

Book review

Mladenović, M. (2016)
SPORTS MOTIVATION

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Sports motivation is the third book about motivation by this author, and the first one that considers motivation solely in the context of sport. This scientific monograph is dedicated to motivation in sport, examining factors that hold particular significance for the engagement and persistence in sports activities, but also for the optimal functioning of personality and mental health.

The book comprises eleven chapters, including the introduction, summaries, references and index.

One chapter represents general consideration and explanation of motivation as a mental process, through the theories of certain authors, including McDougall, Freud, Rogers, and Maslow. The importance of motivation in sport is especially addressed and analyzed, with particular stress on some of the most prominent motives in sport which could be used to explain athletes' behavior. In that context, special attention was dedicated to the concept of achievement motivation in relation to the inner need for competence and self-efficacy. The relation between achievement motive and emotions was particularly discussed, mostly due to its role in the process of motivation in general, expressed through athletes' personal experience, physiological changes and external reactions. In accordance with the nature and competitive character of sport, the author analyzes the connection between achievement motive and emotions, their role through the theory of activation level and the factors that determine the level. The relation between emotions and motivation is discussed not only from the aspect of sports efficacy, but also that of the optimal functioning of personality in sport. Anxiety as a specific emotional state is a particularly significant psychological factor in sport. Anxiety is regarded as a factor of potential continuous demotivation for sports activities, or a serious threat to the achieved result. The theoretical consideration of the relation between motivation, achievement, emotions and anxiety is backed by the author's relevant empirical research. This book also presents a new psychodiagnostic method in sports psychology – the color association

method, which aims at a more precise detection of the emotional state at a competition.

A separate chapter introduces one of the most relevant divisions of motives in sport – to intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Discussing the origin of this dichotomy through philosophical and psychological tradition, the author underlines the importance of differentiation between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for the sports context. The author separately analyzes both motivational behaviors and their correlation. Intrinsic motivation is connected and explained through other theories of motivation, such as Maslow's theory of hierarchy, i.e. through the meta need for self-actualization as a supreme experience, as the human need to develop and actualize him/herself. Extrinsic motivation is elaborated in detail through the crucial theoretical concepts of goal-setting theory (E. Locke), expectancy theory (Vroom), and equity theory (Adams). The author points to the importance of the impact of extrinsic motivation sources on the proper development of intrinsic motivation in sport.

A separate chapter of this monograph is dedicated to the theory of self-determination in sport. As one of the leading conceptual frameworks in the research of sports motivation, the theory of self-determination underlines the significance of the connection of sports motivation with the subjective experience of the degree of satisfaction of person's basic mental needs to feel autonomous as well as competent in the context of sport, and connected to their sports environment. The book involves a detailed presentation of the theoretical concepts of the need for autonomy, competence and connection as key notions that link the optimal psychological functioning of personality with participation in sport. Meeting those basic mental needs contributes to the development of self-motivation and mental health, while the failure to fulfill them leads to the decrease of motivation and the deterioration of overall mental welfare. The author makes careful and reasoned observations regarding the concept of autonomy in different epochs, scientific disciplines and cultures, while making a distinction between this term and similar terms such as free will, independence, etc. The relevant results of empirical research prove the importance of knowing and understanding the notion of personal autonomy in the context of sports science and practice. The significance of the need for competence and self-efficacy in the domain of sport appears to be beyond doubt, and the author systematically presents the motive for competence and achievement, from initial studies on competence in psychology to some contemporary theoretical and empirical considerations of such motives and the authentic need of every individual. The third basic mental need presented by the author in the psychological retrospective, as well as the specificity of the context of sport, is the need for connection. The author discusses the weight of the need to belong and connect with other people for the context of sport and the nurturing of sports motivation.

In a separate chapter, the author points to the psychological approaches in sport. Psychology often refers to the division to the democratic and autocratic approach. Bypassing this division, the author emphasizes a special criterion for the distinction of psychological and motivational approaches in sport – self-motivation. According to the author, if we seek persistence in sports activities and the perseverance of sports achievement, from the psychological point of view it is crucial to create conditions for the development and maintenance of inner, intrinsic motivation. There are psychological approaches that can stimulate or repress intrinsic motivation. Two motivational approaches are presented. The first, supportive approach, is based on supporting a personality's positive potentials and respecting the need for autonomy. The second, controlling motivational approach, focuses on the control of behavior and may have negative connotations to the overall functioning of the personality.

Every theoretical concept (or motivational theory) is presented from its author's point of view, then from the aspect of other authors' research results, and the results obtained from psychological research, along with an analysis of its potential implementation to the explanation and understanding of behavior in sport.

Another chapter is dedicated to the overview and discussion of the results of the author's most relevant empirical research in the field of sports motivation. The author mostly uses the theory of self-determination as a starting point for the research, so the book contains a comprehensive account of the results about the importance of intrinsic motivation, the need for autonomy, competence and connection, as well as the supporting motivational approach for the stimulation and maintenance of sports motivation and the optimal growth and development of personality, above all among young athletes.

The elaboration, analysis of the contemporary and current motivation theories and concepts in sports psychology featured in this scientific monograph and backed by the research results of contemporary authors as well as those of the book's author, make a valuable and significant contribution to science, in theory as well as practice of sports psychology, and psychology as science in general. It is published in the "Educatio" edition, whose mission is defined and aimed at improving and innovating knowledge in all scientific fields and disciplines.

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