Abstract

Why do the young participate in sport? What is the perception of sport among sportsmen and sportswomen? Different organizations use sport as a tool to achieve a deeply heterogeneous gamma of goals: some consider the competition very important, others consider the health benefits, some place more emphasis on the aggregative value of the sport and others are attracted by the economic market. Unfortunately sport can also show, sometimes, its negative face: the violence, the discrimination, the shadow of nationalism. The goal of this research is to study the perception of sport among young athletes in Belgrade. Why in Serbia? The whole former Yugoslavia has recently been a theatre of inter-ethnic conflicts: those conflicts left a deep mark in the society, in people’s memories. In addition, sport also represents an instrument of social escalation, a way to escape poverty. In this context sport can assume different values and can be used in different development policies. The research is based on quantitative methods: the form, based on Linkert scale, is composed by five batteries of items related to six concepts of sport (education, socialization, health, fun, participation and competition), the final part is related to the sport-idols. All the Junior volleyball players from Belgrade – season 2008/09 – filled the form: according to their opinion, education and socialization are very important, health, competition and participation are relevant, fun is relatively important. An healthy lifestyle is the most important benefits of participating in sports. During training it is very important to improve skills and communication. “To play well for the team” is the main quality of the “champion” and it is also the most important aspect during the game. Important goals during the regular season are those of participating in the championship and getting a good position in the final ranking. The main sport-idols are Serbs and males.

Key words: PERCEPTION / SPORT / DEVELOPMENT / VOLLEYBALL / JUNIOR / BELGRADE / QUANTITATIVE / SOCIAL

INTRODUCTION

We live in globalized society and sport is complex social phenomenon: for this reason, the introduction is composed by the approaches of European Union and United Nations, two big international organizations, to sport. Moreover, the introduction reports the information from previous surveys and researches related to the perception of sport. The overall aim of the research is to show the perception of sport among young athletes.

European Union and Sport

The content of the paragraph are taken by “White paper on sport” (European Commission, 2007). This document describes the approach of European Union to sport. It includes various parts from various threats and documents related to sport. The document is composed by five parts: introduction, societal role, economic dimension, organization of sport and follow-up.
**Intro.** Sport is a growing social and economic phenomenon which makes an important contribution to the European Union’s strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity. Sport attracts European citizens, with a majority of people taking part in sporting activities on a regular basis. It generates important values such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, contributing to personal development and fulfilment. The Commission acknowledges the essential role of sport in European society, in particular when it needs to bring itself closer to citizens and to tackle issues that matter directly to them. However, sport is also confronted with new threats and challenges which have emerged in European society, such as commercial pressure, exploitation of young players, doping, racism, violence, corruption and money laundering.

**Societal role of sport.** Sport is an area of human activity that greatly interests citizens of the European Union and has enormous potential for bringing them together, reaching out to all, regardless of age or social origin. Specific goals: - enhancing public health through physical activity, joining forces in the fight against doping, enhancing the role of sport in education and training, promoting volunteering and active citizenship through sport, using the potential of sport for social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities, strengthening the prevention of and fight against racism and violence, sharing European values with the other parts of the world and supporting sustainable development.

**Economic dimension of sport.** Sport can serve as a tool for local and regional development, urban regeneration or rural development. Sport has synergies with tourism and can stimulate the upgrading of infrastructure and the emergence of new partnerships for financing sport and leisure facilities. A growing part of the economic value of sports is linked to intellectual property rights, related to copyright, commercial communications, trademarks, and image and media rights. Anyway the vast majority of sporting activities takes place in non-profit structures, many of which depend on public support to provide access to sporting activities to all citizens. The European Commission wish to guarantee equal opportunities and open access to sport activities.

**Organizations of sport.** The European Commission considers that values and traditions of European sport should be promoted, but it is unrealistic to try to define a unified model of organisation of sport in Europe. Moreover, economic and social developments that are common to the majority of the Member States have resulted in new challenges for the organisation of sport in Europe. The European Commission recognizes and considers the “specificity of sport” (own rules, wide heterogeneous gamma of organizations and stakeholders) but in the Commission’s approach is clear that sport activity is subject to European law.

**Follow-up.** The Commission will promote structured dialogue among all the actors involved in the field of sport. Moreover the European Commission wish to increase the cooperation with Member States and social dialogue.

**United Nations and Sport**

“Sport is increasingly recognized as an important tool in helping the United Nations achieve its objectives, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. By including sport in development and peace programmes in a more systematic way, the United Nations can make full use of this cost-efficient tool to help us create a better world” (Ban-Ki Moon, United Nations Development Programme, 2009). “Sport has a crucial role to play in the efforts of the United Nations to improve the lives of people around the world. Sport builds bridges between individuals and across communities, providing a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of development and peace” (Wilfred Lemkie, United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

The sport — from play and physical activity to organized and competitive sport — is a powerful and cost-effective way to support development and peace objectives. There is a crucial need for United Nations agencies, Governments and concerned stakeholders to integrate sport and physical activity into policies and programs across a range of sectors, including health, education, and economic and social development. By promoting sport in a strategic, systematic and coherent way, the potential of sport as a tool for development and peace can be realized […] Sports programs must be based upon the “sport for all” model, ensuring that all groups are given the opportunity to participate, particularly those who gain additional benefits such as women, persons with dis-
abilities and young people. Sports programs must also be designed explicitly to draw out the core skills and values that can be learned through sport (Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2004).

“Sport and development” refers to the use of sport as tool of development and peace. Various UN agencies and bodies use the sport as tool to achieve their goal: the UN have promoted “sport and development” through conferences, resolutions, documents, declarations and official publications. Sport’s benefits are recognized in several areas of UN activity:

**Health.** Sport and play improve health and well-being, extend life expectancy and reduce the likelihood of several diseases. Regular physical activity and play are essential for physical, mental, psychological and social development (United Nations - International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005). Sport improves public health, reduces health-care costs (Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2004). Moreover sport reduces child mortality - MDG 4 - improve maternal health - MDG 5 - and it is an effective tool to combat HIV/AIDS - MDG6: sport can reach out groups otherwise difficult to reach, it provides positive role-models delivering prevention messages and sport festival can be used as venue for immunizing campaigns (United Nations - International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005).

**Education.** Sport and physical education teach essential values, social and life skills including self-confidence, teamwork, communication, inclusion, discipline, respect, fair play, negotiation and leadership. Sport and physical education also have psychological benefits such as reducing depression and improving concentration. Moreover, sport contributes to achieve universal primary education - MDG 2: within schools, physical education is an integral component of quality education. Moreover sports activities and physical education make school more attractive and improve attendance (United Nations - International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005).

**Social inclusion.** “Sport is a universal language that can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs and economic status” (Kofi Annan, United Nations International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005). Sport, as a universal language, can be a powerful vehicle to promote peace, tolerance, reconciliation, intercultural dialogue and understanding (United Nations - International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005). The benefits provide a powerful means to tackle social exclusion, rehabilitate child laborers and integrate marginalized groups into their communities (UNICEF, 2004). Moreover sport is a powerful tool to promote volunteerism. Sport promote gender equality - MDG 3 - and it’s a powerful tool to integrate persons with disabilities into society, reducing isolation and breaking down prejudices (United Nations - International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005). Also the armed force can use sport for promoting friendship and for building peace and security (2nd Magglingen Conference Sport and Development, 2005).

**Communication, advocacy, partnership and sustainable development.** Sport has the capacity to reach a range of audiences in a variety of ways, particularly groups that are otherwise difficult to reach: it is a powerful channel to communicate messages. Many UN organizations collaborate with the world of sport in the area of communications: there are various ways to apply sport as a vehicle to send messages, including working with athletes as ambassadors or spokespersons (Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2004). Sport gives us heroes to admire and positive role models who inspire young people: they make direct appeals to those (UNICEF, 2004). Moreover sport offers endless opportunities for innovative partnerships for development between developed and developing nations to work towards achieving the millennium development goals - MDG 8 (United Nations - International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005). Partnership between the sports world, media, and development workers will boost understanding of the contribution sport can make to sustainable development (1st Magglingen Declaration, 2003).

The problems. “Sport can lead to elitism and exclusion, excessive alcohol consumption and drug abuse. It can lead to inordinate competitiveness and nationalism that can further divide communities and nations. There is always the potential for doping, cheating, corruption and violence. The benefits of sport, however, far outweigh these potential negative consequences” (UNICEF, 2004).
Previous Analysis

According to “The citizen of the European Union and sport” (Special EUROBAROMETER 213– November 2004 - Universe: 25 Member States - Romania and Bulgaria were not EU member yet), 38% of European citizens practice sport. 15% in fitness centre, 16% in club, 11% in sport centre, 6% in school/university and 51% elsewhere: the sport is played “elsewhere” more in the new Members: Malta 69%, Slovenia 63% and Poland 62%. Health, both physical and mental (78%) and the improvement of physical performance (46%) are the main benefits of sport. The leisure dimension is also relevant: 43% connects sport with relax, 39% to have fun (others answers: 31% to be with friends - 24% to improve self-esteem - 19% to make new acquaintances - 18% to achieve objectives - 16% to develop new skills - 15% to build character and identity - 15% to stimulate the spirit of competition - 10% to help disadvantaged people to integrate into society - 9% to meet other people from new cultures). Sport is also an effective tool to fight against obesity.

Team spirit (52%) is the main value developed through sport activity. Discipline (46%), friendship (38%), effort (36%), self-control (33%), respect for the others and fair play (32%) are considered important too (other answers: 32% respect for the others – 32% fair play – 31% sticking to the rules – 23% tolerance – 18% solidarity – 15% mutual understanding, equity men/women). Among the new members the discipline gets the highest average: Cyprus is the exception, the top is the team spirit. Moreover, sport promotes integration of immigrant populations (73%) and it fights against discriminations (64%). Doping is the main negative aspect of sport (72%): also the great emphasis on money (55%), corruption (41%), violence (32%) are considered relevant (other answers: 29% sexual abuse of children – 25% exploitation of children – 22% over-consume of food supplements – 18% discrimination, over-training – 14% exploitation of people from developing countries).

Perception of Sport on the Italian Pupils

“Indagine conoscitiva sulla percezione dello sport nella scuola dell’obbligo” (“analysis of the perception of sport in the primary school” is a research realized by prof. Vincenzo Biancalana (2004). The goal is to show the approach of the pupils to sport in Italian education system, the form was composed by three main areas: sport practice, knowledge of sport and sport in school. The research involves 1258 pupils from primary school from four cities in Marche (region in the centre of Italy). The cities has been selected according to the sport traditions: Ascoli Piceno has a strong tradition in football, Pesaro in basket, Falconara in volley and Urbino doesn’t have any relevant sport tradition.

The big majority of the pupils practice sport: the most popular sport are football (among males), volleyball (among female) and swimming (without meaningful differences between gender groups). The big majority of pupils are involved in “team-sport”. The respondents consider the sport important because it's healthy activity (92%). About the knowledge of the sport, volley is the most popular discipline among females. Football is the most popular sport among the males but it gets relevant percentages also among women: although they are more likely involved in volley or gymnastics, they are informed about football (92% of respondents know how many players has a football team, 69% know how many players has a basket team, 54% know how many players has a volleyball team, 19% know how many players has a rugby team, 19% know how many players has a handball team). About the knowledge of the sportsmen and sportswomen, 1234 on 1258 (98%) know at least one football player, 1162 (92%) know at least one cyclist (1153 Pantani or Cipollini), 973 (77%) know at least one swimmer, 745 (59%) know at least one basketball player (77% M. Jordan), 429 (34%) know at least one volleyball player, 186 (15%) know at least one athlete from athletics. “Do you wish to became a champion?”: the big majority of the pupils answered yes. The main reasons are “to be popular” and “to be on television”.

Towards a Theoretic Research Model

Crossing the two approaches previously proposed and observing sport phenomenon through the European statistics and previous researches, it is possible to create an analytical model of sport through breaking down the complex macro-concept of sport into six concepts of sport related to six different aspects.


**Competition**

“Citius! Alitus! Fortius!”: the popular quoting of De Coubertain published on Olympic Charta, means originally “Faster! Higher! Stronger!”

Sport has winners and losers: this concept takes into consideration the results, the score, the ranking.

**Education**

Several publications – particularly written by United Nations - point out that sport is a great tool to promote education and to make schools more attractive. The education dimension is related to learn how to practice a sport, through skills and technique improvement, to acquire knowledge, to develop of the body and muscles. Last but not least, the non-formal education dimension. “Education” concept is composed by these four elements.

**Fun**

The leisure dimension is very central in sport, in particular in youth domain: in fact, the “core” of the “Right to play” of UNICEF is the fun dimension of sport. Sport is also a game, a form of entertainment, a leisure activity. To have fun, to play, to enjoy, to have a good time: all these situations are part of the game. These are the dimensions considered within this concept.

**Health**

The Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace of the UN underlines how mainstream sport practice reduces public health costs and increase the quality of people’s life. Sport is based on physical activity, healthy lifestyle and the wellness of body and mind. This concept measures how important it is to be healthy through sport.

**Socialization**

The European Commission and the UN – in particular UNICEF – strongly recognize sport as powerful tool to gather people together. A common language to share experiences and feelings, to make new friends, to improve friendship, to cooperate with others to reach common goals. This concept measures the importance of being both part of a team and an active member in a group. This concept is related to sport as a tool to improve social life and social skills, in networking and friendship.

**Participation / Active Citizenship**

Value as respect, tolerance and fair play are linked with sport by several institutions included the European Commission. Through the respect of the rules, the referee, the competitors, the losers and the winners, the sportsmen and the sportswomen develop civic skills. To communicate proficiently with the team, to respect different opinions, to establish positive relations with the authorities (the coach and referees) are part of this concept. Participation in sport is a form of active citizenship; sport can surely be considered a tool to make athletes better citizens.

**METHOD**

The present research investigates the dimensions in which young athletes perceive sport. For this process, six concepts of sport have been utilised: competition, education, health, fun, socialization and participation. The ‘universe’ is composed of all the volleyball players Junior category from Belgrade, the data has been collected during the season 2008/09.

The research is quantitative, the statistics have been elaborated with SPSS.

**Participants**

The Junior volleyball players from the metropolitan area of Belgrade have been selected as a target group. Volleyball can indeed be considered one of the main sports in Yugoslavian and Serbian tradition. The youth represent the future, especially in the developing countries that have recently been a theatre of inter-ethnic conflicts. All the clubs subscribed at the championship 2008/09 Junior category from Belgrade, with the headquarters inside the metropolitan area of Belgrade, were contacted to arrange a meeting with the Junior team. The meetings took place either during the trainings or after the games, in order to reach all the players. The Junior category includes players “under17” at the beginning of the regular season: the data has been collected during the 2008/09 season. According to these criteria, the sample was composed by 18 teams (13 females and 5 males): 189 players –139 females (72,2%) and 50 males (26,5%) – filled the form. It is a sufficiently
Quantitative Methods

The selection of the methods has been a compromise between the goals of the research and the practical plan. The quantitative methods are easy to implement and their application consents to overcome the lack of knowledge of the Serbian language: in fact it is enough to translate the form once.

A form has been elaborated with the aim to measure the perception of sport: it is composed by five batteries of items. Each battery is related to a particular moment of sport: the game, the regular season, the training, the “champion” and the value of the sport (the question is: why a friend should start to practices a sport?). Each item is related to a concept, each concept has four items. The athletes could choose three items for each battery as a “podium”: the first choice gets ten points, the second gets five, the third gets one. As consequence each concept can be measured by a mark: from zero (no important at all) to ten (very important).

The last part of the form includes the sport idols sections: the respondent can write up to three sport idols, independently of: sport, gender, status, age or nationality. The goal of this part is to investigate the most popular sports, sportsmen and sportswomen. The scheme of the form is shown on figure 1.

FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPORT AND</th>
<th>battery 1</th>
<th>battery 2</th>
<th>battery 3</th>
<th>battery 4</th>
<th>battery 5</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPETITION</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUN</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALIZATION</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please choose the three most important items for each battery. Please write 1 near the most important, 2 to the second, 3 to the third.

1. During the game how important is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>concept</th>
<th>item code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to win</td>
<td>C b11c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to have fun</td>
<td>F b12f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to play well for the team</td>
<td>S b13s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to respect rules, coach and competitors</td>
<td>P b14p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Thinking at the regular season, how important is:

- to participate to the championship: P
- to get a good positioning in the final ranking: C
- to be part of a group (team-mates, club…): S
- to enjoy, to have good time: F
- to do physical activity on regular basis, to be active: H
- to improve your skills: E

3. During the training, the how important is:

- to do physical activity: H
- to enjoy the friends and to have good time: F
- to communicate with the coach and with group: P
- to improve your technique: E

4. Think at the “champion”. How important is for a champion:

- to win a lot of competitions and games: C
- to respect rules, referees and competitors: P
- to play for the team and helps the team-mates: S
- to training and to have a good physical: H
- to be technically the best: E

5. Think at one of your friends who don’t practise any sport. You would suggest to do sport:

- to get new friends: S
- to have a healthy lifestyle: H
- to have fun: F
- to have success on the field: C
- to learn how to practices a sport: E

Please write three sport idols, feel free to choose among all the sport and all the history. Please add gender and sport.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>SPORT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. The scheme of the form
Elaboration and Presentation of Results

The results of the research are obtained by statistical analysis. The software SPSS has been utilised. The results are presented in four blocks, through comments, tables and graphics: concepts, overview (this paragraph is related to the importance of the concepts of sport among Junior volleyball players from Belgrade; and the second elaboration shows the concept means according to the gender of the respondents), batteries (this section includes the elaborations of the data in each battery, the block is divided in five sub-blocks, related to: - game, - regular season, - training, - champion, - value of sport), concepts, magnifying lenses (each concept has been studied according to the different items present in the different batteries), an sport idols (the final part is about the popularity of the sport idols, categorized by gender and sport).

RESULTS

Concepts, Overview

The Serbian volleyball players Junior category from Belgrade consider sport as tool of education (6,49) and socialization (6,12). Health (5,43), competition (5,23) and participation (4,68) are also important. Fun dimension (2,60) is relatively important.

Competition and the fun are factors more interesting for the males respondents (competition: 6,16 males / 4,90 females - fun: 3,36 males / 2,35 females). Socialization and education are elements more important for the females respondents (socialization: 6,44 females / 5,23 males - education: 6,69 females / 5,92 males). Health and participation seems to get the same level of consideration by the whole group (health: 5,35 females / 5,65 males - participation: 4,56 females / 4,94 males).

According to Eurobarometer, the main values promote through sport are team spirit, discipline and friendship: these values seem to be confirmed by the present analysis. According to Eurobarometer, sport is an effective tool to integrate immigrants population: the importance of socialization confirm this statement. More information is available by consulting table 1 and figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GLOBAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6,49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>6,12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>5,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>4,68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>2,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>2,60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Batteries

Game

The Serbian Junior volleyball players from Belgrade consider “to play well for the team” as the most important issue during the game (7,11). However the first battery shows a difference between genders group: males consider more important the positive final score (6,52 males / 4,98 females), females conversely consider more important to play well for the team (7,67 females / 5,56 males). This difference is coherent with the previous paragraph: the male athletes have the tendency to pay greater attention to competition, the female athletes conversely pay greater attention to socialization. More information is available by consulting table 2 and figure 3.

Table 2  Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>During the game, how important is:</th>
<th>global</th>
<th></th>
<th>males</th>
<th></th>
<th>females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1C</td>
<td>To win</td>
<td>5,39</td>
<td>3,06</td>
<td>6,52</td>
<td>3,19</td>
<td>4,98</td>
<td>3,41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2F</td>
<td>To have fun</td>
<td>2,81</td>
<td>2,53</td>
<td>3,53</td>
<td>3,22</td>
<td>2,55</td>
<td>2,33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3S</td>
<td>To play well for the team</td>
<td>7,11</td>
<td>3,47</td>
<td>5,56</td>
<td>3,47</td>
<td>7,67</td>
<td>3,31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4P</td>
<td>To respect rules, referees and competitors</td>
<td>3,94</td>
<td>3,26</td>
<td>4,22</td>
<td>3,37</td>
<td>3,85</td>
<td>3,24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regular Season

The respondents consider a good position in the final ranking as the most important goal to achieve during the regular season (6.11 global / 7.46 females / 5.65 males). “To participate to the championship” is the second most selected item: it results to appeal more females respondents (5.97 global / 5.46 males / 6.13 females). The females consider very important also to be part of a group (4.94 global / 5.05 females / 4.68 males) and the skills improvement (5.11 global / 5.46 females / 4.03 males). Males contrariwise consider very important the leisure (“to enjoy, to have good time”: 3.92 global / 5.00 males / 3.50 females) and relatively important the skills improvement. More information is available by consulting table 3 and figure 4.

Table 3  Regular season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Thinking at the regular season, how important is:</th>
<th>global</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1P</td>
<td>To participate to the championship</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2C</td>
<td>To get a good positioning in the final ranking</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3S</td>
<td>To be part of a group (team-mates, club…)</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4F</td>
<td>To enjoy, to have good time</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.215</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5H</td>
<td>To do physical activity on regular basis, to be active</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6E</td>
<td>To improve your skills</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REGULAR SEASON

![Figure 4](image-url)

Training

The Serbian Junior volleyball players from Belgrade consider the training as educational moment: to improve the technique is the most selected item (8.89 global / 8.63 males / 8.98 females). During the training, it’s also important to improve the communication (4.89 global / 4.59 males / 4.99 females). According to the males’ opinion, leisure is lightly more relevant than physical activity. The females think the opposite (“to enjoy the friends, to have good time”: 2.63 global – 3.92 males – 2.20 females / “to do physical activity”: 2.80 global / 2.82 females / 2.76 males). More information is available by consulting 4 and figure 5.
honours (“to win a lot of competitions and games”: 5,52 global / 5,81 males / 5,41 females) are important too. Males consider fair play (“to respect rules, referee and competitors”: 3,54 global / 5,05 males / 2,83 females) and physical performance (“to train, to have good physical”: 3,74 global / females / males) more important than females. More information is available by consulting table 5 and figure 6.

### Table 5 Champion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Think at the “champion”. How important is for a champion:</th>
<th>global</th>
<th>males</th>
<th>females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1C</td>
<td>To win a lot of competitions and games</td>
<td>5,52</td>
<td>3,46</td>
<td>5,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2P</td>
<td>To respect rules, referees and competitors</td>
<td>3,54</td>
<td>3,13</td>
<td>5,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3S</td>
<td>To play for the team and to help the team-mates</td>
<td>6,90</td>
<td>3,60</td>
<td>5,90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4H</td>
<td>To train and to have good physical</td>
<td>3,74</td>
<td>3,08</td>
<td>4,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5E</td>
<td>To be technically the best</td>
<td>5,41</td>
<td>3,77</td>
<td>5,26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Serbian Junior volleyball players from Belgrade would suggest to practice sport “to have a healthy lifestyle” (7,85 global / 7,88 males / 7,84 females). The opinion of the group is really polarized: health is the most relevant benefits of sport. Sport is also a tool to get new friends, to improve the social life: also this opinion is really polarized (“to get new friends”: 5,17 global / 5,05 males / 5,21 females). According to the males opinion, to have success on the field is more important than to learn how to practices a sport (“to have success on the field”: 3,77 global / 4,38 males / 3,62 females - “to learn how to practices a sport”: 3,87 global / 4,18 females / 3,11 males). To have fun (2,75) is more important for males (3,17) than females (2,56). The males seems to enjoy more the competition and to consider relatively important the fun, the females highlight more the education, giving less-important to the leisure dimension. More information is available by consulting table 6 and figure 7.

Table 6 Value of Sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Think at one of your friends who don’t practice any sport. You would suggest to do sport:</th>
<th>global</th>
<th>males</th>
<th>females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1S</td>
<td>To get new friends</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2H</td>
<td>To have healthy lifestyle</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>3.128</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3F</td>
<td>To have fun</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4C</td>
<td>To have success on the field</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5E</td>
<td>To learn how to practice a sport</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concepts At Magnificent Lents

**Competition**

Competition is very important for males and relatively important for females (global 5.23 / males: 6.16 / females: 4.90). The score of the game (global: 5.39 / males: 6.52 / females: 4.98) and the position in the final ranking (global: 6.11 / males: 7.46 / females: 7.56) are the most important elements of competition, especially considering only the males respondents. For the females, the firsts three items (the position in the final ranking, the honours of the champion and the score of the game) have similar importance (4.98 / 5.65 / 5.41). The men (4.38) would suggest more likely to start to do sport to enjoy competitions than women (3.62). More information is available by consulting table 7.

Table 7 Competition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Competition – global average 5.23</th>
<th>global</th>
<th>males</th>
<th>females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1C</td>
<td>To win the games</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2C</td>
<td>To get a good positioning in the final ranking</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>7.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1C</td>
<td>The “champion” wins a lot of competitions and games</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4C</td>
<td>Why to practice sport? To have success on the field</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education**

Education is very important for the whole group, with small differences between the genders.

Table 8 Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>EDUCATION – global average 6.49</th>
<th>global</th>
<th>males</th>
<th>females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6E</td>
<td>To improve your skills along the regular season</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3E</td>
<td>To improve your technique during trainings</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>8.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5E</td>
<td>The “champion” is technically the best</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5E</td>
<td>Why to practice sport? To learn how to practice a sport</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fun**

The “fun dimension” is the less considered by the Junior volleyball players from Belgrade (2.60). The higher mean of the concept is related to the leisure during the regular season (3.92). The males (3.38) consider more important the fun than the female respondents (2.60), the difference is relevant in all the items of the battery. The higher females average (to have good time during regular season: 3.5) is almost like the lower of the men (leisure during the training: 3.17). More information is available by consulting table 9.
Moreover, it’s the most important quality of a “champion” (6,90). The main difference between genders is related to the game: the males consider more important to win (6,52), the girls to play well for the team (7,67). More information is available by consulting table 11.

### Health

Health is universally recognized as the main benefits of sport activity, with very few differences according to the gender. The whole group of respondents considers health important: the present research confirms the tendencies evidenced by the previous researches about this topic. More information is available by consulting table 10.

### Socialization

Socialization is important, especially considering only the females respondents (6,12 global / 6,44 females / 5,23 males). To play well for the team during the game is the peak of socialization (global 7,11). Moreover it’s the most important quality of a “champion” (6,90). The main difference between genders is related to the game: the males consider more important to win (6,52), the girls to play well for the team (7,67). More information is available by consulting table 11.
Participation

The importance of participation is independent from the gender of the players: 4.68 for the whole group, 4.94 for the males, 4.58 for the females. To participate in the championship is considered as the main example of social participation (5,97). Training is second, Ana Ivanovic is eighth, Roger Federer is tenth (the first of non-Serbs), Jelena Jankovic is twelfth and Rafael Nadal is thirteenth (second of non-Serbs). The good performance of the contemporary Serbian athletes and the consequent media’s attention seems to play an active role.

The respondents are interested in football (almost 11% of the total idols, Nemanja Vidic and Cristiano Ronaldo among the “top 20”), relatively interested in basketball (only 5% of the idols and no representative on the “top 20”) and they are not so interested in water-polo and handball (both less than 1%). The relatively negative results – especially in basketball - in the last years and the lack of strong and popular leaders (like Divac in the past or Cavic in swimming) probably have some influence (the success of the tennis represent the other face of the same medal).

The big majority of idols are males, conversely the big majority of the respondents are female. The female respondents mention most likely males idols. In this perspective is a bit surprising the relatively good performances of very popular female sport idols like Ana Ivanovic and Jelena Jankovic (only eighth and twelfth positions). The respondents are teen-age: maybe the “physical attraction” of the males sport heroes can play an active role (Milorad Cavic is fourth, the swimming is fifth) in the answers.

Table 12 Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>PARTICIPATION – global average 4,68</th>
<th></th>
<th>global</th>
<th></th>
<th>males</th>
<th></th>
<th>females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men average 4,94</td>
<td>females average 4,58</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4P</td>
<td>To respect rules, referees and competitors during the games</td>
<td>3,94</td>
<td>3,26</td>
<td>4,22</td>
<td>3,37</td>
<td>3,85</td>
<td>3,24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1P</td>
<td>To participate to the championship</td>
<td>5,97</td>
<td>3,50</td>
<td>5,46</td>
<td>3,50</td>
<td>6,13</td>
<td>3,50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4P</td>
<td>To communicate with the coach / the group during trainings</td>
<td>4,89</td>
<td>2,44</td>
<td>4,59</td>
<td>2,79</td>
<td>4,98</td>
<td>2,32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2P</td>
<td>The “champion” respects rules, referees and competitors</td>
<td>3,54</td>
<td>3,13</td>
<td>5,05</td>
<td>3,24</td>
<td>2,83</td>
<td>2,83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sport Idols


SPORTS – TOP 5: 1. volley (52,38%) 2. (tennis 17.81%) 3. football (10,76%) 4. basket (5,29%) 5. swimming (4,94%) 5. atletics (1.06%) 6. Others (8 sports: 2,67%) 7. non-valid (5,11%).

GENDER: 1. Males (71,73%) 2. Females (23,23%) 3. non-valid (5,14%).

The main part of the idols are Serbs: among the “top 20” only 4 are not Serbs (they are indicated in italic). The main part of the idols are volleyball player (52%): there is a clear and logical influence between the sport practised and the sport idols. The better volleyball players are on top-positions. Tennis (17% of the total) confirms to be emergent sport phenomenon in Serbia: Novak Djokovic is considered as moment to improve communication with coach and with the team-mates (4,89). The fair-play champion is appreciated more by the male respondents (3,54 global / 5,05 males / 2,83 females). More information is available by consulting table 12.
CONCLUSIONS

An healthy lifestyle is the most important ben-

efits of participating in sports. During training it is

very important to improve skills and to communicate

with the coach and with the team. Training is the

peak of the education. “To play well for the team” is

the main quality of the “champion”, it is more im-

portant than the honours. Playing well for the team is

the most important aspect even during the game. Im-

portant goals during the regular season are those of

participating in the championship and getting a good

position in the final ranking. Women consider more

important education and socialization than men. Both

gender groups consider health and participation in the

same way. Competition and fun result to appeal

more men than women. The main sport-idols are Ser-

bian volleyball players. The Tennis and the swimmer

Cavic (swimmer) are also very popular.

Although we live in a complex and globalized

society and in spite of the fact that sport includes se-

veral problematic aspects, the results of the analysis

show a good awareness of the social value of sport

among Junior volleyball players from Belgrade. The

good performance of concepts like education, social-

ization and health clearly show this evidence.

The universe of the respondents is composed

by young athletes from Belgrade, the Capital of Ser-

bia: the whole former Yugoslavia has recently been

theatre of inter-ethnics conflicts. The good predis-

position of the respondents for education and socializa-

tion seems to be encouraging in order to use the sport

as tool of social inclusion and intercultural dialogue

in the Balkan region.

The good performance of health as main ben-

efits of sport is encouraging also in the perspective to

spread the sport activity in the society. The decision

makers and the policy makers should consider this

element in their daily job and in planning of future

actions, especially at grass-root level and in youth

field, according to the age of the respondents.

The debate on the perception of sport and the

potential of “sport and development” is very impor-

tant and it deserves growing and growing attention.

Especially in the Balkans, sport can play a relevant

role in several future social challenges. For example

in the European integration: sport can act as a bridge
to gather together the future generations of European

citizens, it can be an effective tool to improve youth

leadership and to develop social awareness. Sport

can provide new possibility to citizens and encourage

the participation to the social life. The debate and the

cooperation among different stakeholders seem to be

two key-elements in reaching these goals. For these

reasons, the intent of this research is to be element

of inspiration for further investigations at grass-root

level. Above all and according to the results, the aim

of this research is to inspire future concrete projects

and actions at grass-root level, in order to fully use

sport to its full potential as tool of development.

The results of the analysis show that sport

can be used as tool of development: the NGO, the

GO, the Academic Institutions and the private sec-

tor should be aware of the good predisposition of the

youth evidenced by this research.

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