

## Motivational Factors Affecting Athletes in Selecting the Sport Branches of Athletics, Ski and Tennis

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Received: November 7, 2016

Accepted: November 18, 2016

Online Published: November 21, 2016

doi:10.11114/jets.v4i12.1961

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11114/jets.v4i12.1961>

### Abstract

The aim of this study is to research the motivational factors affecting athletes to select the branches of athletics, ski and tennis. Within the scope of the research, the survey developed by H. Sunay in 1996 was implemented and solution for the problem of the research was searched through the findings that were obtained from the survey. SPSS survey program was used for the data obtained and by calculating Chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) values, it was statistically tested whether the relation is significant. Alpha significance level was taken as ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the tests conducted. At the end of the research, differences were detected between the opinions of female and male athletes in Agri regarding their expectations on the sport branch they deal with. Accordingly, environmental conditions, school sports halls and facilities, television broadcast and newspapers-journals of external motivational factors are seen to have low influences. It was detected that coaches, friend environment and physical education teachers have the first three ranks in reasons for athletes to choose their sport branches.

**Keywords:** sport, motivation, athletics, ski, tennis

### 1. Introduction

Root of the word motivation comes from Latin. English form of the word motivation derives from the word “motive”, and this word is used in Latin as “movere”, i.e. “to move”. This word in essence means moving (Adair, 2006:9). Numerous studies have been made and books and articles have been published on motivation. The one which has drawn the most attention among those is Abraham Maslow’s study of “the Hierarchy of Needs”. According to the theory he presented, it is not possible to motivate every person in the same way. The most important thing to do to be able to motivate people is to determine their needs. Abraham Maslow separates needs into five categories: These are: physiological needs, need for trust, social needs, need for esteem, and self-realization (Maslow, 1970).

While examining motivation in sports, one must also know the biological and social aspects of sports. Movement is an important need for individuals. This need can be satisfied through sport activities and leads positive developments in organism. Again sports have provided qualifications in social and economic areas and started to address large masses. Sport has become a social institution and attention towards sport has increased gradually. This situation has also affected the motivation in sports and this concept has gained social and biological dimensions apart from its psychological aspect (Başer, 1998).

There are several motivational factors that play role in participation in branches of sport. Family and parents have a big and crucial effect in participation of children in physical activities and making physical activities attractive to children (Güven, 2006). Friends, teachers or popular role models: All these persons are models, who affect people and create the desire for identification with them. If we lack examples, with which we want to identify ourselves and which represent a certain social status, it means we don’t have a guide; thus it will be hard for us to fight for a cause (Tezcan, 1993). Children engage in an active social mobility inside and outside school, and have increased respect and appreciation by their environment thanks to effective spare time activities they participate at schools (particularly the students who take part in school team, orchestra or theatre group) (Karaküçük, 1997). Sport is winning over all societies through media, and media is filling a big gap in mass communication tools. Both are actively affected by each other. Thanks to the

developing technology, satellite antennas and frequencies, entire world watches sport competitions instantly (Ünsal, 2013). Media (mass communication tools) have certain functions. These functions are stated as journalism, socialisation, motivation, discussion-dialogue, education, cultural development, amusement and integration (Güz, 1996).

### 1.1 Literature Review

Directing children to participation in physical activities has been a subject for researchers for long years. One of the first researches related to the subject was conducted by Orlick (1974). Researcher examined the environmental factors related to participation in sports and came to the conclusion that children are affected positively by their families as a role model. In addition, it was found out that parents of male children, who start sport at an early age, are persons either doing sport or associated with sport. Certain behaviours of families can also prevent participation of children in physical activities. A research, which was conducted on minor tennis players and their parents in South-eastern America, has revealed that parents' focusing on winning in sportive games and displaying embarrassing behaviours towards their children affect participation of both boys and girls in physical activities negatively. The following results were obtained in a research which was conducted in 2001 by Hong Kong University Department of Sports to detect the influence of family on participation of children (aged 5-9) in physical education and sport activities. More than 57% of children engage in sportive activities with family members, 14% mutually with their friends, 20% with their classmates, and 5% on their own. Of the children who do sport with family members; 42% do sport with their parents, 11% with siblings, and 4% with other relatives. In another research conducted in England to detect the influence of families of elite young athletes on their participation in sport, it was found out that families were effective in 70% of swimmers, in 42% of gymnastic players, and in 57% of tennis players in starting these sports. In a study performed on basketball players aged 14-16 in the province of Istanbul, it was detected that families had an important role by 46% in encouraging athletes to play basketball. In another research conducted on 451 athletes from 15 different branches of sport, family (parents and siblings) ranks first in ranking of opinions regarding the factors that encourage the related sport branch. For the purpose of changing negative behaviours of families towards participation of their children in physical education and sport activities, awareness raising works towards parents in particular must be carried out and they must be made to grasp the importance of physical education and sport first. Current educational and sport policies must be reviewed and education and sport must be integrated (Güven, 2006). Peer groups of the child composed of the same age with him play an important role in formation of the behaviours and shaping of the personality of child. Age levels of the friends of child around him significantly determine friend groups in small traditional societies in particular. (Particularly for men) In our day, friend groups significantly influence the attitudes, values and behaviours of the child or youth. Piaget says that friend relationships are more democratic than the relationships of the child or youth he has in his family (Tezcan, 1993).

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Model

We used the survey method in forming the data related to the research. The survey used in the research was developed by Sunay and Saracaloğlu and implemented on athletes, and has accepted validity and reliability. The survey has an internal reliability coefficient of (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ )  $\alpha = 0.84$  (Sunay and Saracaloğlu, 1996). Accordingly, it can be accepted that the survey applied is a reliable tool. This survey was conducted in 1996 and we took permission to use it in our study. Study group was composed of the professional and amateur athletes in the branches of athletics, ski and tennis in athlete educational courses within Agri Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports and preparation courses of BESYO (School of Physical Education and Sports). We looked for a solution for the problem of the research through the data we obtained from this survey.

These data were subjected to final evaluations by the researcher and later analysed in SPSS 17.0 package program and shown as diagrams. It was statistically tested whether the relation was significant by calculating Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) values in analysis of data. Alpha significance level was taken as ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ) in the tests conducted.

Problems Related to the Research;

1. What are the factors directing athletes to sport branches?
2. Do the factors, which direct athletes to sport branches, vary by the branch of sport?

Limitation of the Research;

1. This research is limited to the athletes in the province of Agri.
2. The research is limited to the sport branches of athletics, ski and tennis.
3. A total of 210 athletes dealing with individual sports participated in the research. This research was conducted through the participation of 134 male and 76 female athletes.
4. Findings obtained as a result of this research was specified with survey questions.

Hypotheses:

1. There are several factors which direct athletes to sport branches.
2. The factors, which direct athletes to sport branches, vary by the branch of sport.

2.2 Findings

Athletes participating in the research are composed of 134 male athletes and 76 female athletes. Age median of the male athletes participating in the research is  $2.41 \pm 0.06$ , while of the female athletes is  $2.30 \pm 0.09$ . Age median of all female and male athletes participating in the research is  $2.37 \pm 0.75$ .

Table 1. Age Distributions and Genders of the Athletes Participating in the Research

Age Distribution	Male	Female	Number of Athletes (n)	Percentage (%)
15 and under	11	13	24	11.4
16- 18	63	32	95	45.2
19- 21	54	26	80	38.1
22 and above	6	5	11	5.2
Total	134	76	210	100.0

Athletics branch is composed of 2 males and 7 females at the age of 15 and below, 23 males and 14 females at the age of 16-18, 18 males and 7 females at the age of 19-21, and 1 male and 2 females at the age of 22 and above. Among the athletes participating in the survey, total number of athletes who have tended towards the branch of athletics is 74. Ski branch is composed of 4 males and 3 females at the age of 15 and below, 15 males and 8 females at the age of 16-18, 21 males and 11 females at the age of 19-21, and 2 males and 2 females at the age of 22 and above. A total of 66 athletes participated in the branch of ski. Tennis branch is composed of 5 males and 3 females at the age of 15 and below, 25 males and 10 females at the age of 16-18, 15 males and 8 females at the age of 19-21, and 3 males and 1 female at the age of 22 and above. 70 athletes participated in this branch in total.

Table 2. Influence of Social Environment in Participation in Sports by Sport Branches

Survey Items		None	Little	Medium	Much	Very much	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Influence of parents or sibling in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 11	11	23	18	11	74	13.742 <sup>a</sup>	0.089
		% 5.2%	5.2%	11.0%	8.6%	5.2%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 9	3	21	15	18	66		
		% 4.3%	1.4%	10.0%	7.1%	8.6%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 19	9	18	9	15	70		
		% 9.0%	4.3%	8.6%	4.3%	7.1%	33.3%		
Influence of coach participation in the related sport branch	Athletics	n 12	7	16	17	22	74	6.465 <sup>a</sup>	0.595
		% 5.7%	3.3%	7.6%	8.1%	10.5%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 7	5	7	17	30	66		
		% 3.3%	2.4%	3.3%	8.1%	14.3%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 8	5	14	17	26	70		
		% 3.8%	2.4%	6.7%	8.1%	12.4%	33.3%		
Influence of friends or friend environment in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 5	11	13	25	20	74	9.074 <sup>a</sup>	0.336
		% 2.4%	5.2%	6.2%	11.9%	9.5%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 4	8	19	16	19	66		
		% 1.9%	3.8%	9.0%	7.6%	9.0%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 8	8	16	12	26	70		
		% 3.8%	3.8%	7.6%	5.7%	12.4%	33.3%		
Influence of physical education teacher environment in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 12	5	13	18	26	74	5.566 <sup>a</sup>	0.695
		% 5.7%	2.4%	6.2%	8.6%	12.4%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 10	5	7	15	29	66		
		% 4.8%	2.4%	3.3%	7.1%	13.8%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 15	7	10	19	19	70		
		% 7.1%	3.3%	4.8%	9.0%	9.0%	33.3%		

As seen in Table 2, no statistically significant difference could be found between sport branches when “the influence of parents and sibling directing to a sport branch” was examined ( $P > 0.05$ ). When the question “has your coach had affect in your participation in sport?” question was examined, no statistically significant difference could be found between sport branches ( $P > 0.05$ ). When the answers given to the question “have friends and friend group had affect in your participation in sport?” were examined, no statistically significant difference could be found between sport branches ( $P > 0.05$ ). No statistically significant difference could be found between sport branches when “the effect of physical education teacher in your participation in sport” item was examined ( $P > 0.05$ ).

As seen in Table 3, statistically significant difference was found between sport branches when “the influence of environmental conditions (e.g. quarters) in your participation in sport” was examined ( $P > 0.05$ ). No statistically

significant difference could be found between sport branches when “the influence school sports hall and facilities in your participation in sport” item was examined ( $P>0.05$ ). No statistically significant difference could be found between sport branches when “the influence of physical education teacher in your participation in sport” item was examined ( $P>0.05$ ). No statistically significant difference could be found between sport branches when “the influence of media organs in directing to sport” item was examined ( $P>0.05$ ).

Table 3. Influence of External Factors in Participation in Sports by Sport Branches

Survey Items		None	Little	Medium	Much	Very much	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Influence of environmental conditions (e.g. quarters) in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 12	7	13	18	24	74	16.067 <sup>a</sup>	0.041
		% 5.7%	3.3%	6.2%	8.6%	11.4%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 8	18	15	14	11	66		
		% 3.8%	8.6%	7.1%	6.7%	5.2%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 16	12	11	9	22	70		
		% 7.6%	5.7%	5.2%	4.3%	10.5%	33.3%		
Influence of school sports hall and facilities in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 23	14	16	12	9	74	1.137 <sup>a</sup>	0.997
		% 11.0%	6.7%	7.6%	5.7%	4.3%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 20	11	14	10	11	66		
		% 9.5%	5.2%	6.7%	4.8%	5.2%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 24	11	16	10	9	70		
		% 11.4%	5.2%	7.6%	4.8%	4.3%	33.3%		
Influence of television broadcast in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 22	14	10	13	15	74	9.233 <sup>a</sup>	0.323
		% 10.5%	6.7%	4.8%	6.2%	7.1%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 10	8	17	15	16	66		
		% 4.8%	3.8%	8.1%	7.1%	7.6%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 15	9	16	11	19	70		
		% 7.1%	4.3%	7.6%	5.2%	9.0%	33.3%		
Influence of newspapers and journals in participation in related sport branch	Athletics	n 28	13	16	7	10	74	4.542 <sup>a</sup>	0.805
		% 13.3%	6.2%	7.6%	3.3%	4.8%	35.2%		
	Ski	n 19	12	20	4	11	66		
		% 9.0%	5.7%	9.5%	1.9%	5.2%	31.4%		
	Tennis	n 18	15	18	8	11	70		
		% 8.6%	7.1%	8.6%	3.8%	5.2%	33.3%		

### 3. Results and Discussion

In the study he conducted in the region of Ankara, Kılıçgil (1998) detected that becoming referee ranked last as the reason for expectations of athletes on the branches of sport they selected. The study “Several Motivational Factors Directing Volleyball Players to Volleyball” conducted by Korkmaz (2003) detected that physical education teachers had influence on guiding female and male athletes to sport. Şimşek and Gökdemir (2006) tried to find out in their researched named “The Reasons of Students Doing Athletics in Secondary School Tending to Athletics and Their Expectations” why athlete students dealing with the branch of athletics in Turkey tended to this branch and sport and what they expected. In this study, they applied a survey on the athletes, who participated in the branch of athletics, and tried to detect the reasons which guided them to this sport branch according to the survey result. They found out at the end of the study that physical education teachers were among the leading individuals guiding students to athletics. Students stated their reason for tending to athletics as getting pleasure from achieving success, desire to be recognized as a popular person among peer group, and their like for the athletics branch. Expectations of the students in the athletics branch concentrated on selecting to the national team, becoming a physical education teacher and receiving higher education at university level. Demir (2007) conducted a study named “Determination of Motivational Factors That Play Role in Participation of Athletes in Football, Basketball and Athletics in the Region of Kahramanmaraş” and detected that there were several factors in selection of sports branches by athletes such as physical education teacher, friends and friend environment, coach, television broadcast, family (mother, father or sibling), environmental conditions, newspapers-journals and school sports halls. Findings obtained in this research shows parallelism with our research. Alibaz (2006) conducted a study and detected that environmental conditions (e.g. neighbourhood) had little influence in directing athletes to sport. This study found out that the main encouraging factor in directing athletes to sport is coach. It was detected that newspapers and journals had low influence in selection of athletics, ski and tennis branches. Expectations of athletes from sports branches for future were detected as selection to the national team and becoming a national athlete. Şimşek and Gökdemir (2006) conducted a study and found out that the desire of athletes to become coach as the reason of their expectations related to their relevant sports branches was low. This research does not show parallelism with our research in this regard. They detected that media organs had low influence in directing athletes to sports. It was detected that school sports halls and facilities had low effect in selection of the branches of athletics, ski and tennis. Data obtained as a result of the studies show parallelism with our research.

#### 4. Conclusion

We see that external motivational factors, which are coaches, physical education teachers and friends-friend environments, have an important influence on athletes in the province of Agri why they have preferred sports branches. We detected that television broadcast, family (mother, father or sibling) and environmental conditions did not have much guidance in selection of a sports branch. Newspapers-journals and school sports halls were detected to have very low influence. It is understood that school sports halls and facilities are at insufficient level for athletes. Again it was detected that athletes are influenced by different external motivational factors in selecting sports branches. Coach was found to have a significant influence in selection of the branches of athletics, ski and tennis. Influence of coach was found out to be higher than the influence of physical education teacher in selection of athletics, ski and tennis branches. It was also seen that friends and friend environments have greater influence than physical education teacher. Distribution of coach by branch basis and others are reported respectively. The influence of coach in guiding to sports branches is as follows: It ranks first with 14.3% in ski branch, second with 12.4% in tennis branch, and third with 10.5% in athletics branch. We regard as a problem requiring research the fact that friends and friend environments have higher influence than physical education teachers in selection of sport branches. When we look at the branches of athletics, ski and tennis, friends and friend environments have the highest rate of influence in tennis. Influence of friends and friend environments ranks first with 12.4% in tennis, second with 11.4% in athletics, and third with 9.0% in ski. Physical education affects selection of athletics, ski and tennis branches significantly. By rank of importance; this influence ranks first with 29% in ski branch, second with 26% in athletics and third with 9% in tennis. Coaches, physical education teachers and families require to pay more attention to the branches of athletics, ski and tennis in order to make sure there will be athletes to represent our country in these branches in international sports competitions. The influence of environmental conditions in selection of athletics, ski and tennis branches is 11.4% in athletics, 10.5% in tennis and 8.6% in ski. It is seen that environmental conditions have little effect in selection of athletics, ski and tennis branches. We detected that school sports hall and facilities have an important influence in selection of athletics, ski and tennis branches by 11.4% in tennis and 9.5% in ski, while they have zero level of influence by 11.0% in selection of the athletics branch. Television broadcast have an influence by 8.1% in selection of the ski branch. While environmental conditions are an important factor with an influence rate of 9.0% in selection of the tennis branch, they have no influence in selection of the athletics branch by 10.5%. It is seen that media organs such as newspapers and journals have zero influence in athletics with 13.3% and 9.5% in ski, while have zero influence with 8.6% in tennis branch and again an important influence at medium level with 8.6%.

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