

# SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY AS A RESOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR PHYSICAL EXERCISE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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## ABSTRACT

Motivation is a very complex psychological phenomenon that can influence a person to achieve the desired results in the field of his interest. Motivation in itself can be external and internal, where it is external, more oriented towards achieving goals that will bring certain recognition to the person, while it is internal, related to further improvement and advancement in life. Recreational physical exercise is largely determined by a certain level of motivation, which means that the more motivated a person is, the more active he will be in different forms and levels of recreational exercise and vice versa. Thanks to the modern technological revolution, very powerful technological resources are available today that can influence the promotion of a recreational form of physical exercise, as well as the motivation of people to be more physically active. Sports photography is a powerful visual tool that can be used to promote a recreational form of physical exercise. Thanks to its artistic dimension, sports photography can make a significant contribution to a higher level of motivation for recreational physical exercise among young people. The application of sports photography in physical education classes would contribute to a higher level of student motivation to be more engaged in all phases of the lesson itself. It can be assumed that the application of technological resources such as videos and sports photos in the form of the motivational stimulators can significantly contribute to the understanding of one's own capabilities. And contribute to a greater interest of the youngest population in joining the physical exercise movement and choosing the sport that they will practice with their generation.

**Key words:** motivation, sports photography, recreational exercise, young people.

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## INTRODUCTION

For any success, both in social and business life, a "driver" is necessary that will help a person to reach the desired goal, i.e. to achieve the set goals. In human psychology, motivation represents that "driver" that has a great influence on achieving personal, business, health and family results. From the psychological aspect, motivation can be external and internal. External motivation is mainly aimed at receiving special recognition for completed tasks, while internal motivation is far more complex and, according to psychology, the most important for quality growth and development in any field that a person deals with. Unlike internal motivation, which is extremely important for a person's successful activity in any area of his interest, external motivation is of a short-term period, because, as said, it refers only to achieving results in order to receive a reward or recognition, and not for the sake of further quality work and improvement.

When it comes to sports, motivation occupies an important place in achieving top sports results of well-trained and professionally oriented athletes. Sport is an organized system of physical exercise, with an agonistic character, which strives to improve the personality in order to achieve maximum sports results (Milošević & Živanović, 2020). Analyzing the very definition of sport, we can conclude that the goal of sport is to achieve top competitive results, and in this respect, a high level of motivation can be helpful to athletes. Unlike professional sports, recreational sports are aimed at improving physical and mental health through freely chosen activities that do not require large physiological-biochemical loads. Simply put, recreational athletes who engage in recreational sports are motivated to engage the locomotor system and the entire kinetic chain of the human body for the sake of health and well-being, and not for the sake of top sports results that require exceptional psychophysical and physiological-biochemical abilities. From a psychological aspect, this proves that the motives for participating in sport and physical activities can be different, as the research of the authors Keivan Molanorouzi, Selina Khoo and Toni Morris (2015) showed. Regardless of the different motives, the authors made it clear in their work that it is internal motivation that leads to good results in both professional and recreational sports. Indeed, internal or intrinsic motivation is a stronger determinant of continued physical activity than external or extrinsic motivation.

It is obvious that the internal motivation of athletes, is exclusively related to sports competitions that bring them pleasure, respect and proof of a high level of their motor skills, while for recreationists, internal motivation is mainly related to enjoying various forms of recreational activities for the sake of health and well-being.

Recreational sport is increasingly recognized as a sport for health and well-being, and it is widely practiced around the world, unlike professional sport, which is more prevalent only among those who are particularly talented in elite sport. The literature has shown that regular physical activity in the form of a freely chosen physical exercise program can have a positive effect on both physical and mental health (Gualdi-Russo & Zaccagni, 2021). Physical exercise can be seen as a set of different movement patterns and levels, i.e. loads of a particular exercise program. In order for

physical exercise to have a beneficial effect on a person's overall health, it is necessary for a person to be sufficiently educated "ABOUT" the movement and "THROUGH" the movement (Milošević & Živanović, 2020). In the center of physical culture, there is man-the secret highest to himself. That man accepts physical movement-exercise as a beneficial food, necessary not only for his body, but also for his soul. The entire phenomenology of physical culture lies precisely in the springing of physical exercise from the being of man (Milošević & Živanović, 2020). In order for a person to be sufficiently educated "ABOUT" the movement and "THROUGH" the movement (Milošević & Živanović, 2020), resources are necessary that can contribute to a better understanding of the movement and its positive effects.

Thanks to the technological and scientific revolution, modern tools are available to us that can make a significant contribution to the understanding of movement in every sense of the word. Television is one of the resources that helps in better understanding the proven positive effects of regular physical activity through a program of freely chosen physical exercise. Television, as a modern technological "miracle", can help a person understand the essence of engaging in recreational sports or recreation. In addition to television, sports photography occupies an important place in the promotion of movement and various physical exercise programs. In relation to television, sports photography has a more significant effect on the promotion of human movements in space and time. Numerous sports media use sports photography as an aid in the affirmation of sports and athletes who compete in individual and team sports.

Indeed, published sports photos that meet the high technical standards of the editors of various sports newspapers or magazines, are admired by those who read the sports press and love sports. A possible explanation should be sought in the artistic dimension of sports photography (Stamenković, 2021). Sports photography is a powerful visual tool that can be used to promote sports, athletes and recreational forms of physical exercise.

From a scientific point of view, photography has been recognized as a powerful media and visual tool by some research that has analyzed the potential impact of photography on greater engagement in physical activity. For example, research conducted by Lily Robinson et al. (2017) used photographs to determine the effect of ideal photographs of women in top athletic and muscular shape compared to traditional ideal images on female appearance dissatisfaction. body, as well as behavior during exercise. Photos of women in great shape were analyzed more than photos of relatively thin women. Photographs of women with perfect athletic bodies have led to greater concern about the appearance of one's own body. When it came to images, the research found that there was a significant comparison. Although the research did not confirm the influence of the photos on the greater engagement of women in a fitness exercise program, the photos that showed women in great athletic and muscular shape still had an inspiring effect on women. In essence, the aforementioned study confirmed that photography has a visual power that just needs to be used in the right way.

A good sports photo includes a recorded moment of the athlete in a specific moving pose that is unusual and cannot be seen on television. The recorded moment characterized by different moments of movement, as well as different positions of the bodies of active athletes and recreationists, represents the artistic dimension of sports photography. Undoubtedly, such photos lead to the manifestation of certain emotions in people who analyze and enjoy watching sports photos. Emotions are an integral part of a person's complex psychological personality, and they can be manifested in different ways, which is very individual. We can conclude that sports photography, together with physical culture, creates the conditions so that the feeling for the beauty of movement and everything related to physical exercise is embedded in a person and is an integral part of his culture of memory (Milošević & Živanović, 2020).

## DEFINITION OF BASIC TERMS

**Sports photography** can be defined as a multidimensional branch of photography that aims to permanently record interesting moving moments, as well as to use its visual power to influence motivation for greater and more numerous engagement of all age categories in various forms of physical exercise. Equally, with its content, dynamics and attractiveness, it mobilizes numerous followers and witnesses of such interesting contents of physical exercise, activities and competitions.

**Sport** is an organized system of physical exercise, with an agonistic character, which strives to improve the personality in order to achieve maximum sports results (Milošević & Živanović, 2020).

**Physical exercise** is the sum of different physical exercises done in a certain time interval (extent) and with a certain intensity (Milošević & Živanović, 2020).

**Physical culture** is a human activity that, as part of the general culture of knowledge about physical exercise and knowledge for physical exercise, and within its areas (physical education, sports and recreation), enables the transformation of personality from the real to the possible (Milošević & Živanović, 2020).

**The term motivation** is also used to explain the driving force, its direction and intensity, persistence and quality of behavior, especially behavior aimed at achieving a certain goal (Bojović, 2017).

## METHOD OF WORK

In this paper, theoretical and descriptive analysis was used.

### Subject of research

The subject of this research is sports photography, motivation and physical exercise.

### The aim of the research

The aim of this paper is to explain, through theoretical analysis and examples of photographs, how sports photography, with its artistic and other values, can motivate young people to engage in recreational forms of physical exercise.

## RESULTS WITH DISCUSSION

Regular exercise of any form and level of physical exercise leads to positive transformational changes when it comes to human health. As a result of physical exercise, there is an improvement in the cardiovascular system, the musculoskeletal system, lung function, the immune status of the organism is improved and the metabolism is accelerated. The positive effects of physical exercise on physical and mental health, as well as on the quality of life, are also documented in the scientific literature (Pederson et al., 2017). For example, Pedersen with his collaborators (2017) investigated the effect of team sports and resistance training on physical function, psychological health, quality of life, and motivation in older untrained adults. Twenty-five untrained men and forty-seven untrained women aged 80 (range: 67-93) years were recruited. Fifty-one were assigned to a training group (TRG) of which twenty-five performed team training (TG) and twenty-six resistance training (RG). The present study demonstrated that team sport training could improve physical function to the same extent as seen in duration-matched resistance training in older adults. Importantly, both team sport training and traditional resistance training collectively increased psychological well-being, general quality of life, and health-related quality of life, as well as decreased anxiety and depression. However, team sport training seemed to be more intrinsically motivating than resistance training, mainly due to a higher degree of social connectedness in the team sport training. Overall, the physiology and psychology of active people is significantly improved compared to people who are not physically active. The literature has shown that a sedentary lifestyle has a negative impact on all aspects of human health, because it does not contain a single program that implies a specific physical activity. The modern era, in addition to technological conveniences for functioning in the modern world, has also brought a modern syndrome known as "hypokinesia" or hypokinetic syndrome".

Sports photography is characterized by the ability to "freeze" the most important sports moments in both professional and recreational sports. Sports photos that were recorded and published in the sports media significantly contribute to the popularization of sports. Also, sports photos that have been published and are related to recreational physical exercise significantly influence the understanding of sports, but only from a health, not a competitive, aspect. This is where we come to people's personal perception, i.e. of the way in which sports photos are perceived by observation alone. For some people, sports photos that show top athletes in sports situations are more motivating.

While for some people, sports photos showing freely chosen recreational activities are more motivating. Similar conclusions were reached by the research of the author Cope et al. (2018), which aimed to investigate how content of images impacted people's automatic and reflective evaluations of exercise images. Their research showed that people tended to more strongly automatically associate images with exercise if the images were of an outdoor setting, presented sport (as opposed to active labor or gym-based) activities, and included young (as opposed to middle-aged) adults. People tended to reflectively find images of young adults more motivating and relevant to

exercise than images of older adults. It is clear that sports photography, significantly raises awareness of the effects of sports and regular recreational physical exercise.

Futhermore, television, as a powerful tool for promoting healthy lifestyles, uses sports photos to show viewers sports and recreational activities from an "other angle". The "second angle" is unique to sports photography, and it is its greatest advantage when it comes to affirming movement and physical exercise. It is not the same when television shows the movement activity of those who participate in the realization of sports tasks with a video, and when a detail from a game or a recreational field is shown across the screen with a high-quality photo with frozen and interesting movement of the professional or recreational athletes. It is clear that television and sports photography have a synergistic effect on the promotion of both professional and recreational sports. We can conclude that the sports media can contribute to a better education of the people "ABOUT" the movement and "THROUGH" the movement (Milošević & Živanović, 2020).

Regardless of the importance that sports photography can have when it comes to greater engagement in various forms of recreational physical exercise, one should not lose sight of the very motives of people for greater engagement in recreational forms of physical exercise. Namely, the literature has shown that the motives for greater frequency in sports and recreational physical activities can differ (Molanorouzi et al., 2015), which means that different sports photos from different sports can influence people's commitment to sports or recreational forms of physical exercise. Here again we come to the basic division of motivation, which was briefly explained in the introduction of this paper. As said, motivation can be external and internal.

From a practical point of view, if a person looking at sports photos of recreationists decides to engage in a recreational form of physical exercise for the sake of himself and his own health, then we can say that such a person is motivated for the sake of himself and health, which means that internal motivation is dominant. If a person wants to engage in sports activities in order to achieve better results, or to complete in a better appearance compared to others, then it is an external motivation. The above examples show the visual power of sports photography, which means that its visual power can be useful to motivate people to be more physically active either in sports or recreational activities.

### **Examples of the impact of the visual power of sports photogtaphy on raising the level ov motivation for greater engagement in sports and recreational forms of physical exercise of young people**

Through examples of specific photographs in this paper, the visual power of sports photography will be better explained. Sports photography does not only aim to capture the most important sports moments of athletes or recreationists, but also to record psychological reactions. For example, for the sports press, interesting details are when athletes celebrate after a victory, or when athletes grieve after a sports defeat. For recreationists, sports photography tries to record the mood of those who practice recreational forms of physical exercise. In contrast to professional athletes,

who have constant psychological tension, in the photos of recreational athletes who are determined to improve their health through movement and healthy exercise, we see a pleasant atmosphere and positive reactions on their faces. The emotional component of athletes and recreationists also occupies an important place in sports photography. Emotions are very complex psycho-physiological reactions that come to the fore in different ways in people, which is very individual. Successful sports photography is also characterized by an emotional moment that is recorded, whether it is a professional athlete or a recreational athlete.

When it comes to young people, it is generally known that they are interested in practicing sports and recreational forms of physical exercise. From an educational aspect, physical education occupies a very important place when it comes to educating young people about physical activities and physical exercise. The different phases of the physical education classes themselves, from the introductory to the final part of the class, are planned and professionally designed. It should be clear to the students that movement is health, and that greater involvement in recreational forms of physical exercise would be extremely important for their health.

The teacher can and must make a great contribution to this by helping his students understand the essence of movement and physical exercise with practical examples. Both the teacher and students must act synergistically in order for the teaching of physical education to be successfully implemented, because there will be no good results if they do not cooperate as a team. Among the students, there is mostly a competitive spirit, i.e. their desire to compete outweighs their desire to learn about movement patterns, motor functioning, and the rudiments of individual and team sports. This is to be expected if their age is taken into account, because children most like to participate in those activities that offer the opportunity to show what they know and can do.

School competitions are an ideal opportunity to promote physical activity and the competitive spirit of young people. Also, school competitions in various sports represent a combination of fun and educational character, and it is the reason why they are attractive and interesting for students. It should be noted that the emotional component of the students comes to the fore here, in terms of joy and excitement. When it comes to motivation, one group of students is highly motivated to achieve good results, while the other group of students is satisfied with just participating in competitions. In general, all students are motivated, both by external and internal motivation, but they are motivated, i.e. the level of motivation is high. Events such as school competitions remain, thanks to the properties of sports photography, recorded and used by those who understand the function of sports photography. In the "visual interpretation" of the obtained sports photos, it is necessary to focus not only on the reactions of the participants, but also on other important elements that make the photo attractive.

*Picture 1. Cross-country youth sports competition within the "Cross RTS" event, which was held in Leskovac.*



*Pierre de Coubertin always emphasized that it is important to participate, not to win. Photo: Miloš Stamenković.*

As explained earlier, sports photography in itself is a powerful visual tool for better understanding the natural forms of movement of young people, in this case, students. The picture 1 shows children participating in the cross-country competition as part of the "Cross RTS" event, which was held in Leskovac. Such organizations are needed to stimulate young people to turn to healthy recreational forms of physical exercise. The use of such photos in physical education classes with the living word method will lead to greater interest of our students for exercise. Second, we should not lose sight of the social aspect of physical exercise and health, which is also present in this photo. The literature has shown that greater individual participation in certain recreational activities can stimulate others to start physical exercise. Likewise, recreational physical exercise contributes to greater socialization of young people, which is important for normal functioning in society. From some aspect, this theoretical assumptions are supported by research conducted by Pedersen et al. (2017) which confirmed the positive and strong influence of social interaction within team sport training on motivation for exercise itself. And in this respect, sports photography can help students understand the importance of companionship, cooperation, teamwork, and cheering each other on not only in sports and recreation, but also in other curricular and extracurricular activities.

*Picture 2. Sports competition of young people in cross-country within the manifestation "Cross RTS" which was held in Leskovac.*



*Manners of a future champion: Celebrating victory over peers. Photo: Miloš Stamenković.*

In another example (Picture 2) we can see the satisfaction of the cross-country participant, as well as his superiority in relation to other competitors. For sports photography, the most important thing is to record the emotional profile of athletes or recreationists in addition to extraordinary moving moments. Analyzing the photo in which the participant raises his slightly bent arms at the elbow joint, and with an expression of satisfaction and emotional relaxation, we can conclude that a moment was recorded that reflects a more psychological than a competitive component. This photo just proves how much of a role sports photography has when it comes to the psychological component of personality. Photos like this would be important for the teaching of physical education itself, in terms of a better understanding of the reasons and ways of expressing both positive and negative emotions. For example, it is essential to teach our students that it is not all about winning, and that they should not be sad if they do not achieve the expected results. Students will learn how to maintain emotional stability in positive and negative moments, both in sports and in life, by observing photos showing positive emotions after victory, as well as negative emotions after defeat.

*Picture 3. Sports competition of young people in cross-country as part of the "Cros RTS" event, which was held in Leskovac.*



*Award for the best. Photo: Miloš Stamenković.*

In the third picture, we have a detail related to the awarding of recognition and prizes to those participants who were the most successful in the race. Such details are important both for sports photography and sports press. This photo exclusively highlights individuals who are gifted to perform better than others who are not as talented. On the other hand, the motivation to be better than we were, grows with the observation of such photos. This means that such photos can have a positive effect on achieving even better results.

*Picture 4. Sporting behaviour of potential young football players.*



*Photo: Miloš Stamenković.*

Over time, in sports equipment, on sports fields, young people develop sportsmanship, love for the team, sports, the desire for success and victories. They grow and over time are selected into true sporting values and champions. Through sports photography, they communicate with the public, with friends from their generation, and become a motivating factor for involving even more children in the movement of physical exercise, sports and sports activities. Through such photos, they convey sports culture and the need to value not only one's own talent, but also the opposing side on the field.

### **Between the actual and the possible: A unique example of the influence of certain stimulators on the achievement of students results (prof. Milivoj Matić, PhD)**

That motivational stimulators play an important role in achieving better than expected results was also shown by the research conducted as part of the doctoral dissertation of respected prof. Milivoj Matić, PhD (1976). The knowledge, awareness of the examinee about his own result in a test and especially the possibility to monitor it (the result) directly visually or auditorily, manifested itself as a powerful stimulating tool that offers wide possibilities of application as in school, as well as in

scientific-research practice of physical education (Matić, 1976). For example, only the introduction of results as a simulator led to statistically better results in the long jump motor test of the experimental group. The author rated this method as a very useful for raising awareness of one's possibilities. Based on the analysis of the research carried out by prof. Matić, it can be assumed that the application of technological resources such as videos and sports photos in the form of motivational stimulators, can significantly contribute to the understanding of one's own capabilities. And contribute to a greater interest of the youngest population in joining the physical exercise movement and choosing the sport that they will practice with their generation.

## CONCLUSION

This paper, through theoretical analysis and examples of several photographs, explained the importance of photography when it comes to the motivation of young people for greater exercise of recreational forms of physical exercise. It is true that there are many factors that can influence the motivation for recreation. On the other hand, it is important to understand that sports photography, as a powerful visual tool, can contribute to greater participation in recreational activities. Likewise, it would be important to apply modern technological resources in physical education classes (videos, photos) as stimulation and encouragement to raise the general level of physical activity of our students and improve the quality of physical education classes.

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