

Original Article

Socializing effect of child soccer players on their parents

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Abstract

The aim of our research was to study the family background of young athletes. If parents want their children to like sports and lay down the foundations of a healthy lifestyle, they have to support their children's physical activity in the beginning. Our goal was to identify the factors that make parents support their children's sports activities by exploring the motivations originating from the family. Considering the deteriorating overall health condition of society, the subject of this study is very timely. The promotion of sports is essential if we want our children to live a healthy lifestyle when they grow up. The costs related to the treatment of cardiovascular diseases and metabolic problems, which result from sedentary lifestyle and obesity, are increasing both for individuals and national economies (Ács et al., 2011; Ács et al, 2020; Ding et al 2016). It has been established that the costs of supporting physical activities are lower than the treatment of the abovementioned health problems (Apor, 2010; Ding et al., 2017). A body of research has been conducted to study the effects of sport on children and the role of parents in this context during socialization. However, there are almost no studies that evaluate the reverse process, i.e., how sport activities of children affect their parents. In this study, we wanted to determine how children influenced others around them, what happens when parents are introduced to the world of sports through their children, and whether this effect can turn into a motivation to start physical activities. In addition, we wanted to study factors that made parents motivate their children to perform physical activities and the key areas where children could be most influenced. Consequently, this study reveals how sport clubs and associations can be more efficient in reaching parents and children.

**Key Words:** sport, talent management, parent–child relation, human ecology model

Introduction

The involvement of parents makes the sport habits of children more complex, which results in cultural changes in the family (Coakley, 2006; Knight et al., 2016; Post et al., 2018). Owing to the development of talent management programmes, millions of children are engaged in sports. Owing to the large number of participating children, it is worth evaluating the social effects of this trend. Several studies have determined that participation, behaviour, and social differences are important aspects in sports (Côté et al., 2009; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Holt et al., 2020). This study is based on the human ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1998). He claims that personal development is a result of a complex interaction between the individual and their environment. This continuous interaction ensures the efficiency of development. Bronfenbrenner (1998) called these interactions proximal processes that mainly occur in parent–child relationships. During the development of individual, the influence, direction, content, and form of these proximal processes change. The model collects the external social, macro, exo, mezo, and micro environmental effects that affect the socialization of an individual. In this study, we wanted to explore these effects by examining how child athletes influence their parents. We were motivated by the modification of the hypothesis made by Bronfenbrenner (2005), who added an extra factor to the model, i.e., time. The abovementioned model allows us to identify effects caused by changes in individuals and their environment. According to Holt (2016) and DiSanti and Erickson (2020), Bronfenbrenner's model can be applied to sports as follows.

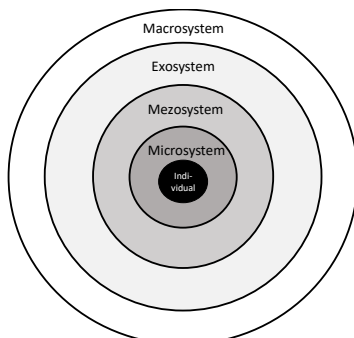


Fig.1: Human ecology model Source: own edition based on Holt (2016)

1. Microsystem: family, school, culture, and neighbourhood
2. Mezosystem: network of microsystems: relatives, friends, and acquaintances
3. Exosystem: broader environment: type of settlement, parents' workplace, type of school, and local community
4. Macrosystems: major beliefs of the given culture, opportunities in society, social norms and expectations, fashion

The effect of parents in sports is clear. Several studies have shown that parents are essential in motivating children to engage in sports. Leff, Hoyle, and Hyatt (1995; 1997; 2018) have determined that parental support is essential in making children love sports, which may boost their self-confidence. White (1998) and Dorsch (2015a; 2015b) have confirmed that children's determination, learning, and anxiousness in sports can be traced back to the behaviour of their coaches and parents. Children often say that in addition to their coaches, peers, and their own decision, their parents were essential in making them engage in sports (Baxter and Maffulli, 2003, Fredericks and Eccles 2005, Keegan et al., 2008, French and Smith 2009; Matthew et al., 2015).

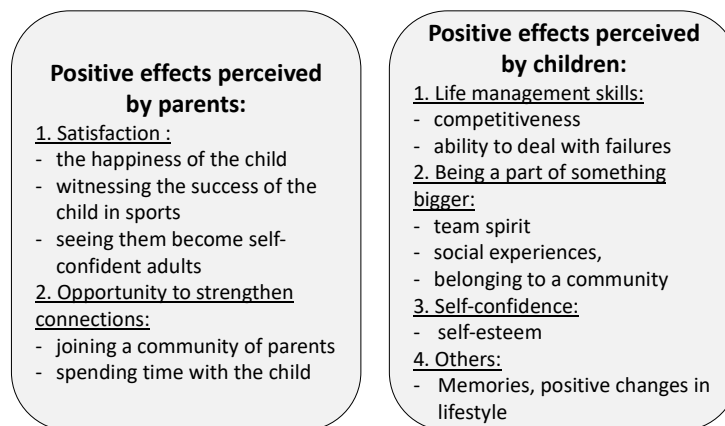
Neely and Holt (2014) have sorted parents into three categories based on their expectations regarding their children's sports activities. Based on semi-structured interviews, these expectations are mainly related to personal, social, and physical factors. In terms of personality, parents expect sports to improve their children's self-esteem, sense of responsibility, and fair play approach. More factors were identified in the social part: friendship, cooperation, teamwork, respect, and rejection of exclusion. The third area of expectations is related to the improvement of skills, with special emphasis on the preservation of health. The groups and related dimensions are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Grouping of the expectations of parents regarding the athletic activities of their children**

*Source: Own edition, based on Neely and Holt (2014)*

Personal benefits	
Positive self-esteem	Stronger self-confidence; children know who they are and what they are capable of.
Sense of responsibility	Commitment and respect of work
Sportsmanship and fair play	Acceptance of victory and defeat, respecting rules, and opponents.
Social benefits	
Friendships	Meeting other children and making friends
Teamwork and cooperation	Learning tolerance and how to work with others
Respect	Respect of coaches and following their instructions
Performance in school	Advantages of closer connection with others and benefits of being able to work in a team
Physical benefits	
Development of sport-related skills	Development of the body and motor skills
Health and physical well-being	Healthy body image and the results of regular physical activity

Based on the focus group study, Wiersma and Fifer (2017) have sorted benefits into two categories: benefits for the parents and benefits for the children (Figure 2). They understood these benefits primarily as mental and social benefits. According to their study, children's athletic activities affect the parents' attitude to sports.



**Fig.2: Benefits of the athletic activities of children**

*Source: Own edition, based on Wiersma and Fifer (2017)*

Previous studies conducted in the '90s have already confirmed the assumption that parents spend large amounts of money and time on their children's athletic activities and are also emotionally affected by such

activities (Green and Chalip, 1997; Kirk et al., 1997; Knight et al., 2017). However, few studies evaluated how children's sports activities change their parents' lives. Földesiné (2010) and Dorsch (2016) have also determined that sport socialization (children are motivated and driven to engage in sports by their parents) is often a two-way process, i.e., children often draw their parents, sometimes even their grandparents, into the world of sports. This can occur gradually, starting from going with the child to practices, through cheering for a team together, to practicing together; these developments may also simultaneously appear in a family's life (Herpainé-Hídvégi, 2016; Vincent and Christensen, 2015).

This reverse sport socialization may result in significant changes in the family (Jambor, 1999). Dorsch, Smith, and McDonough (2009) have identified four categories of change regarding the effects on parents. These changes are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Possible changes in the social relations of parents due to sports**

*Source: Own edition, based on Dorsch, McDonough and Smith (2009)*

Changes in parents' behaviour	
Participation	Strengthening the commitment to sports in children
	Involvement in athletic activities
Support and sacrifice	Financial support
	More complicated time management, sacrificing free time
	Dealing with logistics issues
Changes in parents' fields of interest	
Knowledge	Realizing the hardship of sports
	Learning new things
	Learning about new professions
Goal-oriented attitude	"At all cost" attitude
	Competitiveness
	Identifying with the goals of the child
Consciousness	Consciousness related to parents' and children's athletic activities
	Increased interest in sports
Changes in parents' attitude	
Emotional attitudes to sports	Being afraid of the results
	Being proud or ashamed as a result of the child's performance
	Emotional attachment to sports
Dealing with emotions	Disappointment
	Adopting strategies to control emotions
	"Mirroring"
Reactive emotional experience	Anger and frustration in relation to the child, family, and environment
	A sense of guilt owing to the lack of support and low level of participation
	Mental and physical exhaustion
	Being angry with the sports environment
Changes in parents' relationships	
Communication	Adopting new parent-child communication strategies
	Restricted or overwhelming communication between parents and children
	Sport-specific support, feedback
Parent-child relationship	Parents can meet their children's friends
	Frictions or improvement in the relationship between parents and the child
Social relationships of parents	Loss of social relations owing to the athletic activities of the child
	Making new friends in the sports community
	Meeting other families with child athletes

During initial social learning, children acquire various behavioural patterns through the influence of parents and other relatives and through mimicking (Földesiné et al., 2010). This is how they learn the basic elements and behavioural patterns of a healthy mental and physical life that they can continue later as adults. These patterns include health-protecting activities such as regular physical exercise.

**Materials and methods**

Through a survey conducted with parents at major football academies in Hungary, we studied changes that occurred in families since children have been engaged in sport, and what were parents' expectations in terms of how it will affect them and their children. A total of 727 parents completed the survey from various regions of the country with children playing in different clubs from the basic level to academies. Based on Bronfenbrenner's model (2005), when defining target groups, we reached out to parents (microsystem) with children playing at talent management sport institutions (exosystem) operating in towns (mesosystem). A total of 60% of the respondents were women, 74% were married, and 56% were raising two children.

The survey was designed based on the findings of Dorschel et al., (2009), Neely-Holt (2014), and Wiersma-Fifer (2017). The survey allowed us to study the area from various aspects. Specifically, we could examine how parents benefited from and how their lives changed owing to their children's athletic activities.

The questions related to social-demographic changes were followed by studying the attitude of parents in relation to sports (supportive or rejecting). In addition, we used questions to explore the actual and expected benefits in terms of the personality development of children. Finally, we examined the benefits for parents, mainly in terms of social benefits. To map the correlations as accurately as possible, we used a five-level Likert scale. Owing to the sensitivity of the issue, it was essential to maintain a neutral level, to allow people who could not choose between the alternatives to indicate their position. We used descriptive statistical methods to process the results. We studied the distribution of answers, and then we grouped the variables using factorial analysis. We used explorative factorial analysis in the model to identify attitudes that would serve as the basis for the segmentation of the sample. We performed factorial analysis using the Maximum Likelihood method. The number of factors was determined based on a screen test and explained variance. According to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin criterion, our scales were suitable for the factorial analysis, which was confirmed by Bartlett's test ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The cluster analysis described below was conducted using a hierarchical process, i.e., the Ward method. Distances were calculated using the squared Euclidean method. Using a dendrogram, we established three clusters. By analysing tables and distances, we decided not to exclude any respondents because the resulting peaks were not expected to bias the results.

**Results**

Most respondents (91.7%) fully endorse their children's athletic activities; many respondents are willing to accept the related expenses (76.6%) and are even willing to sacrifice some of their free time (71%).

**Table 3: How much sacrifice parents are ready to make**

*Source: Own edition*

I respect and support my child's commitment to sports							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	1 (0.1%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.3%)	57 (7.8%)	667 (91.7%)	727	4.91
I am willing to pay extra money to cover my child's sport-related expenses							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	11 (1.5%)	1 (0.1%)	38 (5.2%)	120 (16.5%)	557 (76.6%)	727	4.67
I have sacrificed some of my free time							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	11 (1.5%)	11 (1.5%)	52 (7.2%)	137 (18.8%)	516 (71%)	727	4.56

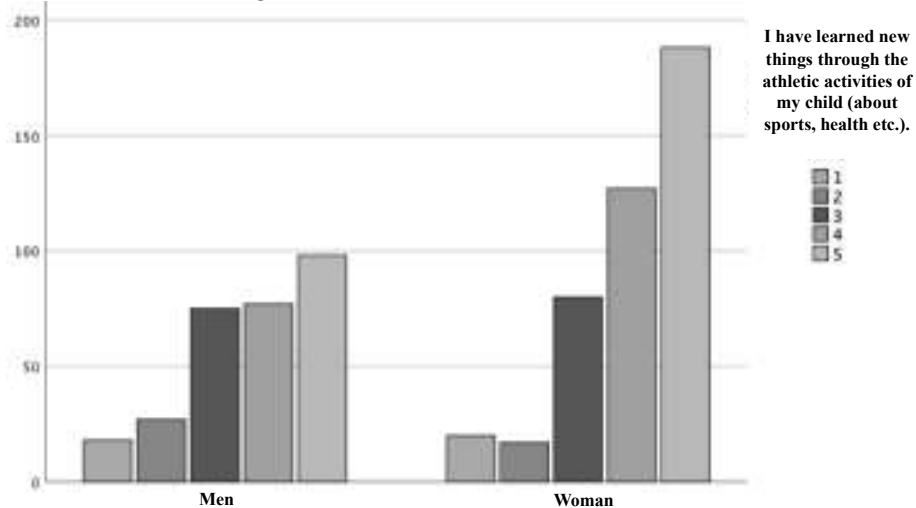
We observed a similar trend regarding the question of whether parents would feel bad if they did not do any physical activities while their children did. A total of 24% of respondents would feel bad; however, almost 10% would have no problem with it at all. The obtained results reveal that men are more affected by their children's sports activities. A total of 28% of men indicated that they would feel bad in such a situation. More than half of men are committed to keeping up with their children.

**Table 4: Effect of the absence of sports broken down by sex**

*Source: Own edition*

I would feel bad if I did not do any physical activities								
Sex		1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
	Male		18 (6%)	36 (13%)	80 (27%)	78 (26%)	83 (28%)	295
Female		51 (12%)	58 (14%)	152 (35%)	79 (18%)	92 (21%)	432	3.24
<b>Total</b>		69	94	232	157	175	727	

We observed that women were more willing to learn new things about sports. Presumably, men are already familiar with the world of football, and this is why they guided their children in that direction, while women only started to learn about this area through their child's athletic activities.



**Fig.3: Learning new things** Source: Own edition

Most parents perceive the benefits of their children's athletic activities. They became aware of the hardship of sports (67%), learned new things (39.3%), their fighting spirit improved, and they became more competitive (29.6%).

**Table 5: New things learned by parents** Source: Own edition

Seeing my child's efforts, I have realized how hard it is to achieve success in sports							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	8 (1.1%)	9 (1.2%)	68 (9.4%)	155 (21.3%)	487 (67%)	727	4.52
I have learned new things owing to my child's athletic activities (about sports and health)							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	38 (5.2%)	44 (6.1%)	155 (21.3%)	204 (28.1%)	286 (39.3%)	727	3.9
I have learned to fight, and I also want to provide excellent performance							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	55 (7.6%)	64 (8.8%)	197 (27.1%)	196 (27%)	215 (29.6%)	727	3.62

The responses varied regarding the question of whether parents practice with their children. Only 21% of the respondents indicated that they practiced with their children or became more active owing to their children's sport activities. To elucidate how many parents practice with their children, it seemed practical to break down the answers by age. It was determined that the older the parents were, the less likely that they practiced with their children. In addition, we determined that the proportion of those who had to sacrifice some of their free time owing to their children's athletic activities increased. This result confirms that other errands represent the problem in most cases, not getting older and weaker.

**Table 6: Practicing with the child broken down by age** Source: Own edition

Whenever I can, I perform some physical activities with my child								
		1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Age	19-29	0	0	1	2	3	6	4.33
	30-39	9	21	44	49	37	160	3.53
	40-49	61	66	167	106	106	506	3.26
	50-59	12	10	10	11	7	50	2.82
	60-	1	0	2	1	1	5	3.2
<b>Total</b>		83	97	224	169	154	727	3.29

**Table 7: Sacrificing free time broken down by age** Source: Own edition

I have sacrificed some of my free time								
		1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Age	19-29	0	1	0	1	4	6	4.33
	30-39	3	5	12	30	110	160	4.48
	40-49	7	4	36	95	364	506	4.59
	50-59	1	1	3	10	35	50	4.54
	60-	0	0	1	1	3	5	4.4
<b>Total</b>		11	11	52	137	516	727	4.56

One of important results is that owing to sports, the goals of their children have become more important for parents (73.7%). A total of 37% of the respondents indicated that sport has become part of their lives, even if they had never been involved in sport activities before. Only 6.3% said that their relation to sports has not been changed by their children's athletic activities. Many respondents have started to follow sport events and attended their children's matches (61.3%) and have become interested in other sport events as well (43.2%).

**Table 8: Presence of sports in parents' life** *Source: Own edition*

It has become more important to me to ensure that my children achieve their goals							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	12 (1.7%)	9 (1.2%)	41 (5.6%)	129 (17.7%)	536 (73.7%)	727	4.61
Sports have become a part of my life							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	46 (6.3%)	60 (8.3%)	196 (27%)	156 (21.5%)	269 (37%)	727	3.75
Whenever I can, I attend my child's practices and matches							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	16 (2.2%)	29 (4%)	82 (11.3%)	154 (21.2%)	446 (61.3%)	727	4.35
I have started to follow sport events							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	33 (4.5%)	40 (5.5%)	144 (19.8%)	196 (27%)	314 (43.2%)	727	3.99

In general, we can establish that interest in sports has significantly increased among parents whose children play in a club; however, this has not resulted in any major change in the parents' lifestyles. In addition to ensuring that their children do enough physical activities, parents also want their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle through sports (81.3%). To this end, they are even willing to make changes in the family's lifestyle and/or diet (27%). For most parents, career opportunities are not the most important factor in relation to sports (42.8%), and only 10.6% are anxious about the future of their children in the world of professional sport.

**Table 9: Motivation of parents in relation to the development of their children**

*Source: Own edition*

They can become healthy athletic adults							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	1 (0.1%)	4 (0.6%)	25 (3.4%)	106 (14.6%)	591 (81.3%)	727	4.76
They can build a career							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	21 (2.9%)	37 (5.1%)	170 (23.4%)	188 (25.9%)	311 (42.8%)	727	4.01
I am worried about my child's career in sports (will he/she be a pro?)							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	194 (26.7%)	126 (17.3%)	207 (28.5%)	123 (16.9%)	77 (10.6%)	727	2.67

Mental factors are also important for parents with child athletes. The abovementioned anxiety about performance and career in sport (10.6%) and worrying about how others value them based on the performance of their children (2.3%) are not significant, but many parents indicated that the happiness or disappointment of their children after matches affect their mood (40.7%). Parents do not perceive the failure of their children as their own (1.8%), but 28.1% searched for information on how the related emotions can be dealt with, which means that they want to help either themselves or their children to manage these feelings.

**Table 10: Emotional issues related to the athletic activities of children**

*Source: Own edition*

I often feel that I am valued based on my child's performance							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	414 (56.9%)	137 (18.8%)	106 (14.6%)	53 (7.3%)	17 (2.3%)	727	1.79
My child's happiness or disappointment resulting from their sport performance affect my mood							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	32 (4.4%)	44 (6.1%)	162 (22.3%)	193 (26.5%)	296 (40.7%)	727	3.93
I blame myself or have a bad conscience when my child does not perform well							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	347 (47.7%)	159 (21.9%)	160 (22%)	48 (6.6%)	13 (1.8%)	727	1.93
I am interested in how to deal with emotions resulting from sport success and failures, so I searched for related information							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	59 (8.1%)	80 (11%)	186 (25.6%)	198 (27.2%)	204 (28.1%)	727	3.56

One of the expected consequences of athletic activities is the development of social skills of the child and of the parents as well. Parents expect that their children become more cooperative (80.3%), better integrate into a community (76.6%), and respect adults more (56.8%). At the same time, they also join a new community (40.3%), make new friends (50.5%), and most importantly, their relationship with their children can improve (33.8%).

**Table 11: Expected development of the child's social skills resulting from their athletic activities**

*Sources: Own edition*

They learn to cooperate							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	17 (2.3%)	124 (17.1%)	584 (80.3%)	727	4.77
They learn to integrate into a community and make friends							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	2 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)	28 (3.9%)	139 (19.1%)	557 (76.6%)	727	4.72
They learn to respect adults							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	9 (1.2%)	17 (2.3%)	119 (16.4%)	169 (23.2%)	413 (56.8%)	727	4.32
We know more sporty families than before							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	41 (5.6%)	48 (6.6%)	164 (22.6%)	181 (24.9%)	293 (40.3%)	727	3.88
I have made new friends owing to my child's athletic activities							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	33 (4.5%)	35 (4.8%)	105 (14.4%)	187 (25.7%)	367 (50.5%)	727	4.13
My relationship with my child has improved							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	64 (8.8%)	42 (5.8%)	179 (24.6%)	196 (27%)	246 (33.8%)	727	3.71

Many parents expect that sport will help the development of their children's personality. They hope that their children will become self-confident (64.4%), disciplined (75.9%) adults, who are able to accept victory and defeat (76.8%).

**Table 12: Benefits of sports expected by parents in terms of personality development**

*Source: Own edition*

They will become self-confident adults who know who they are							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	3 (0.4%)	5 (0.7%)	56 (7.7%)	195 (26.8%)	468 (64.4%)	727	4.54
They learn discipline and self-control, their personalities develop, and learn to respect work							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	1 (0.1%)	3 (0.4%)	27 (3.7%)	144 (19.8%)	552 (75.9%)	727	4.71
They learn to handle victory and defeat, accept rules, and respect opponents							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	1 (0.1%)	3 (0.4%)	25 (3.4%)	140 (19.3%)	58 (76.8%)	727	4.72

Regarding other benefits for parents, many parents are proud of the success of their children (69.2%). However, this has more to do with their inner feelings than with the reactions of the community (12.2%).

**Table 13: Social effects of the child's athletic activities on parents**

*Source: Own edition*

I can be proud of my child's achievements							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	19 (2.6%)	16 (2.2%)	60 (8.3%)	129 (17.7%)	503 (69.2%)	727	4.49
My community respects me owing to my child's achievements							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
<b>Total</b>	205 (28.2%)	108 (14.9%)	203 (27.9%)	122 (16.8%)	89 (12.2%)	727	2.7

Using factorial analysis, we grouped variables pertaining to the effects of children's athletic activities on their parents. One of the most significant factors is the change in parents' lives to help their children achieve their goals. This includes the improvement of fighting spirit and competitiveness, more physical activities, and following of sports events. We can conclude that these changes are a combination of changes in attitude and new efforts to achieve personal goals. The second most important factor deals with disturbing aspects, including potential issues with parents, environment, coaches, or other children. The following significant factor is the group of emotional and social effects. They include aspects related to the evaluation of parents based on their children's performance, reactions to events that may trigger anxiety, and dealing with success and failure.

The fourth significant factor deals with changes in the social lives of parents, including joining a new community and making new friends. Another factor deals with the improvement of the relationship between parents and their children, including communication, intimacy, meeting child's friends, or accepting advice regarding sports.

The next factor relates to the sacrifices parents are willing to make. This includes time and money, as well as any other sacrifice related to the commitment of the child. The last factor relates to the new knowledge acquired by parents in relation to sports, new professions, and management of emotions.

Based on the obtained answers, in terms of the expected benefits for parents, we can identify five factors. The first group includes variables related to life management and mental strength such as the

development of the child, their self-confidence and self-knowledge, and their respect for rules. The second factor deals with social skills including the improvement of connections with peers, respect for adults, and cooperation. Another important factor is the opportunity to build a career in sport, which may be important for parents owing to the sacrifices they have made. Other factors are physical condition and the image of a healthy adult.

**Table 14: Classification of factors based on their effects on parents** *Source: Own edition*

Goals and changes made to reach them		Disturbing factors		Emotional and social effects		Changes in social life	
I have also learned to fight and want to perform well at all cost	.781	My child's teammates can be annoying sometimes	.750	When my child does not perform well, I often blame myself, I have a bad conscience, or I am angry with myself	.749	Owing to the athletic activities of my child, I have become a member of a new community	.811
I have become more competitive	.761	The behaviour of my child's coach often annoys me	.735	My child's happiness or disappointment about his/her performance affect my mood	.646	My child's athletic activities have brought new friends into my life	.772
Now I live a more active life	.649	The information published about my child's club is often disturbing to me	.728	I am anxious about the performance of my child (will he/she become a pro?)	.640	We are in touch with more sporty families	.733
I tend to follow sports events	.567	The conditions at the facility where my child practices often annoy me	.684	I feel guilty when I do not support my child appropriately in their athletic activities	.599		
It has become more important for me to ensure that my child reaches his/her goals	.551	I often find other parents around the team of my child annoying	.615	I often feel that I am valued based on my child's performance	.550		
Sports have become a part of my life	.5481			My child's athletic activities also make me tired	.537		

Other factors include changes in the parent-child relationship such as better communication, more intimacy, meeting the child's new friends, and accepting advice related to sports. The next factor deals with sacrifices that parents are willing to make to support their children's athletic activities, including time and money, as well as other sacrifices made to support the child's commitment. The last factor is how parents acquire new knowledge related to sports, new professions and dealing with emotions.

**Table 15: Classification of factors based on their effects on parents II**

*Source: Own edition*

Acquiring new knowledge		Personal relationships		Making sacrifices	
Owing to the athletic activities of my child, I have learned new things (about sports, health etc.)	.682	My relationship with my child has improved	.662	I am willing to spend money on my child's athletic activities	.775
I have learned about new professions through my child's athletic activities (sports manager, coach, masseur etc.)	.646	My child asks me for advice in relation to sports	.642	I have sacrificed some of my free time	.544
Due to sports, I have used new communication methods with my child	.530	Due to sport, I have learned more about my child's friends	.498	I respect and support my child's commitment to sports	.493
I am interested in how to deal with emotions related to success and failure in sport, and I have searched for related information	.528			Seeing my child's efforts, I understood how hard it is to achieve success in sports	.460

Based on the obtained answers, in terms of the expected benefits for parents, we can identify five factors. The first group includes variables related to life management and mental strength such as the development of the child, their self-confidence and self-knowledge, and their respect for rules.

The second factor covers social skills, including the improvement of connections with peers, respect for adults, and cooperation. Another important factor is the opportunity to build a career in sport, which may be important for parents owing to sacrifices they have made. Other factors are physical condition and the image of a healthy adult.



**Table 16: Classification of factors based on parents' motivations** Source: Own edition

Life management skills and mental strength		Social skills		Building a career		Physical condition	
They learn discipline and self-control, their personalities develop, and they learn to respect work	0.852	They get closer to their peers	0.843	They can achieve success in sports	0.839	Their physical and basic abilities develop	0.685
They learn to accept victory and defeat, and to respect rules and opponents	0.654	They will respect adults more	0.645	They can build a career	0.765	They will become healthy adults with an athletic body	0.661
They will become self-confident adults who know who they are	0.595	They will become teamplayers	0.466				

Using cluster analysis, we sorted the parents who completed the survey into three groups. We analysed the factors that definitely affected parents and caused actual changes in their lives.

The first group includes *active parents*, who practice with their children, live active lives, and perceive positive changes in their mental lives as a result of their children's athletic activities (e.g., fighting spirit). However, there was no significant change in the relationship between these parents and their children. Even though the positive effects of athletic activities of the child dominate (including an increased interest in sport events, joining a new community, and meeting the friends of their children), some negative consequences also appear including anxiety and mood changes related to the athletic activities of the child. Yet, this group can be considered the golden mean because they are aware of the advantages of physical activities but are able to maintain a balance (e.g., they do not feel guilt when they are unable to support their children in sports) and they are not overly involved emotionally either. The second group includes parents who perceived no positive effects from their children's athletic activities. This cluster is called "Parents not interested in sports" because they do not want to learn new things about sports and are not willing to do any sport activities with their children. However, they are not able to disregard the athletic performance of their children because it affects their mood; however, there is no emotional attachment. Their mild reaction is most probably generated by their love towards their children. The third group includes parents who gave positive response in all aspects. They are child-oriented to the extent that their emotional state depends on the success or failure of their child. Compared to active parents, they do not find the health aspect of sport particularly important because most of them do not feel bad if they do not do any physical activities. However, they feel guilty if they are unable to support their children's athletic activities. They perceive the positive effects (e.g., joining a new community or learning more about their children), and their fighting spirit and active lifestyle have improved. This cluster is called "My child is an athlete".

**Table 17: Classification of clusters** Source: Own edition

	"Active parents" (n = 331)	"Parents not interested in sports" (n = 141)	"My child is an athlete" (n = 255)
Whenever they can, they practice with their children	They prefer to do physical activities alone (3.41)	The majority do not join their children (2.92)	Prefer to join their children (3.35)
They feel bad if they do not do physical activities	Most of them definitely would (3.5)	To some extent (3.13)	To some extent (3.36)
They acquire new knowledge	They learn new things (3.84)	They learn fewer new things (3.45)	They learn new things (4.24)
They have also become more active	They have become more active (3.75)	They have not become more active (2.99)	They have become more active (3.84)
They have also learned to fight	They have developed a fighting spirit (3.81)	No change experienced (2.82)	They have developed a fighting spirit (3.82)
Sports have become a part of their lives	To some extent (3.88)	Not at all (2.92)	Definitely (4.02)
Their relationship with their child has improved	Their relationship with their child has improved (3.78)	Their relationship with their child has somewhat improved (3.27)	Their relationship with their child has somewhat improved (3.87)
They feel guilty if they cannot help their children in relation to sport	Do not feel guilt (2.8)	Do not feel guilt (2.25)	They feel guilt (3.66)
Anxiety regarding the career of the child in sport	No anxiety (2.49)	No anxiety (2.18)	Anxious to some extent (3.18)
Their children's happiness and disappointment affect their mood	Definitely (3.8)	To a certain extent (3.4)	Significantly (4.4)

Owing to the athletic activities of their children, they have become members of a new community	Have integrated into a new community (4.08)	Notsignificant (3.55)	Have integrated into a new community (4.64)
Owing to sport, now they know their children's friends better	They know their children's friendsbetter (3.66)	They do not know their children's friends better (2.94)	They know their children's friendsbetter (3.96)
Likes to follow sport events than before	Like to follow sport events more than before (4.1)	Do not follow sport events more than before(3.07)	Like to follow sport events more than before (4.35)

### Conclusions

In terms of personal and social benefits for parents resulting from their children's athletic activities, our findings agree with the results of previous studies. During the process of "reverse sport socialization", parents become more interested and acquire new knowledge about the world of sports. Parents go through significant mental changes owing to their children's athletic activities in terms of lifestyle, management of goals, and interest in sports. The athletic activities of children greatly affect how parents relate to sports. These activities may represent emotional stress for them because they have to deal with the uncertainty about the output as well as the successes and failures of their children. They tend to search for strategies that help them deal with these issues. In addition, parents start to become emotionally involved in sports, which may lead to mental and physical exhaustion that is sometimes combined with frustration and anxiety.

In terms of social benefits, it is surprising that parents do not attribute much importance to the environment where athletic activities take place. However, they find communication and social contacts important. We can highlight communication with their children, but involvement in a new community and making new friends also significantly affect their lives. Parents find it important that sport teaches their children to respect and cooperate with others. In summary, we can conclude that youth sport also affects the lives of parents. They get closer to the world of sport, may start a more active lifestyle, have to deal with the related emotional burdens and benefits, and with a wider social web. Our results agree with the conclusion of Földesiné, who claimed that sport has a dual role in socialization. It is not a one-way process; specifically, child athletes and their parents can equally affect each other's attitude to sports (2010).

### Conflicts of interest

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