

# Self-physical and emotional perception in water polo for drop out

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## ABSTRACT

To try to have a global view of the phenomenon of abandonment, we must ask ourselves what are the main reasons and psychological dynamics that convince a child to start any sport activity. In Italy, unfortunately, it is not always the children who choose the physical and sporting activity to practice, but often it is the parents and this is a serious mistake and could be one of the causes of abandonment at an early age. Sport activity in adolescence, especially practiced at a competitive level, is grafted on ground rich in interpersonal reversals and existential problems, going to affect intrapsychic dynamism and acting on the ability to control the ego and the unconscious dynamics that in this period undergo massive readjustments. The aim of the study is to study, in different groups of athletes (7-12 years, 13-17 years, 17-30 years) of water polo, how they deal emotionally and physically with the physical and emotional workloads and especially if you find physical and mental well-being. The method of the study is qualitative/quantitative and the administration of 10 questions: 5 to identify the physical self-perception and 5 for the emotional one, is done anonymously. The data shows that the self-perception for physical performance is on average positive and the self-perception for motivation performance is on average negative. This data is significant for the perceptive state of the athletes to whom it is necessary to refer in order to face the problem realistically. Given the data and their significance, the study must be deepened with a more significant and detailed sample of data. **Keywords:** Water polo; Drop out; Sport activity; Self-perception.

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## INTRODUCTION

This research was born with the aim of understanding what are the reasons for the abandonment of sport in terms of physical and emotional perception by athletes. In the term sport we tend to understand a concept of competition, of struggle against an opponent or against a limit, because we expect a constant improvement of our level of efficiency, both from the physical point of view and from the technical one. Sport is considered an important tool for the satisfaction of many needs; it creates opportunities for meeting and discussion and promotes the perception that everyone has of himself. But despite this, there are phenomena of abandonment of sport. Every year many young people make the decision to abandon sport, this can happen for different reasons, but hardly happens because they were born in a new passion. As the main source of abandonment we find the dissatisfaction of those needs that had led them to practice this activity. The causes that lead young people to abandon competitive activity can be social, psychological and related to discipline.

Social, because socio-cultural changes and progress have led to new lifestyles for young people, a wealth of new interests and technologies that could curb the commitment to an activity that requires effort and renunciation and does not pay immediately. Early cessation of sport, the phenomenon of "Drop out" is a problem that tends to occur especially in the age group between 15 and 17 years for boys, while for girls this trend manifests itself slightly earlier. In some respects, the drop-out can be considered "physiological", as a change of interests and priorities in the lives of young people is inevitable. Also teaching method and the setting environment play a role in the phenomenon (Invernizzi et al, 2019, Di Tore et al, 2018). Another important element is the way in which parents react to victories and defeats, as it sends strong messages to children about the value attributed to the sporting experience. Parents should try to make a clear distinction between their own and their child's motives. Studies examining parental behaviour associated with youth sport have generally found that parental support, encouragement, involvement and satisfaction increase the child's sense of fun and intrinsic motivation. On the contrary, high parental pressures, high expectations, criticism and lack of support decrease the feeling of enjoyment, causing anxiety, abandonment and burnout. During the annual planning and planning of the objectives (Altavilla & Raiola, 2018) some very important aspects could be left out, which are considered secondary, such as motivation (Severino et al, 2019ab, Raiola & Altavilla, 2015). In some sports, testing players is indispensable for different reasons: it allows to evaluate their potential (Alminni et al, 2019), their athletic and technical qualities (D'Isanto, 2019, 2016, D'Isanto et al, 2019). The aim of the study is to investigate, in different groups of athletes (7-12 years, 13-17 years, 17-30 years) of water polo, how they face emotionally and physically the physical and emotional workloads and, above all, if you find physical and mental well-being.

## METHOD

The study used is the case study, a research method that targets a limited number of events or conditions and their correlation. After collecting the data through field surveys, the researcher examines them to find the links between the research objective and the conclusions with respect to the initial questions they asked themselves. The sample is divided into groups into 3 groups according to age (7-12 years; 13-17 years; 17-30 years). The method of the study is qualitative/quantitative (Cyril et al, 2016) administered through a special online platform a questionnaire of 10 questions: 5 to identify the physical self-perception and 5 for the emotional one, in total anonymity so as not to incur in false data. The study was submitted to water polo athletes of different ages. The study involved 45 athletes divided into three groups: First group: 15 children aged 7-12 years, second group: 15 children aged 13-17 years, third group: children aged 17-30 years. The contents are established a priori, standardization in reference to the uniformity of the stimuli offered and high structuring as the respondent cannot come out off track predetermined.

To avoid external influences in the respondents was decided to administer the questionnaire through the online platform Google drive "forms". In order to assess the quality of the instrument, a pre-test with similar characteristics was carried out prior to administration. The main topic of the questionnaire is perception, we first investigated the physical and then emotional perception.

All data are expressed as average and percentage for each group.

The Kendall Test Tau was used to determine the level of correlation between non-parametric variables of the three groups. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 22.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

**Results**

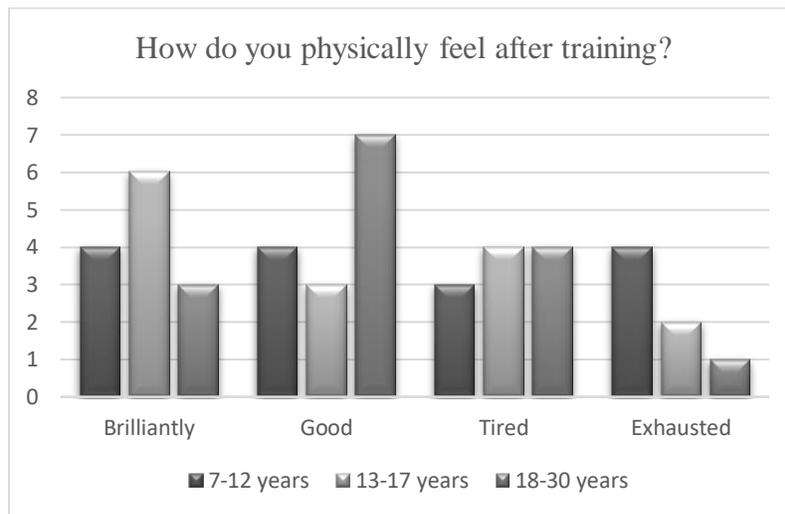


Figure 1. Physical self-perception after training.

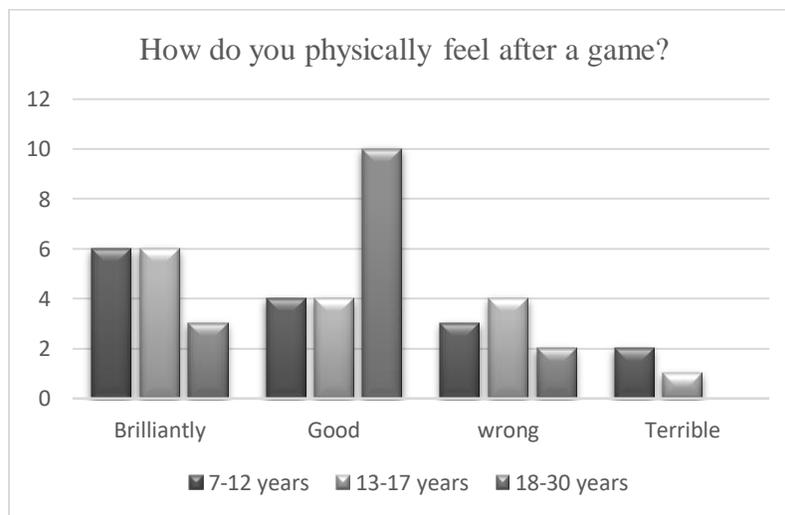


Figure 2. Physical self-perception after a match.



Figure 3. Emotional self-perception after training.



Figure 4. Emotional self-perception before training.

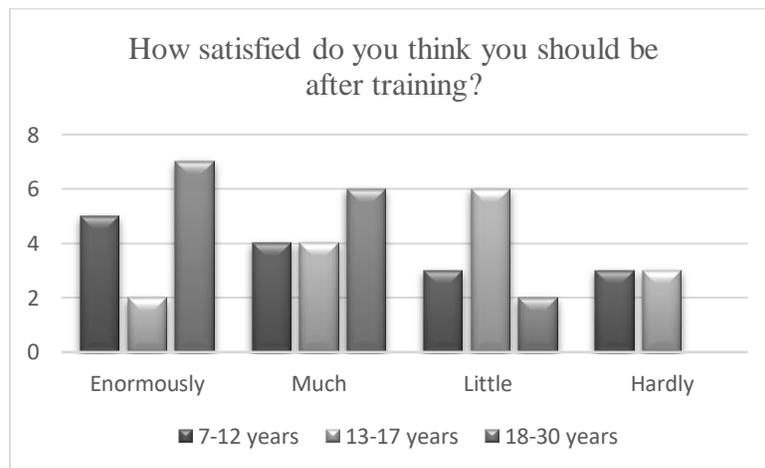


Figure 5. Emotional self-perception.

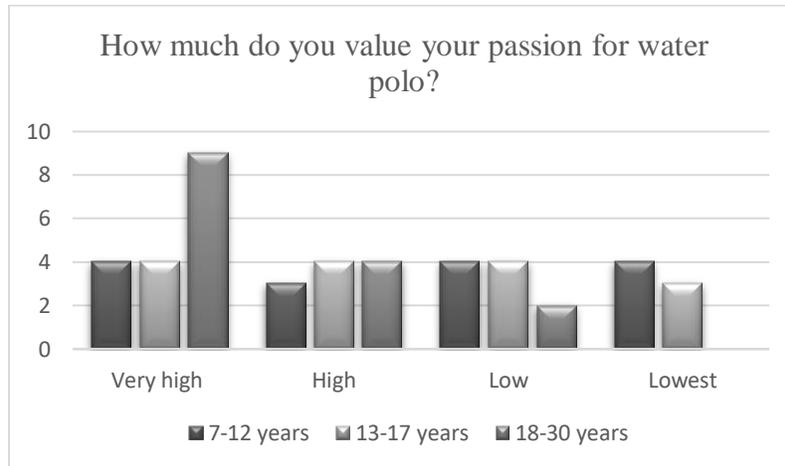


Figure 6. Self-assessment of the sport played.



Figure 7. Technical self-assessment.

Table 1. Kendall's Tau correlation between levels of physical and emotional perception (7-12 years)

			VAR00001	VAR00004
Tau_b of Kendall	VAR00001	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.278
		Sign. (two tails)		.317
		N	10	10
	VAR00004	Correlation coefficient	.278	1.000
		Sign. (two tails)	.317	
		N	10	10

Table 1 shows a good correlation between the two levels (physical and emotional), therefore these are perceived more similarly by the 13-17 age group.

Table 2. Kendall's Tau correlation between levels of physical and emotional perception (13-17 years)

			VAR00002	VAR00005
Tau_b of Kendall	VAR00002	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.442
		Sign. (two tails)		.124
		N	10	10
	VAR00005	Correlation coefficient	.442	1.000
		Sign. (two tails)	.124	
		N	10	10

Table 3. Kendall's Tau correlation between levels of physical and emotional perception (18-30 years)

			VAR00003	VAR00006
Tau_b of Kendall	VAR00003	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.350
		Sign. (two tails)		.190
		N	10	10
	VAR00006	Correlation coefficient	.350	1.000
		Sign. (two tails)	.190	
		N	10	10

Tables 2 and 3 show a low correlation between the two levels (physical and emotional) of perceived well-being, therefore, these are not perceived in a similar way by the groups of 7-12 and 18-30 years old. With the Kendall Tau Test, we tried to establish if the level of correlation and therefore of self-perception (physical and emotional), in different ages, was similar; which is denied by the results.

## DISCUSSIONS

From the results obtained from the administration of the questionnaire we can deduce that with regard to physical self-perception in all three groups is positive, so it is excluded in this case as a cause of abandonment (Figures 1 and 2). With regard to the emotional aspect, however, we find differences based on the age of the subjects. We find in the motivation before training (Figure 4) a negative finding for the age groups between 7-12 and 13-17 years and positive for the age group between 18-30 years and in part this also occurs in the satisfaction after training (Figure 5).

Another important aspect of the questionnaire is the passion of these athletes for the sport they practice, i.e. water polo. It can be seen (Figure 6) that the passion for this sport on the part of athletes tends to increase with age, but the significant figure is found between 18 and 30 years. On the technical aspect, there are evident differences in self-evaluation, as the lower the age of the athletes, the more negatively they self-evaluate (Figure 7).

## CONCLUSION

The absence of different components considered essential for the athletes themselves, such as playfulness, the onset of conflicts, passion, failures could lead to early abandonment in sport (drop-out). From the results obtained, the most significant aspect that we find is precisely the passion that athletes have for the sport itself. The results therefore tend to confirm the idea that among the 12-17 years of age, the members of this

group do not have a strong passion for water polo, thus verifying the hypothesis of a possible early departure from the sport itself.

Given the data and their significance, the study must be deepened with a more significant sample of data and rich in details.

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