

Original empirical article

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOAL ORIENTATION,
MOTIVATION AND POSITIVE AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES OF
YOUNG ATHLETE IN SERBIA**

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Abstract. *This research is aimed at describing motivational features, achievement goals, and the related affective positive outcomes of young athletes in Serbia. Also, we wanted to examine the extent to which achievement aims, according to AGT, and motivation, according to SDT, can predict affective positive outcomes. The sample consisted of young athletes (N=227), of both genders, aged 15-18 years, who train different individual and group sports. The subjects completed questionnaires assessing goal orientation, sport motivation, satisfaction with individual performance and ability utilization, positive and negative affects and a subjective vitality scale. The subjects in the Serbian sample manifested high levels of positive affective outcomes, higher levels of more autonomous types of extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation, and higher task aims in comparison to ego aims. Based on a multiple and hierarchical linear regression, the concepts of SDT were identified as significant predictors of affective positive outcomes, first of all intrinsic motivation and amotivation, while the concepts originating from AGT such as ego and task-aimed orientation, did not significantly predict affective positive outcomes. The results of this study highlight the importance of motivation for the realization of positive affective outcomes that the young can accomplish in sport, thus indicating the possibility of coach education.*

Key words: *goal orientation, motivation, satisfaction with individual performance and ability utilization, positive and negative effects, subjective vitality.*

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INTRODUCTION

A love of sport, the popularity and ubiquity of sport blur the paradox of mass sport that is reflected in the fact that a large number of children are getting involved in sports, whereas a large number of adolescents are abandoning it. The authors (Sarrazin et al., 2002), who dealt with this issue called the adolescents a population “at risk” of dropping out of sport. Although there is an agreement that the athletes who have achieved positive outcomes stay involved in sports, contemporary authors report that there is a need for the fuller understanding of the processes that may contribute to both the positive and negative outcomes and experiences of young people involved in sports (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2006). Motivation occupies one of the central positions in Sport Psychology (Roberts, 2007). Although most modern theorists agree that motivation is a process defined as the psychological construct that energizes, directs and regulates goal-oriented behavior (Roberts, et al., 2007), there is still no agreement in regard to the motivational patterns themselves and the postulated processes that lead towards different outcomes (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999).

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) belongs to the social-cognitive theories of motivation and during the last twenty years this theory has become one of the leading frameworks for studying and understanding of motivated behavior and related cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes in sports (Duda & Ntoumanis, 2009). The central premise of this theory is that each individual is goal-oriented and wants to demonstrate his or her competence. Goal orientation, as one of the essential concepts of this theory, represents a disposition that provides energy to the goal-oriented behavior and which is fundamental to individual differences by defining competence and emphasizing particular standards of success assessment (Roberts, 2007). There are two types of goal orientation: task orientation and ego orientation (Roberts et al., 2007). A person focused on task orientation defines his or her competence by making progress in learning and improving skills. He or she uses self-referential standards for success assessment. A person focused on ego orientation is directed towards the achieving of goals and competing with others. He or she uses normative criteria for success assessment. Current research indicates that there is a greater possibility for young people to experience positive feelings associated with sports if they are more task oriented rather than ego oriented, whereas the involvement of young people while both dimensions have low values is not permanent (Spray et al., 1997; Nickols, 1989, according to Duda & Ntoumanis, 2009). Most studies have confirmed this hypothesis: task orientation is associated with pleasure and positive experiences to a greater extent than ego orientation (Duda & Ntoumanis 2009), and with pleasant effects as well (Bortoli et al., 2011). The conclusions of two review studies agree with this finding: Biddle et al. (2003), reviewing 98 studies which included 110 independent samples of participants, concluded that task orientation is related to positive feelings, ranging from moderate to high intensity. The correlation between ego orientation and positive feelings is not significant. The conclusion of a meta-analysis by Ntoumanis & Biddle (1999) is similar, that task orientation is associated with the feeling of joy and pleasure to a significantly greater extent than ego goal orientation. Different results came from the study by Hom et al. (1993), involving the participants of a summer basketball camp. The results indicate that ego orientation is related to pleasure and joy. The authors consider that the results are the consequences of the fact that the sample athletes was highly oriented in both types of goal orientation.

In Sport Psychology, significantly less attention is dedicated to the **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010). This theory belongs to the organismic theories of motivation with central postulates saying that behavior is partially regulated by internal structures and that people are proactive by nature and that they have needs for growth, progress, the realization of their potential and mastery over challenges. Motivation is understood as a multidimensional construct, which extends along a continuum towards the increasing degree of behavioral independence: from amotivation through extrinsic motivation (external, introjected, identified and integrated regulation) to intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Internalization represents a process of the transformation of acquired attitudes, beliefs, and the regulation of behavior, i.e. external types of behavior control, aimed at a greater degree of autonomy towards internal behavior regulation. The basic question is how the events from the external environment affect the internalization of extrinsic motivation into intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002). Controlling events lead to the external regulation of behavior, and the events supporting autonomy, having an informing character, lead to more autonomous forms of behavior regulation. As for the application of this theory to the study of sports motivation, it should be noted that almost all sports activities are guided by competition (Pokrajac, 2007). A sport event is the activity that has a controlling aspect manifested through division and its informing character which is manifested through getting feedback on competence (Deci et al., 1981). Different types of motivation lead to different experiences and outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985). As for the outcomes at the affective level, involvement in physical activities is associated to a greater degree to subjective vitality, but only if a person is intrinsically motivated (Ryan, et al., 2009). The study (Vansteenkiste, et al., 2010) was carried out on the sample of young soccer players playing in different leagues, and has shown that more autonomous reasons are positively associated with the feeling of subjective vitality and positive affects, whereas controlling reasons are negatively associated to positive affects, and positively associated with the negative ones.

Since a large number of adolescents drop out of sports, and since the goals of achievement and motivation from the point of view of AGT and SDT as well as their correlates at the affective level, in the population of young athletes in Serbia, are virtually unexplored, the first objective of the study was the description of the goals of achievement and motivation of adolescent athletes. We expect that most athletes will be task oriented to a greater extent than ego oriented, that majority of them will show intrinsic motivation or external regulation with a high degree of autonomy. The second objective of this study was to identify whether positive outcomes which are predicted on the basis of AGT theory, and which primarily refer to pleasure and positive feelings, and positive outcomes which are predicted on the basis of SDT theory, and which primarily refer to subjective vitality, represent the reflection of the same concept - positive affective outcomes, and whether they, if there is one factor, examine the predictive validity of goal orientation and motivation. In this way, it would be possible to directly compare the concepts of these two theories, which according to the discoveries of these authors, have not been investigated yet, although there are studies that indicate a connection between these concepts (Ntoumanis, 2001; Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2003; Vansteenkiste, Mouratidis, & Lens, 2010). In that sense, positive outcomes at the affective level, in this paper, include the following variables: satisfaction with individual performance and ability utilization, positive affects and subjective vitality.

METHOD

Participants

The sample of participants consisted of 227 athletes, aged 15-18 ($M=16.24$, $SD=1.08$). The sample was relatively uniform in terms of gender, with 48.0% of male subjects ($n=109$), and 52.0% of female subjects ($n=118$). Their involvement in sports activities ranged from 2-13 years ($M=7.85$, $SD=2.38$). The sample was diverse according the type of sport the participants were involved in: 56.5% of them were involved in team sports and 43.5% in individual sports.

Measures

The Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire – (TEOSQ), by Duda and Nicholls (1991), was used to determine the athletes' target orientation. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 13 items and consisted of two subscales representing task orientation (6 items) and ego orientation (7 items). The root of each item begins with: "I feel that I am most successful in sport when ...", and the subjects responded on a 5-point Likert type scale, (ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree"). Alpha coefficients of the questionnaire in the research so far have been, for task orientation .83, and for ego orientation .92 (Givvin, 2001).

In order to assess the manifestation of different types of athlete motivation, we used a **Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-6)**, the revised form by Mallet et al. (2007), consisting of 24 items of a Likert type scale with a measurement scale from 1 - 7 (ranging from 1 "does not correspond at all" up to 7 "corresponds exactly"). The scale consisted of 6 subscales (each consisting of 4 items): amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation and intrinsic motivation. The authors state that alpha coefficients of all subscales were above .70, and the average was .78.

Subjective Vitality Scales (SVS), by Ryan and Deci (2001), was designed to measure the vitality feeling which was intended to assess of vigor and vitality, where vigor refers to being fully functional and feeling good. It is a 7-item instrument in which the subject answers with Likert type replies on a measurement scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". Alpha coefficients of the scale in the previous studies ranged from 0.87 to .91 (Gagne, 2003; Vlachopoulos & Karavani, 2009; Podlog, et al., 2010).

The Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) of Watson et al. (1988), was modified in content and length during the pilot study resulting in a shorter form of scale labeled the Positive and Negative States Scale (PONO), divided in two subscales: a scale of positive feelings (PO) with 5 questions and a scale of negative feelings (NO) with 6 questions. The athletes were asked to assess, on a 5-level Likert type scale (from 1 "at all" to 5 "very much") their feelings in the last year during the usual sports activities (both competitions and trainings included).

In order to establish the level of the athletes' satisfaction with their performance, two subscales were united: satisfaction with one's individual performance and satisfaction with ability utilization from the **Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ)**, by Rimer and Chelladurai. We have chosen two ASQ scale, which in the pilot research proved to best represent the satisfaction concept and whose items were projected on a single factor within the pilot study. The subjects responded by circling one of the offered answers on a 7-point Likert type scale (ranging from 1 "not satisfied at all" to 7 "very satisfied"). In the previous

research (Eys, et al., 2007; Ayogi et al., 2008), the alpha coefficient for satisfaction with a performance was above .85, and for satisfaction with ability utilization was .92.

The participants completed the questionnaire individually or in small groups and their answers were anonymous. The first author gave verbal instructions for each section of the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Prior to analysis, the data were examined for missing values and outliers and normality. There were no cases with missing values on more than 10% of the number of items in each scale, and all of the missing values were replaced by the regression method. The principal axis exploratory factor analysis, EFA (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidel, 2007) was used to test the plausibility of the structure of the ASQ, SVS, SMS6 and TEOSQ questionnaires. We have determined the number of factors based on the scree test, and the criteria that eigenvalues > 1 (Guttman, 1954), and retained items based on the criteria that communality $> .3$ and based on simple factor structure. For the SMS-6 and TEOSQ questionnaires we first used the oblimin rotation, and because there was no correlation between the factors for TEOSQ, we further employed a varimax rotation for that scale. Scores on the scale are represented as the total score, divided by number of items. As the goal of this paper was not to examine the psychometric characteristics of these tests, the basic metric and descriptive characteristics of questionnaires are presented in Table 1 in accordance with guidelines given in APA Manual 6th Edition (APA, 2010).

Table 1. The metric characteristics and descriptive statistics of ASQ, SVS, SMS6, TEOSQ and PANO

| Questionnaire | Subscale (factor) | α | n | M | SD | Range | | Sk | Ku |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|---|------|------|-----------|-----------|------|------|
| | | | | | | Potential | Actual | | |
| ASQ | ASQ | .91 | 8 | 5.74 | .91 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 1.6 – 7.0 | -.64 | .40 |
| SVS | SVS | .76 | 5 | 5.74 | .91 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 1.0 – 7.0 | -.21 | -.46 |
| SMS6 | AMOT | .77 | 5 | 1.78 | 1.1 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 1.0 – 7.0 | .85 | -.54 |
| | EKST | .83 | 4 | 3.60 | 1.50 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 1.0 – 7.0 | .04 | -.71 |
| | INTRO | .71 | 3 | 4.53 | 1.48 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 1.0 – 7.0 | -.30 | -.51 |
| | IDIN | .65 | 3 | 5.18 | 1.12 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 2.0 – 7.0 | -.64 | .05 |
| | INTR | .70 | 3 | 5.63 | 1.09 | 1.0 – 7.0 | 1.0 – 7.0 | -.55 | .18 |
| TEOSQ | EGO | .84 | 6 | 2.87 | .59 | 1.0 – 5.0 | 1.0 – 5.0 | -.12 | -.67 |
| | TSK | .77 | 5 | 4.41 | .93 | 1.0 – 5.0 | 1.4 – 5.0 | -.89 | 1.04 |
| PONO | NO | .82 | 6 | 2.03 | .74 | 1.0 – 6.0 | 1.0 – 5.0 | .16 | -.44 |
| | PO | .68 | 5 | 4.04 | .55 | 1.0 – 5.0 | 1.8 – 5.0 | -.57 | .89 |

α – Cronbach's alfa coefficient of reliability; n – number of questions in subscale; M – arithmetic mean, SD – standard deviation; Sk – skewness; Ku – kurtosis.

ASQ – athlete satisfaction questionnaire; SVS - subjective vitality scales; AMOT – amotivation; EKST – external motivation; INTRO – introjected motivation; IDIN – identified and integrated; INTR – intrinsic motivation; EGO – ego orientation; TASK – task orientation; NO – negative affects; PO – positive affects.

We can see that almost all scales have satisfactory metric characteristics, except the IDIN and PO scales.

In order to identify whether the three factors that measure the construct of affective positive outcomes (ASQ, SVS, PO) were loaded on a single higher order factor, a second order factor analysis was conducted. A single higher order factor was extracted by the principal axis exploratory factor analysis. The total variance explained by a single factor was 63.38%, with factor loadings of the three subscales ranging from .78 to .81, $\alpha=.71$ ($n=3$), $sk=-.54$ ($SEsk=.16$), $ku=.37$ ($SEku=.32$). This result gives support for postulating one global factor which we have labeled affective positive outcomes. In the further analysis we have used this factor as the criterion variable in the multiple regression analysis. In order to examine the predictive power of the SDT and AGT constructs, an independent multiple regression analysis was performed.

The results of the multiple regression analysis with the concepts of AGT as predictors - ego orientation and task orientation, and the affective positive outcomes as a criterion variable indicate that AGT concepts do not significantly predict affective positive outcomes, $F(2,224)=1.78$, $p=.17$.

A multiple regression with the concepts of SDT as predictors - amotivation, external, introjected, identified and integrated regulation and intrinsic motivation, and the affective positive outcome as a criterion variable show that SDT concepts significantly predict affective positive outcomes scores (Table 2.), $R^2=.40$, $F(5,221)=31.33$, $p<.001$. Although the predictors are correlated, the VFI statistics are under 2.5 for every predictor.

Table 2. Results of the multiple regression analysis with concepts of SDT as predictors and affective positive outcome score as the criterion variable

| Variable | β | T | p |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------|------|
| Amotivation | -0.29 | -4.65 | 0.00 |
| External motivation | 0.06 | 1.03 | 0.31 |
| Introjected motivation | -0.05 | -0.80 | 0.43 |
| Identified and integrated motivation | 0.24 | 3.27 | 0.00 |
| Intrinsic motivation | 0.27 | 3.43 | 0.00 |

In order to get a more parsimonious model we conducted a number of hierarchical regression analyses. The results indicate that two motivational concepts make a statistically significant and relevant unique contribution in the prediction of affective positive outcomes, intrinsic motivation, $\beta=.42$, $t(224)=7.34$, $p<.001$ and amotivation, $\beta=-.29$, $t(224)=-5.10$, $p<.001$ (Table 3), and they explain 38% of the variance of positive outcomes.

Table 3. Results of hierarchical linear regression with affective positive outcome score as criterion variable

| Variable | R^2_{change} | F | df_b | df_w | p. |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Step 1: Intrinsic motivation | .31 | 100.70 | 1 | 225 | .000 |
| Step 2: Amotivation | .07 | 25.96 | 1 | 224 | .000 |

DISCUSSION

The key concepts of this research belong to two motivation theories: AGT and SDT. Additionally, this research encompasses the positive effects related to the aims of achievement and motivation on the affective level.

The results obtained in this research showed a greater level of manifestation of task orientation than ego orientation, which indicates that athletes in the sample were more oriented towards the development than towards the demonstration of their competence, that they used self-reference to a greater extent than normative criteria for success assessment, and that success was more often defined through personal advancement than through competition and beating others. Numerous studies with different samples of athletes provided similar results (White, et al., 1998; Givvin, 2001; Hall et al., 2007).

The athletes in our sample were to the greatest extent intrinsically motivated for activities, which means that their behavior is inner-controlled and that the activities are voluntarily launched to provide satisfaction and excitement in the course of sports activities, which according to the SDT occur by the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The fact that the athletes' motivation to a greater extent is autonomous, was confirmed in a previous study involving athletes of different ages (Ntumanis, 2001; Standage, et al., 2003).

Compared to the results of previous studies, the score on the scale for satisfaction with individual performance and ability utilization is more prominent than in the subjects from previous research (Eys, et al., 2007; Aoyagi, et al., 2008; MohadPilus, & Saadan, 2009). The obtained results on the intensity of positive and negative feelings are in conformity with the research so far that athletes experience significantly more positive than negative feelings (Gaudreau & Lapierre, 2001; Mack, et al., 2011). The values on the subjective vitality scale are slightly higher than the values from previous studies (Reinboth et al., 2006; Vlachopoulos & Karavani, 2009; Mack, et al., 2011), which indicates that the subjects in our sample experience activeness to greater extent, that they feel good and function in an optimal manner. It can be presumed that the obtained higher scores on satisfaction and the subjective vitality scale indicate the possibility that competitive sport at the age of 15-18 years involves athletes who have already realized positive affective outcomes to a great extent.

Based on the results of this research, we can conclude that all these positive outcomes have a common-base factor, which we named affective positive outcomes. This offered us a possibility to directly compare the predictive validity of the concept of the AGT and SDT theory when it comes to positive outcomes.

Contrary to the existing research (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999; Biddle et al. 2003; Duda and Ntoumanis 2009; Bortoli et al., 2011), in our sample no relatedness between AGT theory concepts and positive results was obtained. Task and ego orientation do not predict statistically significant positive outcomes. In line with the expectations, SDT theory concepts proved to be good predictors of positive outcomes, which complies with the existing research (Ryan, et al., 2009; Vansteenkiste, et al., 2010). Based on the obtained results we can conclude that low amotivation and high intrinsic motivation make the greatest individual contribution. This implies that the individuals with good internalized extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, whose behavior is motivated by internal reasons and who experience satisfaction by the sole performance of sports activities, achieve significantly more positive outcomes in sport.

The issue of the non-existence of a correlation between goal orientation and positive affective outcomes can be understood if we take into consideration the presumption within AGT, that in a motivation climate, in which the situation achievement criteria are very stressed (Roberts, 2007), which is characteristic even for our contest, when it comes to sport, it is possible that they become significant and dominant over goal orientation as an individual disposition.

CONCLUSION

The subjects in our research showed a greater level of manifestation of positive affective outcomes – satisfaction with performance and ability utilization and subjective vitality, than did the subjects in other studies.

Predictors resulting from the AGT did not show predictiveness with regard to affective positive outcomes, unlike the SDT predictors, which explain a great part of the affective positive outcomes variance.

The results of this study highlight the importance of motivation for the accomplishment of positive affective outcomes which the young can realize in sport. For a more thorough understanding of this relation, one should bear in mind the limitations of this research. One limitation refers to the fact that the data are correlational in nature, precluding the possibility of inferring causal relations between the variables. The second limitation refers to the sample of subjects. In order to expand the generalizability of the results, besides the youth involved in competitive sports, future studies should also involve both young people who dropped out of sports activities and junior athletes and should investigate the manifestation of motivation and positive affective outcomes and examine their relatedness. Likewise, a more detailed examination is required to find out the reasons why no relatedness was obtained between goal orientation and positive affective outcomes. One of the possible research directions is the moderator effect of social influences affecting this relatedness. The results of this research can have practical implementation in coaching junior athletes, in order to stimulate a motivational climate in which competition has a predominantly informative character, i.e. it is in function of obtaining feedback on competence which can affect development of more autonomous motivation types, and the less stressed controlling character of a competition.

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ODNOS IZMEĐU CILJEVA, MOTIVACIJE I POZITIVNIH ISHODA NA PRIMERU MLADIH SPORTISTA IZ SRBIJE

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Cilj ovog istraživanja jeste da se opišu motivacija, ciljevi postignuća i sa njima povezani pozitivni afektivni ishodi kod mladih sportista u Srbiji. Takođe, želeli smo da ispitamo stepen u kome ciljevi postignuća prema AGT, i motivacija, prema SDT, mogu da predvide pozitivne afektivne ishode. Uzorak čine mladi sportisti (N=227), oba pola, uzrasta 15-18 godina, koji treniraju različite individualne i kolektivne sportove. Ispitanici su popunili upitnik ciljne orijentacije, sportske motivacije, upitnik zadovoljstva izvođenjem i iskorišćenošću potencijala, skalu pozitivnih i negativnih osećanja i skalu subjektivne vitalnosti. Ispitanici na uzorku u Srbiji, ispoljavaju visok nivo pozitivnih afektivnih ishoda, ekstrinzičke motivacije sa većim stepenom autonomije i intrinzičke motivacije, i viši nivo orijentacije na zadatak nego na postignuće. Na osnovu multiple i hijerarhijske linearne regresije, koncepti SDT su identifikovani kao značajni prediktori pozitivnih afektivnih ishoda, na prvom mestu intrinzička motivacija i amotivacija, dok koncepti koji potiču iz AGT – ciljna orijentacija na zadatak i ciljna orijentacija na postignuće, nisu značajni prediktori pozitivnih afektivnih ishoda. Rezultati ove studije osvetljavaju značaj motivacije za ostvarivanje pozitivnih afektivnih ishoda koje mladi mogu da ostvare kroz sport i ukazuju na mogućnost edukacije trenera.

Ključne reči: ciljna orijentacija, motivacija, zadovoljstvo izvođenjem i iskorišćenošću potencijala, pozitivna i negativna osećanja, subjektivna vitalnost.