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# FACTORS OF SUCCESS. ATTITUDE DIFFERENCES OF ONE HUNGARIAN AND ONE SERBIAN TEAM'S YOUTH HANDBALL PLAYERS

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**Abstract:** Results of the Hungarian and the Serbian handball teams are similar on the international level (IHF rankings: Serbia 4. Hungary 5. IHF-10.03.2012.), however the general supposition is that the Serbian handball players are more successful and more acknowledged. This is confirmed by numerous Serbian internationals that play at high level in Hungary and other European countries and the results of the youth national teams. In this article we were searching for the influential factors behind the success of the Serbian team. While there are no considerable differences in physical performance and anthropometric parameters so we assume the main differences are in their relation and stance to coach and to training.

In our study we support an explanation for the reasons of the differences in the results between two nations youth handball players with an analysis of the attitude to the head coach and players relation to work and physical training. Our sample was chosen from one Serbian (Crvenka) and one Hungarian (Komló) youth team. The measurement was completed with a standard survey according to Hagger et al. (2007) Passes questionnaire.

The results show that the Serbian youth players have better relations with their head coach and have better stance for work and training, which might be an explanation for their better success.

**Key words:** motivation, attitude, success factors, coach, training

## Introduction

In our days modern handball requires not only good technical and tactical preparation for being in a good shape but the mental-psychic factors have their significance as well. There are plenty of situations where the mentally and emotionally more stable athletes provide better performance, especially those at a younger age. The coach has a big part in the development and maintenance of emotional stability, because it is not common that young generation have their own qualified psychologist or mental trainer. Coach who supports the athletes' self-realization also gives them the feeling of appreciation and the fact that they are valuable part of the community (De Backer, 2011). Many times coaches are not aware of the fact that their attitude affects their players' progress and decision making ability, especially because of the impact of negative criticism. Unfortunately, it happens in many sports (Walters, 2012). Mental factors can be different in various nations' athletes' because of their different preparation, different way of approaching the game, not mentioning their different training methods. The Hungarian and Serbian senior male handball national team's efficiency is similar. (IHF ranking: Serbia 4. Hungary 5.

[ihf.info 2012. may]), however there are many thoughts that the ball players from the ex-Yugoslavia are more effective, successful and admired. A number of ex-Yugoslavian players who are playing in Hungary as well as the youth men handball teams results can prove that: IHF ranking: Junior: Serbia 6. (169 points – first Germany have 198) Hungary 9. (86 points) Youth: Serbia 11. (86 points), Hungary (0 points) (ihf.info May 2012.). Moreover, a few players from Serbia played in the Hungarian national team, who were nationalized (Nikola Eklemovic, Milorad Krivokapic, Nenad Puljezevic). In our opinion the reasons of the differences have to be searched in the youth age. The aim of the study is to analyse the attitude differences comparing one Serbian and one Hungarian teams' youth men handball players' attitude towards their coaches and training. The study's principles are the works of Gombocz János - Gombocz Gábor (2006) and Hajduné László Zita - Prisztóka Gyöngyvér (u.i.) where the differences between the real and the ideal handball and basketball coaches are being analyzed as well as the players' attitudes towards coaches. Our assumption was that the Serbian athletes' attitudes to trainings are better than the Hungarian ones and that the Serbian players' relationship with their coach is better as well.

## Methods

The study model compares two youth (from age 14 to 18) men handball team's players (n=37). The Hungarian Komlói BSK (n=17) and the Serbian RK Crvenka (n=20) both had players who represented their countries in a big tournament. We chose these two teams because of their important place on the handball map of their countries. Both teams have tradition of making good players and have rich handball history, although at this moment their first teams compete in the second level. Both of the team's young players compete in more levels. Players from Komló have 5 trainings weekly and play league matches on weekends, and also compete in Hungarian Youth Cup. Players from Crvenka have 6 trainings weekly and compete in youth league and also in youth cup. One training lasts one and a half hour by both clubs. So we can conclude that both nations' players' competitions and training schedule are similar. Previously achieved results (from season 2010/2011) show the Serbian youth players had more success. Youth players from Crvenka finished the season 8<sup>th</sup> while players from Komló finished 16<sup>th</sup>. We enrolled data from January 2012 to May 2012. A two-part questionnaire was used from the method PASSES (The perceived autonomy support scale for exercise settings, 2007) developed by Hagger and his co-workers (2007), which study the students' attitude to their P.E. teachers and classes. We converted P.E. teachers to coaches and P.E. classes to handball trainings. Athletes' anthropometric data was collected as well as the scholastic record. We divided the questionnaire results into two groups. One of them contains questions concerning coaches (15 questions); the other one contains questions on the subject of trainings (18 questions). On the questionnaire concerning coaches the answers were given on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 meant *I totally disagree* while the answers about trainings are given on a 4-point Likert scale where 1 meant *I totally agree*. In the training questionnaire the principal question was "*Why do you work hard on trainings*". It might be confusing the reverse direction of scaling, but we didn't want to change the original (PASSES) surveys methods. We processed the data with SPSS 20 and Excel programs where we used simple mathematic-statistic methods as well as factor analysis.

## Results and Discussion

After analyzing the athlete's stance to their coach we can conclude that Serbian young players have different opinion of their coach and more positive relation to him than the Hungarian ones. We can see from the tables underneath that the average points are higher in every question related to trainer in specific fields.

The most significant difference between Hungarian and Serbian young athletes were in the fields of coaches appreciation, trust, acceptance and handling and sharing feelings. The lowest results were taken with the questions "*Does your coach ask you for an opinion*" and "*Do you feel right the way your coach talks to you*". This reflects

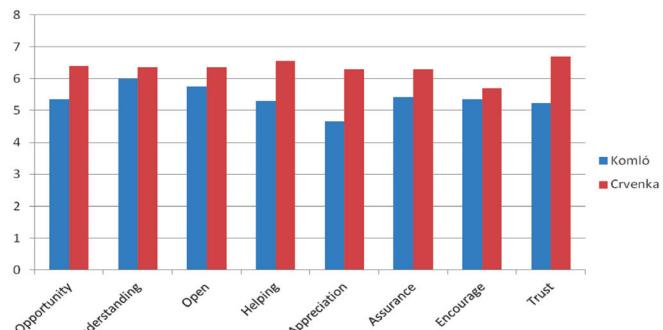


Table 1. Average points of Hungarian and Serbian players to questions from 1 to 8.

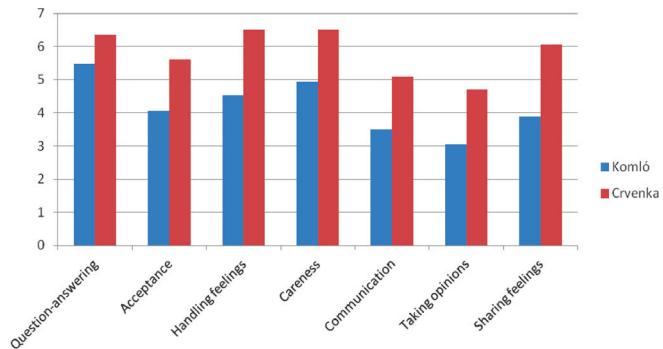


Table 2. Average points of Hungarian and Serbian players to questions from 9 to 15.

the trainers' authoritative behaviour and the lack of two-sided communication. So we can conclude that Serbian handball players gave more points in every aspect of their relation to trainer. Hungarian athletes scores approaches most to Serbians in the field of understanding and encourage.

There were only three cases were significant differences was not shown between the answers of Hungarian and Serbian players (using ANOVA, with  $p<0,05$  – 9 cases with  $p<0,01$ ). These were "*Understanding*", "*Open*" and "*Encourage*". All other answers showed significant differences between the players of the two nations.

Analyzing the answers concerning training questions, the most conspicuous difference is that there is only one question from the 18 where we can find the average result above 2 from the Serbian youngsters (It means that the given fact at least partly motives the athlete) while in Hungarian players' case this number is 8. Moreover, at the Hungarian athletes' we found answers in 5 elements reach or surpass the value of 2,7.

When concentrating on the differences of the points given to each training questions we were able to find significant differences (using ANOVA) 15 times out of the overall 18 questions ( $p<0,05$ ). The three question, which Hungarian and Serbian players answered alike were: "*Because the training is important to me*" (HUN mean=1,05; SRB mean=1,05; F=0,013; Sig.=0,909); "*To be a good player*" (HUN mean=1,88; SRB mean=1,95; F=0,34; Sig.=0,854) and "*Because it is a good thing to practice*" (HUN mean=1,82; SRB mean=1,55; F=0,766; Sig.=0,387). In all other cases the Serbian youth players gave significantly lower grades than their Hungarian sport mates.

We can conclude from these answers that the Serbian athletes are more motivated in connection with trainings (the average was 1,36 while in the Hungarian sample the average was 2,12).

The question is why athletes from these two different countries have different motivations? What motivates them most? These tables conclude the answers:

**Table 3.** Hungarian handball players' answers, for the question „Why do you work hard on trainings?”

Answer (Serbian athletes' placing)	Points (Serbian athletes' number of points)
1. Because the training is important to me (1)	1,05 (1,05)
2. Because I find it useful (1.)	1,47 (1,05)
3. Because I miss it when I don't practice (4.)	1,58 (1,15)
4. Because I find it enjoyable (3.)	1,64 (1,10)
5. To do well on the training (9.)	1,71 (1,25)

**Table 4.** Serbian handball players' answers, on the question „Why do you work hard on trainings?”

Answer (Hungarian athletes' placing)	Points (Hungarian athletes' number of points)
1. Because the training is important to me (1)	1,05 (1,05)
1. Because I find it useful (2.)	1,05 (1,47)
3. Because I find it enjoyable (4.)	1,10 (1,64)
4. Because I miss it when I don't practice (3.)	1,15 (1,47)
5. Because I enjoy it. (6.)	1,20 (1,82)
5. Because I have to do it on my coaches command (12.)	1,20 (2,11)
5. Because it gives me the feeling of joy and satisfaction (11.)	1,20 (2,06)
5. Because it helps me in learning and developing (9.)	1,20 (1,94)

It is also interesting, which factors motivate them the last. We concluded that on the next table:

**Table 5.** Hungarian handball players' answers, for the question „Why do you work hard on trainings?”

Answer (Serbian athletes' placing)	Points (Serbian athletes' number of points)
18. Because I will be punished if I don't practice (18.)	3,65 (2,05)
17. Because I will get into trouble if I don't practice (13.)	3,23 (1,40)
16. I am ashamed if I don't practice (16.)	2,76 (1,90)
14. Because it is expected from me (12.)	2,71 (1,30)
14. Because I feel guilty if I don't practice (9.)	2,71 (1,25)

It is within the tables that the Hungarian athletes are motivated in only one area. Surprisingly one of the answers is positioned at the back (Hungarian's 8<sup>th</sup>, Serbian's 17<sup>th</sup> place) "To be a good player". Originally we supposed the fact to be a great player will be one the most determining factors, but it turned out to be false in both of the nations.

**Table 6.** Serbian handball players' answers, on the question „Why do you work hard on trainings?”

Answer (Hungarian athletes' placing)	Points (Hungarian athletes' number of points)
18 . Because I will be punished if I don't (18.)	2,05 (3,65)
17. To be a good player (8.)	1,95 (1,88)
16. Because I am ashamed if I don't practice (16.)	1,90 (3,23)
15. Because it is a good thing to practice (6.)	1,55 (1,82)
13. Because I will get into trouble if I don't practice (17.)	1,40 (3,23)
13. Because it is not good when I don't practice (9.)	1,40 (1,94)

## Factor analysis

We could establish by analyzing the second group of questions' elements that all the questions (18) are able to be involved into the creations of the factor groups. We got results in all areas appropriate for conditions for factor analysis. The result of the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) criteria was 0,658 which are considered to be medium-adequate factor. Besides that we found the Bartlett-test significant as well (368,219 Chi-Square distribution at 0,000 significance level).

The questions integration to factors was confirmed by certain variables communality (the lowest communality was 0,677 which is beyond the strict 0,5 level) as well the determination of factor analysis with maximum likelihood method index number (59,549 Chi-Square rate at 0,492 significance). Maximum likelihood tests have shown the main component analysis and the Kaiser-criteria (factors eigenvalue min. 1) approves 6 equivalent factors (the significance level was 0,267 with 5 factors). The factors explain 76,81% of variance, so we can accept them as good consideration.

By all these facts we can separate 6 factors.

**Table 7.** Name of the factors and variable names

Name of the factor	Variable name (the question)
Demonstration/Self-respect	Because I enjoy the training
	Because the training is useful
	Because I want to do well on the training
	Because it is expected from me
Authority / Avoiding conflicts	Because I will get into trouble if I don't practice
	Because I will be punished if I don't practice
	Because it is not good when I don't practice
	Because it gives me the feeling of joy and satisfaction
Self-calming/ Urge	Because I feel guilty if I don't practice
	Because the training is important to me
	Because I am ashamed if I don't practice
	Because the trainings are joyful
Correspondence	Because I have to do it on my coaches command
	Because it helps me in learning and developing
	Because it is interesting
	Because I miss it when I don't practice
(Desire to) Develop	Because I will be a great player
	Because it is a good thing to practice
Self-expression	

It is worth to compare the Hungarian and the Serbian athletes' answers inside of a certain factor. It is shown in the table underneath:

**Table 8.** Comparison of Serbian and Hungarian players average points given to factors

	Hungarian	Serbian	Difference
Demonstration/Self-respect	1,92	1,20	<b>0,72*<sup>1</sup></b>
Authority / Avoiding conflicts	3,295	1,725	<b>1,57**<sup>2</sup></b>
Self-calming/ Urge	2,23	1,28	<b>0,95**</b>
Correspondence	1,89	1,31	<b>0,58</b>
(Desire to) Develop	1,96	1,20	<b>0,76**</b>
Self-expression	1,85	1,75	<b>0,10</b>

<sup>1</sup> \*means significant difference (ANOVA) with p<0,1

<sup>2</sup> \*\*means significant difference with p<0,05

It can be concluded from the table above that the Serbian players' motivation is more individual. In the centre of their motivation is the efficiency and to keep in progress. On the other hand, the Hungarian players' motivation is to satisfy their coaches and themselves. We must state that the strongest motivational aspects among Hungarian youth athletes stays below Serbian's lowest ones.

When analyzing the significance of differences, we find that the factors concluding the previously mentioned not significantly different variables are significantly different as well. Except for Demonstration/Self respect, which contains "Because I enjoy training", but significant difference at this factor is only valid on a 90% significance rate.

Altogether we can conclude that the Serbian young players' motivation in the trainings is way better, no matter what kind of motivations they have. The next important question would be the research of the background motivation.

We have found interesting results after collecting the anthropometric parameters of the young handball players. Average height of the Hungarian players was 184,5 cm and 181,8 cm of the Serbians. Average weight was 75,2 kg at Komló and 76,6 kg at Crvenka.

Scholastic record was better among the Serbian young athletes (average 3,75 to 3,07 among Hungarian athletes).

## Limitations

It is important to mention that this research can be mentioned only as a "pilot" study and we cannot conclude anything precisely. The main goal of the research was to test the validity of the questionnaire. It is why we worked with low members of subjects and players only from second division. Besides that, the results are provoking, showing us the differences between two countries' youth athletes. We must emphasize that the differences are not (or not only) in the technical abilities but in the varieties of attitude.

## Acknowledgement

The Serbian (from Crvenka) youth handball players' attitude to their coaches is way different than the Hungarians (from Komló), especially in the area of trust, handling feelings and admiration. That is why Serbian athletes are more open, confidant to their coaches, making an opportunity for them to be much more effective. Fewer points are given to coaches on the area of communication, what matches Walters and co-workers' (2012) research results, where male baseball coaches made more negative comments than female trainers. It is very important for coaches to know the constructive and destructive power of their communication. Their methods can result into better but also worse performance. In studies of Gombocz János-Gombocz Gábor (2006) and Hajduné László-Prisztóka Gyöngyvér (u. i.) we can realize the differences between ideal and real coach image, especially in the field of authority. The ideal coach is more reliable and communicative than real one. Both countries players work hard on trainings because they find handball important, useful, enjoyable as well as to become great players. The expectation and avoiding the punishments are stronger motivating powers among Serbian handball players. Finally, the stance to training is way more positive among Serbian athletes, which can be one reason of the better performance.

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