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## Assessment of the Prevailing Motivation within the Sports Teams from the City of Iasi

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### Abstract

Seen as a psycho-social products, motivation, attitudes and the view of life depends on the education, socio-cultural environment etc. The individual's personality marks his activities, motivations and interests, as it ensures the direction and dynamics of the participation to it. Within the group, the individual seeks to satisfy personal needs, in agreement with the achievement of the organizational goals. The level of motivation of the individual is determined by the action of several factors, and the contribution of each member of the group's performance is different. We aim to assess the level of motivation of the members of sports groups. The research sample was composed of athletes (N=158, 55 females, 103 males) from the sports groups within the city of Iasi, part of the first and second sports divisions (basketball, football, handball, rugby, and volleyball). The respondents answered to a adapted to the Romanian population 32-item questionnaire; the items were grouped into four factors: *leadership (power needs)*, *expertise / performance (achievement needs)*, *bonding (affiliation needs)*, *subsistence (existence needs)*. The homogeneity instrument was assessed for the entire scale, as well as independently for each factor. The lack of variance homogeneity made it impossible to get outcomes for the interaction of the independent variables such as the type of club and the status. No gender-based differences were found regarding the power needs. If the type of club does not influence the expert/performance factor, have identified a partial influences of this variable over the bonding factor. Professional athletes are more motivated to achieve the performance than semi professional athletes.

**Key words:** *sports group, motivaion in sport, local community*

### Rezumat

Văzute ca produse psiho-sociale, motivația, atitudinile și concepția despre viață a individului depind de educație, ambientul socio-cultural etc. Personalitatea individului își pune amprenta asupra activității desfășurate, motivele și interesele susținând, direcționând și dinamizând participarea în aceasta. În cadrul grupului, individul urmărește satisfacerea necesităților personale, acordate cu atingerea obiectivelor grupului. Nivelul de motivație al individului este determinat de acțiunea mai multor factori, iar contribuția fiecărui membru al grupului la obținerea performanței grupului este diferită. Ne propunem să evaluăm nivelul de motivare a membrilor grupurilor sportive. Lotul de subiecți a fost constituit din sportivi (N=158, 55 de gen feminin, 103 de gen masculin) care activează în cadrul echipelor sportive locale din primele eșaloane valorice în baschet, fotbal, handbal, rugby și volei. Respondenții au completat Cestionarul DM etalonat pe populație românească, de 32 de itemi, grupați pe patru factori (conducere, expertiză/performanță, relaționare, subzistență). Omogenitatea instrumentului a fost evaluată pentru întreaga scală, precum și independent pentru fiecare factor. Lipsa de omogenitate a varianțelor a condus la imposibilitatea obținerii de rezultate în cazul interacțiunii variabilelor independente tip de club și statut. Variabila gen nu influențează dimensiunea conducere la subiecții studiați. Dacă tipul de club nu influențează factorul expertiză/performanță, s-au identificat influențe parțiale ale acestei variabile asupra factorului relaționare. Pe dimensiunea expertiză/performanță, sportivii profesioniști sunt mai motivați comparativ cu sportivii semi-profesioniști.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *grup sportiv, motivație în sport, comunitate locală*

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## Introduction

Motivation alongside attitudes or the view on world and life are psychosocial products. They depend on education, social environment, and educators' morality. Sport has favourable or unfavourable educational consequences, depending on its organization and management.

The athlete's personality marks his activities, motivations and interests, as it ensures the direction and dynamics of the participation to sport competitions. The attitudes specific to the individuals who practice this type of activities has made the object of studies elaborated by several authors [1,2,3]. On one side, a series of theories of motivation analyze the intrinsic motivations of behaviour, be they innate or acquired, conscious or unconscious, physiological needs or abstract ideals [4].

In the opinion of analytical psychologists, sport competition is a mechanism of liberation, of symbolic compensation for the problems of everyday life. Sport provides the athlete with the possibility to let go of the frustrations accumulated daily, thus directing the aggressiveness toward constructive finalities. Sport provides the individual with the satisfactions he needs for his mental economy, often frustrated by the conditions of life [5].

On the other side, a series of theories of motivation explain the athlete's behaviour based on the psychological factors, which can be related – to a certain extent – to the primary elements, such as needs, impulses, but which are necessarily anchored in the social conditions of human existence. Needs and reasons generate different attitudes in direction, intensity, complexity, etc, towards the self, the others, towards things, ideas, acts, etc. [4]

Studies have pinpointed several reasons for practicing sports: physical development, fun and

pleasure, discovery of the unknown, energy consumption, the wish of parents or friends, rehabilitation of physical or mental disabilities, acknowledgment, fame, rewards, etc. The hierarchy of motivations suffers alterations, depending on several factors (age, gender, duration and type of practiced sport). All of the above make it difficult to determine a classification in this sense.

Arriving to an *optimal motivational level* – alongside other variables (positive image of the self, specialized psycho-pedagogical assistance etc) – contributes to reaching a goal [6].

In sport, like in other human activities, the individual seeks to show his skills; according to Nicholls [7], this phenomenon is based on two views:

- a) *the ego-involved goal orientation*, when the individual is concerned with demonstrating high ability in comparison to other people;
- b) *the task-involved goal orientation*, when self-esteem exists and the goal is simply to develop our ability in an undifferentiated sense.

On the other hand, Craciun [8] proposes two types of motivational climate in the sports environment, in direct relation with the ego-involved goal orientation. The *task-oriented climate*, which focuses on achievement, is characterized by a focus on increasing the efforts of athletes towards co-operation and positive support from the part of the coach, while the *competition-oriented climate* (concerning the athletes' ego) encourages social comparison. The author points that the development of athlete's learning, self-confidence and perceived skills depend on the effectiveness of the task-oriented climate.

The individual may be motivated by getting to know the multitude of personal needs, which provides with the possibility of satisfying them, in agreement with the achievement of the organizational goals. The individual can cope with the changes only if the

managers are oriented towards motivation and subordinates' satisfaction. All manager-subordinate relationships affect motivation. The motivating factors that could increase the subjective value of work are related to determining lucrative objectives, to appreciating the employees' success, to encouraging initiative and novelty within the organization, to stimulating a creative climate at the workplace by stimulating autonomy and freedom in the decision-making process, etc.

The general motivation level of the members of a sport group depends on the action of factors such as previous successful experiences, agreement with the team's management style, depending on the common goals. All these factors contribute to the moral state and to the performance of the team.

Considering that not each member contributes equally to the team's performance, it is necessary to identify the strategies that increase the perceived value of the team members, concerning themselves and the team.

In a study on the social-cognitive perspectives of motivation in sport, Thill [9] underlines the negative influence of money on some of the athlete's states, thus complaining about the increase in the importance of extrinsic motivation in the sports activity. The relation between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is also discussed within the *control theory*, which focuses on the concepts of goal and feedback. In order to reach a goal and to improve his performance, the athlete has to assess both goals and feedbacks. Nicholls' cognitive evaluation theory explains a part of the achievement motivation mechanism.

The extrinsic motivation – that reflects the ego-involved goal orientation by comparison with others, which implies promises of rewards, of appreciation – is associated with the “external causality,” which tends to force the individual towards achievement-

specific behaviours, thus reducing the feeling of autonomy and the intrinsic motivation, implicitly.

Epuran [4] brings to attention McClelland's viewpoint; the latter pinpoints that women are less motivated for success. Horner (cited by 4) defines this tendency as “fear of success”: women tend to avoid success, as society does not have a good opinion on female success.

The **purpose** of this research is to assess the prevailing motivation level of the members of sports teams in Iași – basketball (females and males), football (males), handball (males), rugby (females and males), volleyball (females) – activating in the national championships, in the first performance levels.

The research **objective** is to study the influences of certain variables (*biologic gender, performance level, club type, status of the athlete*) on the motivation of the members within the teams studied.

### Research hypotheses

Two general hypotheses were formulated:

1. *There are interaction effects of the variables biologic gender, level, type of club, and athlete's status on the four dimensions of prevailing motivation on the level of the studied sports teams.*
2. *There are statistically significant differences concerning the dimensions of prevailing motivation between the athletes of the sports teams from the city of Iași, depending on the four variables: biologic gender, level, type of club, athlete's status.*

Within the second general hypothesis, five other specific hypotheses were formulated:

Specific hypothesis No. 2.1. The level of power (leadership) needs is significantly higher for athletes in male teams compared to athletes in female teams.

Specific hypothesis No. 2.2. We suppose that the level of motivation regarding the achievement (*expertise / performance*) needs in the athletes of the studied teams is directly proportional with the infusion of private capital.

Specific hypothesis No. 2.3. The level of achievement (*expertise / performance*) needs is significantly higher in professional athletes compared to semi-professional athletes.

Specific hypothesis No. 2.4. The level of affiliation (*bonding*) needs is significantly higher in semi-professional athletes compared to professional athletes.

Specific hypothesis No. 2.5. We suppose that the level of motivation regarding the affiliation (*bonding*) needs in the athletes of the studied teams is reversely proportional with the infusion of private capital.

### Material and methods

The research sample is relatively small (N = 158, 55 females, 103 males), considering that there are only a few teams activating in the first division of the Romanian national championships: basketball (females and males), football (males), handball (males), rugby (females and males), and volleyball (females).

### Procedure

The questionnaire was applied within the training program (right after the practice, in the locker rooms), towards the end of the competition periods. We have been granted permission by the coaches and the management of the clubs; we have asked the subjects to complete the questionnaire in a personal manner and we have ensured them of the confidentiality of answers.

### Instrument

To assess the degree of motivation of athletes – members of the sports teams studied – the “Prevailing Motivation” (DM) questionnaire was used; this instrument was applied to the Romanian population by Constantin [10]. A number of terms used in the questionnaire were calibrated change, this outgoing claims, meaning aiming to adapt to the specific sports activity [11]. The questionnaire includes 32 items scored on a Likert scale from 1 (never true) to 7 (always true) and grouped into four factors: *leadership (power needs)* [1, 2, 3, 4, 17, 18, 19, 20], *expertise/performance (achievement needs)* [5, 6, 7, 8, 21, 22, 23, 24], *bonding (affiliation needs)* [9, 10, 11, 12, 25, 26, 27, 28], *subsistence (existence needs)* [13, 14, 15, 16, 29, 30, 31, 32].

### Research variables

*The independent variables* refer to the following: biologic gender of the subjects (*males* and *females*), performance level (*performance level I*: the teams activate in the first division of the championship with different names depending on the sports branch: A-Division, National Division – the level I football males and volleyball females, rugby females and males, basketball females; *performance level II* with different names: A-Division, B-Division, and C-Division – the level II football males and volleyball females, handball and basketball males), the club type (we have labelled a *public club* the ones functioning exclusively with public financing – for handball, rugby males; *private club* – the ones with exclusive private financing – for rugby females, volleyball – level I team; *mixed club* – with both public and private funds: for football, basketball males and females, volleyball females – level II team), the status of athletes within the sports team (*professional player* – including here the level I male

football players and female volleyball players; *semi-professional player* – the athletes of the other sports branches included in the study).

The dependent variables are represented by the factors of the utilized instrument: *leadership (power needs)* focused on the individuals' desire to influence the other group members; *expertise / performance (achievement needs)* concerns the tendency or the wish to do our best in any activity we engage in; *bonding (affiliation needs)* focuses on the individual's desire to establish relationships with the others; *subsistence (existence needs)* is oriented on the individual's interest to ensure the basic needs of his existence.

For the analysis of the data, the One Way Anova was used for the variable *type of club*, the independent-samples t-tests of significance between means for independent samples, and the two-way analysis of variance.

## Results

The homogeneity of the instrument was assessed for the entire scale, as well as on the two factors independently, with the following results: for the entire scale  $\alpha = 0.88$ , for the scale of leadership factor  $\alpha = 0.83$ , for the scale of expertise / performance factor  $\alpha = 0.80$ , for the scale of bonding factor  $\alpha = 0.87$ , and for the scale of subsistence factor  $\alpha = 0.84$ .

The analysis of the results was structured considering that the effect was to obtain bonding effects of the independent variables *biologic gender* – *level* on the dimensions of prevailing motivation. For the other designs, the one-way ANOVA could not be applied given the lack of homogeneity of the variances.

For the dependent variable *leadership (power needs)*, the two-way analysis of variance indicates a

main significant effect of the level variable [ $F(1.154) = 4.06$ ,  $p = 0.04 < 0.05$ ], but not also of the biologic gender [ $F(1.154) = 2.60$ ,  $p = 0.10 > 0.05$ ], as well as of the interaction effect between the two variables [ $F(1.154) = 1.25$ ,  $p = 0.26 > 0.05$ ].

For the dependent variable *expertise / performance (achievement needs)*, the two-way analysis of variance shows a main significant effect of the level variable [ $F(1.154) = 5.44$ ,  $p = 0.02 < 0.05$ ], while the rest of the effects are insignificant: for the variable biologic gender [ $F(1.154) = .003$ ,  $p = 0.95 > 0.05$ ] and for the interaction effect between the two variables [ $F(1.154) = 0.03$ ,  $p = 0.85 > 0.05$ ].

There is no main significant effect of the variables biologic gender and level on the dependent variables *affiliation (bonding) needs* and *subsistence (existence) needs*. Furthermore, there are no interaction effects between the two variables.

The application of independent-samples t tests and of the Anova One Way for the variable *type of club* led to an emphasis on the differences concerning the *power (leadership) needs*, the *achievement needs (expertise/performance)*, the *affiliation (bonding) needs*, the *subsistence (existence) needs*, between the studied groups depending on the independent variables *biologic gender*, *level*, *athlete's status*, *type of club*.

### Specific hypothesis No. 2.1.

The results showed no statistically significant differences between male and female athletes concerning the *power (leadership) needs* [ $t(156) = 1.402$ ,  $p = 0.65 > 0.05$ ]. The hypothesis is not confirmed.

### Specific hypothesis No. 2.2.

The ANOVA One Way applied for the level of motivation concerning the achievement/performance (expertise) needs underlines the following results: [ $F(2.155) = 1.8250$ ,  $p = 0.16 > 0.05$ ]. Hence, there is no statistically significant effect of the type

of club on the satisfaction level regarding the achievement / performance needs; thus, the hypothesis is not confirmed.

Thus, the level of motivation concerning the achievement needs of the athletes with private financing sources is not different from that of the athletes with mixed or public financing sources.

### **Specific hypothesis No. 2.3.**

The professional athletes (male soccer players and female volleyball players, members of sports teams who play in first-level competitions) are more motivated on the dimension of *the achievement (expertise / performance) needs* compared to semi-professional athletes (all the other subjects of the research sample). The difference is statistically different [ $t(156) = 2.022, p = 0.04 < 0.05$ ]. The results also show the means of the scores obtained by the athletes in question. Hence, the hypothesis is confirmed.

### **Specific hypothesis No. 2.4.**

The semi-professional athletes (male handball, male and female basketball, male and female rugby, female volleyball and male soccer – members of the teams within the second level) are more motivated on the dimensions of the *affiliation (bonding) needs* than professional athletes (male soccer players and female volleyball players who play on the first level). The results indicate a statistically significant difference [ $t(156) = 7.022, p = 0.001$ ], thus confirming the hypothesis.

### **Specific hypothesis No. 2.5.**

The ANOVA One Way shows the following results on the level of motivation concerning the affiliation (bonding) needs: [ $F(2.155) = 5.516, p < 0.05$ ]. Hence, overall, there is a significant effect of the type of club on the level of motivation concerning the affiliation needs.

The hypothesis is confirmed partially. We conclude that the level of motivation concerning the affiliation needs for athletes with public financing sources is significantly higher than that of the athletes with mixed and private financing sources. However, there are no statistically significant differences between the athletes with mixed and those with private financing sources.

## **Discussions**

The results of our investigative approach have pinpointed the extent to which the level of motivation of the members within the studied sports groups influence the team's goal reaching, meaning the team's sport performance. A series of independent variables – which can represent the fundament of explanations concerning the variability of the prevailing motivation for the athletes within the sports teams in the city of Iasi – were taken into account. Thus, the hypothesis was that *the biologic gender, the level of sports branch practice, the type of club, and the athlete's status* within the studied sports teams may have consequences on their motivational level.

Based on the data obtained in the analyses, we pinpoint that the hypotheses were confirmed partially. The results of our study allow us to utter a series of conclusions.

No gender-based differences were found regarding the power needs (the *leadership* factor) of the athletes within the studied sports teams. Our hypothesis was not confirmed, though the research literature notes that the female instrumental qualities are defined by competence, success-orientation and high occupational status, while the male ones also include physical force, demonstration of the male differences and superiority, spirit of initiative (Bell, cited by 12). The members of the male teams did not get different

scores than the female athletes regarding the wish to influence the other group members in order to achieve sport performance. The results do not confirm the hypothesis according to which women would be less motivated for success; actually, the women's status – even in sports and mainly within certain sports branches – has been changing continually.

The hypothesis regarding the influence of the type of club in explaining the achievement / performance needs of the athletes was not confirmed either. The level of motivation concerning the achievement needs for the athletes within teams with private financing sources is not different from that of the athletes within teams with private or mixed financing sources.

In exchange, the partial influences of the type of club were obtained on the level of affiliation needs of the athletes within the studied teams. Hence, the level of motivation concerning the affiliation needs for athletes with public financing sources is significantly higher than that of the athletes with mixed and private financing sources. However, there are no statistically significant differences between the athletes with mixed and those with private financing sources. The level of engagement in sports activities – in case of athletes within public clubs – may be determined more by the wish to spend the leisure in a pleasant and healthy way, and less by the desire to get high sports results. Hence, the athletes are more social-oriented and less performance-oriented within group activities.

The contribution of the professional status of the athletes within the studied sports teams to explaining their achievement / performance needs is not surprising. It is obvious that professional athletes are more motivated for sports performance than semi-professional athletes are. There is a direct relation between the status of the athlete, the

extrinsic motivation and the professional development opportunities. The professional athlete is much more pragmatic about this relation and he follows consequently his professional development, which he relates to performance.

The wish of the athletes to have higher performances by getting to practice the sport on the professional level and by enjoying the mobility of the sports branch (changing teams – for the better, if the player is good) determines a certain relationship downside (maybe they do not get to make friends within the team). The hypothesis formulated concerning the differences between semi-professional and professional athletes on the level of affiliation (bonding) needs is confirmed.

### **Conclusions of the study**

Our investigative approach allowed studying certain variables (*biologic gender, the level of sports branch, the type of club, the status of the athletes within sports teams*) which influence the level of the prevailing motivation of the athletes within the local sports teams.

The results allow pinpointing that the uttered hypotheses were confirmed partially. Furthermore, a series of conclusions can be formulated:

1. No gender-based differences were found regarding the power needs. Both male and female subjects wish to influence their teammates in order to get sport success.
2. The wish to achieve sport performance is not influenced by the typology of the athletes' club. Irrespective of the type of financing sources, the athletes are oriented towards getting high results.
3. On the other hand, the wish to establish socio-affective relationships with the teammates and to perform in a pleasant climate is higher in the

athletes of public clubs than in athletes within clubs with mixed or private financing.

4. The status of professional athlete and becoming aware of the consequences involved influences the athlete's orientation towards high performances and less towards bonding needs. For the professional athlete, sport is a profession that requires personal investment.

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