

Psychological factors of competitiveness of the women's youth handball team

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Abstract

The aim of the article is an empirical study of the influence of dispositional optimism on the psychological meaning parameters of the athletes' competitiveness of women's youth handball teams. Study participants: women's youth handball teams (n = 61). The handball players are representatives of five national teams from different regions of Ukraine. They are regular participants in the competitions of the Championship of Ukraine (Junior League). Methods. Standardized and adapted psychodiagnostic methods, correlation analysis, comparative analysis using ϕ – Fisher's angular transformation criterion are applied. Results. The components of competitiveness of young female handball players are determined and grounded: motivational, regulatory, personal. It is established that the average viability indicators in the group of women's handball players exceed the average normative values, which points out at the ability to overcome difficult, stressful situations in training and competitive sports activities. Higher indicators of the studied sample were stated in comparison with the normative values on the scales "Openness to experience", "Conscientiousness" and "Extraversion". It was found that dispositional optimism at a statistically significant level ($p < .05$) correlates with the indicators "Motivation to succeed", "Hardiness" and its components (commitment, control, challenge). The correlation at the statistically significant level ($p < .05$) of dispositional optimism with personal factors, namely, with openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism was stated. A comparative analysis of two groups of female handball players by the level of dispositional optimism was performed. It is established and substantiated that dispositional optimism has an impact on the motivation to succeed, hardiness, openness to experience, conscientiousness. The diagram is constructed and the differences in the key parameters of dispositional optimism are clearly shown. The obtained results should be implemented in the practice of psychological work on pre-competitive training of young athletes in team sports in order to increase the level of competitiveness.

Key words: handball, juniors, expectations, dispositional optimism, hardiness, openness to experience.

Introduction

Modern sport is an object of heightened interest, a subject of national pride, which in turn increases the requirements for the competitiveness of every athlete. The trend of rejuvenation of certain sports makes sports psychologists pay attention to the psychological accompaniment of young athletes.

Competition is an integral part of the relationship in any sports association and exists at all stages of an individual sports career. A sports career is an indicator of success in sports, achieving the desired status. The successful development of a sports career is influenced by many factors: the surroundings in which a young athlete is brought up, individual motives for sports, psychophysiological and personal potentials, and the impact of the environment on a person (Blynova et al., 2020; Cvetkova, 2016; Kozina et al., 2019; Popovych et al., 2020a).

Competition is related to the professional career changes and achievements of athletes in individual or team activities. The athlete's ability to win in competition by increasing the level of his/her skills, by improving his/her competitive advantages, by choosing a model of competitive interaction, greatly increases the chances of sporting success. Competition allows advancing social satisfaction, which is an important condition for the harmonious development of a personality, his/her social self-realization (Koval' et al., 2019; Popovych et al., 2019b).

Already at the initial stage of long-term training of athletes, it is necessary to study the psychological preconditions for the development of stress resistance, especially to competitive stress (Chiker, 2010; Gorskaya, 2012). In any competition, participants fight for victory, for achieving superiority over the opponent. We claim that the game(s) is synonymous with competition; participants compete with each other for the right to receive

the highest award. Sport is always a competitive environment (Cvetkova, 2016). Such competition exists among athletes, not only in the final performances, but also during the regime, theoretical education, and grueling training. We summarize that competitiveness is an important aspect of athletes' lives. Competitive personalities in sports are strong and people of great endurance who understands the value of winning a particular fight and strive to win. Sport develops a competitive individuality that is capable of decisive action in the most difficult situations, including – outside of sports, for example, in politics, business. A person who, in addition to professional knowledge, goes in for sports is better prepared for competition, has a strong-willed character (Cvetkova, 2016; Sedelnikova, 2019).

Competitiveness is a complex ability of the individual, the structure of which is determined by psychological and psychodynamic characteristics, which provide the opportunity to be successful and effective in the maximum realization of potential, in changing living conditions. To be competitive, you need to have personal qualities that would help to be realized. According to various researchers (Gorskaya, 2012; Koval' et al., 2019), such qualities include: will, self-confidence, clear goals and values, ability to work, creative attitude, risk-taking, independence, leadership, desire for self-development, stress resistance, desire for professional growth and high quality labor product. Thus, the basic components that characterize a competitive personality include: motivational and demanding, business (practical), organizational-volitional, intellectual, cultural, communicative and moral.

Note that the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affects the spatial self-regulation of young athletes (Khmiliar et al., 2020), affects stress, anxiety and depression (Gallagher et al., 2020) and probably affects dispositional optimism. The explanation for the effective ability of optimists to adapt to difficult life situations is an optimistic worldview, involvement in wider support of the social network, more friends. Such athletes value the social support they receive from significant others and the environment in general (Brissette et al., 2002). In this context, another convincing argument is the longitudinal section of the study of goal in youth sports. Researchers have identified dynamic changes in goal development depending on social factors. The influence of coaches, parents and peers on the motivational climate of young athletes is revealed (Ingrell et al., 2020; 2018).

We come to understand that the competitiveness of the athlete's personality is a combination of physical and intellectual qualities. Also, competitiveness includes features that are necessary for independent and effective resolution of urgent situations, creating the best conditions for constructive interaction with other participants in sports and for their advancement in the common sphere of activity.

At the same time, there is a question about a certain prerequisite that sets athletes up for a positive result in competitions, which is the basis for their self-efficiency, self-confidence, ability to win, to succeed. Such an integral personal formation, which provides so positive attitude, is studied in research as dispositional optimism. Dispositional optimism was considered in the context of the study of athletes' positive thinking (Babushkin, G. & Babushkin, E., 2016), in the study of coping strategies and their role for psychological adaptation (Brissette et al., 2002; Bryant & Cvengros, 2004). A retrospective analysis of dispositional optimism studies and adaptive response to various stressors demonstrated that, in general, optimism is positively correlated with the use of active methods of overcoming difficulties aimed at eliminating, reducing the impact of stressors and emotion management. Optimism is negatively correlated with elusive and passive coping strategies aimed at ignoring, avoiding solving problems or emotions associated with it (Solberg, & Segerstrom, 2006).

Hypothesis. The authors suggest that 1) the competitiveness of the athlete's personality is an integral indicator that includes motivational, regulatory, personal components; 2) dispositional optimism is a factor that causes the desire of young female handball players to win, and at the same time determines the components of competitiveness; 3) there are differences in the manifestations of different components of the competitiveness of young athletes personality of women's youth handball teams with different levels of dispositional optimism.

Purpose is to determine the influence of dispositional optimism on the special features of the components of the competitiveness of the athlete's personality of women's youth handball teams.

Material and methods

Participants. The study was conducted on the basis of women's youth handball teams. The study involved 61 persons. The participants are representatives of five national teams from different regions of Ukraine. The average age of athletes was 16.2 years. Kherson professional sports college of the Kherson regional council (hereinafter – KhPSC of ChRC, Kherson, Ukraine) (n = 14) of different playing experience and role (forward, goalkeeper, defender). Kryvyi Rih children's and youth sports school № 4 (hereinafter – CYSS №4, Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine) (n = 11). The national team of Kirovohrad region (Znamyanka, Ukraine) (hereinafter – NTKR, Znamyanka) (n = 12). Children's and youth sports school of the Olympic reserve (Zinkiv, Ukraine) (hereinafter – CYSSOR, Zinkiv) (n = 11). Children's and youth sports school "Swift" (hereinafter – "Swift Ball", Kyiv, Ukraine) (n = 13). Young female athletes participated in the study voluntarily.

Organization of research. All teams belong to the middle age group (15-17 years old), participate in the competitions of the Championship of Ukraine (Junior League). During the study, they participated in beach handball competitions.

To study the motivational component of the competitiveness of female athletes, a test-questionnaire “Motivation to succeed” (“MS”) by T. Ehlers was used; adapted by E. Il’in (Il’in, 2013). The methodology consists of 41 questions, the answers to which, the respondent indicates his/her level of motivation to succeed. After processing with the key, participants were differentiated according to low, medium, above average and high levels of achievement motivation.

“The Hardiness Survey”, developed by the American psychologist S. Maddi (adapted by E. Osin and O. Rasskazova) (Leont’ev & Rasskazova, 2006), was used to study the regulatory component of athletes’ competitiveness. We understand hardiness as a system of beliefs about ourselves, the world, relations with the world, as a disposition that contains three relatively autonomous components: commitment, control, and challenge. The expressiveness of these components and viability in general prevents the emergence of internal tension in stressful situations due to hardy coping of stresses and the perception of them as less significant.

Commitment is understood as the belief that active involvement in what is happening gives a chance to find something interesting and important for the individual, that is, a person gets pleasure from his/her own activities. In contrast, the lack of such conviction evokes a feeling of rejection. Control is the belief that the struggle can influence the outcome of what is happening, even when success is not guaranteed. That is, a person with a developed component of control feels that he has chosen his own path, his own activity. The opposite is a feeling of helplessness. Challenge is a person’s belief that everything that happens to him/her contributes to his/her development, increase of knowledge and experience. A person who sees life as a way to gain experience is ready to act even in the absence of reliable guarantees for success, at its discretion.

That is, the basis of challenge is the idea of development through the active learning of knowledge from experience and their subsequent use. The questionnaire consists of assertion points, to which the subject under study responds on a 4-point scale.

To study the personal qualities that can affect dispositional optimism as a general setting for a winning result in a competitive situation, we used the “Five-Factor Personality Questionnaire” (“Big five” or “OCEAN”), named after the abbreviation of the first letters of the names of the scales: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism (R. McCrae & P. Costa; adapted by L. Burlachuk and D. Korol’ov) (Burlachuk & Korolev, 2000).

“Life Orientation Test” (“LOT”) (C. Carver and J. Gaines, (Carver & Gaines, 1987); adapted by T. Gordeeva, O. Sychev and E. Osin) (Gordeeva et al., 2017; Heizberg et al., 2006) was used to determine the general attitude to a positive result or to a possible failure.

Dispositional optimism is understood as a stable personal characteristic that reflects the positive expectations of the subject under study about the future. Optimists tend to have positive generalized expectations about the future, while pessimists, in turn, tend to have more negative ones. The test includes two scales – “positive expectations” and “negative expectations”, as well as the ability to obtain a generalized assessment; the subject under study must choose the degree of his/her agreement with the statement on a 5-point scale. Test standards are calculated separately for female and male samples.

Statistical analysis. Statistical processing of the empirical data was performed by means of the statistical program “SPSS” v. 23.0 and “Microsoft Excel”. Spearman’s correlation coefficients (rs) were used to find and determine the correlation between the indexes obtained. To prove the statistical difference between the groups, the ϕ – Fisher angular transformation criterion was used.

Results and Discussion

According to the test-questionnaire “Motivation to succeed” (“MS”), we obtained the arithmetic mean of the sample of female athletes ($M = 17.28$; $SD = 3.42$), which is slightly higher than the normative values compared to the test norms. That is, the level of motivation to achieve in athletes is quite high. This indicates a clear desire to succeed in competitive activities, the desire for high sports results, to win. At the same time, according to the approbation of the test, the author (T. Ehlers; adapted by E. Il’in) points out that the person in whom motivation of success prevails, chooses average or low level of risk, as a rule, avoiding risk of high level (Il’in, 2013).

However, according to H. Hekhausen, there are three fundamentally different motivational factors that determine the characteristics of the interconnection between activity and motivation to succeed: individual subjective ideas about the probability of personal success and the complexity of the task; the degree of significance for the subject of this task and, therefore, the desire to maintain and increase self-rating; the tendency of a particular person to attribute responsibility for success or failure to him/herself, other people or circumstances (Hekhausen, 2003).

Important for our study is the principle that adequate motivation to achieve can be constructively implemented only in such a system of relations, which are characterized by cooperation, positive approval for success and support in case of failure.

The results of the “Hardiness Survey” S. Maddi (adapted by E. Osin, O. Rasskazova) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Arithmetic mean values and meansquare deviations according to the scales of the questionnaire “Hardiness Survey” by S. Maddi (adapted by E. Osin, O. Rasskazova) (n = 61)

Scale	M	SD
Hardiness	52.81	10.92
Implication	23.76	4.77
Control	17.12	3.94
Challenge	9.86	3.14

Note: M – arithmetic mean; SD – mean square deviation.

The obtained data allowed to state that according to the generalized indicator of hardiness in the group of female handball players higher average indicators were obtained in comparison with the test norms (M = 52.81; SD = 10.92). This indicates that the level of stress resistance, the ability to overcome difficult situations, is to a sufficiently high level, which is provided by exercise tolerance, persistence and the desire to succeed in the struggle. According to the “Commitment” scale, the results slightly exceed the normative averages (M = 23.76; SD = 4.77), which indicates the interest of young female handball players in their work, the activity of their participation, indifference to common problems of the team, the desire to join their solution. The “Control” scale also exceeds the average normative indicators (M = 17.12; SD = 3.94). This may be evidence that mostly respondents in the research sample tend to rely on themselves when planning their sports activities and evaluating results. Athletes rely on their own strengths and resources and feel confident in their ability to actively influence the situation. The results on the scale “Challenge” showed that the arithmetic mean is slightly lower than the norm (M = 9.86; SD = 3.14). We explain such data by the young age of the studied female athletes. Although participation in sports is interesting for them, the desire to take risks in order to succeed is not clear.

The results of women’s youth handball teams according to the “Big five” (R. McCrae & P. Costa; adapted by L. Burlachuk and D. Korol’ov) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Arithmetic mean values and mean square deviations according to the scales of the questionnaire “Big five” (R. McCrae & R. Costa; adapted by L. Burlachuk and D. Korol’ov) (n = 61)

Scale*	M	SD
Openness to experience	14.92	3.61
Conscientiousness	12.84	2.67
Extraversion	15.27	2.94
Agreeableness	11.73	3.07
Neuroticism	15.26	3.29

Note: M – arithmetic mean; SD – mean square deviation; * the name of the scales in the table corresponds to the pole of the scale with high scores

According to the test results, it was found that on the scale “Openness to experience” the arithmetic mean of the sample of young female handball players (M = 14.92; SD = 3.61), exceeds the average in the test norms according to the method. This testifies to the predominance of girls’ youth teams in the quality of openness, which is associated with the active search for new experience, recognition of its independent value, tolerance for uncertainty, susceptibility to any kind of knowledge, activity in accordance with new ideas or situations. The scale “Conscientiousness” has average indicators on the level of manifestation in the respondents of the studied sample compared to the normative variables (M = 12.84; SD = 2.67).

Female handball players of youth national teams sufficiently demonstrate organization, persistence, motivation, discipline, punctuality of the individual in purposeful behavior. It should be noted the increased level of arithmetic mean on the scale “Extraversion” (M = 15.27; SD = 2.94), which characterizes the breadth and intensity of interpersonal interactions; activity level; the need for external stimulation; ability to enjoy life, focus on the outside world, interest in external events and other people, activity, sociability.

The average values on the scale “Agreeableness” are lower than the norm (M = 11.73; SD = 3.07). This indicates a low level of conformity of young female handball players, a low level of tendency to subordinate their interests to the interests of the group, to accept the principles and rules of group behavior, which is probably associated with the formation of their own “Self”, the desire to stand out, to be different. At the same time, according to the “Neuroticism” scale, the results of the studied sample slightly exceed the normative indicators (M = 15.26; SD = 3.29), which reflects emotional instability, anxiety, sensitivity to stressful situations, which can be seen in the ease of negative emotions. This is partly due to the age of the young female handball players and the competition situation in which the study was conducted.

We present the data of female athletes in the study sample according to the “Life Orientation Test” (“LOT”) (C. Carver and J. Gaines, (Carver & Gaines, 1987); adapted by T. Gordeeva, O. Sychev and E. Osin) (Gordeeva et al., 2017) (see Table 3). Note that dispositional optimism and the “positive expectations” scale are interpreted

as follows: the higher the data, the higher the optimism and positive expectations, while the “negative expectations” scale is interpreted the opposite: the higher the data, the lower the negative expectations.

Table 3. Arithmetic mean values and mean square deviations according to the scales of the “Life Orientation Test” (“LOT”) questionnaire (n = 61)

Scale	M	SD
Positive expectations	13.07	3.46
Negative expectations	13.92	3.18
Dispositional optimism	26.04	5.73

Note: M – arithmetic mean; SD – mean square deviation.

It was found that in the studied sample of handball players of women’s youth teams, the indicator “positive expectations” (M = 13.07; SD = 3.46) is above average, i. e. female athletes are mostly focused on the positive outcome of significant events for them, feel the ability to predict the positive course of events based on information about the conditions of competitive activities, the actions of partners and rivals. This conclusion is confirmed by arithmetic mean data on the scale “negative expectations” (M = 13.92; SD = 3.18), which indicates a level of negative expectations below average, and on the whole scale “dispositional optimism” (M = 26.04; SD = 5.73), where the sample rate is insignificant, but exceeds the average values in the test norms of the female sample. To establish the interconnection between dispositional optimism and the components that determine the competitiveness of athletes (motivational, regulatory, personal), a correlation analysis was performed using the Spearman’s correlation coefficient. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Coefficients of correlation of dispositional optimism with indicators that determine the competitiveness of athletes (n = 61)

The name of the indicator	Dispositional optimism
Motivational component	-
Motivation to succeed	.293*
Regulatory component	-
Hardiness	.347**
Commitment	.351**
Control	.296*
Challenge	.287*
Personal component	-
Openness to experience	.338**
Conscientiousness	.306*
Extraversion	.342**
Agreeableness	.394**
Neuroticism	-.263*

Note: * the correlation is significant at the level $p < .05$ (two-way); ** $p < .01$

According to the results of correlation analysis, it was found that dispositional optimism at a statistically significant level correlates with the indicator “Motivation to succeed” ($r_s = .293$; $p < .05$), which indicates a high level of commitment to success, the desire to achieve it, faith and belief in positive opportunities for its attainment.

When analyzing the interconnection between the indicators of the regulatory component of the competitiveness of athletes with the parameter of dispositional optimism, correlations were obtained with all components and with the general indicator “Hardiness”: scale “Commitment” ($r_s = .351$; $p < .01$); scale “Control” ($r_s = .296$; $p < .05$); scale “Challenge” ($r_s = .287$; $p < .05$); integrated indicator “Hardiness” ($r_s = .347$; $p < .01$). That is, active involvement in solving stressful situations, taking responsibility, willingness to take risks for the sake of the goal contribute to the formation of dispositional optimism, confidence in achieving high results, willingness to make efforts to achieve goals.

In the group of female handball players of youth national teams, dispositional optimism at a statistically significant level is interrelated with the feature “Big five”, “Agreeableness” ($r_s = .394$; $p < .01$). A positive correlation with the “Extraversion” scale should also be noted ($r_s = .342$; $p < .01$). This gives grounds to conclude that sociability, ability to interact with the social environment, the ability to cooperate and teamwork contribute to the formation of positive expectations from activities, willingness to set high goals, be confident in achieving them, make efforts to implement them.

It was found that the scale of the questionnaire “Big five” “Conscientiousness” at a statistically significant level correlates with the parameter “Dispositional optimism” ($r_s = .306$; $p < .05$). That is, the desire of athletes to develop skills, increase the number of technical and tactical actions for the game, a sense of responsibility to the social environment (team members, coaches, parents, etc.) also increase positive expectations, confidence in achieving the goal. Dispositional optimism is positively correlated with the feature “Big five” “Openness to

experience” ($r_s = .338$; $p < .01$). Thus, curiosity, the desire to learn something new, develop skills, involvement in activities for reward and approval, willingness to solve difficulties contribute to the development of dispositional optimism.

Based on the obtained correlations, we can say that in the group of athletes of women’s youth handball teams in the formation of dispositional optimism are the most important: openness to experience, hardiness, which is an important resource for young female athletes to realize their potential. Thus, our results are consistent with those of other researchers and show that optimism is closely linked to variables that reflect effective self-regulation, more effective coping strategies, successful psychological functioning, stress adaptation, and physical health (Cheban et al., 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). Optimism is also associated with personality traits and attitudes that characterize psychological well-being, namely, high self-rating, positive emotions, extraversion, a sense of control over what is happening, as well as low levels of neuroticism, depression and anxiety (Bryant, & Cvengros, 2004; Heizberg et al., 2006; Nosov et al., 2020a; Solberg & Segerstrom, 2006).

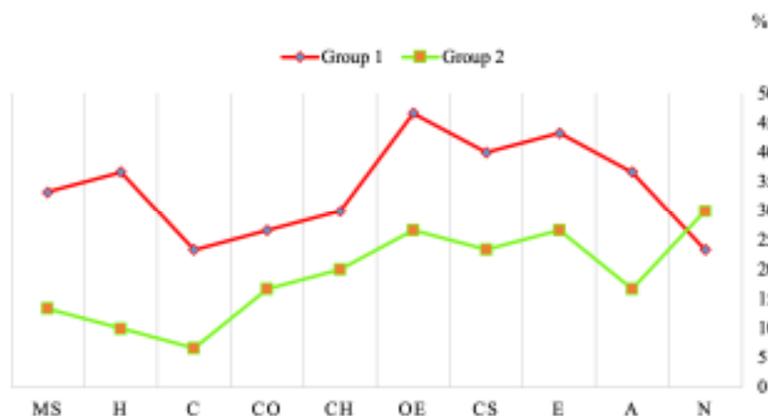
At the next stage of our study, the sample of handball players of women’s youth teams was ranked according to the parameter “Dispositional optimism” from the minimum value to the maximum value in this sample. We obtained a median value equal to $m = 13.22$. Based on this, the sample was divided into two subsamples: Group 1 – above the average level of dispositional optimism ($n_1 = 30$); Group 2 – below the average level of dispositional optimism ($n_2 = 30$). The ϕ – Fisher’s angular transformation criterion was used to prove the statistical difference between the two samples (see Table 5). For comparison, we took the percentage of people from each subgroup that have a high level of manifestation of the studied indicator.

Table 5. Differences between groups in terms of indicators that determine competitiveness ($n_1 = 30$; $n_2 = 30$)

The name of the indicator	Group 1 ($n_1=30$)	Group 2 ($n_2=30$)	Fisher’s criterion	Level of significance
Motivation to succeed	33.33%	13.33%	1.883	$p < .05$
Hardiness	36.67%	10.0%	2.554	$p < .01$
Commitment	23.33%	6.67%	1.969	$p < .05$
Control	26.67%	16.67%	0.955	–
Challenge	30.0%	20.0%	0.904	–
Openness to experience	46.67%	26.67%	1.644	$p < .05$
Conscientiousness	40.0%	23.33%	1.411	–
Extraversion	43.33%	26.67%	0.795	–
Agreeableness	36.67%	16.67%	1.794	$p < .05$
Neuroticism	23.33%	30.0%	0.592	–

Note: Group 1 – women handball players with a high level of dispositional optimism ($n_1=30$); Group 2 – women handball players with a low level of dispositional optimism ($n_2=30$).

The diagram shows the differences between Group 1 and Group 2 on key indicators that determine competitiveness (see Fig. 1).



Note: Group 1 – women handball players with a high level of dispositional optimism ($n_1=30$); Group 2 – women handball players with a low level of dispositional optimism ($n_2=30$); MS – motivation to succeed; H – hardiness; C – commitment; CO – control; CH – challenge; OE – openness to experience; CS – conscientiousness; E – extraversion; A – agreeableness; N – neuroticism.

Figure 1. Diagram of differences between Group 1 and Group 2 on key indicators that determine competitiveness.

Statistically significant differences were found on the scale “Motivation to succeed” ($\varphi_{emp.} = 1.883$; $p < .05$). That is, the high level of focus on victory, to a greater extent inherent in Group 1 athletes, determines the general attitude to a positive result of competitive sports activities. Differences between subgroups on the integrated scale “Hardiness” are expected ($\varphi_{emp.} = 2.554$; $p < .01$). However, it is interesting that among the components of hardiness only the scale “Commitment” showed differences between subgroups, which are statistically confirmed ($\varphi_{emp.} = 1.969$; $p < .05$). At the same time, on the other two scales “Control” ($\varphi_{emp.} = 0.955$) and “Challenge” ($\varphi_{emp.} = 0.904$), although there are some differences between the groups, they do not reach the level of statistical reliability. This indicates that among the indicators of the regulatory component, the most influential is “Commitment”, i.e. active, interested, motivated participation in competitive activities.

Among the personal indicators obtained by us from the “Big Five” questionnaire, two scales confirm statistically significant differences between subgroups, which are divided by the parameter “Dispositional optimism”: “Openness to experience” ($\varphi_{emp.} = 1.644$; $p < .05$, “Agreeableness” ($\varphi_{emp.} = 1.794$; $p < .05$). This shows that athletes are optimistic in setting goals, confident in their implementation, ready to make efforts to achieve them, in case of difficulties – do not leave what they have already begun to do.

The presence of differences between subgroups on the scale “Motivation to succeed” and, at the same time, the lack of statistical difference in the indicator “challenge” confirms the well-known fact that the higher a person’s motivation to succeed, to achieve the goal, the lower the willingness to risk. Thus, female handball players strive for success in their activities, but at the same time choose the average level of risk.

The empirical data obtained in the study confirm the previously gained results of expectations of a winning result in the women’s handball team (Piovesanet al., 2020; Popovych et al., 2020b), the results of the correspondence between intelligence and competitive activity of elite female handball players (Strikalenko et al., 2020b), results of research and comparison of types of expectations in sports (Popovych et al., 2020c) and other activities (Blynova et al., 2019; Nosov et al., 2020b; Popovych & Blynova, 2019; Popovych et al., 2019a; Prokhorov et al., 2015; Strikalenko et al., 2019; 2020a).

Conclusions

1) It is stated that the competitiveness of athletes is an integral indicator. It contains the following components: motivational, regulatory and personal. It is determined by the general attitude to a winning result, faith in victory, positive conviction in the ability to achieve success, which is considered as dispositional optimism.

2) It is established that dispositional optimism is a factor that determines the manifestations of the components of competitiveness. The interference ($p < .05$) of dispositional optimism and motivation to succeed, hardiness, openness to experience, communicative qualities, responsibility is defined at a statistically significant level.

3) The differences between two subgroups of young athletes of women’s youth handball teams, which are compared in terms of the level of dispositional optimism on the following indicators: motivation to succeed, hardiness, openness to experience, conscientiousness.

4) Thus, such values as equality of chances for success, aspiration to be the first, desire to win not only the opponent, but also oneself are brightly demonstrated in sports. Sports activities are necessary for the social adaptation of young people, as sports increase self-rating, self-esteem, faith in own strengths and abilities, as well as the ability to apply them. The value potential of sports provides opportunities not only for physical and sports improvement, but also for moral, intellectual and labor.

5) The obtained results can be implemented into the practice of psychological work on pre-competition training of young athletes to increase the level of competitiveness.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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