pleasant after trainings and pay less attention to professional skiing on tv, which may indicate the dominance of the inner motivation in young female skiers.

At the very end, we may conclude that the research has served its purpose. The main motives have been identified and their structure, strength and synergism have been detected to a certain degree. However, when we take into account the importance of this field for sportsmen, especially children who start with trainings, we have the obligation to perceive this research as the tip of the iceberg, that is to say a valuable starting point for further researches. The future researches in this field should contain the holistic and idiographic approaches in a greater level.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Lazarević, Lj. S. (1994). *Psihološka priprema sportista* [Psychological preparation of athletes. In Serbian]. Beograd: Fakultet fizičke kulture.
- Burton, D., & Raedeke T. D. (2008). *Sport Psychology for Coaches*. Champaign: Human Kinetics,
- Milojević, A. (2004). *Psihologija sporta i vežbanja* [Sport and exercise psychology. In Serbian]. Niš: Fakultet fizičke kulture.
- Cox R. H., (2007). *Sport Psychology, Concepts and Applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Smoll, F., Magill, R., & Michael, A. (1988). *Children in sport*. Champaign : Human Kinetics
- Havelka, N.N., & Lazarević, L. (1981). *Sport i ličnost* [Sports and personality. In Serbian]. Beograd: Sportska knjiga.
- Deci, E.L. (1975). *Intrinsic motivation*. New York-London: Plenum Press.

МОТИВАЦИОНАТА СТРУКТУРА НА ДЕЦАТА СКИЈАЧИ НА ВОЗРАСТ ОД СЕДУМ ДО ЕДИНАЕСЕТ ГОДИНИ

УДК: 796. 92-053.2
(Предходно соопштение)

Петар Митиќ, Звездан Савиќ и Ненад Стојиљковиќ
Универзитетот во Ниш, Факултетот за спорти и физичко воспитување,
Ниш, Србија

Апстракт:

Целта на истражувањето беше да се утврди кои се главните мотиви на децата за занимавање со скијање. Истражувањето требаше да покаже дали кај децата поважни се нивните внатрешни мотиви или подоминантна е надворешната мотивација. Примерокошто на истражувањето го сочинуваа 49 деца од машки и женски пол кои сеопределиле да се занимаваат со скијање. Нивната возраст беше од 7 до 11 години. За потребите на истражувањето, беше конструиран анкетен прашалник од неговите авторитети. Добиените резултати од истражувањето покажаа дека најзастапен мотив кај децата е дека нивните родители сакаат своите деца да тренираат скијање. Потоа, изразени се два фактори на социјалната мотивација: стекнувањето на нови пријатели и заедничката работа во камповите за скијање.

Клучни зборови: анкетирње, родители, машки, женски, тренинг