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# PECULIARITIES OF JUNIOR BALLROOM DANCERS' MOTIVATION

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***Abstract.*** *The aim of this research is paid to the peculiarities of junior ballroom dancers' motivation. The sample of the research consisted of 70 12-15-aged junior ballroom dancers – 40 girls and 30 boys. The sport motivation scale (SMS) was chosen in order to reveal this issue. The study revealed that the internal motivation of junior dancers was expressed more than the external motivation, but some statements that reflect the internal motivation were evaluated differently by the dancers. The dancers did not have a strong opinion – they doubted the statements of the external motivation subscales. The dancers mostly disagreed with the following statements: I dance because my friends and other people respect and appreciate me for it and I dance because I think it's one of the best ways to make friends and communicate. The amotivation of the dancers was not strongly expressed. They did not doubt their success, why they were dancing and they had no thoughts that they will not achieve their intended purpose. The girls that dance ballroom dances have higher internal motivation – to find out and internal motivation – experience; meanwhile, the boys had stronger internal motivation – to strive for perfection. It was also revealed the external motivation – to get identified and coincide – was important for the junior dancers of the both groups.*
***Keywords:*** *amotivation, ballroom dancing, external motivation, internal motivation.*

## Introduction

Currently, ballroom dancing is at the peak of popularity, as the number of children and teenagers who want to dance is growing. However, no matter how popular the ballroom dances are, without knowing the peculiarities of motivation, it would be difficult to prepare young dancers for competitions. In pursuance to increase the motivation of young athletes, the promotion of motivation for the chosen sport plays an important role (Baligad & Martin, 2017; Huang, Hogg, Zandieh, & Bostwick, 2012; Vallerand & Toward, 1997). According to (Howard, Gagne, Morin, & Van den Broeck, 2016) inappropriate athletic performance is often caused by a lack of motivation. Therefore, the problem of research on the motivation of sports activities is definitely relevant. For example, when analyzing the issue of motivation in a sports context, it is observed (Deaner, Balish, & Lombardo, 2016; Guilbault, Harvey, & Vallerand, 2020) that the motivation of young athletes differs. However, in the findings of many scientific studies (Deaner et al., 2016; Kingston, Horrocks, & Hanton, 2006; Stenling, Lindwall, &


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Hassmen, 2015) both young athletes, amateurs and professionals see the benefits of motivation as an opportunity to improve their athletic performance.

According to (Huang, Pan, & Lee, 2018; Stavridis, Kaprinis, & Tsirogiannis, 2015), young dancers with a high level of motivation view challenges as tasks that need to be overcome, in addition to having a greater interest in the sport in which they participate, have a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment, and recover more quickly from failures. According to (Alesi, Lopez-Gomez, Borrego, Monteiro, & Gallegos-Granero, 2019; Huang et al., 2018; Kingston, Horrocks, & Hanton, 2006), motivation is also associated with higher satisfaction with sports activities (higher sportsmanship, decreased withdrawal from sports activities, greater attention, better athletic performance. For example (Stavridis et al., 2015) state that the motivation of children who attend in sports is particularly strongly influenced by their maturity.

An analysis of the scientific literature in this area shows that greater confidence in success and less fear of failure are important conditions for maintaining motivation to exercise for a longer period of time (Kalinina, Suschenko, Scchegolev, & Barykin, 2018). Previous research (Bassett-Gunter, Rhodes, Sweet, Tristani, & Sultoni, 2017; Cain et al., 2015) indicates that children's main motives for sports are often based on the positive emotions they experience and the desire to experiment. Meanwhile, adolescents who exercise often refer to better physical condition as the main motive for exercising, as they become more sensitive to their physical changes and body image at that time. However, other works (Huang, Hogg, Zandieh, & Bostwick, 2012; O'Neill, Pate, & Beets, 2012) have shown that children have different reasons to play sports, have fun, improve their skills, exercise, hang out with friends or make new friends, compete. When looking at children's motivation in sports, gender bias is also noticeable - girls are more likely to choose aesthetic sports than dancing or gymnastics, while boys are more likely to choose team sports (Grimminger-Seidensticker, Mohwald, Korte, & Trojan, 2018).

According to (Nieminen, 2006), many ballroom dances are practiced because of movement, self-expression, and because dance allows emotions to be expressed at the same time. Also (Wang, Chow, & Amemiya, 2017) confirmed in their work that the motives for choosing this sport are determined by the joy of movement, socially acceptable physical contact. However, when analyzing the influence of the coach on children's motivation, it is noticeable that it is often difficult to apply specific motivational measures to children of different ages. Thus, based on the research of researchers in this field, it is observed that the main motives for promoting ballroom dancing are internal, such as self-expression, the opportunity to perform, satisfaction with the movements performed, the implementation of the discipline. However, external motives such as improving sports skills, coaching, or peer support should not be underestimated (Rokka, Mavridis, Mavridou, Kelepouris, & Filippou, 2015).

Although there seems to be clear enough evidence that sports motivation is related to the choice of sport, research with children and adolescents in sports requires a deeper examination of the topic. Without knowing the peculiarities of motivation, it is difficult to properly manage this multi-component process.

Therefore, it is very important to study the peculiarities of dancers' motivation in order to create the most favorable conditions for their physical and psychological education. **Research aim** – to determine the peculiarities of junior ballroom dancers' motivation.

## Methodology

The study involved 70 junior ballroom dancers (40 girls and 30 boys) aged 12–14. The respondents were selected by convenient sampling. On carrying out the questionnaire of the researched, the ethic and legal principles of research were observed, i.e., the aim of the questionnaire was explained to each participant of this research and the anonymity of their data was ensured. The questionnaire was carried out after the ballroom dance practice. The questionnaire lasted for 20 minutes.

The motivation of the dancers was assessed on the basis of "The sport motivation scale (SMS)" (Pelletier et al., 1995). This scale is based on the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which states that motivation has two sources of origin: internal and external. This scale consists of 22 statements, which are divided into 6 subscales: internal motivation – to find out; internal motivation – to strive for perfection; internal motivation – to experience; external motivation – to identify; external motivation – direct external regulation; amotivation. Answering to each statement, the respondents had to choose the variants in a five-staged scale from "absolutely no" (1) to "absolutely yes" (5). This questionnaire was adapted for young athletes to assess the internal compatibility of scales and subscales. The internal consistency coefficient Cronbach alpha in many subscales of the sports motivation scale was well above the acceptable 0.5 threshold and ranged from 0.58 to 0.82.

The following was performed by applying the data processing method – statistical analysis: descriptive data statistics: the means (M), standard deviations (SD), *Student's t* criterion for independent samples. The difference is considered statistically significant, when $p<0.05$. The effect size was determined by applying the *Cohen d* criterion coefficient. Usually, the *Cohen d effect size that ranges between 0,2 and 0,5 is considered low, between 0,5 and 0,8 – average and above 0,8 – high one* (Bakker et al., 2019). The data was processed by applying version 22.0 package SPSS of the statistical data processing programme (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0.).

## Results

Analyzing the internal motivation of dancers – to experience – a significant difference between the dancers-girls and boys was obtained in response to the statement "I dance because I can experience pleasant sensations". Dancers-girls agreed with this statement – the mean estimate for this statement was 4.12±0.83 points. The boys' response was on the positive side – 3.42±0.51 points ($t(69)=4.35$; $p<0.05$; $d=0.45$) (Table 1). Analyzing the statements of internal motivation subscale – to find out – a significant difference between the dancers-girls and boys was obtained in response to the statements „This kind of sport is interesting because I can gain an interesting experience" ($t(69)=4.94$; $p<0.05$; $d=0.51$), "Dancing is intresting as I learn more and more about this activity" ($t(69)=2.79$; $p<0.05$; $d=0.31$), and "Dancing is interesting because I learn new movements and training ways" ($t(69)=3.17$; $p<0.05$; $d=0.33$).

*Table 1* ***Indicators of junior ballroom dancers-girls and boys' internal motivation***

| Subscales of motivation | Statement | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internal motivation – to find out | This kind of sport is interesting because I can gain an interesting experience | 3.83±0.59 | 3.21±0.46 | 4.94 | p<0.05 | 0.51 |
| | Dancing is intresting as I learn more and more about this activity | 4.55±0.96 | 3.97±0.78 | 2.79 | p<0.05 | 0.31 |
| | Dancing is interesting because I learn new movements and training ways | 4.08±0.81 | 3.56±0.67 | 3.17 | p<0.05 | 0.33 |
| Internal motivation – to strive for perfection | I dance because I feel satisfied with new and challenging dance movements | 3.79±0.64 | 3.64±0.53 | 0.14 | p>0.05 | 0.13 |
| | I dance because I feel pleasure in improving my weaknesses | 3.68±0.55 | 3.77±0.71 | -0.58 | p>0.05 | -0.07 |
| | I dance because I really like dance music | 3.78±0.72 | 4.24±0.83 | -2.43 | p<0.05 | -0,28 |
| | While dancing sport dances, I have the pleasure of learning | 3.49±0.43 | 3.58±0.51 | -0.78 | p>0.05 | -0.09 |

| Subscales of motivation | Statement | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | new movements all the time | | | | | |
| | I dance because I have the pleasure of learning new movements that I haven't learned before | 3.96±0.77 | 4.43±0.87 | -2.35 | p<0.05 | -0.28 |
| | I feel a lot of pleasure in making movements while dance music is playing | 4.50±0.94 | 3.91±0.72 | 2.97 | p<0.05 | 0.33 |
| Internal motivation – to experience | I dance because of the emotions I experience when I get involved in this activity | 4.08±0.74 | 4.35±0.77 | -1.48 | p>0.05 | -0.18 |
| | I dance because I can experience pleasant sensations | 4.12±0.83 | 3.42±0.51 | 4.35 | p<0.05 | 0.45 |

*Notes. M ± SD – mean and standart deviation; Cohen d – effect size*

The indicators of internal motivation subscales of junior dancers-girls and boys is presented in Table 2. The dancers agreed with the motive groups – to find out, to strive for perfection and to experience. A statistically significant difference between the girls and boys was estimated in the motive group – to find out ($t$ (69) = 3.33; p<0.05; $d$ =0.36).

Both the girls and boys agreed with the following statements in the subscale: „the sport is interesting because I can gain an interesting experience", „dancing is intresting as I learn more and more about this activity" and „dancing is interesting because I learn new movements and training ways" and the average score for these statements of the girls was 4.15±0.79 points, of the boys - 3.58±0.64 points (Table 2).

*Table 2* ***Indicators of junior ballroom dancers-girls and boys' internal motivation***

| Subscales of motivation | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To find out | 4.15±0.79 | 3.58±0.64 | 3.33 | p<0.05 | 0.36 |
| To strive for perfection | 3.87±0.68 | 3.93±0.69 | -0.33 | p>0.05 | -0.04 |
| To experience | 4.10±0.76 | 3.89±0.64 | 1.21 | p>0.05 | 0.15 |

*Notes. M ± SD – mean and standart deviation; Cohen d – effect size*

In the motive group – to strive for perfection – the estimates of dancers-girls and boys do not differ statistically significantly ($t$ (69) = -0.33; p>0.05*; d* =-0.04) and almost all the statements of this group are supported by the dancers.

Both the girls and boys equally agree with the statement „I dance because I feel satisfied with new and challenging dance movements" – this estimate is the same for the both groups – 3.79±0.64 points and 3.64±0.53 points. "Difficult to say" – such an answer option was chosen by the both groups of dancers in response to the statement „I dance because I really like dance music" ($t$ (69) = -2,43; p<0.05; $d$ = - 0.28).

All the other claims of this motive group were accepted: the mean score for the girls-dancers was 3.87±0.68 points, for the boys – 3.93±0.69 points ($t$ (69) = -0,33; p>0.05; $d$ =-0.04)

However, assessing the overall scale of internal motivation – to experience – the dancers-girls and boys agree with the statements of this subscale: the mean estimate for the girls was 4.10±0.76 points, for the boys – 3.89±0.64 points ($t$ (69) =1.21; p>0.05; $d$ =0.15) (Table 2).

The external motivation in the motive subscale „identification/coincidence", the statement for the girls-dancers „I dance because my friends and other people respect and appreciate me for it" is not important, but the boys' answers were significantly different: the mean score for the girls was 2.84±0.46 points, for the boys 3.52±0.69 points ($t$ (69) = -4.67; p<0.05; $d$ =0.50) (Table 3).

The statement for the dancers-girls and boys „I dance because I want to show others what a good dancer I am" is not important. The girls and boys answered to this statement more negatively: the girls' mean score to this statement was 3.21±0.51 points, that of the boys – 2.93±0.42 points ($t$ (69) = 2.52; p>0.05; $d$ =0.29). The most frequently chosen answer of the dancers to the other statements of this subscale was "difficult to say". The assessment of the other subscale of external motivation „Direct external regulation" is provided in Table 3.

Overall assessment of the subscale "Identification/coincidence": for the girls-dancers, the overall score for this subscale was 3.41±0.58 points, for the boys – 3.59±0.61 points ($t$ (69) = -1,25; p>0.05; $d$ =-0.15). Overall assessment of the subscale "Direct external regulation": for the girls-dancers, the overall score for this subscale was 3.78±0.63 points, for the boys – 3.49±0.59 points (Table 4).

*Table 3* ***Indicators of junior ballroom dancers-girls and boys' external motivation***

| Subscales of motivation | Statement | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| External motivation – to get identified and coincide | I dance because my friends and other people respect and appreciate me for it | 2.84±0.46 | 3.52±0.69 | -4.67 | p<0.05 | -0.50 |
| | I dance because I think it's one of the best ways to make friends and communicate | 3.02±0.55 | 3.21±0.61 | -1.34 | p>0.05 | -0.16 |
| | I dance because this is one of the best ways to develop other personal qualities | 3.92±0.74 | 3.29±0.63 | 3.84 | p<0.05 | 0.42 |
| | I dance because it can be useful in other areas of life (such as relationships with other people) | 3.87±0.58 | 4.35±0.49 | -3.75 | p<0.05 | -0.41 |
| External motivation – direct external regulation | I dance because to be in good shape, it is necessary to move | 4.12±0.84 | 3.62±0.66 | 2.79 | p<0.05 | 0.31 |
| | I dance because ability to dance is prestige | 3.51±0.57 | 3.75±0.69 | -1.55 | p>0.05 | -0.19 |
| | I dance because people around me think it's important to learn to dance, look flawless, and be in good physical shape | 4.27±0.61 | 3.66±0.57 | 4.29 | p<0.05 | 0.46 |
| | I dance because I want to show others what a good dancer I am | 3.21±0.51 | 2.93±0.42 | 2.52 | p>0.05 | 0.29 |

*Notes. M ± SD – mean and standart deviation; Cohen d – effect size*

*Table 4* ***Indicators of junior ballroom-dancers' girls and boys' external motivation***

| Subscales of motivation | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identification / coincidence | 3.41±0.58 | 3.59±0.61 | -1.25 | p>0.05 | -0.15 |
| External regulation | 3.78±0.63 | 3.49±0.59 | 1.98 | p<0.05 | 0.23 |

*Notes. M ± SD – mean and standart deviation; Cohen d – effect size*

Table 4 presents the estimates of the subscales for the external motivation of dancers-girls and boys. Both the dancers-girls and boys neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements of the subscales of the motive groups – „identification/coincidence" and „direct external regulation", but the estimates in the subscale „external regulation" differ significantly between them ($t$ (69) = 1.98; p<0.05; $d$ =0.23).

The dancers-girls and boys' amotivation is analysed in Table 5. The evaluation of the responses of the girls and boys to the statements of the amotivation subscale is negative.

*Table 5* ***Indicators of junior ballroom dancers-girls and boys' amotivation***

| | Statement | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subscale of amotivation | I always knew why I was dancing, but now I doubt I should do it any further | 3.69±0.54 | 3.54±0.58 | 1.10 | p>0.05 | 0.13 |
| | I don't know why I dance. I don't seem to be very lucky | 3.57±0.51 | 3.72±0.65 | -1.05 | p>0.05 | -0.12 |
| | I often ask myself why I dance sport dances, because I didn't achieve goals I was aiming for | 3.84±0.73 | 3.69±0.63 | 0.92 | p>0.05 | 0.11 |

*Notes. M ± SD – mean and standart deviation; Cohen d – effect size*

Table 6 presents the estimates of dancers-girls and boys' amotivation. The mean score of the dancers-girls' amotivation is 3.70±0.59 points, that of boys – 3.65±0.62 points (t (69) = 0.34; p>0.05; d =0.04). The dancers-girls and boys did not agree with the statements of the amotivation subscale and their estimates did not differ (p>0.05) (Table 6).

*Table 6* ***Indicators of junior ballroom dancers-girls and boys' amotivation***

| Subscale of amotivation | Girls (M ± SD) | Boys (M ± SD) | t | p | Cohen d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3.70±0.59 | 3.65±0.62 | 0.34 | p>0.05 | 0.04 |

*Notes. M ± SD – mean and standart deviation; Cohen d – effect size*

## Conclusions and discussion

On applying the sport motivation scale and comparing the obtained results of the research, it was determined ballroom dancers-girls had stronger *internal motivation – to find out* (they supported the following statements of the subscale more: „*This kind of sport is interesting because I can gain an interesting experience", „Dancing is interesting because I learn new movements and training ways"* and *internal motivation – to experience („I feel a lot of pleasure in making movements while dance music is playing")* compared with the dancers-boys. Meanwhile, the boys had stronger *internal motivation – to strive for perfection ("I dance because I can experience pleasant sensations")*.

The results of this study are consistent with the results of similar studies (Uspuriene & Cepulenas, 2011), stating that the research with ballroom dancers' results showed that the internal motivation – to find out – is also strongly expressed among dancers-girls and boys. Previous research (Grimminger-Seidensticker et al., 2018) revealed the internal motivation was more important for participants of traditional and modern/classic dances when participating in competitions. However, it is difficult for us to compare the results of this research because we did not analyse any peculiarities of sport motivation for dancing adolescents over 15, especially those ones that dance traditional and modern/classic dances. The data of our research confirmed the results of (Baligad & Martin, 2017): a wish to dance is more related with the internal motivation of dancing girls, they state not only emotional factors are most important, but they also emphasize physical and artistic factors.

There are scientific studies (Sniras & Gedgaudaite, 2014), during which special attention is paid to the dependence of the motivation of sports activities of students attending ballroom dances in the place of residence. The results of this study showed that the internal and external motivation and motivation to succeed is higher for 13-15-year-old urban students attending ballroom dances than for district students. However, we cannot agree or disagree with the data from this study because we did not examine in whay the motivation of adolescent athletes to exercise depends on the place of residence, making it difficult to compare this data as similar or contradicting the results of our study.

It was also revealed the *external motivation – to get identified and coincide –* was important for the young dancers of the both groups. The girls supported the statements of the subscale more: *"I dance because this is one of the best ways to develop other personal qualities",* meanwhile, the boys – "I dance because my friends and other people respect and appreciate me for it" and *"I dance because it can be useful in other areas of life (such as relationships with other people)".* The girls evaluated the *external motivation – direct external regulation ("I dance because people around me think it's important to learn to dance, look flawless, and be in good physical shape")* with a little higher index.

Among the young dancers, the external motivation is not strongly expressed like in the reseach of (Uspuriene & Cepulenas, 2011), which results also showed that the external motivation of ballroom dancers was less expressed than the internal one. Meanwhile, the analysis of the motivation of dancers with different styles (Zaletel & Kajtna, 2020) revealed that male dancers were more oriented to the motive of force strengthening and female ones – to such motives as emotional relaxation, self-control and social understanding. The motives of self-respect and self-realisation are important for Latin-American, ballroom dance and rock'n'roll dancers and self-control – for modern jazz and ballet dancers. However, we cannot support the conclusions obtained in (Baligad & Martin, 2017) that a wish of students-boys is more related with social factors; in our case, the external motivation is also stronger for ballroom dancers-girls.

The amotivation subscale indexes are both similar for the girls and boys and they did not agree with the statements of the amotivation subscale.

The research conducted by both us and other authors (Uspuriene & Cepulenas, 2011) showed that young dancers did not doubt their success, did not hesitate whether they were dancing and were not tormented by the thought that they would not achieve the intended goal. Nevertheless, the importance of sport motivation of young dancers is absolute because the sport activity takes place under tough conditions of practices and competitions when the maximum psychical resistance is necessary for the realisation of skills and abilities. The overview of scientific works shows it would be useful to prolong any further research revealing the peculiarities of formation of the motivation of young dancers or its expression in the aspects of environmental factors or sport location.

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