

BRANCH OF SPORT PREFERENCE EXAMINATION IN THREE AGE-GROUPS OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

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Abstract

The Branch of Sport Preference Test (BSPT) of *Stuller* (1984) makes it possible to quantify the Hierarchy of the positive – negative attitude towards different branches of sport by selection of pictures from 4 years of age. Nine sport branches (team sport, pair-, combat-, sports equipment driven the by human force-, driven by motor/wind-, immanent-, target-, distance/time- and heavy athletic sports) appear in the pictures. While motor development of preschool children is closely determined by the everyday playing activity/exercise both in kindergarten and in family, the children's preference in different sport events may help parents the appropriate selection of sport in early childhood.

Three age-groups [1(4.73-5.99-); 2(6.0-6.75-), and 3(6.76-7.99 calendar age)] are compared to each other. BSPT was answered in 37 nurseries in Budapest, several towns, and villages (N=538). The family background of the subjects was characterized by the years of education of the mothers and fathers. The parents' sedentary or active lifestyle and their earlier best sport results (qualification) also were recorded. Gender and age group difference in the sport branch preference for kindergarten children is expressed with exception of team sport. The latter is equally preferred by both sexes in all age groups. On the top of boys sport branch preference hierarchy you can find combat sports, motor/wind driven equipment sports. Kindergarten boys' also prefer shooting/ archery together with heavy athletic sports. Girls prefer pair-sports, immanent sports, running/ swimming, human force driven equipment sport (the latter sport branch preferred only in girls' age group 3).

Key-words: sport branch, preference hierarchy, kindergarten children.

Introduction

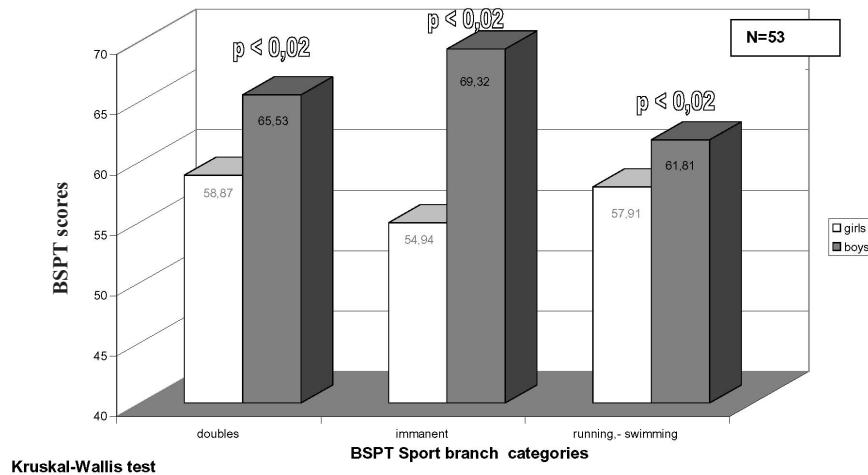
The Branch of Sport Preference Test (BSPT) of *Stuller* (1984) makes it possible to qualify the hierarchy of the positive – negative attitude towards different branches of sport by selection of colored pictures from 4 years of age. (Appendix 1, 2) While motor development of preschool children is closely determined by the everyday exercise both in kindergarten and in family, the children's preference in different sport events may help the appropriate selection of sport in early childhood. Our literary review references to those articles, the main interest of which is the orientation towards sport (*Stuller*, 1989, 1990; *Mallias* and *Stuller*, 1991), as well as, besides the general developmental psychological characteristic features of the age-group 3-6. (*Porkolábné*, 1984).

Sample and method

Three age-groups [1(4.73-5.99-); 2(6.0-6.75-), and 3(6.76-7.99 calendar age)] were compared to each other. BSPT was applied by postgraduate students of the College for Kindergarten Teachers (Szarvas) in 37 nurseries in Budapest, and other cities, several towns, and villages (=538). The family background of the subjects was characterized by the years of education of the mothers and fathers. The parents' sedentary or active lifestyle and their earlier best sport results (qualification) also were registered. The nine sport branches (team sport, doubles-, combat-, sport equipment driven by the human force-, driven by motor/wind-, immanent-, target-, distance/time- and heavy athletic sport). The preference order varies from 1 to 8. The most preferred sport branch has 1 point the most rejected has 8. (In the diagrams the higher columns signal the more rejected sport branch.)

Result

If the two genders are compared, in age-group 1 (Figure 1) it can be seen that girls are much more interested in team sports than boys. The column in the centre shows striking difference in the interest towards Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics or Figure Skating ('immanent' sports) on the side of the girls, and towards Shooting or Archery (sport with a target to hit) in case of the boys.

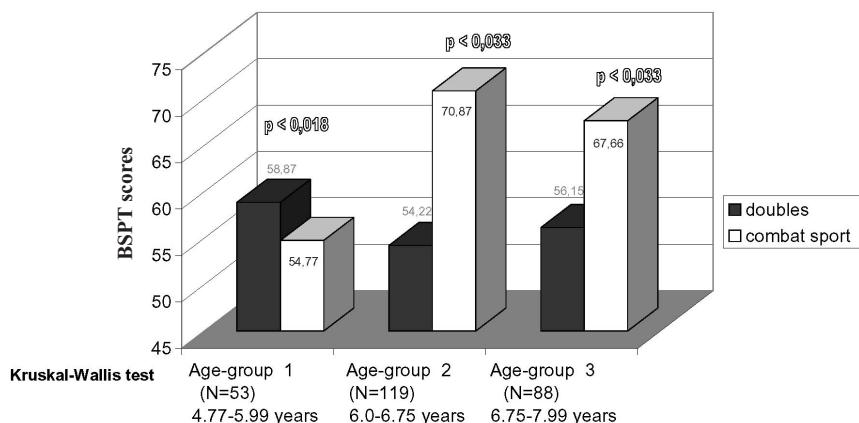


Kruskal-Wallis test

Figure 1: Significant difference between sexes in age-group N1 (4.77-5.99 years)

There is a statistically significant difference between the pair games and combat sports when comparing three different age-groups of girls with the help of the Kruskal-Wallis Test. Pair games are favored mainly by the middle age-group of the girls ($\chi^2=6.801$, df=2, $p<0.033$). Pictures about combat sports are significantly better accepted by the youngest group ($\chi^2=8.8012$, df=2, $p<0.018$).

Two significant differences can be observed in all the tree age-groups of the girls (Figure 2). One of them is in pair games (doubles) and the other one is in the combat sports between the 1st and 2nd age-group. From these two the pair games prove to be more important, as they form the third most preferred group of sports with the girls, based on the average values. It can be

**Figure 2: Significant differences in branch of sports preferences three age-groups of girls**

seen that there is a permanent interest towards team games, which are ranked second by them, while the 'immanent' sports (gymnastics, ballet) become more preferred in relation to their age (*Kalmár*, et al., 2006).

Summary

Based on a sample of kindergarten children and primary school pupils, it can be said that the interest towards different groups of sports is different in each age-group of both boys and girls. Only one of them is an exemption: the interest towards team sports, which is positive with both genders in all age-groups (*Kalmár* et al., 2006).

Pair games 'immanent' sports, and those such as kayak-canoeing and cycling, which require human-powered equipments (in the oldest age-groups), or running and swimming (fighting against space and time) are preferred by the girls.

Combat sports, sailing and motor sports (equipments driven by nature or by motor), shooting or archery (sport with a target to hit), and heavy athletics are favored by the boys. There is an interesting change depending on the age, mostly in case of girls attending kindergartens in countryside. Those are the youngest who mostly favor the combat sports, while the pair games are the most popular at the age group 6.00-6.75.

Conclusions

It is advisable to survey the interest towards groups of sports already in the kindergarten age. It can be useful not only in assessing the aptitude to a sport, but to opening up and forecasting the psychological side of a successful sport career, as well as in formulating the teaching practice of PE in the kindergarten and primary classes. It can also help in finding out the sport-preferences or their rejections in certain age-groups both with the boys and the girls.

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Appendix 1



Appendix 2

