

THE PERCEPTION OF JUNIOR HANDBALL PLAYERS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE

RAUL FERENT¹

¹*State University of Physical Education and Sport of Chisinau, Republic
of Moldova*

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Abstract: Achievement motivation is, probably, the most important factor in obtaining performance in sports, handball included. This motivation, accompanied by elements of social emulation, raises victory very high in the eyes of the winner. Intrinsic motivation, accompanied by rewarding elements (social advantages, money, etc.) may stimulate victory. However, performance must not be sought at all costs, although social pressure is very high sometimes. The modern society is guilty for having developed, at times exaggeratedly, people's performance reasons (Epuran M., Holdevici, I. & Tonița, F., 2008). Performance sport, like handball, is a limit activity for man's physical and mental skills. In some sports, the "limiting" elements may be measured (e.g. space, time, gravity), in other, performance means defeating an opponent, either an individual or a team. Therefore, handball reclaims certain types of performances, which depend on the motor, psychological, energetic, attention-related, decisional and creative functions.

Introduction

Overall goal and specific hypotheses of the research

Overall goal:

- **Investigation of the way in which performance in handball is associated with a high level of motivation of young handball players (17 – 19 years old).**

In the light of the above, we have elaborated the specific hypotheses of the research:

- The high performance level perceived by athletes is associated with their high degree of perception of the benefits brought by this sport;
- The high performance level perceived by young athletes is associated with their high degree of perception of the changes that this sport has brought to their lifestyle;

- The high performance level perceived by young athletes is associated with their high degree of perception of the (internal or external) factors which can lead to success.

Research tool

We used the questionnaire as research method.

The questionnaire for young handball players contains items concerning the following:

- The young athletes' perception of *the advantages brought by handball on a personal level – 5 choices, from “To a great extent” (1) down to “Don’t know/Refused to answer” (99), one possible answer;*
- The perception of the 17-19-year old athletes of the benefits of doing a sport – *question addressed to the respondents who chose option 1, respectively 2 for the previous question* - 8 choices, two possible answers;
- The athletes' perception of the extent in which they benefit from the parents support in doing sport (training, competitions etc.) - 5 choices, *from “To a great extent” (1) down to “Don’t know/Refused to answer” (99), one possible answer;*
- The opinion of the respondent athletes regarding the reasons which drive them to obtain performance in sport – 8 choices, two possible answers;
- The perception of young handball players of the strong points of this sport – 6 choices, two possible answers;
- The handball players' perception of the changes brought by sport to their personal lifestyle – 8 choices, two possible answers;
- The athletes' opinion on the aspects seen as important incentives for achieving performance – 7 choices, two possible answers;
- The handball players' perception of the methods used by their coaches for strengthening motivation - 8 choices, two possible answers;
- The athletes' opinion on the perceived performance level of their team – weak, average or high performance, 4 choices, *one possible answer.*

Experimental group

The experimental group was made of 58 subjects (24 girls and 34 boys).

Procedure

The participants were asked to fill in the questionnaires after having been explained the purpose of the research and reassured of the confidentiality of the results and of their anonymity.

The participants filled in the protocols in 5 to 10 minutes.

Results

The correlation analysis of the statistical indicators obtained at different stages of the research is detailed below:

- **Hypothesis 1** - The high performance level perceived by athletes is associated with their high degree of perception of the benefits brought by this sport.

Table no.1 Performance level perceived by handball players

		<i>To what extent do you consider that doing a sport brings personal benefits?</i>	<i>How do you appreciate the sports performance of your team?</i>
<i>To what extent do you consider that doing a sport brings personal benefits?</i>	<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	1	0.381*
	<i>Probability level</i>		0.142
	N	58	58
<i>How do you appreciate the sports performance of your team?</i>	<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	0.381*	1
	<i>Probability level</i>	0.142	
	N	58	58

* Significant correlation at threshold 0.01

A smaller but significant correlation ($r = .38$; $p < 0.01$) was obtained between the variable concerning the perception of the 17-19-year old athletes of the extent in which playing a sport brings them personal benefits and the variable concerning the athletes' perception of the performance level of their team. The result indicates an association

between average values and levels assigned to the two variables by the respondents.

The hypothesis is thus confirmed, indicating that obtaining sports performance leads to a stronger belief in the personal advantages and benefits associated with playing a sport. The two investigated variables are reciprocal and condition each other, one bringing about the other.

- **Hypothesis 2** - The high performance level perceived by the young athletes is associated with their high degree of perception of the changes that this sport has brought to their lifestyle.

Table no. 2 Performance level associated with the athletes' perception of playing handball

		<i>What has changed in your life since taking up this sport?</i>	<i>How do you appreciate the sports performance of your team?</i>
<i>What has changed in your life since taking up this sport?</i>	<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	1	0.420*
	<i>Probability level</i>		0.122
	N	58	58
<i>How do you appreciate the sports performance of your team??</i>	<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	0.420*	1
	<i>Probability level</i>	0.122	
	N	58	58

* Significant correlation at threshold 0.01

A smaller but significant correlation ($r = .42$; $p < 0.01$) was obtained between the variable concerning the perception of the 17-19-year old athletes of the changes brought by handball to their lifestyle and the variable concerning the athletes' perception of the performance level of their team (please see Table 7). The result indicates an association between average values and levels assigned to the two variables by the respondents.

The hypothesis is confirmed, emphasising the strong connection between the success obtained and the obvious, beneficial changes of the

athletes' lifestyle. A healthier lifestyle creates, in its turn, the premises for obtaining notable success in sport.

Hypothesis 3 - The high performance level perceived by young athletes is associated with their high degree of perception of the (internal or external) factors which can lead to success.

Table no. 3 The performance level perceived by athletes, associated with the internal and external factors.

		The reasons which make me strive for sports performance are: ...	How do you appreciate the sports performance of your team?
The reasons which make me strive for sports performance are: ...	<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	1	0.300*
	<i>Probability level</i>		0.122
	N	58	58
How do you appreciate the sports performance of your team?	<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	0.300*	1
	<i>Probability level</i>	0.122	
	N	58	58

* Significant correlation at threshold 0.01

A smaller but significant correlation ($r = .30$; $p < 0.01$) was obtained between the variable concerning the perception of 17-19-year old athletes of the (internal or external) factors which can lead to success and the variable concerning the athletes' perception of the performance level of their team (please see Table 9).

The hypothesis is confirmed, emphasising that motivated athletes, aware of the reasons of doing sport, will rank among the performers, their victories being strongly supported, both affectively and motivationally.

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PERCEPȚIA HANDBALIȘTILOR TINERI ASUPRA RELAȚIEI MOTIVAȚIE – PERFORMANȚĂ

Cuvinte cheie:handbal,performanta,perceptie,motivatie

Rezumat: Motivația de realizare este probabil factorul cel mai important în obținerea de performanțe sportive, inclusiv în jocul de handbal. Această motivație, însoțită de elementele de emulație socială, ridică pe o treaptă foarte înaltă victoria în ochii celui care a obținut-o. Motivația intrinsecă, însoțită de elemente premiale, de recompensă (avantaje sociale, bani etc.) poate stimula victoria. Însă performanța nu trebuie căutată cu orice preț, deși presiunea socială este uneori mare. Societatea modernă are vina de a fi dezvoltat, uneori exagerat, motivele performanțiale ale indivizilor (Epuran M., Holdevici, I. & Tonița, F., 2008). Sportul de performanță, așa cum este și jocul de handbal, este o

activitate de limită a capacităților fizice și psihice ale omului.În unele sporturi, elementele „limitative” ale sportului pot fi măsurate (de ex. spațiul, timpul, gravitația), în altele performanța înseamnă învingerea unui adversar, a unui individ sau a unei echipe.Așadar, jocul de handbal reclamă și el anumite tipuri de performanțe, dependente de funcțiile motrice, psihologice, energetice, atenționale, decizionale, creatoare.