

## **Differences in self-perception of adolescents in relation to the affiliation of the individual or collective sports**

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### **Abstract**

This survey was conducted in the total sample of 128 adolescent of both sex and average age of 18.75 years by using adapted questionnaire *Profile of self-perception for adolescents* (Harter, 1988). The main objective of this study was to investigate the psychological characteristics of adolescents, candidates for admission to the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, and to determine the differences in these characteristics of candidates according to the type of sport – individual or collective. The results of ttest for Independent Samples showed that there are statistically significant differences between participants in scores on the self-concept dimensions depending on the sport they practice. Candidates who are engaged in team sports had significantly higher score on the dimension of Social Acceptance than the participants who are engaged in individual sports.

**Keywords:** adolescents, self, individual sports, collective sports

## Introduction

Adolescence is the chronological period between 10 and 24 years of age preceding the achievement of physiological, psychological, social and economic maturity (Kapor-Stanulović, 1988; Tubić, Đorđić & Poček, 2012). Developmental tasks of adolescents are often turbulent since there is a simultaneous adaptation to different newly-appeared psychological and anatomical changes and integration of a mature sexuality into a personal model of behavior, then the establishment of personal identity and formation of appropriate social roles. In addition, adolescence is characterised by the development of skills for professional activities and gradual allocation of free activities that are beneficial to individual and community.

Middle adolescence period (15-19 years) is characterised by a higher propensity to self-reflection, with the emphasis on willing components of personality and distinct moral evaluation of one's own personality. The concept of self (self-concept, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-image, self, ego identity, and me) is a subjective experience of own personality (Batić, Bajić, 2009). Krstić (1988) in the Dictionary of Psychology defines self-concept as „attitudes, modes of reasoning, value system, behaviour, skills and everything else that one person considers relevant, including one's own assessment of the own characteristics“ by which it approaches the concept of „identity“; but opposing view has Hrnjica (1992) who claims that self-represents only the conscious part of identity.

According to the theory of social interaction, self-image is the result of „mirroring“, i.e. obtaining a feedback about one's self from important persons in the own environment, especially parents and peers (Cooley, in Krstić, 2008; Batić, 2003). Shavelson, Hubner, Stanton (in Batić, Bajić, 2009) believe that self-concept is hierarchically organized, structured experience of one's self composed of dimensions/aspects in which an individual categories information

specific to him and/or the group to which belongs, develops and enriches the life through personal involvement with the environment and the interpretation of that environment, evaluation by significant others, reinforcement and attribution of own behaviour that has significant impact. In this study, self-concept is operationalized multidimensional construct that represents a combination of different individual perceptions of competencies and aspects of the own myself in various areas of operation, with special and relatively independent general perception of the value of self as a person (Harter, 2012). According to the Theory of Motivation for Competences where the principal motive/cause of behavior is the feeling of competence or expertise in dealing with given domain of reality which continues to affect the development of the real competence (Harter, 1992 in Tubić, Đorđić&Poček, 2012). Previous studies show that adolescents with low self-esteem usually tend to have an instable self-concept, so more than others feel lonely; they are awkward in social contacts, sensitive to criticism by others and doubt their own competence. Young people with a stable self-concept, have higher self-esteem, lack of feelings of inferiority and anxiety, they are favorite in the group, socially more active, and better adapted than young people with unstable self-concept (Hurlock, 1971, in Batić, Bajić, 2009).

Some former studies have examined which kind of role sports playing has on the principle of maturation in young adults. Through participation in sport, children and adolescents are subjected to concepts that usually apply to adults, such as organization, discipline, fair play, devotion, and teamwork which have very positive effect on the maturation process. Personality traits which are then more common in adults who were engaged in sports during their maturation are a lower level of neuroticism, high level of compliance and conscientiousness (Allen, Greenlees & Jones 2013).

Previous research also confirmed that population of active sportspersons was significantly different than the population of non-sportspersons especially in characteristics such as emotional stability, self-reliance, persistence, responsibility, etc. (Tubić, 2010 in Tubić, Đorđić&Poček, 2012).

According to Ostojić (2006), sport is one highly structured physical activity that has a precise aim and includes elements of dedication and overcoming one's self or opponent. Sport can be individual or collective. The collective sports perform in a group and usually these are sport games (basketball, football, handball...) and with individual one, a sportsperson acts alone for the score and success. In the base of each sport exists striving for success – the best result. An athlete is a person who possesses an above-average level of physical fitness thus it is possible to say that at the very basis of this concept stands an aspiration for the best personal result as well as the award (Ostojić, 2006).

The main objective of this study was to investigate characteristics of the self-concept of adolescents, candidates for admission to the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education on the entrance exam. The specific objective was to determine the differences in these characteristics of the candidates according to the type of sport – individual or collective – in preparation for the entrance exam and admission to the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in Novi Sad.

## Method

*Sample of participants:* Total number of participants within this research was 128, of which male adolescents (n=91) and female adolescents (n=37) of average age of  $18.5 \pm ???$  years. Examining the completed answers of the questionnaire, of the total number of respondents, it was determined that 120 of them played sports (93.8%), and 4 did not (3.1%), while 4 respondents did not answer this question (3.1%). In regard to the question of individual / collective sports it was determined that 33 participants played individual sports (25.8%) and 85 collective sports (66.4%), while 10 adolescents did not answer this question (7.8%). A total of 12 (9.4%) participants played sports up to 3 years, 5 (3.9%) respondents up to 5 years, while 109 (85.2%) respondents were engaged in sports more than 5 years. Without answer were 2 (1.6%) respondents.

Testing was conducted by application of standardised questionnaire of the adapted *Questionnaire of Self-perception Profile for Adolescents*, Harter, 1988, as well as the *Entrance Exam of the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, University in Novi Sad*.

According to the current experience (Popović, 2002), students attending the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education are selected in many ways, but not in the sense of partial selection in regard to the certain dimensions of psycho-physical status, like with supreme sportspersons, but with the assumption that all is about general multivariable distribution shift toward the zone of qualitative better results in relation with normal population.

The participants sample as such, upon many anthropological characteristics, presents a specific population due to various criteria which are different in comparison to the normal peer's population as follows:

- Level of biological development (all participants were 18.75 years of age);
- Level of health condition (ill participants were not tested);
- Level of motoric development;
- Level of intellectual and cognitive development.

**The Questionnaire of Self-perception Profile for Adolescents**, Harter 1988: This instrument was developed out of the children version *The Profile of Self-Perception for Adolescents*, Harter 1985, in such way that competences like Competence at work, Close friendship and Romantic attraction were added to the domains from children version. The instrument contains nine sub-scales; it is aimed to assess eight different and specific adolescents' functioning areas as well as general self-perception. A participant should decide if he/she is better described by the left or right part of the sentence; then should assess the chosen part of the sentence if it describes him/her completely or partially (*Completely correct when I am in question; partially correct when I am in question*). This is how the four grade scale is formed. This format was chosen to avoid socially favourable answers, so the options were offered. For each statement should be filled in one *X* in one of the 4 fields offered. Each sub-scale score represents the arithmetic mean of the

responses to the each statement, which are then graded in a way that 1 means a minimum competence and 4 the maximum (Tubić, Đorđić&Poček, 2012). Reliability of these sub-scales is high (from 0.60 to 0.86) except for self-perception of behaviour and competence at work (Harter, 2012).

The *School competence* represents an operationalization of the appraisal of own cognitive abilities within the school environment (e.g. *some teenagers are very good at schoolwork but other teenagers are not very good at schoolwork*);

The *Social acceptance* relates to the level in which an adolescent is accepted by school mates or feels popular. He/she measures the appraisal of own abilities to form a friendship (e.g. *some teenagers find it difficult to make friends but other teenagers make friends quite easily*);

The *Sport competence* relates to the assessment of own motoric abilities and competences in sport (e.g. *some teenagers are good in all kinds of sports but other teenagers think that are not so good at sport*);

The *Physical appearance* measures satisfaction with own look (e.g. *some teenagers are quite satisfied with their appearance but other teenagers are not satisfied with their appearance*);

The *Business competence* – includes evaluation of own abilities in performing task as well as readiness to perform well (e.g. *some teenagers consider themselves old enough to find and retain paid job but some other teenagers consider themselves not yet old enough to really carry out well such job*);

The *Romantic attraction* – estimation of own ability in the exercise of romantic relationships and personal sexual attraction (e.g. *some teenagers feel that they are attractive to their peers of the opposite sex but other teenagers worry if they are attractive to their peers of the opposite sex*);

The *Behaviour control* – refers to the level of satisfaction of adolescents with their own behaviour; to the feeling that they behave properly and in accordance with expectations (e.g. *some teenagers often get into troubles because of their acting but other teenagers usually do not make things that could lead them into trouble*);

The *Close friendship* – measures ability of a person to keep close relationships and to create intimacy with dear persons (e.g. *some teenagers have a close friend to share secrets but other teenagers do not have a close friend to share secrets*);

The *General self-perception* – is the level of satisfaction with own-selves and own entire lives (*some teenagers like themselves but other teenagers usually want to be someone else*).

*Statistical analysis of data:* To present indicators of self-perception of male and female adolescents depending on the type of sport, the basic descriptive statistics were applied. To determine the existence of gender differences among participants with regard to the type of sport the method of Chi-square test was applied. To determine the differences between participants engaged in individual or collective sports the t-test were applied.

## Results

The basic descriptive statistics of male and female adolescents self-evaluation (N=128) depending on doing sports are displayed in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** The self-perception profile for adolescents (SPP)

Dimension	AM	S	min	max
1. School competence	3.10	0.45	1.80	4.00
2. Social acceptance	3.23	0.54	1.20	4.00
3. Sport competences	3.22	0.44	2.00	4.00
4. Physical appearance	2.94	0.43	1.60	3.60
5. Business competence	3.02	0.66	1.00	4.00
6. Romantic attraction	3.24	0.47	1.40	4.00
7. Behaviour control	3.24	0.49	2.00	4.00
8. Close friendship	3.36	0.54	1.60	4.00
9. General self-perception	3.43	0.52	1.40	4.00
AM – Arithmetic Mean	Min – minimum value			
S – Standard deviation	Max – maximum value of results			

**Table 2.** Results of the t test for the differences in relation to affiliation of the individual or collective sport

Scale – Dimension	Sport	AM	S	T	P
<i>Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents</i>					
1. School competence	individual	3.19	0.41	1.19	0.24
	collective	3.08	0.47		
2. Social acceptance	<b>individual</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>-3.04</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	<b>collective</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.47</b>		
3. Sport competence	individual	3.09	0.46	-1.90	0.06
	collective	3.25	0.42		
4. Physical appearance	individual	2.98	0.43	0.68	0.50
	collective	2.92	0.44		
5. Business competence	individual	3.16	0.67	1.49	0.14
	collective	2.96	0.67		
6. Romantic attraction	individual	3.19	0.44	-0.56	0.58
	collective	3.25	0.49		
7. Behaviour control	individual	3.18	0.48	-0.98	0.33
	collective	3.28	0.50		
8. Close friendship	individual	3.27	0.66	-1.04	0.30
	collective	3.39	0.51		
9. General self-perception	individual	3.37	0.53	-0.81	0.42
	collective	3.46	0.53		



The t-test for independent samples was applied to determine the differences between participants in scores on dimensions of self which depend on the kind of sport they practice (individual or collective). There was significant statistical inference differentiations potted in scores Participants practicing collective sports had significantly higher score only on Social acceptance dimension ( $t(116)=3.04, p<0.01$ ).

To test the gender differences due to type of sport preferences, the chi-square was applied. The results showed that there was not statistically significant differences between male and female, so both of them equally choose one or another type of sport:  $\chi^2(1)=3.58, p=0.59$ .

## **Discussion**

Persons engaged in team sports had a significantly higher score on the Social acceptance dimension than those participants who are engaged in individual sports. Members of team sports with higher scores on the Social acceptance showed that they feel better among peers and they have a more pronounced ability to form friendships. This result can be partially explained in terms of an atmosphere of individual and collective sports. The maturing process of young sportspersons certainly includes an influence of particular atmosphere in which a young sportsperson usually resides (Stambulova, 2006; in Franck, 2009). That atmosphere during training and competitions is completely different when compares these two categories of sports. At sportspersons playing in a team, the crucial is coping in the group. According to the previous research, sport competitions relating to collective sport includes a higher level of communication and social interaction. This also explains the reason why athletes play in a team are different than individual players, due to team sports usually request higher levels of interdependence and social interaction (Van Vianen, De Dreu, 2001).

Important differences in the type of personalities are spotted in sportspersons who participate in various kinds of sport activities

(Geron, Furst, and Rotstein, 1986 in Carlstead, R., 2013). All these studies confirmed that personalities of sportspersons who participate some team sport differentiate from those who plays individual sports, and most usually regarding extraversion (players who are in collective sports show a high level of extraversion) which was not the case of this research.

Upon some research, the members of collective sports are usually of very different characters among themselves than among the position they take in a team. (Allen, Greenness & John, 2013). Maybe it is realistic to expect differences in the type of personalities between different positions the players take in a team because different positions often request different behavior which more or less can be harmonised with a type of personalities of special characters. Thus, presently there is no base to make any acceptable conclusion on differences in the type of personalities and differences relating to the position in team stay open area for further research of components and dynamics in relation to results.

This study aim was to investigate differences in self-perception between adolescents, the sportspersons, in relation to their affiliation to individual or collective sports. We have assumed that those who belong to collective sports and individual would have higher scores on dimensions connected with social aspects which were confirmed by some former researches.

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