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“Selfmotivation in Sports“

An analysis of the different manifestations of action orientation in
endurance and explosive sports

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Abstrakt

Bisherige Forschungen konnten eine höhere Handlungsorientierung mit einer besseren Leistung im Ausdauersport in Verbindung bringen. Das Ziel der Studie war es herauszufinden, ob sich die Ausprägung der Handlungsorientierung in den unterschiedlichen Sportartengruppen (Ausdauer, Explosiv, Team) unterscheiden. Dafür wurden die Ausprägung der Handlungsorientierung sowie die sportlichen Gewohnheiten von 128 Sportler*innen in einem Online-Fragebogen erhoben.

Es bestanden die Annahmen, dass eine höhere Handlungsorientierung im Ausdauersport vorhanden ist, dass die Trainingsintensität und die Anzahl der Trainingsjahre einen Einfluss darauf haben und dass Teamsportler*innen im Vergleich mit Explosivsportler*innen eine höhere Handlungsorientierung aufweisen. Im Rahmen der Studie, konnte wider Erwartens keine der gebildeten Hypothesen signifikant bestätigt werden.

Schlagwörter: Handlungsorientierung, Ausdauersport, Explosivsport,

Abstract

Previous research has been able to link higher action orientation with better performance in endurance sports. The aim of this study was to find out whether the extent of action orientation differs in the different sport groups (endurance, explosive, team). For this purpose, the expression of action orientation as well as the sporting habits of 128 athletes were collected in an online questionnaire.

It was assumed that a higher action orientation is present in endurance sports, that the training intensity and the number of years of training have an influence on it and that team athletes have a higher action orientation compared to explosive athletes. Contrary to expectations, none of the hypotheses could be significantly confirmed during the study.

Keywords: action orientation, endurance sports, explosive sports

1. Introduction

Who has not experienced this: You know that something has to be done urgently, you should start as soon as possible, but you don't manage it. Again and again things come up that are done beforehand and in the end you start much too late with the task. And then there are people who immediately start with the tasks, who seem to have no problems facing unpleasant situations. Why do these people have more motivation? Why do they find it easier to motivate themselves to do tedious work? The difference between these two groups of people lies in their action orientation. There are people with a high action orientation, who tackle everything immediately and do not brood over unpleasant things, and there are people with a low action orientation (or state orientation), who take longer to cope with situations and think intensively about what has already happened (Kuhl & Kazén, 2003). People with high action orientation are more able to motivate themselves than people with low action orientation when facing difficulties or problems (Gröpel, Baumeister & Beckmann, 2014).

Hence, action orientation is an advantage to tackle unpleasant tasks. But what about self-motivation in the face of stress and exhaustion? Sport, for example, is not only a hobby for many people, it is also a professional direction. Is a high action orientation important in order to deal successfully with the available resources in the sporting setting? Is the necessary energy balance only possible if there is a high level of action orientation? Looking at all sports, does this mean that only action-oriented individuals can gain a position in professional sports? Can state-oriented people not be professional athletes at all? Beckmann and Kazén (1994) were able to disprove these chain of thoughts. Depending on the sport, a different degree of action orientation is advantageous, therefore state-oriented individuals can also successfully manage resources in sports. It is important to recognize which orientation is beneficial for which sport. Since action-oriented individuals are better able to divide up the available motivational resources over a longer period of time, endurance sports seem to be particularly suitable for this. State-oriented people, on the other hand, manage to achieve a very high performance for a short period of time, which means that explosive sports seem to be better suited for them.

The aim of this study is to replicate the findings of Beckmann and Kazén (1994) that endurance athletes have a higher action orientation than explosive athletes. Furthermore, it will be investigated whether the action orientation is related to the training duration (in years) and the training intensity (per week) and whether team sports have an effect on the action orientation.

2. The theory of action-orientation

Action orientation refers to the different ways people deal with goal-directed activities under changing circumstances. In this context, the convictions of one's own ability to perform can be similar among all participants, but the performances rendered can show differences (Diefendorff, 2004).

2.1. Action- vs. state-orientation

Kuhl and Beckmann (1994) distinguish between action orientation and state orientation. As already mentioned, an action-oriented person does not get stuck in the situation with their thoughts. On the contrary, they quickly find ways out or alternative courses of action in order to be able to continue working successfully. This means that if a mishap should happen, they do not spend a long time thinking about who is to blame, but instead discuss various possible courses of action. People with this type of orientation are able to distance themselves well from negative situations and feelings (Kuhl & Beckmann, 1994; Penningroth, 2005).

State-oriented people, on the other hand, remain in the situation for a very long time and ruminate about it (Kuhl & Beckmann, 1994; Penningroth, 2005). Situations that have not gone according to plan drag these individuals down, preventing them from continuing to pursue everyday life normally. It is assumed that a state orientated person lacks of self-direction and has in principle just a low extent of action orientation. In doing so, they cannot motivate themselves or put thoughts into action (Baumann & Kuhl, 2005), partly because they integrate irrelevant intentions (Penningroth, 2005). However, this intense falling into the situation can also be beneficial, because not only are negative feelings experienced more

intensely, but also the feeling of happiness in positive situations outweighs that of action-oriented individuals (van Putten, 2015).

Action-oriented individuals are able to create positive affect themselves (Baumann & Kuhl, 2005). This means that no outside help is needed to get themselves mentally back on track. It should be noted, however, that action-oriented individuals always need a certain amount of resistance. For example, if the situation is very accommodating, complex tasks will be solved less effectively than if the situation is challenging.

In contrast to this, when state-oriented people are under stress, they find it difficult to recognize their own wishes. It is no longer possible to distinguish between one's own wishes and those of others. This is usually expressed by continuing an unattractive action even when an attractive alternative is available. The inability to switch becomes especially apparent after exhaustion, when all resources have been used up (Baumeister et.al, 1998). In addition, failures of previous tasks negatively affect further performance, even if they are not linked (Kuhl, 2018). But, to regain the ability to switch, a state-oriented person only needs a reminder of previously positive experiences. This can originate internally or externally, as long as it is sufficiently positive.

Every advantage also brings its disadvantages and vice versa. For example, in complex situations with hidden risks and unexpected events, hesitation and reflection is preferable for quick action (Kuhl & Kazén, 2003). It is possible that acting quickly may be less effective if, for instance, not all of the information is given at any time or a step back is needed to provide an overview over the situation. That's why state-oriented individuals in comparison to action-oriented individuals are comparatively less likely to be caught unprepared by events during an activity because they have previously thought carefully about the situation (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994).

If the switch from state orientation to action orientation is no longer possible, even though it is absolutely necessary to be active, a state orientation brings exclusively disadvantages. In many situations it is important to act quickly and actively. If the switch to

these characteristics does not work anymore, disadvantages or dangers can result. It is optimal to be able to switch between the two orientations as the situation demands. (Kuhl & Kazén, 2003)

2.2. Two forms of action orientation

Kuhl and Kazén (2003) distinguish in action orientation the direction in which motivational regulation takes place. If a difficult task is imminent, one needs a prospective action orientation (German "Prospektive Handlungsorientierung", HOP). Prospective means "looking ahead." This is important when the initially positive basic mood gets dampened. Difficulties that arise can be solved better if one does not remain in the situation, but proactively looks ahead. This process is also called self-motivation. The degree of action orientation plays a role in the quality of self-motivation. Action-oriented individuals are very good at self-motivation and can use resources effectively and flexibly, whereas state-oriented individuals are less successful at self-motivation and are more hesitant (Gröpel et al., 2014).

Through a positive form of self-motivation, difficult tasks are perceived as energizing instead of exhausting (Baumann & Kuhl, 2005). Self-motivation is learned only when sufficient external encouragement has been provided during critical periods of development. In this context, recognition by the father of the child's abilities and skills is particularly decisive (Kuhl & Kazén, 2003; Kuhl, 2018).

On the other hand, if one has to cope with a painful experience such as failure or pressure, one needs the retrospective oriented, failure-related action orientation (German, "Misserfolgsbezogene Handlungsorientierung", HOM). Retrospective means "looking back". This involves regulating stress and negative feelings. This process, also called self-relaxation, is used to get an overview. The regulation of negative feelings in such a situation supports the perception of details and helps to find creative ways to act (Baumann & Kuhl, 2005). Self-relaxation is learned only when there has been sufficient reassurance from outside during critical periods of development. In this context, reassurance by the mother in the first eight hundred milliseconds after the baby's cry for help is decisive for teaching

circumspection, self-awareness, and creativity. In addition, the child learns to self-regulate through down regulating negative affect. (Kuhl & Kazén, 2003; Kuhl, 2018)

The development of self-motivation and self-relaxation is similar to Pavlovian classical conditioning. Special learning phases can be recognized by the expression of feelings and needs of the children. If these learning moments are missing in childhood, it is difficult in the future to internalize the inputs from outside and to regulate oneself. However, it is perfectly possible to learn self-regulation in sensitive phases throughout life such as puberty and adolescence. An appreciative atmosphere is particularly important, with love playing the biggest role. (Kuhl & Kazén, 2003; Kuhl, 2018)

2.3. Self-control and ego-depletion

An important concept for the study is the notion of self-control. It is the ability to change behavior to affect goal-directed behavior (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Baumann & Kuhl, 2005; Gröpel et al., 2014). Self-control is considered a limited resource. That is, after excessive exertion of self-control, it is exhausted, like a muscle. This assumption has been confirmed in several studies: Individuals who had already exercised some kind of self-control before the test performed worse on the following tests than those who had not exercised self-control before (Baumeister et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

The state at which the resource is exhausted is called ego depletion, according to Freud's instance model ("It" - "Ego" - "Superego"). The ego is exhausted because it is constantly torn between the It and the Superego, trying to act correctly and maintain control with all the needs and morals. Ego depletion is the state of decreased capacity for self-control. This state can be caused by several reasons. For example, a person has limited capacity for control and cannot suppress a large number of urges simultaneously because all self-control measures draw on the same resource. Furthermore, it can also be the product of learned helplessness, as a result of a constant overload that makes the system unwilling to function (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). In this context, ego depletion has a negative impact on further performance in the face of high demands. State-oriented individuals are more

likely to experience the state of ego depletion than action-oriented individuals (Gröpel et al., 2014). However, if one sticks to the analogy with the muscle, also it can be assumed that self-control can also be trained, whereby the point of occurrence can be individually postponed (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

However, there is a theory that ego depletion is just a shift in resources (Muraven, Shmueli & Burkley, 2006; Beedie & Laane, 2012; Gröpel et al., 2014). This would imply that self-control resources are not depleted, but merely deployed elsewhere. For example, remaining resources are deliberately saved in order to have something left up your sleeve for expected later efforts. However, exhausted individuals can be motivated to perform even without remaining reserves with a perceived benefit to themselves or others. In 2003, Muraven & Slessareva conducted a study in which participants experienced different types of depletion and self-regulation in three experiments. Experiment one consisted of thought suppression/memory task and solving unsolvable puzzles, Experiment two consisted of giving a speech with/without restrictive instructions and solving a ball maze with motivating/demotivating instructions, and Experiment three consisted of watching a video with/without emotion control and drinking sweet/bitter drinks with high/low pay per drink. The study found that while exhausted participants performed worse without sufficient incentive for self-control, they were quite capable of performing at the same level of self-control as non-exhausted participants when given sufficient incentive. As a result, even people with high levels of exhaustion are quite capable of keeping up performance, they may just lack the will to do so.

The ability to perform properly in (exhausting) moments also depends on the degree of action orientation. (Exhausted,) state-oriented people find it more difficult to perform well than (exhausted,) action-oriented people, since the former are less able to motivate themselves. Regardless of the state of exhaustion, this is also reflected in the health behavior or marksmanship of police officers in stressful situations (Gröpel et al., 2014; Landman, Nieuwenhuys & Oudejans, 2016). That means the depletion of self-control has a greater impact on state-oriented individuals. This is partly because action-oriented individuals

always want to do their best, whereas state-oriented individuals are more likely to conserve residual energy. Of course, this only applies to slightly exhausted individuals, because severely exhausted muscles can no longer provide as much power to produce peak performance. (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994; Gröpel et al., 2014).

These findings mean that action-oriented and state-oriented individuals adapt differently with requirements in terms of self-control. It is not possible to highlight one of the types of adaptation as being more effective, as different types can be beneficial depending on the situation. Additionally,, prior efforts, such as a self-control action or making responsible decisions, have some kind of negative effect on the ability to self-control in both expressions. (Baumeister et al., 1998; Gröpel et al., 2014; Kuhl, 2018)

3. Types of sports

3.1. Endurance sports

Weineck (2007) defines endurance as "the psychophysical fatigue resistance of the athlete" (p. 229). Consisting of the mental endurance, which is responsible for the resistance to the termination of the load, and the physical endurance, which is responsible for the resistance to the exhaustion of the organism, different forms of endurance are classified (Meier, 1991; Weineck, 2007).

Thus, endurance sports are sports in which the given performance is maintained for a longer period of time. A difference is made between short-, medium-, and long-term endurance (Weineck, 2007). Short-term endurance includes any effort between 45 seconds and a maximum of two minutes, medium-term endurance includes any effort between two and eight minutes, and long-term endurance includes any effort that exceeds eight minutes.

Weineck (2007) also distinguishes between basic and local endurance. For example, basic endurance is responsible for resistance to exhaustion and a short recovery time. Also, it improves physical performance, psychological resilience, and health. It minimizes the likelihood of serious injury and technical errors due to exhaustion. Endurance capacity is

thereby correlated with the cardiovascular system, metabolism, and mental state (SAFS & BETA, n.d.).

Different types of training target different aspects of endurance. Weineck (2007) separates into the four groups of endurance, interval, repetitive, and competitive methods. Any type of endurance training can be assigned to one of these training types.

Typical sports that belong to the term "endurance sports" are swimming, cycling, running, triathlon, cross-country skiing, rowing, etc.

3.2. Explosive types of sports

Ex | plo | sive: adjective, [ɪk'spləʊ.sɪv]. In Cambridge Dictionary online there are 4 different meanings. In a sportive context it means "used to describe a sports player, runner, etc. who is able to suddenly increase their speed or power while playing or running, or to describe this speed or power: Trainers work on drills designed to promote explosive speed and physical agility." (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)

Explosive types of sports are activities in which the given power must be present only very briefly at the beginning of the a movement. Frequently these are called strength sports. The athletes have only little time to give the necessary impulse. For this, the strength at this point should correspond to the maximal strength. The amount of starting strength and the size of the strength increase are particularly important. The explosive strength is the maximal strength increase in the strength-time curve, which is formed due to the fast contraction against the static resistance. Shown in Figure 1, the starting strength, the explosive strength and the maximum strength together form the rapid strength, which describes the ability to set a high impulse in the shortest amount of time. (Meier, 1991)

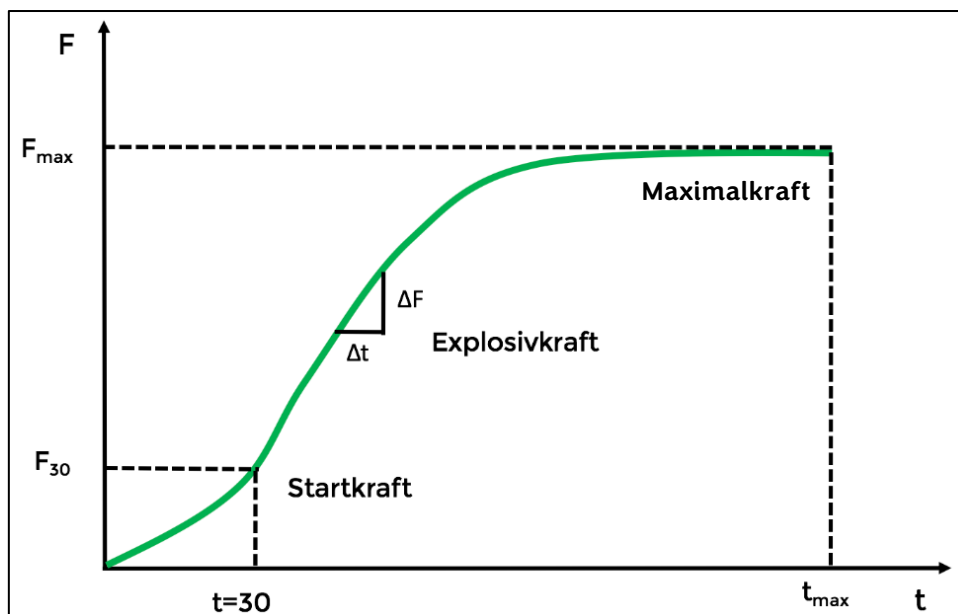


Figure 1: Components of the rapid strength based on Meier, 1991.

Typical sports that belong to the term "explosive sports" are fencing, boxing, sub-disciplines of athletics (sprinting, spear throw, bullet push, etc.), ski jumping, etc.

3.3. Team sports

Team sport: noun, (ti:m spɔ:t) is described in Collins dictionary online as „a sport in which teams play against each other, Polo is probably the oldest team sport in the world” (Collins, n.d.).

Team sports, according to the dictionary definition, cannot be played alone. It requires teammates in one's own team and an opposing team against which one can compete here. A team is made up of different characters and abilities, which makes teamwork very important. A team is therefore characterized by mutuality, and joint, coordinated and purposeful action (Baumann, 2012). The performance of the team is not based on one person alone, but on each person who is part of it. Of course, there are very good individual performances that can stand out or bring victory, but here the saying "each chain is only as strong as its weakest link" is true. If there are only lone wolves in a team, even if they are top athletes, no joint performance will be possible and the team will not be successful. A team with twelve strong individual players is never as strong as a team of twelve weaker team players. (Grossegger, 2011)

Team sports teaches not only teamwork and social skills, but also a lot about oneself, one's role in the team, one's abilities and the ability to put one's own needs, the ego, aside for the good of the team.

Classic team sports are ball sports such as soccer, basketball, handball, volleyball and baseball, but also ice hockey, American Football, cheerleading, etc.

4. Action-orientation and sports

In 2014, Gröpel et al. conducted a study about action-orientation in sports in three substudies. In study one, an action-control scale was completed before and after a workout, indicating that action-oriented individuals performed better compared to state-oriented individuals despite fatigue during training. In study two, vigilance was assessed by first testing baseline central nervous activation after the action-control scale, then performing a 25-minute triangle attention test, and then testing central nervous activation again. This showed that action-oriented people were relatively immune to ego depletion, whereas state-oriented people performed worse after the vigilance test. In study three, following the action-control scale hand-eye coordination was measured, in which one group had to perform a difficult task with unexpected barriers and the other group had to perform a comparatively simple task. After a manipulation check they had to complete the Stroop color-word task. Study 3 indicated that frustrated individuals generally performed worse, but ego depletion was lower when they were action-oriented.

This shows, both action-oriented and state-oriented individuals experience physical and mental exhaustion, but the way they deal with the exhaustion state is different (Gröpel et al., 2014). While state-oriented individuals conserve their resources, their performance decreases as a result, and activities are frequently abandoned, action-oriented individuals use their resources despite being exhausted and thus manage to maintain performance for a longer period of time. A high degree of self-control characterizes the success rate of action-oriented persons. For example, different studies found that, in comparison, state-oriented female basketball players showed more unstable performance in stressful situations because

they either shot at the basket too early or too late (Beckmann, 1989), state-oriented basketball players were more likely to pass to teammates in stressful situations (Raab & Johnson, 2004), and state-oriented skiers were more likely to have stressful thoughts, such as about the outcome, before and during competition than action-oriented ones (Beckmann & Hazlett, 1989).

Nevertheless, state orientation in sports is not necessarily negative. Beckmann and Trux (1992) found two effects of state orientation: On the one hand, concentration for the task is disrupted by state-oriented thoughts as described before; on the other hand, these obstacles trigger energy reserves that are normally not accessible allowing greater concentration and better performance.

4.1. HO and explosive sports

In 1994, Beckmann and Kazén confirmed the assumption that different orientation can be beneficial in different sports. For example, it was shown that the inability to control oneself and to motivate oneself in state orientation can be positive for athletes when a short but intense performance is required. Sprinting, jumping and other types of explosive sports require high initial effort but not for such a long time. This is perfect for state-oriented people who use up their resources quickly.

Furthermore, it is not necessary for explosive athletes to have remaining resources after a performance. In most explosive sports, there is sufficient recovery time between performance moments, so resource management and self-control are not essential for a good performance.

4.2. HO and endurance sports

In contrast, action-oriented individuals maintain a constant level of performance over a longer period of time. Ideal sports are those that are endurance-intensive, because there it is not an initial strong performance that is decisive, but rather the maintenance of the performance over a longer period of time. In addition, self-control plays an important role here. Endurance sports do not always consist of a long active phase, sometimes there are

only short regeneration phases between the performance moments, whereby a good endurance, an optimal resource allocation and thus also a high self-control are very advantageous. (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994)

Studies indicate that not only action-oriented individuals do engage more in endurance sports, but that endurance athletes also exhibit higher action orientation than individuals who do not engage in endurance sports (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994, Gröpel et al., 2018, Prieler, 2022).

4.3. HO and team sports

While state-oriented athletes are better at impulsive sports with maximum energy in a short period of time and action-oriented athletes are better at strategic planning of energy expenditure in controlled sports, it is difficult to categorize team sports.

On the one hand, there are team sports that are endurance-based and, on the other hand, others that are characterized by short impulsive bursts of energy. However, in team sports, it is particularly important to respond quickly and flexibly in every situation, which means that, regardless of the duration of intensity, an action-oriented strategy may be more appropriate. Beckmann & Kazén (1994) base this assumption on the fact that team athletes in feedback sports have to react constantly to changing situations and therefore retrieve resources from working memory. Failure is a fixed part of the sport, since one cannot be prepared for all situations. State-oriented individuals would then spend too much time worrying about the failure, which would make the rest of the competition irrelevant.

5. Research question and hypotheses

Due to the diverse research situation, the question is inevitably formed whether the assumption of Beckmann and Kazén (1994) is still ongoing and whether the results of Prieler (2022) that endurance athletes have higher action orientation than non-athletes are also confirmed in comparison with explosive athletes. After all, it was found that explosive sports are relatively unexplored in this context. In order to clarify these questions, the research

question is, whether there is a connection between the type of self-motivation and the mainly practiced sport. Specifically:

Is there a difference in the way endurance and explosive athletes motivate themselves?

In order to answer the research question appropriately, several hypotheses were formed during the literature research.

H1: Endurance athletes have a higher self-motivation than explosive athletes.

Beckmann and Kazén (1994) show that action orientation (high self-motivation) has a positive effect on endurance sports and state orientation (low self-motivation) has a positive effect on explosive sports. This hypothesis tests whether action-oriented individuals are indeed more likely to be found in endurance sports and state-oriented individuals are more likely to be found in explosive sports.

H2: There is a positive correlation between the number of years of training and action orientation.

Beckmann (1989) was able to confirm the correlation that athletes with a higher number of years of training also showed a higher action orientation. People who have been training the same sport for years, or are still doing the sport, show a special kind of motivation. The longer one trains in a sport, the higher the probability that a certain number of defeats, difficult situations or unmotivated phases have occurred over the years. Nevertheless, continuing to train and compete in that sport indicates a high level of self-motivation in the form of prospective and retrospective action orientation (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994). The longer one trains, the higher the commitment one makes to the sport. If one has been training for years, a higher level of performance is associated with it compared to regular training that has only just begun. Likewise, the commitment to the sport is higher. With this hypothesis, it is assumed that a higher commitment to sport, i.e., a higher level of training, is also present with greater self-motivation in terms of prospective and retrospective ability to act.

H3: There is a positive correlation between action orientation and training intensity.

Gröpel et al. (2014) confirmed that action-oriented individuals are better at managing their resources and thus recover faster. Therefore, it is assumed that individuals with a high level of self-control will also exercise more often during the week, as the recovery time between training content does not need to be as high.

H4: Team athletes have a higher self-motivation than explosive athletes.

It is assumed that the relationships within a team have a positive effect on self-motivation. As already mentioned by Kuhl and Kazén (2003), an action orientation can also be made up for by positive encouragement from those close to the athlete. In this regard, cohesion in a team can also promote action orientation in team sports. Additionally, most team sports are in the feedback domain. Since an action orientation has a positive effect on the reaction speed to moves (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994), it is assumed that explosive team sports also contain an increased number of action-oriented individuals.

6. Methods

The data collection was conducted online via the SoSci Survey access of the University of Vienna and consisted of two steps: a socio-demographic survey and the HAKEMP-24 discussed below. After activating the link for the online questionnaire, a web page with the information about the study was presented to the participants. Participation was voluntary and could be discontinued at any time without giving a reason. The 32 page questionnaire was completed by the participants in about ten to 15 minutes. The data was submitted directly and anonymously. All subjects received the same questionnaire. The study was available for a period of one month (18.12.2022-18.01.2023).

The form of the online survey was chosen for various reasons. Firstly, a large number of different participants could be reached easily. Contact was primarily made in person via telephone calls and e-mails to personally known athletes who were, however, dispersed throughout Austria. Thanks to the online questionnaire, they were then able to forward it to

other participants. This also simplified the further establishment of contact via social media. (Reinecke, 2014)

Problems associated with an online questionnaire were largely eliminated. Questions or difficulties could be sent by e-mail to the responsible person during or at the end of the survey. The exclusion criterion of technical knowledge and possibilities could also be neglected, since mostly young, tech-savvy respondents were contacted and the questionnaire could also be completed via cell phone. (Reinecke, 2014)

6.1. Participants

To participate in the study, subjects had to be fluent in German, be at least 14 years old, and be active in endurance, explosive or team sports. In addition, it was important to have competition experience, as some of the questions in the questionnaire referred to competition situations. Although club membership was not an exclusion criterion, club athletes were primarily targeted.

401 subjects took part in the study, 131 of whom fully answered the questionnaire. Three of these data records had to be removed because the response time was too short for giving thoughtful answers. This leaves a total of 128 data records that could be used.

The sample included 84 men (65.6%) and 43 women (33.6%) and one diverse person (0.8%). Ages ranged from 14 to 55 years (M: 25.50, SD: 9.975) with an average training experience of 9.86 years (SD: 8.162; 1-42) and on average training was done four times a week (SD: 1.766, 1-9).

95 people (74.2%) were members of a club, 32 people (25.0%) trained without a club membership and one person (0.8%) did not give any information. Of the 128 people, 61 (47.7%) were endurance athletes, 28 (21.9%) explosive athletes and 39 (30.5%) team athletes.

The sport they perform were entered by participants in open text fields, so that the test subjects were assigned to the three categories endurance, explosive and team sports manually during the evaluation. This type of survey was chosen in order to obtain precise

data and to not from given categories in advance. The ulterior motive was that some sports might be excluded from participation as a result. The question looked as follows:

1. Welche Sportart betreiben Sie hauptsächlich?

Bei Sportarten mit mehreren Disziplinen führen Sie bitte Ihre Hauptdisziplin an. z.B. Leichtathletik/Speerwurf

Figure 2: German sample question from the demographic survey.

The endurance sports group included running (20), rowing (11), triathlon (7), swimming (7), cycling (6), skiing (4), cross-country skiing (2), dancing (2) and Nordic combined (2), while the explosive sports group included Weight Training/CrossFit (12), Athletics (5), Ski Jumping (4), Fencing (3), Bobsledding (2), Golf (1) and Parkour (1) and Team Sports consisted of American Football (22), Ice Hockey (12), Soccer (3), Volleyball (1) and Beach Volleyball (1).

6.2. Measures

Action orientation was measured with the HAKEMP 24 questionnaire (Kuhl, 1990) which is a measurement instrument to assess action and state orientation. As the name suggests, it is comprised of 24 questions describing different situations. The task of the participants was to complete the sentence with the option that was more applicable to them. For each question, one answer option was marked as action-oriented and the other as state-oriented. The questions were also divided into retrospective (failure-related) and prospective orientation.

An example of a retrospective, failure-related question (HOM) is.

(1) When I have lost something valuable and every search has been in vain, then...

- 1) I can hardly concentrate on something else.
- 2) I don't think about it for long.

Answer choice 1 stands for a state orientation or concern and answer choice 2 stands for an action orientation or disengagement. (Kuhl, 1994)

An example of a prospective question (HOP) is.

(2) When I know something needs to be done soon,...

1) I often have to push myself to get it started.

2) I find it easy to get it over with quickly.

Again, answer choice 1 stands for a state orientation or procrastination and answer choice 2 for an action orientation or initiative. (Kuhl, 1994)

Each answer is coded with a number, the answer options are then added up and the result indicates in which direction the action orientation goes. A high score describes greater action orientation in the HAKEMP scale (Raab & Johnson, 2004).

6.3. Statistic analysis

The present study is a cross-sectional study, which means that all data per participant was collected at only one measurement point (Niederberger & Finne, 2021). The data was collected using a standardized survey and is considered a quantitative method. The data was processed using SPSS. After classification into endurance, explosive, and team sports, the following analysis was made.

For hypotheses H1 and H4, first an ANOVA and second a t-test were made. Both analyses are robust against non-normality and are used for difference hypotheses such as H1 and H4. The ANOVA was chosen because there are more than two groups of sports in the first place. The t-test with independent samples was chosen to give specific information for endurance and explosive sports for H1 and explosive and team sports for H4.

For hypotheses H2 and H3, a Pearson correlation matrix was created with the data "action orientation", "training intensity" and "years of training", since these are correlation hypotheses.

7. Results

7.1. Distribution by gender, club membership and age among types of sports

The gender distribution among the different types of sports shows great differences. While the women are mainly located in endurance sports (28, 65.1%; explosive: 9, 20.9%; team: 6, 14%), the men, apart from explosive sports, show a relatively even distribution (endurance: 32, 38.1%; explosive: 19, 22.6%; team: 33, 39.3%). With a Pearson Chi-squared value of $p=.022$, a significant correlation between the variables gender and type of sport is shown.

A significant correlation (chi-square $p<.001$) with types of sports can also be determined in relation to club membership. While in endurance sports the distribution is relatively even (club membership: 36, 59%; no membership: 25, 41%), it can be seen that explosive sports are less frequently practiced without club membership (club membership: 21, 75%; no membership: 7, 25%). As assumed, all team athletes practice their sport in a club (club membership: 38, 100%; no membership: 0, 0%).

On average, endurance sports contain the oldest athletes (M: 28.80; SD: 11.378; 14-55), followed by explosive sports (M: 23.89; SD: 8.189; 15-54) and team sports with the youngest athletes (M: 21.49; SD: 6.672; 14-38).

7.2. Correlation of action orientation with gender and club membership

With regard to action orientation, the genders do not differ significantly ($t(125) = -.025$, $p = .980$; $d = -.005$) because the mean values are almost identical see Figure 3.

	Gender	N	Mean value	Standard deviation
HOP	female	43	7.12	2.719
	male	84	7.13	3.252

Figure 3: Correlation HOP and gender

	T	df	Double-sided sig.	Mean dif.	Dif. SD
HOP	-.025	125	.980	-.015	.578

Figure 4: T-Test of gender HOP

A significant correlation was found for club membership ($t(125) = -3.330, p = .001, d = -.681$), in which individuals without membership showed a higher action orientation on average see Figure 5.

	Club membership	N	Mean value	Standard deviation
HOP	yes	95	6.60	2.904
	no	32	8.59	3.004

Figure 5: Correlation HOP and club membership

	T	df	Double-sided sig.	Mean dif.	Dif. SD
HOP	-3.330	125	.001	-1.994	.599

Figure 6: T-Test of club membership HOP

7.3. H1 testing

In the first hypothesis it was assumed that endurance athletes have a higher self-motivation than explosive athletes. In order to confirm this hypothesis, the HOP average score for the endurance sport category ($M = 7.98; SD = 3.003$) would have to be significantly higher than that for the explosive sport category ($M = 6.57, SD = 3.436$). However, according to the t-test, the difference is just no longer significant ($t(87) = 1.968, p = .052, d = .449$), dismissing this hypothesis. Endurance athletes do not have significantly higher self-motivation than explosive athletes.

		Endurance sports	Explosive sports
HOP	Mean value	7.98	6.57
	SD	3.003	3.436
	N	61	28

Figure 7: H1 comparison of the average score HOP

	T	df	Double-sided sig.	Mean dif.	Dif. SD
HOP	1.968	87	.052	1.412	.718

Figure 8: H1 t-test of the sports HOP

7.4. H2 testing

For the second hypothesis, it was assumed that there is a positive correlation between the number of years of training and action orientation. Although there is a positive correlation (HOP: $r = .145, HOM: r = .050$), there is no significance in either case (HOP: $p = .102; HOM: p = .575$). Thus, the H2 is dismissed: No significant correlation could

be found between the number of years of training and prospective action orientation (HOP) or failure-related action orientation (HOM).

		HOP	HOM
Years of training	Pearson correlation	.145	.050
	Sig. (double sided)	.102	.575
	N	128	128

Figure 9: correlation years of training and HO

7.5. H3 testing

In the third hypothesis, it was assumed that there is a positive correlation between the number of training sessions per week and action orientation. Here, there is a negative correlation (HOP: $r = -.049$, HOM: $r = -.026$), but this value is not significant in either case (HOP: $p = .585$; HOM: $p = .773$). Thus, H3 is dismissed: No significant correlation could be found between training intensity and prospective action orientation (HOP) or failure-related action orientation (HOM).

		HOP	HOM
Training intensity per week	Pearson correlation	-.049	-.026
	Sig. (double sided)	.585	.773
	N	128	128

Figure 10: correlation training intensity per week and HO

7.6. H4 testing

The fourth hypothesis assumed that there is a difference between explosive athletes and team athletes in terms of action orientation. The HOP average score in the explosive sports category ($M = 6.57$, $SD = 3.436$) would have to be significantly different from that in team sports ($M = 6.23$; $SD = 2.549$). However, according to the t-test, there is no significant difference between these two sports ($t(65) = .466$, $p = .643$, $d = .115$). Therefore the hypothesis must be dismissed.

		Explosive sports	Team sports
HOP	mean value	6.57	6.23
	SD	3.436	2.459
	N	28	39

Figure 11: H4 comparison of the average score HOP

	T	df	Double-sided sig.	Mean dif.	Dif. SD
HOP	.4668	65	.643	.341	.731

Figure 12: H4 t-test of the sports HOP

8. Discussion

The distribution of the sexes among the sports clearly shows that women are primarily represented in endurance sports, while men are distributed among all three categories. This may be due to the fact that endurance sports require less effort in comparison and are also non-contact sports, which could make them more attractive to women.

As expected, explosive athletes were more likely to be in clubs, while endurance athletes were relatively balanced. This may be due to the fact that explosive sports, such as athletics disciplines, are only offered in clubs, but endurance sports can also be trained privately. Not very surprisingly, it was confirmed that all team athletes train in a club.

The distribution of the age groups among the sports brought only small differences, however it is noticeably that in endurance sports more older individuals are represented. This may be due to the fact that these sports can be trained well into old age, whereas explosive sports can cause increased abrasion and injuries over time, which force athletes to quit. The fact that the youngest subjects are represented in team sports could be due to the fact that many team competitions are only offered up to a certain age group.

In terms of action orientation, the two genders show no significant differences, which Gröpel et al. (2014) have already confirmed.

The study confirms that people without a membership show a higher action orientation on average. This may be due to the fact that people outside a group sharing the same training content have to overcome a greater motivation threshold. The social setting in a club can override minor motivational deficits, which means that each individual does not necessarily have to provide a high level of self-motivation themselves (Baumann, 2012).

The study examines the different manifestations of action orientation in relation to the type of sport. Based on the previous literature review, it was assumed that higher action-orientation would be found in endurance sports than in explosive sports (Beckmann & Kazén,

1994). This assumption could not be confirmed, in both sports the participants had a similarly high average score.

According to previous studies, a higher action orientation should also correlate with a high number of years of training (Beckmann, 1989; Beckmann & Kazén, 1994; Prieler, 2022) and a high number of training sessions per week (Gröpel et al., 2014). The former contradicts previous research, as no significant correlation was found. The second supports the findings of Prieler (2022) in finding no significant correlation either. It can be assumed that, contrary to the assumption of Gröpel et al. (2014), increased training per week has no relationship with action orientation.

There are several reasons that action orientation should be found predominantly in team sports (Beckmann & Kazén, 1994; Kuhl & Kazén, 2003). Nevertheless, all considerations were disproved here, as no differences compared to explosive sports were found.

After the results of the questionnaire study could not confirm any assumptions, the question arises as to what this could be due to.

8.1. Limitations

There may be different reasons why this study does not agree with the results of the literature read so far.

First, it could be sample-dependent. Many of the subjects indicated not only one specific sport, but several. In the course of the evaluation, it was always the first sport that was decisive for assignment to a group. Thus, there are football players who stated "running" in second place and football players who stated "weight training" in second place. Both were assigned to the "team sports" group, even though they took different directions besides their main sport. In addition, it is not known whether athletes who indicated only one sport possibly train comprehensively by doing strength training in addition to endurance training or by swimming regularly to compensate for the great amount of explosive training. However, it is also difficult to find athletes who train exclusively in endurance or explosive sports.

Second, the sample may have been too small. Of the more than 400 people who opened or started the questionnaire, only 131 completed it. Even in this group there were three people who answered too quickly and randomly towards the end. Although only 120 people were needed for a meaningful study, a larger group might reveal different results.

Third, the survey period may not have been optimal. The study was online over the period of Christmas and school vacations, which created some difficulties. First, data collection was very slow, as many people were unavailable during the vacations, and secondly, some people had to be motivated several times to participate in the study.

Fourth, the answers to the questions could have been answered more according to the person's desired image. After consultation with some participants, they emphasized how difficult it is to distinguish whether one really behaves this way in the corresponding situation or whether one wishes one would behave this way. However, since this problem has never been mentioned in correlation with the HAKEMP 24 items, it may only be a problem in this sample and therefore negligible in general.

Fifth, there is the possibility that there is a difference between urban and rural areas. Since this study recruited mostly participants from the rural area of Styria, it could be that this factor has an impact on action orientation.

8.2. Further thoughts

This work provides an important part for the research on action orientation in explosive sports. As previously stated, this area is underrepresented compared to endurance sports. The lack of significant results from this study is a sign that more research should be done in this direction, as one study alone is not representative.

Likewise, no strictly explosive athletes could be interviewed in this work. For future work, more attention could be paid to prevent mixing between strict explosive athletes and explosive and endurance athletes to get more accurate results.

For ongoing work, it would be interesting to know if there are differences in action orientation between urban and rural areas. Since in the rural area the availability of

competitive sports is rather small or is associated with more time and travel, it can be assumed that in the rural area a greater self-motivation is necessary to remain active in these types of sports. Since assigning a competitive sport may be easier in urban areas, it would be interesting to see if this has an impact.

In conclusion, despite the lack of significance values, the study raises some points that may be relevant to future work.

9. List of abbreviations

H

HAKEMPHandlungskontrolle nach Erfolg, Misserfolg und prospektiv

HO..... Handlungsorientierung

HOM.....misserfolgsbezogene Handlungsorientierung

HOP prospektive Handlungsorientierung

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11. Appendix



selfcontrol22 → base

30.03.2023, 15:36

Seite 01

Lieber Teilnehmer, liebe Teilnehmerin!

Vielen Dank, dass Sie bereit sind an meiner Befragung zum Thema "Selbstmotivation im Sport" teilzunehmen.

Bitte beantworten Sie den Fragebogen alleine, wahrheitsgemäß und nach Möglichkeit vollständig.

Das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens nimmt ca. 15 Minuten in Anspruch.

Seite 02

Die Richtlinien guter ethischer Forschung sehen vor, dass sich die Teilnehmer:innen an empirischen Studien explizit und nachvollziehbar mit der Teilnahme einverstanden erklären.

Freiwilligkeit. Ihre Tätigkeit an dieser Untersuchung ist freiwillig. Es steht Ihnen zu jedem Zeitpunkt dieser Studie frei, Ihre Teilnahme abzubrechen, ohne dass Ihnen daraus Nachteile entstehen.

Anonymität. Ihre Daten sind selbstverständlich vertraulich, werden nur in anonymisierter Form ausgewertet und nicht an Dritte weitergegeben. Demographische Angaben wie Alter oder Geschlecht lassen keinen eindeutigen Schluss auf Ihre Person zu.

Fragen. Falls Sie noch Fragen zu dieser Studie haben sollten, finden Sie im Anschluss ein Impressum mit Kontaktdaten der Studienleitung.

Hiermit bestätige ich, dass ich mindestens 14 Jahre alt bin sowie die Einverständniserklärung gelesen und verstanden habe. DG01

- Nein (nicht an der Studie teilnehmen)
- Ja

Seite 03

1. Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?

DG02

- weiblich
 männlich
 divers

Seite 04

2. Wie alt sind Sie?

DG03

bitte in Zahlen angeben

Seite 05

3. Betreiben sie regelmäßig Sport? (mehrmals pro Monat)

DG04

- Ja
 Nein

Seite 06

4. Welche Sportart betreiben Sie hauptsächlich?

DG05

Bei Sportarten mit mehreren Disziplinen führen Sie bitte Ihre Hauptdisziplin an. z.B. Leichtathletik/Speerwurf

Seite 07

5. Wie häufig betreiben Sie die vorher genannte Sportart/Disziplin durchschnittlich?

DG06

Geben Sie bitte die Häufigkeit pro Woche an. Bsp. 1x/Woche

Seite 08

6. Wie viele Jahre betreiben Sie diese Sportart/Disziplin schon?

DG07

Bitte geben Sie die Antwort, inklusive dem aktuellen Jahr, in ganzen Jahren an.

Seite 09

7. Sind Sie Mitglied in einem Verein?

DG09

- ja
 nein (nur Hobbymäßig)

Seite 10

Überleitung zum Fragebogen

DG08

Auf den nächsten Seiten finden sie Fragen zu verschiedenen Lebenssituationen. Bitte kreuzen Sie zu jeder Frage immer diese Antwortmöglichkeit (1. oder 2.) an, die eher für Sie zutrifft.

Seite 11

8. Wenn ich etwas Wertvolles verloren habe und jede Suche vergeblich war, dann

H001

- kann ich mich schlecht auf etwas anderes konzentrieren.
 denke ich nicht mehr lange darüber nach.

Seite 12

9. Wenn ich weiß, dass etwas bald erledigt werden muss, dann

H002

- muss ich mir oft einen Ruck geben, um den Anfang zu kriegen.
 fällt es mir leicht, es schnell hinter mich zu bringen.

Seite 13

10. Wenn ich vier Wochen lang an einer Sache gearbeitet habe und dann doch alles misslungen ist, dann

HO03

- dauert es lange, bis ich mich damit abfinde.
- denke ich nicht mehr lange darüber nach.

Seite 14

11. Wenn ich nichts Besonderes vorhabe und Langeweile habe, dann

HO04

- kann ich mich manchmal nicht entscheiden, was ich tun soll.
- habe ich meist rasch eine neue Beschäftigung.

Seite 15

12. Wenn ich bei einem Wettkampf öfter hintereinander verloren habe, dann

HO05

- denke ich bald nicht mehr daran.
- geht mir das noch eine ganze Weile durch den Kopf.

Seite 16

13. Wenn ich ein schwieriges Problem angehen will, dann

HO06

- kommt mir die Sache vorher wie ein Berg vor.
- überlege ich, wie ich die Sache auf eine einigermaßen angenehme Weise hinter mich bringen kann.

Seite 17

14. Wenn mir ein neues Gerät versehentlich auf den Boden gefallen und nicht mehr zu reparieren ist, dann

HO07

- finde ich mich rasch mit der Sache ab.
- komme ich nicht so schnell darüber hinweg.

Seite 18


15. Wenn ich ein schwieriges Problem lösen muss, dann

HO08 

- lege ich meist sofort los.
- gehen mir zuerst andere Dinge durch den Kopf, bevor ich mich richtig an die Aufgabe heranmache.

Seite 19

16. Wenn ich jemanden, mit dem ich etwas wichtiges besprechen muss, wiederholt nicht zu Hause antreffe, dann

HO09 

- geht mir das oft durch den Kopf, auch wenn ich mich schon mit etwas anderem beschäftige.
- blende ich das aus, bis die nächste Gelegenheit kommt, ihn zu treffen.

Seite 20


17. Wenn ich vor der Frage stehe, was ich in einigen freien Stunden tun soll, dann

HO10 

- überlege ich manchmal eine Weile, bis ich mich entscheiden kann.
- entscheide ich mich meist ohne Schwierigkeiten für eine der möglichen Beschäftigungen.

Seite 21

18. Wenn ich nach einem Einkauf zu Hause merke, dass ich zu viel bezahlt habe,

HO11 

- fällt es mir schwer, mich auf irgend etwas anderes zu konzentrieren.
- fällt es mir leicht, die Sache auszublenden.

Seite 22

19. Wenn ich eigentlich zu Hause arbeiten müsste, dann

HO12 

- fällt es mir oft schwer, mich an die Arbeit zu machen.
- fange ich meist ohne weiteres an.

Seite 23

20. Wenn meine Arbeit als völlig unzureichend bezeichnet wird, dann

HO13

- lasse ich mich davon nicht lange beirren.
- bin ich zuerst wie gelähmt.

Seite 24

21. Wenn ich sehr viele wichtige Dinge zu erledigen habe, dann

HO14

- überlege ich oft, wo ich anfangen soll.
- fällt es mir leicht, einen Plan zu machen und ihn auszuführen.

Seite 25

22. Wenn ich mich verfare (z.B. mit dem Auto, mit dem Bus usw.) und eine wichtige Verabredung verpasse, dann

HO15

- kann ich mich zuerst schlecht aufrufen, irgend etwas anderes anzupacken.
- lasse ich die Sache erst mal auf sich beruhen und wende mich ohne Schwierigkeiten anderen Dingen zu.

Seite 26

23. Wenn ich zu zwei Dingen große Lust habe, die ich aber nicht beide machen kann, dann

HO16

- beginne ich schnell mit einer Sache und denke gar nicht mehr an die andere.
- fällt es mir nicht so leicht, von einer der beiden Sachen ganz Abstand zu nehmen.

Seite 27

24. Wenn mir etwas ganz Wichtiges immer wieder nicht gelingen will, dann

HO17

- verliere ich allmählich den Mut.
- vergesse ich es zunächst einmal und beschäftige mich mit anderen Dingen.

Seite 28

25. Wenn ich etwas Wichtiges, aber Unangenehmes zu erledigen habe, dann

HO18 

- lege ich meist sofort los.
- kann es eine Weile dauern, bis ich mich dazu aufraffe.

Seite 29

26. Wenn mich etwas traurig macht, dann

HO19 

- fällt es mir schwer, irgend etwas anderes zu tun.
- fällt es mir leicht, mich durch andere Dinge abzulenken.

Seite 30


27. Wenn ich vorhabe, eine umfassende Arbeit zu erledigen, dann

HO20 

- denke ich manchmal zu lange nach, womit ich anfangen soll.
- habe ich keine Probleme loszulegen.

Seite 31


28. Wenn einmal sehr viele Dinge am selben Tag misslingen, dann

HO21 

- weiß ich manchmal nichts mit mir anzufangen.
- bleibe ich fast genauso tatkräftig, als wäre nichts passiert.

Seite 32

29. Wenn ich vor einer langweiligen Aufgabe stehe, dann

HO22 

- habe ich meist keine Probleme, mich an die Arbeit zu machen.
- bin ich manchmal wie gelähmt.

Seite 33

30. Wenn ich meinen ganzen Ehrgeiz darin gesetzt habe, eine bestimmte Arbeit gut zu verrichten und es geht schief, dann HO23

- kann ich die Sache auf sich beruhen lassen und mich anderen Dingen zuwenden.
- fällt es mir schwer, überhaupt noch etwas zu tun.

Seite 34

31. Wenn ich unbedingt einer lästigen Pflicht nachgehen muss, dann HO24

- bringe ich die Sachen ohne Schwierigkeiten hinter mich.
- fällt es mir schwer, damit anzufangen.

Letzte Seite

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Wir möchten uns ganz herzlich für Ihre Mithilfe bedanken.

Falls Sie an den Ergebnissen der Studie interessiert sind, schreiben Sie bitte ein Mail an a01547553@unet.univie.ac.at.

Ihre Antworten wurden gespeichert, Sie können das Browser-Fenster nun schließen.