THE SENSE OF OBSERVATION AND THE DEGREE OF SUGGESTIBILITY AT THE 8-9 YEARS OLD GYMNASTS

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Abstract: *The research topic aims to diagnose the gymnasts by obtaining information on the degree of manifestation level of some mental skills necessary for practicing artistic gymnastics.*
The goal consists in highlighting the importance of assessing advanced gymnasts' mental skills involved in a productive motor learning. The study is focused on obtaining information concerning essential psychological features, vital for an effective motor learning. The above were assessed by implementing the Huth test of suggestibility. Moreover, the study provides a playful, stimulating and exciting method for testing the gymnasts' observation and suggestibility. The results may satisfy coaches' inquisitiveness, which creates the circumstances for systematically implementing this method.

Key words: *Sense of observation, suggestibility, Huth test.*

1. Introduction

Diagnosis in sports targets to obtain as much information about athletes as possible [1]. To be more precise, some skills which they manifest in different chronological and biological age are revealed. The information aims the overall development of an individual (health, somatic, motion, propelling, functional indices, endurance, strength, psychological characteristics etc.).

Mutual connections between the circumstances and the ability of high performance require a diagnostic of gymnasts' skills as precise as possible [3]. Given that performance can be obtained by repeatedly investigating the possibilities of human being in achieving perfection, it is only natural to turn our attention to issues of sportswomen personality [2].

Our research tries to highlight the mental skills using Huth test. This is a suggestibility test, consisting in both assessing the degree of external influence on the subjects and their sense of observation [5]. Learning how much a gymnast is willing to accept external ideas (suggestibility), sports coaches are provided with valuable information to complement their endeavour in obtaining knowledge on a gymnast's personality [2].

2. The Purpose and the Hypothesis of the Paper

In this paper we purpose to highlight the importance of using psychological diagnosis methods by obtaining

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information on the degree of manifestation level of some mental skills necessary for practicing artistic gymnastics.

The hypothesisof the paper: using the Huth test we can achieve a psychodiagnosis of gymnasts, by assessing some important skills and mental abilities: the (sense of) observation, the subjects' level of suggestibility, the ability to understand, organize and update the information from memory [4].

3. The Methods and the Data of the Research

In this study we used the documentation and observation research methods. The methodology of this ascertaining research is based on data collection.

The research was conducted in January, 2015 and the venue was the gym of School Sports Club in Sibiu. The subjects included in the study were 10 gymnasts aged 8 and 9 years old, being in advanced level of training and having 3-5 years' experience in practicing Woman's artistic gymnastics. Table 1 shows the study group.

Introducing the subjects   Table 1

Nr. crt.	Subject	Age (years and months)	Training (years and months)
1	B.D.	8.6	3.8
2	B.I.	8	3
3	C.N.	8.8	4.8
4	M.L.	8.4	3.5
5	A.A.	9.1	4.5
6	B.F.	9.5	4.7
7	J.A.	9.6	4.6
8	J.I.	9	4.4
9	M.C.	9.2	5
10	P.G.	9.7	5.2

Taking into consideration that reproducing the original Huth test drawing is forbidden and that it is addressed to children older than our group subjects, we therefore tried to adapt this test to the mental skill level of 8-9 year-old children. Each athlete in the study group assessed with the Huth test received the following drawing (figure 1):

The subjects were given five minutes to study the drawing from figure 1. Cooperation between participants and other different external influences of all types were not allowed.

After five minutes, the drawings were collected and each child received a sheet with 12 questions (and 12 blanks for answers) aiming to study the subjects' observation, but also their level of suggestibility.

Fig. 1. *The drawing handed in to the subjects*

The questions included in the test had been actually drafted as suggestions [5].

Please see below the 12 questions:

1. What was placed on the log in the middle of the drawing?
2. How big was the stick held by the squirrel?
3. What was written on the boy's T-shirt?
4. Was the fox hidden in the bushes or in the tree?
5. Which wing of the bird had been bandaged, the right or the left?
6. What was the wolf doing?
7. Was the boy wearing spectacles or sunglasses?
8. What color were the boots of the squirrel?
9. How many pockets does the backpack of the boy situated in the middle of the drawing have?
10. How many kites had been lifted up in the sky?
11. How many butterflies were in the tree?
12. What was there in the second hollow of the tree: peanuts or nuts?

The correct answers to the above 12 questions are as follows:

1. There was no log in the drawing.
2. The squirrel wasn't holding any stick.
3. There was nothing written on the boy's T-shirt.
4. There was no fox in the drawing.
5. The bird had no bandaged wing.
6. No wolf could be observed in the drawing.
7. The boy wasn't wearing any glasses.
8. The squirrel didn't have any boots.
9. The boy was not carrying a backpack.
10. There were no kites in the sky.
11. There weren't any butterflies in the tree.
12. The tree had only one hollow.

4. Results

The research results were summarized in Table 2. The numbers can be analyzed, explained and compared in relation to important data for each subject.

Table 2

Huth Test results and their interpretation.

Nr. crt.	Subject	Age (years and months)	Training (years and months)	Huth Test Result	Translating the result / Results' interpretation
1	B.D.	8.6	3.8	16	Good performance
2	B.I.	8	3	4	Weak performance
3	C.N.	8.8	4.8	22	Good performance
4	M.L.	8.4	3.5	14	Good performance
5	A.A.	9.1	4.5	0	Weak performance
6	B.F.	9.5	4.7	14	Good performance
7	J.A.	9.6	4.6	4	Weak performance
8	J.I.	9	4.4	0	Weak performance
9	M.C.	9.2	5	20	Good performance
10	P.G.	9.7	5.2	20	Good performance

The interpretation of the results was based on the assessment scale displayed in the below table:

Assessment scale   Table 3

Performances	Score	Assessment
Good performances (match the expected level)	12-24 points	● The child has the ability to listen carefully, to understand what she/he had just seen, to organize and reproduce the information using her/his memory
Weak performances (below expected level)	< 12 points	● The child is unable to understand the information, which can be caused by his/her inability to understand, absence of mind, carelessness, indifference or overloading (exhaustion)

The results can be analyzed in Figure 2, where they are displayed in an illustrative way.
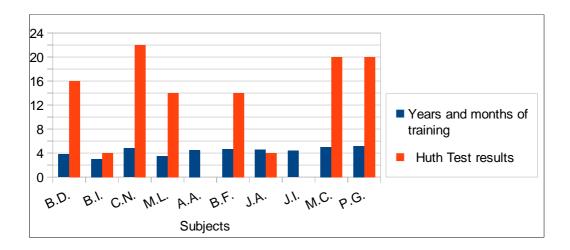
Fig. 2. *Graphic representation of Huth Test results*

5. Conclusions and Proposals

Following the Huth test, six of the subjects scored good performances, while the other four scored poor results. This prompts us to state that:

- most female gymnasts in the group have good abilities in understanding the information and good visual memory, being retentively, which translates into solid circumstances favoring motor learning ability;
- high score subjects are only little suggestible; they are not weak-willed and don't react in a mechanical way to some external stimuli (like signals, commands, etc.); one can foresee that these subjects will show strong will and initiative when coming to maturity in sports;
- the subjects who had been training longer periods of time scored the highest performances, which means that sports training can develop the skills assessed by Huth test;
- the athletes scoring poor performances have difficulties in remembering details and are more or less weak-willed; this may indicate a reduced motor learning ability and a high level of suggestibility; it can be stated here that these subjects conform themselves rapidly to external stimuli, being easily controlled, accepting external suggestions without careful reflection;

- the study provides an attractive, ludic, spontaneous playful testing method, complementing the incentive feature of motor training with intellectual challenges;
- the data generated by using the Huth test augment the overall knowledge learned by coaches, with regard to their athletes' personality; as a result, a reliable diagnosis and even prognosis of motor performances is facilitated to sports coaches;
- simultaneously with the completion of the study, one may issue new research assumptions, in terms of assessing the gymnasts' personality using Huth test in contrast to the personality of people who don't do gymnastics.

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