

# **SPORT AS A MOTIVE AND VALUE IN SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES**

Tkavc, Suzana, M.Sc. <sup>1</sup>,

Tušak Matej, PhD<sup>2</sup>,

Masten, Robert., Ph.D<sup>3</sup>.

Dimec, Tjaša<sup>4</sup>

1 Ministry of Defence, Headquarters of Slovenian Armed Forces, Ljubljana, Slovenia

2University of Ljubljana, Faculty of sport, Ljubljana, Slovenia

3University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia

4 University of Ljubljana, Faculty of sport, Ljubljana, Slovenia

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the research was to evaluate ranking of the sport activity values and motives among soldiers and officers in Slovenian Army. We were also interested in understanding the meaning of physical and sport activity for the employers in the Slovenian Army and how being physically fit influence on work efficiency. We also were interested in differences between soldiers and officers in Slovenia Army. 100 subjects were measured (70 soldiers and 30 officers) with Musek General Values Scale, Participation Motivation Scale and Attitudes Toward Sport Scale. The most important among all sport activity motives are those, connected to physical preparedness: good physical skills and abilities and to be fit and physically ready. The most important value is general health, which can be reached through sport and physical activities. There are also be found that the employers in Slovenian Army do not physically train because of the orders but because of their own benefits. Sport activity is important factor of work efficiency, because both soldiers and officers see it as healthy way of life and pleasure. They relate sport activity to efficient work in the Army. It was also found that good physical preparation is more important to officers than soldiers. Those results can be understand as a confirmation of good and right human resource planning for military tasks and also confirmation of sport activities in Slovenian Army. Sport exercise with the purpose of remaining health can be understood as a basic condition for appropriate motor abilities and efficiency of the soldiers and officers in the Army.

## INTRODUCTION

Slovenian Armed Forces are defence forces, which autonomously or in alliance based on international treaties execute military defence. Hierarchical organization of the Slovenian Armed Forces provides efficient and proper management and command.

The armies worldwide have been increasingly integrating and performing common tasks, such as peacekeeping in war zones or common actions in combat in different war zones of the world with various conditions (climatic, geographic, cultural, etc.). For that an individual has to be well-prepared for such conditions.

Picarielo (2000) emphasized physical training is based on endurance, strength and speed, as well as on the development of mental skills, cohesion within the group, and on the factors that are related to the conditions on the battlefield. Even without the extreme additional burden, many individuals often face problems; their own bodies present a greater challenge and burden than the task, which they are supposed to accomplish. Such problems are usually health related (increased body weight and related symptoms, daily exposure to stressful situations, problems with motion organs, cardio-vascular diseases, etc.) (Karpljuk, Žitko, Rožman, Suhadolnik & Karpljuk, 2000; Karpljuk et al., 2003; Novak, 2003). All these factors and diseases have a negative impact on performance of assignments and duties in operating units in the field, as well as in command, branches and in everyday life (Tkavc, 2004).

Life dynamics of an individual actively includes one's personality, which on the one hand depends on various motives and on the other hand also has the role of a stimulus or guide. Since the old days people have believed in internal and external powers and forces which drive and direct us, thus inducing our behaviour. In the broadest sense motivation represents an oriented and a dynamic behavioural component, which is a characteristic of all animal organisms. It includes stimulation and guidance of activities (Tušak, 2003). Motivation is a process, while motives are stimuli, which direct and manage the activity. Motives stimulate and determine human behaviour every time a wish for a certain goal arises (Kronja, 1966). Motives as a mobilising dimension of a person's psychosomatic status release the lever which determines whether a person will be active in sports or not. An important set of motivation is also self-motivation, which expresses the capability of motivation self-control. Individuals

with high self-motivation level prepare and motivate themselves and work independently, without any external support or “pressure”.

The aim of the research was to evaluate ranking of the sport activity values and motives among soldiers and officers in Slovenian Army. We were also interested in understanding the meaning of physical and sport activity for the employers in the Slovenian Armed Forces and how being physically fit influence on work efficiency. We were also interested in differences between soldiers and officers in Slovenia Army.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

100 (70 soldiers and 30 officers) employees of the Slovenian Armed Forces (70 soldiers and 30 officers) collaborated in the research. In our sample were included employees of Slovenian army from seven different units.

### **Instruments**

- **Participation Motivation Questionnaire: PMQ** (Gill, Gross & Huddleston, 1983) with a list of 30 potential motives or reasons for sports participation. This questionnaire is particularly intended for young, who are active in sports, and the motivation of whom is still very diverse. The respondents evaluated each reason on a three-level ordinal scale (Very important; Somewhat important; Not important). In our research we adjusted this scale to a 50 mm graphic scale in which the left side indicated “the reason is irrelevant for me” and the right side indicated “the reason is highly important for me”.

By using factor analysis of the reasons, the authors obtained the following main factors or incentives:

1. *Success and productivity* (e.g. "I like winning")
2. *Team atmosphere* (e.g. "e.g. I like groupwork/teamwork")
3. *Friendship* (e.g. "I like spending time with my friends")
4. *Recreation* (e.g.. "I like to get out of the house")
5. *Relaxation and releasing the superfluous energy* (e.g. "I want to release tension")

6. *Developing abilities* (e.g. "I would like to learn how to train/practice")

7. *Fun* (e.g. "I like having fun").

The importance of individual goals or of an individual incentive is used as attractiveness of a motive or incentive and as its valence in a motivational situation. The authors have reported factors with various levels of reliability, between 0.30 (friendship) and 0.78 (team atmosphere). Although the authors did not indicate any norms, they presented the results obtained from the sample of 720 boys and 418 girls. The results cannot be compared to ours, since the scale has been adjusted. The questionnaire was translated with permission and adapted for the purpose of researches (Tušak, 1996). In our research we also obtained seven factors, which are represented and described in results. Cronbach's alpha coefficient in our study is 0.94. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for separate factors range between 0.89 (*the motives of social recognition*) and 0.54 (*the motives of competence and promotion to a higher level*).

- **Work Efficiency Scale;** It is composed of 19 statements to which the participant answers on a five level scale (1 not true at all for me and 5 completely true for me). The statements are created in a way that show participant's preparedness for fulfilling everyday work duty and the biggest emphasis is on his psychophysical readiness. The results show individual's interest for good performing of defined motive tasks, his motivation, interest, effectiveness and reliability.

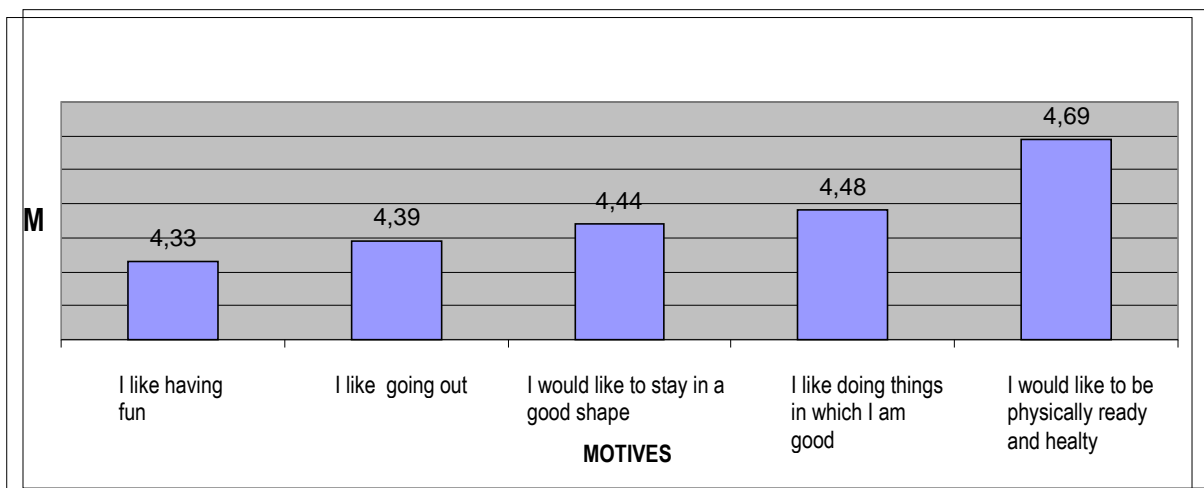
- **Values Scale** (Musek, 1993, 2000); It is composed of 54 items, which represent 54 independent values. The participant answers with scale from 1 to 100 in a way he values stated things. The participant's answers enable us to find out his value orientation and value hierarchy. Cronbach's alpha coefficient in our study is 0.95.

- For finding out the intention of points of view on sport we composed **The Point Of View Scale On Sport (SS)** (Tušak & Korenjak, 2006). It is composed of 35 statements (e.g. "I like competing at competitions", "Sport represents enjoyment to me"). The participant labels how much a statement is true for him/her on a five level scale, where 1 means I completely disagree and 5 means I completely agree. For the final result we scored the average of the answers. Cronbach's alpha coefficient in our study is 0.92.

## Procedure

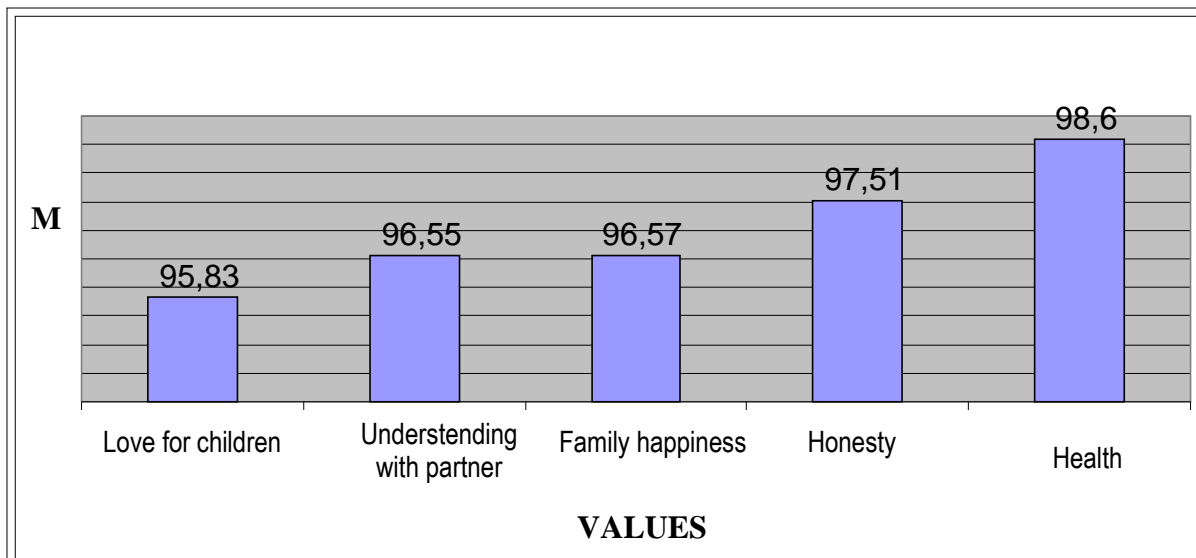
After previous agreement with the Slovenian Armed Forces and their consent to collaborate in the research, we collected data in different units. The testees filled in the questionnaires individually and considering the instruction added. For any possible questions the testators were there to answer so that we explained any possible indistinctness. The filled out questionnaires were collected after the filling in was completed. The data was statistically handled with help of the program SPSS 15.0.

## RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION



Picture 1: *The most important motives of employees of Slovenian Armed Forces.*

We found out that the most important among all sport activity motives are those, connected to physical preparedness: good physical skills and abilities and to be fit, physically ready and healthy. Similar results in one of the research has received Tkavc (2003), namely the acquisition of physical fitness as the biggest motive among employees of Slovenian Armed Forces. This shows the awareness of employees about the importance of physical preparedness. There are also be found that the employees in Slovenian Armed Forces do not physically train because of the orders but because of their own benefits.



Picture 2: *The most important values of employees of Slovenian Armed Forces.*

Picture 2 indicates that the most important value is general health, which can be reached through sport and physical activities. Similarly in one of the research in the Slovenian Armed Forces in the first place was classified utilitarian value - health (Tkavc, 2003)

We also found out that sport activity is important factor of work efficiency, because both soldiers and officers see it as healthy way of life and pleasure. They relate sport activity to efficient work in the Army. The integration of sport in everyday life of employees probably resulting from many years of efforts by sport professionals in the Slovenian Armed Forces, who have designed a system of sport in the Slovenian Armed Forces, including performing a variety of educational forms, in cooperation with experts from the Faculty of Sport. The Slovenian Armed Forces also contribute a major proportion to the regularly physical active population of Slovenia, as already noted Tkavc (2003).

Good physical fitness and health are important to officers and also soldiers, but placed greater importance to the officers, because they have a crucial meaning at decision making, while experiencing both the physical and psychical effort. In addition to all this they easily overcome stress if they are physically well prepared and therefore they valued this motive the most. It should be also noted that officers are better educated and because of the role of decision-making also have more opportunities to participate in various forms of education and consequently are more aware about healthy lifestyles as soldiers.

## Conclusion

Those results can be understood as a confirmation of good and right human resource planning for military tasks and also confirmation of sport activities in Slovenian Armed Forces. Sport exercise with the purpose of remaining health can be understood as a basic condition for appropriate motor abilities and efficiency of the soldiers and officers in the army.

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