

*Field : Sport Psychology*

*Type : Research Article*

*Received: 27.05.2016 – Accepted: 08.08.2016*

## **Motivators, Constraints and Benefits of Participation in Sport As Perceived by the Students**

**Mohibullah Khan MARWAT<sup>1</sup>, Syed Zia-ul-ISLAM<sup>2</sup>, Hazratullah KHATTAK<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Director Sports, Directorate of Sports, Gomal University, DIKhan (KPK) PAKISTAN

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Dep. of Sports Sciences & Physical Education, Gomal University DIKhan (KPK) PAKISTAN

<sup>3</sup> Coordinator/Lecturer, Department of Sports Sciences & Physical Education,  
SARHAD University of Science & Information Technology Peshawar, PAKISTAN

**Email:** [dsmarwat@yahoo.com](mailto:dsmarwat@yahoo.com), [ziaulislamgr8@gmail.com](mailto:ziaulislamgr8@gmail.com), [hazratullah.ss@suit.edu.pk](mailto:hazratullah.ss@suit.edu.pk)

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the different motivators, constraints and general benefits of involvement in sports as perceived by the students. For this purpose, in addition to examining the existing literature for determining the principal motivators and constraints reported by the sport persons, viewpoint of the players was obtained and analyzed. Data from male and female student (N=370), 215 male and 155 female were obtained through a properly developed Likert type scale. The scale, offering 10 possible motivators, 10 possible constraints and 10 benefits associated with participation in sport, was administered to the respondents. Data from the respondents were collected during Gomal university Inter-colleges Sport competition 2014-2015. The data have revealed that to have fun, to be physically fit, to stay in shape, to be with friends, to do something I am good at and popularity were the main motivators for participation in sport and similarly, the main five constraints in the way of participation reported by the respondents include a) financial problem, b) socio-cultural restrictions, c) access to the facilities, d) parental barriers, and e) physiological problems. Promotion of health, fun and entertainment, relieving tension, sociability and wellbeing were reported as the main benefits of participation.

**Keywords:** Sport, motivation, constraint, benefit, health

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Motivators for Participation in Sport

Motive is the possible impetus, or the reason or a combination of desires and needs that causes a person to act or move in a particular way to get or to come closer to the desired target. *“Motivation refers to an activated state within a person consisting of drive, urges, wishes, and desires that lead to goal-directed behavior”* (Caro & García, 2007). Motivation is a process, while motives are the stimuli, the driving force, which directs and manages the action of the person. Weinberg & Gould (2007) have identified that motivation is the internal force which stimulates action for reaching to the desired ends. Motives stimulate and determine human behaviour every time when a wish for a certain goal arises (Kronja, 1966). With regard to participation in sport, the participant of the activity has always “something” in his/her mind that motivates him/her to start the activity; this “something” is called the motive. Motivation, particularly with reference to the children and adolescents, plays significant role in connection with initiating and adherence to the activity. Linder (2002) suggests that parents who show interest in their children’s activity levels will increase the likelihood of their children’s prolonged involvement in physical activity. Children should always be encouraged by the parents as well as teachers in carrying out any new or skillful assignment rather than suppressed with the negative impression of inability or incompetency. It is important that children are empowered with an “I can do” attitude rather than discouraged by the message “you can't do that” (Wilson, 2002).

Motivators for participation in sport vary from person to person and from situation to situation. The motive behind participation in sport of one person may differ from the other on account of the fact that every individual has got different type of need, mentality, mood, choice, taste and area of interest. These varied constructs of the choice establish motive of a person towards participation in the activity either it is sport or any other undertaking of everyday life. As a matter of common observation, advantages of the activity, personal need, taste and desire of the participant play the role of motivating factors with reference to participation in different types of sport activities. Participants report social reasons for engaging in physical activities including affiliation, being part of a team, and social status (McCullagh, Matzkanin, Shaw, & Maldonado, 1993). Research has confirmed a number of motivators for participation in sport. *“Fitness benefits are among the main reasons, other motives for participation in physical activity include weight control, competition, sheer enjoyment, physical appearance, self-presentation, coping with stress and/or anxiety, relaxation, social contact, and fun”*, (Cash, Novy, & Grant, 1994). Similarly Weinberg and Gould, (2007) have concluded that main motives for participation in sport are fun & entertainment, fitness, and friendship. A number of studies have been conducted to examine the motivating factors for involvement in sport and different reasons like fun & entertainment, fitness, affiliation and competition have so far been identified (Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989).

### 1.2 The Constraints to Participation in Sport

In sport, constraints are those factors which reduce an individual’s frequency, intensity, duration or quality of participation in recreational activities (Ellis & Radmacher, 1986). Leisure constraints limit participation in desired leisure activities (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991). The concept of constraints for this particular study with reference to the realm of sport and recreational activities is defined as the factor that prevents or prohibits a person

from participating in and enjoying any leisure activity (Jackson, 2000). The common constraints with reference to participation in sport include time, money, health, lack of emotional attachment, social relationships and travel distance (Kleiber et al., 2008). Constraints generally inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure e.g recreational constraints may include rules of games, constraints on space and place for activities, limitations on time and timing of activities and identity constraints (Shaw, 1994)

Socio-economic status of the parents has been regarded as one of the most powerful constraints in the way of participation in sport. Socio-economic status has been used as a synonym for social class which represents status in society based upon occupation, education and housing. Social class has been identified as an environmental and social factor which may have a positive or negative influence on adolescents' participation in physical activities (Green, Smith and Roberts, 2005). Social class is the factor that may affect adolescent's physical activity levels (Macdonald et al., 2004). Research has confirmed the lower rates of involvement in activities by youth living in urban, low-income communities as compared to youth living in middle and upper-income communities within urban areas and surrounding suburbs (Weiss, Little, & Bouffard, 2005). With reference to health, the socio-economic status of the parents plays significant role in the maintenance and development of the overall health status of the family. Adolescents from low socio-economic backgrounds 'suffer worse health status and have limited access to facilities or organizations promoting healthy and active behaviours' (Azzarito and Solomon, 2005: 26). The same stance is also endorsed by Kirk (2005) who suggests that adolescents from lower socioeconomic groups participate less in sport, and they also suffer poor health and have a lower life expectancy.

In addition to that, children belonging to low socio-economic families and deprived areas are under-represented in community-based sports clubs (Kirk, 2005). On the contrary, higher socioeconomic background of the family is considered to be associated with good health and good participation in sport. Duncan et al., (2004) have concluded that higher socio-economic status is linked with higher involvement in physical activity. In addition, higher educational attainment and family income contribute to higher involvement in physical activity (Wilson, 2002). Further that, a number of studies have confirmed that participant from lower socio-economic class have shown their concerns with the cost of joining and availing the sporting infrastructure. Low fitness level, poor health, obesity, incompetency in performing the basic skill of the activity have also been reported as the personal constraints to participation in sport.

### **1.3 The Benefits of Participation in Sport**

As a matter of common observation, there exists a common misperception about the sport, playing, exercise, recreational activity and physical activities. Sport has been defined as "*All forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels*" (European Sports Charter, 2001). Whereas the term physical activity is defined as "*Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure above resting level*" (Caspersen, Powell, & Christensen, 1985). Playing, Exercise and recreational activity may be defined as the volunteer entertaining engagement of a person having no hard and fast rules, and which does not require any specific space or timing.

There exists general consensus among the masses regarding the positive role of sport in the physical, mental, social and emotional aspect of life. *“Health benefits of participation in physical activity are not limited to physical health but it also incorporate mental components* (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008; Janssen, 2007). In another study Tomori (2000) has confirmed that sports influence a person’s mentality as well.

Sport prepares the individual for the practical life so that to cope with different sort of situations. Participation in sport and physical activity provides opportunity for social connections, co-operation, reciprocity, collective identity and trust in the community (Chau, 2007). The social interaction taking place during the course of playing has lasting positive impact upon the personality of the player. Life skill gains through social interaction can be tremendous (Harrison & Naraya, 2003). Research endorses the social and health benefits of participation all types of sports (Artinger, et al., 2006). The life full of action is always considered to be beneficial for the health and general life expectancy. *“Physical activity should be reintegrated into the routine of everyday living”* (WHO 2002, p.6).

In general terms, sport is regarded as having a number of social, mental, health and economic benefits. But research has confirmed that the role of sport is wider than it is perceived. *“Sport is being analyzed not only in terms of its economic impact but also in terms of its potential to combat poverty, unemployment, crime and segregation”* (Michael Collins et al., 1999) There was a general recognition of the role of sport and physical activity in health promotion and the benefits of having a healthy and fit population, which can be seen as positive from a public health perspective (World Health Organization, 2007).

In addition to physical benefits of participation in sport, it also promotes the spirit of understanding, co-operation and fraternity among the participants. In sport, the participant learns to cooperate with teammates and exhibit sportsmanship (Poinsett, 2002). The same stance is also endorsed in a study conducted by Sport England (2009) claiming that sport provides the arena for social interaction and reduces the sense of isolation among the participants. Participation in sport has got very positive psychological effects particularly upon the children and youths. Young sport participants generally claim to have good physical health than the non-participants (Piko & Keresztes, 2006).

A number of studies have confirmed the positive impact of participation in sport upon the socio-emotional aspect of the life of participants. The President’s Council on Physical Fitness, (2003) recognizes this fact as the report claims that participation in sport activities help individuals to develop character, discipline, confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of well-being.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The problem of this study was to determine the motivators, constraints and benefits associated with participation in sport as perceived by the participants of the different games during the Gomal University Inter-Colleges sport competition 2013-2014.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate and determine causative factors that promote as well as hinder the participation of the students in different activities of sport. In addition to

that, the study was also aimed at to know about the perceived and associated benefits with reference to the student's involvement in sport.

#### **4. Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the current study was to gain an understanding of the positive and negative factors responsible for promoting and demoting the sport participation, specifically among the students. To solve the problem and to examine the causative factors, data from the sport participants representing different colleges were collected and analyzed to reach some concrete findings and conclusions.

#### **5. Population for the Study**

Polit and Hungler (1999; 37) define population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conforms to a set of specifications. The population for this study consists of all the male and female student players of Cricket, Foot Ball, Valley Ball, Basket Ball, Badminton, Table Tennis and Athletics representing teams of different government colleges and Post Graduate Gomal University in the Gomal University Inter-Colleges sports competition 2013-2014.

#### **6. Sample**

Technically speaking, "sample is a smaller but true representative group of the total population. A convenience sampling method was adopted for the selection of sample for the study. This method of sampling deals with the subjects that are easily and readily available to the researcher. The sample for this study consists of 370 players, 215 male and 155 female student players, who represented teams of the different male & female colleges and Post Graduate Gomal University in the Gomal University Inter-Colleges sports competition during 2013-2014.

#### **7. Tool for the Data Collection**

A properly designed five steps, Likert type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree containing 30 different items was developed. The first 10 items comprised of the motivators, next 10 items comprised of the different constraints to participation in sport and the last 10 items show of the common benefits known to be associated with the participation in sport as perceived by the students. The scale was offered to the respondents for the collection of data.

#### **8. Administration of the Scale**

The data were collected during Inter-Colleges, Cricket, Football, Valley Ball, Basket Ball, Badminton, Table Tennis and Athletics competitions organized by the Sports Directorate Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan. Respondents were briefed about the purpose and significance of the study. Prior to distribution of the scale among the respondents, they were briefed that in the scale, the first 10 items are about the possible motivators to participation in sport, the next 10 items reflect the different constraints which impede participation of the

students in sport and the last 10 items are about the perceived benefits of participation in sport. Respondents were asked to mark the motivators, constraints and benefits of participation in sport in line with the order of priority in their mind. They were also briefed to mark the appropriate option (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) offered in front of each item. With the co-operation of the team managers, prior to the start of competition, the scale was distributed among the players. They were requested to fill it and return the filled-in scale before the end of the concluding competition. Accordingly, before the completion of the competition, the filled in scale was collected back from the respondents. In this way the scale was administered among the respondents and data collected.

## 9. Analyses of Data

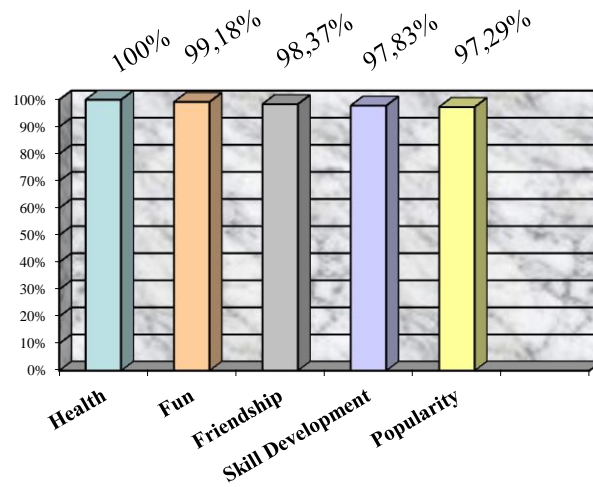
To determine the main motivators, constraints and benefits of participation in sport, the respondents were offered 10 possible motivators, 10 possible constraints and 10 perceived benefits associated with participation covered within different items of the scale. Data from the respondents were collected during Gomal university Inter-colleges Sport competition 2013-2014. The collected data were properly tabulated and after coding, the data were processed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Percentage was used for analysis of data. Percentage of the strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree for each item was calculated and the conclusion was drawn on the basis of the calculated percentage. The result of percentage of each item has been given in the following table.

The data revealed that out of ten, the following five motivators were marked by majority of the respondents in order of priority. To have fun, to be physically fit, to be with friends, to do something I am good at and to get popularity were the main motivators for participation in sport. Similarly, the main five constraints in the way of participation as reported by the respondents includes financial problem, followed by socio-cultural restrictions, access to the facilities, parental barriers, and physiological problems. In view of the respondents, the main benefits of participation in sport include promotion of health, acquisition of fun and entertainment, source of relieving tension, provision of the chances for social interaction and development of the sense of wellbeing in the participants.

Findings of the study are presented in the following tables:

**Table 1.** Top five Motivators of participation in sport as reported by the respondents

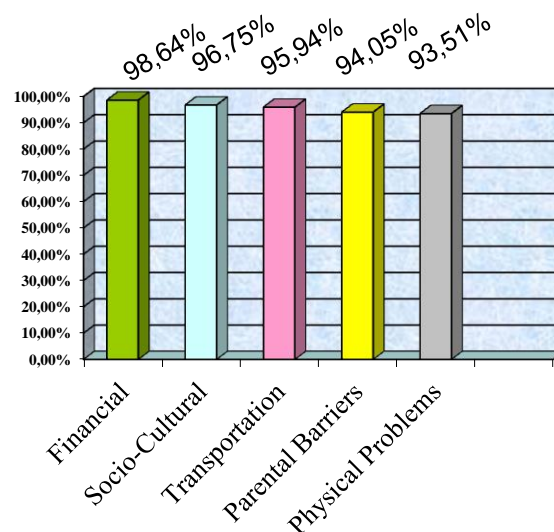
SNo.	Motivators to Participation in Sport	Frequency of the Respondents	Percentage of the yes	Percentage of the Undecided
1	I want to be healthy and fit.	370	100%	00
2	I want to get fun and entertainment..	367	99.18%	0.81%
3	I want to be with my friends	364	98.37%	1.62%
4	I want to do something I am good at.	362	97.83%	2.16%
5	I want to get popularity in the society	360	97.29%	2.70%



**Graphic 1.** Top Five Motivators for Participation in sport reported by the respondents

**Table 2.** Top five Constraints to participation in sport as reported by the respondents

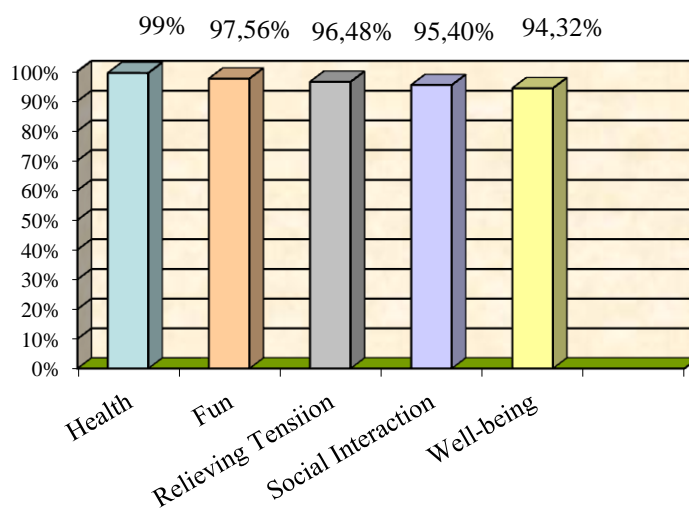
SNo.	Constraints to Participation in Sport	Frequency of the Respondents	Percentage of the yes Response	Percentage of the Undecided Response
1	Financial problem,	365	98.64%	1.35%
2	Socio-cultural restrictions	358	96.75%	3.24%
3	Access to the facilities	355	95.94%	4.05%
4	Parental barriers	348	94.05%	5.94%
5	Physiological problems	346	93.51%	6.48%



**Graphic 2.** Top Five Constraints for Participation in sport reported by the respondents

**Table 3.** Top five Benefits of participation in sport as reported by the respondents

SNNo.	Benefits of Participation in Sport	Frequency of the Respondents	Percentage of the yes Response	Percentage of the Undecided Response
1	Promotion of health,	368	99.45%	0.54%
2	Acquisition of fun and entertainment,	361	97.56%	2.43%
3	Source of relieving tension,	357	96.48%	3.51%
4	Gives chance for social interaction	353	95.40%	4.59%
5	Develops the sense of wellbeing	349	94.32%	5.67%


**Graphic 3.** Top Five Benefits of Participation in sport reported by the respondents

## 10. Findings and Conclusions

The study reveals that considerable interest exists among the youth with reference to participation in sport. Most of the subjects were aware of the health benefits of participation in sport as Khan et al., (2012) state that physical activity is not only encouraged but is recommended as part of a healthy lifestyle. With reference to youth, the study has revealed that regular sport participants were very much enthusiastic about the outcomes of participation in sport. Research has confirmed that young people who daily participate in sport are twice as likely to have high levels of happiness as those who participate in sport on two or fewer days in a week (McFall, 2012). Good health, efficiency, parental motivation and socio-economic status were also amongst the main motivators with reference to participation in sport. Research has confirmed that confidence, concentration, coping, motivation, commitment and support are vital for participation in sport (Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett,



2002a). These findings support the studies which suggest that students from higher socioeconomic status have generally greater participation levels than those from a lower socioeconomic status (Duncan et al., 2004; Linder, 2002).

So far as constraints to participation in sport are concerned, the main constraints reported by the respondents in the way of participation in sport include economic barriers followed by socio-cultural restrictions, access to the facilities, parental barriers and physiological problems. Participation in sport was constrained by economic, sociological and psychological variables such as gender, age, time available to participate and motivational factors (Lera-López and Rapún-Gárate, 2011)

In view of the respondents the main five benefits of participation in sport include promotion of health, fun and entertainment, source of relieving tension, promotion of sociability and development of the sense of wellbeing in the participants.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

### REFERENCES

- Artinger, L., Clapham, L., Hunt, C., Meigs, M., Milord, N., Sampson, B., & Forrester, S. A. (2006). The social benefits of intramural sport. *NASPA Journal*, 43 (1), 69-86.
- Azzarito, L. and Solomon, M.A. (2005). 'A Reconceptualization of Physical Education: The Intersection of Gender/Race/Social Class', *Sport, Education and Society* 10(1): 25–47.
- Caro, L.M., & Garcia, J.A.M. (2007). Consumer satisfaction with a periodic reoccurring sport event and the moderating effect of motivations. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 16, 70-81.
- Cash, T.F., Novy, P.L., & Grant, J.R. (1994). Why do women exercise? Factor analysis and further validation of the reasons for exercise inventory. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 78, 539-544.
- Caspersen CJ, Powell KE, Christensen GM (1985). Physical activity, exercise, and physical fitness: definitions and distinctions for health-related research. *Public Health Reports*, 100:126–131.
- Chau J, (2007), *Physical activity and building stronger communities*, NSW Centre for Physical Activity and Health, Sydney.
- Crawford, D.W., Jackson, E.L. & Godbey, G. (1991) .A hierarchical model of leisure constraints. *Leisure science*, 13, 309-320
- Duncan, J.M., Al-Nakeeb, Y., Nevill, A. and Jones, M.V. (2004) 'Body Image and Physical Activity in British Secondary School Children', *European Physical Education Review* 10(3): 243–60.
- European Sports Charter (revised)*. Brussels, Council of Europe, 2001.
- Ellis, G. & Rademacher, C. (1986) .A literature review of the presidents commission on American outdoors, motivation. Washington DC .Us .Government printing office.

- Geneva, World Health Organization, (2007). *A guide for population-based approaches to increasing levels of physical activity – implementation of the WHO global strategy on diet, physical activity and health.*
- Gould, D., Dieffenbach, K., & Moffett, A. (2002a). Psychological Characteristics and Their Development in Olympic Champions. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 14(3), 172-204.
- Green, K., Smith, A. and Roberts, K. (2005). ‘Social Class, Young People, Sport and Physical Education’, in K. Green and K. Hardman (eds) *Physical Education: Essential Issues*, pp. 180–96. London: SAGE.
- Harrison, P., & Naraya, G. (2003). Differences in behavior, psychological factors, and environmental factors associated with participation in school sports and other activities in adolescence. *Journal of School Health*, 73, 113.
- Jackson, E.L. (2000). Will research on leisure constraints still be relevant in the twenty-first century? *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32, 62–68.
- Janssen I (2007).: Physical activity guidelines for children and youth. *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab*, 32:S109–S121.
- Khan, K.M., Thompson, A.M., Blair, S.N., Sallis, J.F., Powell, K.E., Bull, F.C., & Bauman, A.E. (2012). Sport and Exercise as Contributors to the health of nations. *Lancet*, 380, 59-64.
- Kirk, D. (2005). ‘Physical Education, Youth Sport and Lifelong Participation: The Importance of Early Learning Experiences’, *European Physical Education Review* 11(3): 239–55.
- Kleiber, D., McGuire Aybar- Damali, B. & Norman, W. (2008). Having more by doing less: The paradox of leisure constraints’ in later life. *Journal of Leisure Research* 40 (3) : 343-360.
- Kronja, T. (1966). *Psihološka razmatranja o rukovođenju u armiji*. [Psychological debates about leadership in the army. In Serbian.] Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod.
- Lera-López, F., & Rapún-Gárate, M. (2011). Determinants of sports participation and attendance: differences and similarities. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 167-190.
- Linder, K. (2002) ‘The Physical Activity Performance Relationship Revisited’, *Pediatric Exercise Science* 14: 155–69.
- Macdonald, D., Rodger, S., Ziviani, J., Jenkins, D., Batch, J. and Jones, J. (2004) ‘Physical Activity as a Dimension of Family Life for Lower Primary School Children’, *Sport, Education and Society* 9(3): 307–25.
- McCullagh, P., Matzkanin, K., Shaw, S., & Maldonado, M. (1993). Motivation for participation in physical activity. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 5, 224-233.
- McFall, S.L. (2012). *Understanding Society: Findings 2012*. Colchester Institute for Social and Economic Research.
- Michael Collins et al., (1999). Sport and social exclusion, Loughborough, Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy.
- Piko, B., & Keresztes, N. (2006). Physical activity, psychosocial health, and life goals among youth. *Journal of Community Health*, 31, 136-145.

- Poinsett (2002), "The Role of Sports in Youth Development;" Shields and Bredemeier, *Character Development and Physical Activity*, pp. 191-92;
- Polit, D.F., Hungler, B.P. (1999). *Nursing Research: Principles and Methods* (6th edn). Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott
- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, [www.fitness.gov/aboutpcpfs.aboutpcpfs.html](http://www.fitness.gov/aboutpcpfs.aboutpcpfs.html) (visited November 11, 2003).
- Shaw,S.M. (1994). Gender, Leisure and Constraint: Towards a framework for analysis of women's leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research* 26,8-22.
- Sport England (2009), *Executive summary. Developing strong, sustainable and cohesive communities through sport*, viewed on 14 September 2010, [http://www.sportengland.org/support\\_\\_advice/local\\_government/shaping\\_places.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/support__advice/local_government/shaping_places.aspx).
- Tomori, M. (2000). Duševne koristi telesne dejavnosti. [Mental benefits of physical activity. In Slovenian.] *Lepota gibanja*, 10(2), 60-70.
- US Department of Health and Human Services: Physical activity guidelines advisory Committee report (2008). Available from <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/report/>.
- Weinberg, R.S., & Gould, D. (2007). *Foundations of sport & exercise psychology* (4th Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics (p. 96).
- Weiss, H. R., Little, P. M. D., & Bouffard, S. M. (2005). More than just being there: Balancing the participation equation. *New Direction for Youth Development*, 105, 15-31.
- Weiss, M.R.,& Petlichkoff, L.M. (1989). Children's motiavation for paticipation in and withdrawal from sport: Identifying the missing links. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 1, 195- 211.
- Wilson, T. (2002) 'The Paradox of Social Class and Sports Involvement', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37(1): 5–16.
- World Health Organization (2007). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health*. Available at: [www3.who.int/icf/icftemplate.cfm](http://www3.who.int/icf/icftemplate.cfm). Accessed June 28, 2007
- WHO (World Health Organization) (2002), *A physically active life through everyday transport with a special focus on children and older people and examples and approaches from Europe*, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Geneva.