

Hooray

STUDY:

Youth voices: how do adolescents perceive physical activities that support mental health

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ABOUT HOORAY PROJECT:

Youth for Youth's Mental Health through Physical Activity - HOORAY

Even before the pandemic, the mental health of young people, particularly teenagers, has been declining. The HOORAY (Youth for Youth's Mental Health through Physical Activity) project aims to address this challenge by exploring the impact and positive influence physical activity and sport can have on improving the overall well-being and mental health of young people.

Based on the EU Physical Activity Guidelines, the project team will collect good practices, and develop educational resources and an online knowledge hub for physical education teachers, youth workers, coaches, parents and other personnel working with teens that want to put more attention on mental health and health enhancing physical activity, and prioritize participation and well-being of youth over performance, pressure and results.

Those resources and activities will target both, youngsters that are already physically active or enrolled in sport activities, and those who have been inactive and/or dropping out of sport. Young people will play a key role as we will take a closer look at physical activity through the lens of teenagers and explore how they perceive sport and its impact on their well-being.

The HOORAY project started 1st of January 2023 and will continue for 30 months until 30th of June 2025. The kick-off meeting is scheduled for 16th and 17th of February 2023 in Munich, Germany.

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Executive Summary

This report contributes to Deliverable 2, Output 2 of the HOORAY project and aims to contribute to developing evidence-based resources for adolescents' social milieu to support usage of sport in the context of well-being and increase their knowledge about the topic. The study aims to explore what factors related to participation in organised youth grassroots sport are relevant for the subjective well-being of youth athletes. We relied on the PERMA (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) framework to reveal adolescents' experience concerning their mental health within the context of sports. Semi-structure interviews with adolescents from Germany, Portugal, Hungary, Croatia, and Finland were conducted (n = 47). Through the interviews, we were able to gain valuable firsthand insights on mental health and sport directly from the adolescents themselves. We analyzed the interviews via a thematic analysis. The analysis reveals interesting findings on all dimensions of the PERMA model and provides theoretical contribution as well as practical implications. For positive emotions (P), fun, contentment, calmness, pride, joy and excitement, as well as feeling strong and resourceful were identified. For relationships (R), various factors were identified related to coaches, peers, and parents. For accomplishment (A), mastery, competition, and mastery at competition were identified. For Engagement (E) and Meaning (M), no sub-themes were revealed, but examples highlight the general relevance of the concepts. To conclude, we can state that all five PERMA dimensions can be used to describe adolescents' mental health when, or after, being physically active. Practitioners can address the full range of emotions, enrich the network between coaches, parents, and peers, as well as encourage and allow for mastery, often realised within competitions. Also, engaging and meaningful activities are helpful to increase mental health, according to voices of youth.

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Introduction

This report was produced as a part of the EU-funded Youth for Youth's Mental Health through Physical Activity – HOORAY project that addresses the horizontal priority of “encouraging healthy lifestyle for all” of the Erasmus programme and is designed to present a practice-oriented, research-informed educational remedy for tackling mental health crisis through physical activity and sport in adolescents. In particular, this report contributes to Work Package 2, Deliverable 2, and aims to contribute to developing evidence-based resources for adolescents' social milieu to support usage of sport in the context of well-being and increase their knowledge about the topic. Specifically, in this report we ask: What factors related to participation in organised youth grassroots sport are relevant for the subjective well-being of youth athletes?

The report starts with an introduction into the topic that outlines the shortcomings of the current literature on youth sport and wellbeing and positions the research. It continues with introducing the concept of wellbeing and specifically, the PERMA framework of wellbeing that serves as a theoretical anchor and guides the data analysis. In this section, we reflect on the youth sport literature that pertains to each of the PERMA dimensions. We then outline the methodology used for the study and continue by presenting the findings. Then, we conclude with a discussion and recommendations for the practice.

Conceptual Background

The adolescent years are central in the development of capabilities related to lifelong health and wellbeing (Barican et al., 2022). The essential developmental tasks of adolescence, including gaining emotional and cognitive skills for independence, education, entering the workforce, engaging in civic activities, and establishing enduring relationships, are all fundamentally rooted in health and wellbeing (Patton et al., 2016). Additionally, adolescence is the period in which environmental influences such as relevant relationships, socio-economic status, or education can leave a prominent mark on individuals' health (Kipping et al., 2012). Relevant social and environmental contexts therefore hold a promise as for promotion of adolescents' physical and mental health and wellbeing (Patel et al., 2018). For adolescents involved in grassroots sport, the sporting environment presents a relevant social context with a potential to promote health and wellbeing (Eime et al., 2013; Geidne et al., 2013; Piñeiro-Cossio et al., 2021).

The notion of well-being faces numerous interpretations, each rooted in distinct perspectives on the components that contribute to living a good and life worth living (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Recently, one of the most influential perspectives on wellbeing came from the positive psychology that views well-being as a multifaceted construct that extends beyond mere absence of mental illness and enables people to flourish (Seligman, 2011). Within the positive psychology tradition, wellbeing is based on the positives, and conceptualised as the PERMA framework (positive emotions, engagement, quality relationships, meaningfulness and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011)).

From a positive psychology perspective there is a certain shortcoming of sport psychology literature pertaining to youth sport. Namely, research on the psychological aspects of sport participation has mainly revolved around psychopathology, i.e., a focus has been

mostly on mental health and symptoms of mental illness (Brady & Bridget Grenville-Cleave, 2018). For instance, literature reveals compelling evidence to suggest youth sport as a setting and promising strategy to promote adolescents' mental health or prevent or treat mental-ill health symptoms (Easterlin et al., 2019; Doré et al., 2020; Panza et al., 2020; Sutcliffe et al. 2021; Swann et al., 2018).

Although sport seems as a promising venue to improve adolescent's wellbeing (Mansfield et al., 2018; Piñeiro-Cossio et al., 2021), available sport-related literature on wellbeing in youth suffers from theoretical vagueness and incongruities (Lundqvist, 2011; Piñeiro-Cossio et al., 2021). This is for instance visible in recent research on youth sport and wellbeing, where wellbeing was assessed with a unidimensional scale despite its multifaceted conceptualizations (Wilson et al., 2022). Furthermore, a glance at the youth sport literature reveals various concepts that are similar to Seligman's wellbeing conceptualization. For instance, positive youth development (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005) emphasises youth sport participation as means to foster positive developmental outcomes through, among others, emphasising competence, confidence, character, connections, and compassion in sport programmes. Beni et al. (2017) proposed that meaningful experiences in youth sport are based on social interaction, fun, challenge, motor competence, and learning. Quality Sport Experience Framework for Youth includes components of quality youth sport experience, namely fun and enjoyment, opportunity for sport skill development and progress, social support and sense of belonging, and open and effective communication (Brown et al., 2023). So, the available research is either theoretically weak, or investigations of what seems like elements of the sport specific wellbeing are incorporated into frameworks with a different focus. Therefore, in this report we take a sound theoretical perspective, the PERMA wellbeing framework and explore adolescent's perspectives on their youth sport involvement to produce a sport-context specific framework of wellbeing in youth sport.

Defining Wellbeing

Discussions about what constitutes a life well lived, or wellbeing, continues to be a subject of ongoing debates in various fields including psychology, philosophy, public health or economics. Among the plethora of conceptualisations of wellbeing most discussions pivot around two central notions, eudaimonic and hedonistic wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonic wellbeing focuses on the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain as fundamental aspects of human happiness and well-being. Eudaimonic wellbeing, on the other hand, emphasises the pursuit of meaning, personal growth, and self-realisation as essential components of a fulfilling life (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Hedonic psychologists use subjective wellbeing as a measure of happiness, which rests on the three most commonly used variables: life satisfaction, positive affect and the absence of a negative affect (Busseri, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2001). The subjective wellbeing is contrasted to more normative measures of wellbeing that often rest on the socially desirable criteria (e.g., income) of what constitutes a good life, as opposed to giving more weight to subjective, affective, and measures based on the personal judgement. In contrast, the researchers interested in eudaimonic tradition base their work mainly on two concepts, the psychological and social wellbeing (Keyes et al., 2002). The former is most often conceptualised into six elements, including (a) self-acceptance that involves having a favourable perception of oneself, one's own attributes, and one's past experiences, (b) positive relations with others, which refers to the ability to cultivate trusting, caring, and empathetic connections with others, (c) autonomy, referring to being self-driven, motivated from within, and using personal standards for self-assessment, (d) environmental mastery, which encompasses effectively navigating one's surroundings and circumstances to meet personal needs and uphold personal values, (e) purpose in life, referring to having clear, meaningful objectives that guide one's life choices, and (f) personal growth, denoting a sense of progress

and self-fulfilment that evolves over time (Ryff, 1989). Psychological well-being focuses on the individual and his or her private life, as opposed to proponents of social well-being who acknowledge that individuals are intertwined within their social frameworks and communities. As such, social components of wellbeing include social integration, or the extent to which an individual feels that they belong to and that they have something in common with their social environments; social acceptance, or the trust in others, perception of them as capable of kindness and hold positive opinions about human nature; social contribution, or the belief that one can contribute to the society; social actualization, or the belief in society's fulfilment of its potential, and social coherence, care for the kind of the world one lives in and the perception that he or she can understand it (Keyes, 1998). Some thinkers take a more holistic view to wellbeing, incorporating both "being well" and "feeling well" (Keyes et al., 2002) into the notion of wellbeing (Keyes et al., 2002; Lundqvist, 2011; Martela & Sheldon, 2019). These models include both, hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing as important components of wellbeing.

Although conceptualizations of both mental health and wellbeing vary across the literature in many accounts they are inextricably linked (Fusar-Poli et al., 2020). For instance, Keyes and Lopez (2009) propose that "mental health is a syndrome of symptoms of well-being" (p. 47). World Health Organization (WHO) regards mental health as

a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in (WHO, 2022).

PERMA Model of Well-being

Positive psychology is grounded on the basic paradigmatic shift that the focus of research on what constitutes a good life should be directed towards understanding the good and positive sides of people, rather than towards focusing on mental illness (Luthans, 2002). Well-being and positivity of humans have received great attention across research fields (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Multiple definitions and theories regarding well-being have emerged (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Topp et al., 2015). According to the well-being model, also known as the PERMA model by Seligman, well-being is a combination of five main constructs, positive affect, engagement, relationship, meaning and achievement (Seligman, 2011). Seligman posited that with these five main constructs as building blocks, one can achieve flourishing (Seligman, 2018). There is no correct way on the road to flourishing, each construct can vary to a different degree among each individual. The model provides a framework based on positive psychology and has been found across studies that its constructs are associated with increased life satisfaction, physical health, happiness and creativity. With the effect of each construct, it creates the strength to help individuals find fulfilment and happiness (Seligman, 2011).

PERMA has been studied in various settings. For instance, a study with employees showed that PERMA can effectively predict one's wellbeing and is positively related to one's physical health, life satisfaction, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Kern et al., 2014). It has also been applied to study institutional leadership and cultural change (Slavin et al., 2012). PERMA has also been examined within cross-cultural contexts. Findings from research conducted in the United Arab Emirates mirror the PERMA framework (Lambert D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016). Moreover, studies suggest a significant overlap between the well-being framework and the pursuit of happiness within Malaysian culture (Khaw & Kern, 2014)

The PERMA framework, renowned for its multidimensional approach to well-being, has proven to be a valuable tool for assessing the well-being and life satisfaction of young individuals (Kern et al., 2015; Roncaglia, 2017). Its dimensions align with the values of youth and are compatible with educational structures and strategies. Positive psychology interventions in schools have demonstrated noticeable improvements in students' relationships, well-being, and academic achievements (Waters et al., 2011; Waters, 2014). Furthermore, the applicability of PERMA extends to the realm of sport. Research has shown that participation in sport events can activate the constructs within the PERMA model, thereby enhancing individuals' engagement with sports (Doyle et al., 2016). Attending charity sporting events has been linked to varying degrees of improvement across all five domains of PERMA (Filo & Coghlan, 2016). PERMA is also finding utility among junior ice hockey players, offering insights into the assessment of athletes' well-being (Uusiautti et al., 2017). Engagement in moderate physical activity, watching sports, and team identification has exhibited positive correlations with well-being and flourishing (Oshimi & Kinoshita, 2022). Moreover, participation in leisure snow sports tends to elevate life satisfaction and foster a sense of flourishing, particularly among women (Mirehie & Gibson, 2020).

Each of the PERMA constructs work as a building block of well-being and have its own contribution to life satisfaction and flourishing. The construct can be measured independently while having the effect of leading each construct to build among each other (Seligman, 2018). When an individual has a certain construct, it is likely that he or she will have other constructs to a similar degree as well (Goodman et al., 2017).

Positive Emotions

Positive emotion is the hedonic state from experience across past, present and future (Seligman, 2002). Past positive emotions are such as gratitude, fulfilment, and satisfaction.

Future positive emotions may include hope and optimism. Positive emotions are key antecedents to develop one's well-being. According to the broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions can cause one to build up one's personal resource, including multiple psychological resources such as resilience and mindfulness (Fredrickson, 2001). Positive emotions can also decrease illness symptoms and increase purpose of life. It can overcome time restrictions and sustain from past to future based on personal experiences. Study shows with positive emotions, one can benefit on social behaviour and cognitive process (Isen, 2009). Positive emotions can help with one's coping ability when faced with a negative event (Tugade et al., 2004). Positive emotions in sport are known to have a positive effect on motivation, self-efficacy and performance (McCarthy, 2011; Yang et al., 2020). Study on youth sport athletes indicates that with greater positive emotions, youth athletes tend to have greater team interaction, support and satisfaction with performance (Scanlan, 1993).

Engagement

Engagement is a deep connection and involvement with an activity where you devote your full attention to the extent of creating a flow and purpose. According to Csikszentmihalyi, flow is a sense of feeling fully connected with the activity where it is possible to lose the awareness of time and self (1997). The intrinsic motivation creates a need to fully engage with the task, therefore, rewards one with fulfilment and accomplishment (Nakamura, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Studies indicate a high relation between engagement and well-being (Robertson & Cooper, 2010; Kuykendall et al., 2015; Shuck & Reio Jr, 2014; Sutton, 2020). According to the self-determination theory, youth are more likely to meet the physical activity recommendations with higher engagement (Fenton, 2016). Coaches who create an effort and learning climate among youth athletes tend to have a more positive overall engagement with students (Curran et al., 2015).

Relationship

Relationship is the feeling of connection, inclusion and belongings with a society and community, or being cared for by loved ones. Social support is known to positively relate to well-being and lessen depression (Barrera Jr. & Ainlay, 1983). Adolescents are at the stage where they value extremely peer perspectives but still have high dependency on parents, teachers and coaches (Lashbrook, 2000). For youth sport context, having a strong relationship with coaches, peers and parents is crucial (Sheridan et al., 2014; see also Brown et al., 2023). Among the various sources of social support, studies recognize coaches as the primary providers, extending distinct types of support including tangible, informational, emotional, and esteem-related support to the participants (Sheridan et al., 2014). Peers include a relevant social group for youth athletes. Participation in team sports is associated with better mental health when compared to non-participation, and this relationship is mediated by peer belonging (Oberle et al., 2019). Moreover, a positive relationship with peers among adolescents is positively related to commitment and sport enjoyment (Weiss & Smith, 2002). Participating in physical activities within social settings, like team sports, has the potential to boost the perception of social acceptance and if cooperation and support for reaching others success are reinforced it can nurture feelings of autonomy and competence. Additionally, such activities may offer adolescents opportunities to establish bonds with their peers and experience a sense of connection, all of which can have a positive influence on their mental well-being (Doré et al., 2020). A supportive parent can predict the continuity in sport for adolescents (Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009).

Meaning

Meaning indicates having purpose and sense of value towards life (Seligman, 2011). One needs to understand their personal values, goals, purpose of life and to realise there is a

larger goal beyond oneself. Having meaning for life is positively related to happiness and life satisfaction (Baumeister et al., 2013). Meaning helps individuals understand who they are and what are their purposes, with the state of being aware and conscious, one is likely to improve on their performance (Luthans et al., 2004). Understanding youth's meaning on physical activity can help develop an effective youth sport setting (Beni et al., 2017).

Accomplishment

Accomplishment focuses on achieving one's personal goals and growth and the pursuit of success. The urge to move forward and work for personal goals provides a sense of purpose to individuals (Seligman, 2011). The sport context highly values performance and achievements. Performance among youth athletes is highly related to well-being. Stressful training to achieve excellence in sport performance can influence adolescent's well-being and physical performance (Noon et al., 2015).

Methodology

For the purposes of this report we used a qualitative research design, widely accepted in psychology when the aim is to explore participants' feelings, perceptions, or understandings of their everyday experiences (Biggerstaff, 2012). Since our sample were youth athletes that were not yet necessarily able to articulate answers to some of our questions pertaining to their wellbeing, we adopted a phenomenological approach where we formed the interview questions to elicit experiences of the young athletes about various aspects of their sport participation.

Data Collection

The data for this research were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews undertaken from April to July 2023. The interviews were conducted by the HOORAY project partners in five different European countries, specifically in Lisbon (Portugal), Rijeka, (Croatia), Budapest (Hungary), Munich (Germany), and Helsinki (Finland). Prior to conducting the interviews, an online briefing session was organised and led by the researchers at the Technical University of Munich. During this session, the interviewers were provided with a workshop on how to conduct the interviews effectively, and they were introduced to the standardised interview schedule (see Appendix I). Interviewers translated the interview guide from English to their respective languages and interviews were conducted in the local language of the project partner. An overview of the interviewers is provided in the Appendix. The interview guide was uniform for all interviews, ensuring consistency across the data collection process, however, the interviews were semi-structured so that the interviewers could explore specific topics in greater depth by reacting to the received input from participants and probing where necessary. This also provided flexibility to interviewers for establishing the rapport with participants.

Given the internal participant recruitment constraints faced by the project partners, the data collection process was designed to include a predetermined number of interviews (see Appendix II). This is in contrast to the data collection practice in qualitative research designs where the data saturation or information power are often used to decide when to stop the data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Malterud et al., 2016). We could not analyse data in parallel with the data collection due to the time needed for transcription and translation. However, we wanted to make sure that we have a rich data set, so we aimed for 14 interviews per project partner as the best-case scenario. Specifically, we aimed to recruit youth athletes ranging from 13 to 19 years old, a male and female for each year in this age span. However, due to certain challenges in the data collection, not all partners managed to collect the predetermined number of interviews. After initial analysis, some of the interviews were excluded for the final analysis in cases where participants had documented mental health issues or other circumstances, such as having the participant's father as a coach. In total, 13 interviews conducted in Germany, 13 in Hungary, 10 in Portugal, 8 in Croatia, and 3 in Finland were considered for the analysis.

Participants

All participants under the age of 18 had to obtain a prior written consent from a parent or guardian to be able to participate in the study. A written consent both for the parent or guardian and for the athlete included information about how the researchers will ensure the anonymity and confidentiality, and data protection procedures. They agreed to have the interview recorded and to allow the data to be used with pseudonyms.

The overview of participant demographic information, as well as information of the sport they practised, duration of their sport participation, amount of training per week is documented in Table 1.

Table 1*Overview of study participants*

Pseudonym	Age	Country	Sport	Years active	Amount of training (hours per week)
Lena	13	Germany	Artistic gymnastics	9	7
Leon	19	Germany	Trampoline	16	4.5
Maximilian	13	Germany	Artistic gymnastics	7	6
Alexander	13	Germany	Artistic gymnastics	10	5
Emma	16	Germany	Artistic gymnastics	7	5
Luca	16	Germany	Football	11	6
Felix	15	Germany	Athletics	9	6.5
Clara	13	Germany	Athletics	9	8
Jonas	17	Germany	Athletics	6	10
Mia	14	Germany	Athletics	9	5
Timo	14	Germany	Athletics	7	6
Sophia	18	Germany	Dance	14	1
Iris	18	Germany	Dance	14	1
Maria	14	Portugal	Rhythmic gymnastics	7	14
Matilde	15	Portugal	Rhythmic gymnastics	7	14

Mariana	14	Portugal	Rhythmic gymnastics	8	14
Mateus	18	Portugal	Swimming	9	10
Beatriz	15	Portugal	Swimming	10	10
Francisco	18	Portugal	Judo	7	10
Ines	18	Portugal	Judo	7	12
Pseudonym	Age	Country	Sport	Years active	Amount of training (hours per week)
Leonor	13	Portugal	Swimming	9	14
Tiago	19	Portugal	Swimming	10	14
Filipa	15	Portugal	Swimming	9	12
Marko	14	Croatia	Table tennis	N/A	2
Ivan	13	Croatia	Paraswimming	1	4
Ivana	19	Croatia	Paraathletics	1	3
Monika	17	Croatia	Paraswimming	2	7.5
Fran	19	Croatia	Dance	12	N/A
Stanko	13	Croatia	Parabasketball	2	7.5
Marijan	14	Croatia	Kickboxing	4	6
Mara	14	Croatia	Tennis	4	4.5
Bence	19	Hungary	Futsal	5	3

Lehel	18	Hungary	Futsal	4	3
Adam	15	Hungary	Football	1.5	6
Benedek	13	Hungary	Football	8	6
Hanna	14	Hungary	Futsal	8	7.5
Lili	16	Hungary	Futsal	11	7.5
Petra	18	Hungary	Futsal	12	7.5
Zsolt	15	Hungary	Futsal	8	7.5
Levente	17	Hungary	Futsal	13	7.5
Zsofia	17	Hungary	Handball	10	7.5
Eszter	13	Hungary	Climbing	1	2
Annett	19	Hungary	Futsal	9	6

Pseudonym	Age	Country	Sport	Years active	Amount of training (hours per week)
David	16	Hungary	Pentathlon	12	20
Nasuf	14	Finland	Basketball	3	6
Burhaan	14	Finland	Football	5	4.5
Aden	13	Finland	Football	n/a	6
Average	15.55			7.72	7.33

This study featured a diverse and heterogeneous sample of young athletes. The age range of participants was broad, with the youngest athlete being 13 years old and the oldest 19 years old. The average age of the participants was 15.55 years, reflecting a wide spectrum of adolescent development. These athletes represented an array of sporting interests, encompassing a total of 21 different sports. Notably, participants from Croatia were engaged in parasport. This diversity in sporting choices added depth and breadth to the perspectives gathered.

The duration of participants' engagement in their respective sport was diverse, with athletes with around one year of sport experience to those who have been practising their sport for 16 years (i.e., one 19-year old informant started practising sports at the age of three years). An average sport participation duration was approximately 7 years. This variance suggests a wide range of experiences, ranging from those who were relatively new to their sports to others who had accumulated significant expertise and dedication over the years. Furthermore, the study revealed considerable variation in the athletes' training regimens. On average, participants committed approximately 7 hours per week to training. However, the training hours ranged from 1 hour per week to as much as 20 hours per week. This variance underscored the heterogeneous nature of the sample, encompassing athletes with differing levels of commitment and dedication to their respective sport. Some participants could be categorised as grassroots athletes, while others might be considered elite.

Data Analysis

We analysed the data broadly following Creswell's data analysis spiral (2007) that starts with data management and organisation. For this, we used MAXQDA data management software. The first author first reread and noted initial emerging thoughts in memos. She then started the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008), specifically following the hybrid

approach by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) that combines the strengths of inductive and deductive coding to produce a more holistic and nuanced analysis of qualitative data. We first started with inductive analysis, open coding the data without reference to the existing theoretical framework. The codes and their definitions were noted by the first author. Once the first round of inductive coding was finalised, the first author discussed this with the co-authors, and a consensus was reached. Next, we followed a deductive procedure, that is, we introduced the PERMA framework and integrated initial codes with the PERMA by placing the inductive subthemes within the deductive, PERMA determined overarching themes. We also checked whether codes could not be placed within the framework, which was not the case. By choosing the PERMA framework to analyse the data we find a middle ground from objectivist accounts of wellbeing that claim that certain objective elements should determine wellbeing in sport (Bloodworth et al., 2012) and those who argue that experiential, subjective measures are more successful in capturing the value of sport for people and their wellbeing (Testoni et al., 2018). Throughout the analysis process, we continuously compared and contrasted inductive and deductive codes. We went back and forth from the data and the framework until we felt that the findings represented a useful amalgam of information from inductive coding and existing knowledge from the theoretical framework (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Findings

Positive Emotions

The athletes were asked to reflect on what they like about their sport club and to share their happiest and most memorable experience at the sport club. Feelings of fun, pride, joy and excitement, calmness, contentment, and feelings of strength and resourcefulness were present in their positive reflections and memories.

Fun

Fun was a dominant emotion that athletes mentioned when asked why they liked their sport club. For instance, Nasuf reflected on his love for basketball: *Whenever I play basketball, I feel like sometimes I don't want to stop. It's like a lot of fun. I love basketball.* Fun was often mentioned in connection to peer relationships, i.e., spending time with friends, for instance: *Because it's just a lot of fun for me and you make a lot of friends through sport (Mia), or It's super fun. You can do things with friends (Felix).* The reason for sport being fun was also due to the mastery of new skills and taking part in competition. For example, Lena expressed that *Well, it's just that when you, um, always do something new, then, um, you're always happy, and then it's even more fun when you can do it again and again. And then, that also motivates you to continue.*

Contentment

The data has shown that sport participation made athletes content with themselves in different situations. This was due to noticing the progress they can achieve in sport, such as *It's something you can spend your time on, where you can put your energy, where you can improve (Timo).* Moreover, feelings of content stem from achieving small goals set out for the training session: *I just like the feeling when you've done sport, when you're so exhausted and*

proud that you've done it now. When you've achieved something, you've set out to do, it's always a nice feeling (Clara). They also recalled feelings of spending time doing something productive and useful for themselves, such as Monika, who when asked if and why she feels better after practicing sport, reflected on the usefulness of sport for her health and appearance: *I am doing something good for myself and that is very precious to me. I see it in my body, in myself, and I am happy with myself, and it makes me feel better. This is automatically better for me.* Mia also stated that: *...after sport you simply have a feeling of having done something productive and you haven't sat all day like at school.*

Calmness

Athletes talked about how practising sport helps them to manage their stress levels by providing time when they do not have to think about the stressor and focus on the sport. This seems to touch upon the engagement component of the PERMA framework. For instance, Mariana said: *Yes, when I'm having problems like at school, something, a bit of stress. I like to go training, because it clears my head and I forget about everything around and concentrate on training.* Moreover, Adam had a similar thought: *It [sport] can switch my mind off after a stressful day, just switch it off and then I just focus on the football.* Some athletes linked this to their peers: *I really enjoy training, because when I come to training, I abstain from everything. The atmosphere is good among us athletes and that's good. After training I always feel better* (Matilde).

Some athletes commented how physical activity facilitates what Lili called *liberated* feeling after the practice session. In that vein, Fran commented that: *One of the important reasons [why sport makes him feel good] is that you get tired in training, and with that you do not feel so bad anymore because the physical exertion kills that psychic, psychic negativity.* Alexander also thought along similar lines that: *If you've had a bad day, it goes away because*

you see your friends. You're not alone and you can just do gymnastics and let your energy out. For example, if someone is really angry, you can just let your energy out.

Pride

The data has shown that athletes, through accomplishment in sport, facilitated the sense of pride in themselves and the team. This was the case for accomplishing a skill or having a competition success. For instance, Emma shared: *Of course, you are very happy when you have done something or tried something new and it worked out. Then you are happy that you have done it. And then you're really proud of yourself. And then, when the others also support you, it feels very good. For example, when I did flick flack on the floor or something. But when I dared to do it alone, everyone was so proud. Then I was very happy that I had overcome my fear, so to speak.* Competition success also facilitated a sense of pride. For example, Mia: *That was a competition, the South German Championships about a year ago. I threw my best and then moved up to first place in the German best lists. I was really very happy then. That was a sense of achievement...I was very, very happy and also proud of myself because I threw very far and didn't expect it at all.*

Joy and Excitement

Athletes expressed that sport participation brought them joy because they were simply doing what they enjoyed doing. For instance, Ivan expressed that *When I'm swimming in this case, I feel good when I meet the goals and... ah... I don't know I feel good because I like it!* Some athletes also recalled emotions of excitement and thrill when winning or achieving certain goals. Such as David who recalled: *I think the happiest moment for me was when we went to the tournament, and we came first as a team. So, we were three in a club, three of us from the same club and the happiest moment was that we won it together and it was good... I cried with joy, I was moved.* Another example of a similar memory was expressed by Luca:

We once had a tournament against bigger teams, where Bayern also played. We won against a very good team and played well as a team. That was the happiest moment for me. We were the underdogs and the weaker team, and then we stuck together and won...I was very happy. I let my emotions show, I just enjoyed the time.

Feeling Strong and Resourceful

Some of the athletes mentioned how sport participation improves their health and fitness, which in turn makes them feel stronger and with more energy. Tiago thought: *Ah, yes, sport makes me feel good ...And I feel that I am doing something that I like, something useful. I really enjoy competing and I enjoy being well and it also ends up making me stronger, which is nice because I like being strong. Makes me stronger and stronger.* In a similar vein, Paolo deduced that: *Yes, sport makes me feel more. The athletes can run faster, jump higher and I have more energy,* and Aden highlighted: *I have energy to do a lot and I like that.* Mara also added that: *I feel good when I finish the training session because I know that I have used the time well and I did something useful for my body.*

Athletes also reflected on how sport participation makes them stronger in a sense of having more psychological resources, capacities and resilience. For instance, Ivana concluded: *I really find travelling great because they make me more independent. If there were no travel, I think I would have lost my motivation. In this way, this is a school of life, and it is somehow bigger than just being better in sport. So that's it.* Similarly, Mariana concluded sport builds her resilience: *I think it [sport] helps psychologically and obviously physically as well. It helps in everyday life to learn and know how to react to losing. Yes, it helps.*

Engagement

In the data there was some evidence of engagement and immersion in the activity. This was mentioned mostly in the context of dealing with stress in a sense that a complete focus on the sport activity provided athletes with a break from stressful everyday life. Sophia reflected about her engagement with her activity: *And otherwise also when we really do the routines. I really like that and then I just think about what the next step is and not about what else is happening in everyday life. I like that very, very much. Because I am so independent of everything else. I'm just lost in the dance.* Another athlete put it in a similar way: *So when I'm having a bit of a stressful time or something, it's definitely really good for me to do some sport. Or when I'm not feeling so well, it's also very liberating for you. Because during sport I somehow get a bit free from my head, then I'm actually only in my sport. And I also find it nice that my sport is with music and that I am somehow in my own world for that period of time* (Iris).

Relationships

Coach

Closeness and Acknowledgement. From the data it is visible that the most positive memories related to their coaches were related to moments of appreciation and reflection, when the coach took extra time and effort to speak to the athlete. For instance, Interviewee Lehel recalled: *We were at a team building and it was very early days, I was there about 1 year ago, it was 2020, yeah. And so I didn't have a lot of confidence so I wasn't doing so well with football, so we (coach and the athlete) had a really good conversation where he told me how much he saw in me and how good I was going to be and that he definitely wanted me to stay so I wouldn't give up and stuff like that. And it was really nice.* Data also showed that often these more intimate moments happened during additional social situations outside of the usual training routines, as was the case for Lehel. Other athletes also referred to how they

appreciated that coaches took effort to facilitate social connections. Lena: *I think it's very, very cool that our trainer is always doing something with us to strengthen this team spirit. So, recently we were all together in Regensburg for a weekend and at the gymnastics festival, too. And, um, then they also did that with us and organised everything for us. And then, um, and also in the summer we go out and sometimes we go to a lake or sometimes we go out to eat or something. And I think it is very cool that they organise this for us, because it is also extra work.*

Some athletes also recognized when coaches were invested in their success through expressing their genuine feelings of contentment with the accomplishment of the athlete. For instance, Emma recalled training: *Today during training I did a new skill on the parallel bars. And then she was also really happy for me. And this was a really nice moment.* Similarly, Ines recalled: *When I come out of an important fight that I've won and the way he, ready, doesn't point out the mistakes straight away but what I've done well and the way, there's always that final hug. I think that's it. In general he always does that. I think that's what the friendly moment is.*

Facilitating Accomplishment. Athletes spoke about how they appreciated the role of the coach in accomplishing their sporting goals in terms of their sporting expertise. When asked about positive experiences related to the coach, Maximilian expressed: *Uh yeah, so when he taught me a very hard skill. I was proud of myself, and it was also a lot dependent on him.* Also, the feeling of safety that the coach provided was relevant for athletes, especially gymnasts: *When she tells me how to do it, I just do it and then I don't have to think about it, I know she'll hold me (Maike).*

Athletes not only appreciated coaching skills but also additional effort the coach was willing to put into the athlete's success. For instance, this gymnast reported the so called

twisties, a mental block where gymnast loses a sense of body movement in the air: *I told you earlier about this mental block I had, and then he took a lot of time for me, and we often trained alone so that I could somehow manage to get rid of it. And at one training session I was suddenly able to make a twist again. It was as if the blockage had been solved, because he gave me a good encouraging talk. And then I was just happy, because that was the moment when I thought, OK, I don't have to stop now, it's working again. And then I could believe in myself again* (Leon). Similarly, Luca reflected on the situation when the coach directly facilitated success in the competition: *In training, we did a shooting exercise and somehow it didn't work out so well. After training, he came to me and talked to me for another 25 minutes or 30 minutes and showed me how to do it better. Then I scored a goal in the next game at the weekend, exactly with the shooting technique he showed me. That's when I was happy that he took the extra time to help me and say, "You can do this and this." That's why I thought it was great.*

Supportive and Pressure-free Environment. Creating a positive atmosphere where they get praised for achievement was relevant for some of the athletes. Praise was important to the athletes, as for instance, when reflecting on her coaches this young athlete indicated: *I think other than us in the competitions before we enter we have that moment of motivation there, but when we're in the trainings and I have some achievements I like it when they praise me* (Maria). Some young athletes in this study especially emphasised that they value support that they get from their coaches, even if the skill they were performing or competition results were not optimal. *Um, and yes, when the competitions become so, um, important, of course, then they are also a bit more tense, I would say. But, um, it's still not bad if we don't manage something. And that's always good to know* (Lena). In a similar vein Ivana spoke about how her coach has a motivating role but always reminds her to enjoy: *I learn something new at every meeting and that is for me the positive creation, she is here to show me the technique of*

how to do something and she always encourages me to give my best, to achieve the maximum. But is it not too harsh, she does not insist that I have to achieve something in particular, just to give the best of myself, and to try to enjoy it. She's rightly urging me to enjoy it, especially when in competition.

Peers

Friendship. The athletes reflected on the bonds and camaraderie that exist among them, emphasising the significance of friendship within sport experience. Leona, for instance, highlighted how spending extensive training time with teammates fosters friendships and imparts strength: *Um, yes, that's absolutely important because you can just talk to them during training. You have also become friends because you spend so much time together. So, I would say that is definitely important...Yes, I am absolutely satisfied there. So I was really lucky. I've known them all for a long, long time, we train a lot together. And it also gives you strength when you know people so well. You train together, so that's really nice (Leona).*

Matilde echoed this sentiment and underscored the friendships and deep connections formed through shared experiences in gymnastics: *We created bonds of friendship that I can't explain, I'll carry for life. We don't just do gymnastics. We call each other, we share about everything.... If I'm unwell I don't go unnoticed, meaning that our level of attention and care for each other leads us to be very closely knit together.*

Monika and Lehel further emphasised the role of humour and light-heartedness in team dynamics, showing how teammates uplift each other's spirits and create a positive atmosphere: *They're funny, they joke around, they talk and try to cheer me up if they see I'm in a bad mood. Lehel: Well, the team captain usually tells you off, but in a funny way. And the rest of us, I don't know, we just start talking and joking and then I don't have to get all excited, it just makes me feel better. Monika put it this way: If you come in a bad mood, there is always*

a special vibe between us. So, if one of us is down, the other one is there with a stupid joke that will make you brighten up. Automatically, my colleagues put me in a better mood.

Peers' Role in Mastery. The data has shown the pivotal role of peer support and motivation within the realm of sports mastery, and therefore, athlete's wellbeing in sport context. In essence, the data illuminated the power of camaraderie and mutual support in sport mastery where teammates not only inspire and motivate each other but also create an environment where athletes feel safe to take risks and perform at their best. For instance, Lena reflected on one of the situations in the sports club: *When you have, we had once, it was kind of a bad day, so, it didn't work out somehow, although I can actually do it. Sometimes I had this: "And if you succeed next time, then you'll get a chocolate or something next time". That you are then motivated again: hey, now I have to do it again, because I can do it. But if you've never done it before or something, then of course it's always like: "Yeah, it's not so bad and it took me a long time, but I know you can do it. And that's why. People motivate each other a lot. (Lena).* Maike, emphasised cheering as an expression of support: *Yes, because they are always there for me and say: "You can do it, you can do it, just do it like that. And they also cheer you on, for example when you stand up straight on the beam and then wobble a bit, then they call out: " Stay, stay, stay." Then you stay too, because they are cheering you on. They are there. You realise that you are not alone.* Petra reflected on the sense of freedom and lightness that stems from knowing that even if things go wrong, she can perform better: *For example, when I'm alone at practice and I don't have my teammates that I like and I'm playing with them, it's a lot harder to kind of get into the game, but when I'm surrounded by people that I like to play with and I know that I'm not going to be blamed if I make a mistake and stuff like that, I'm more free and maybe I can do things better (Petra).*

Peer Support in Competition. Peer support emerged as a coping mechanism when things were intense in competition and when participants recalled feelings of joy and

excitement related to the competitive experience. For instance, Leonor recounted a time when she felt sad and exhausted after a race but found solace and happiness through her training colleague and friend, who provided emotional support and encouragement. The act of talking to a colleague was important as a coping mechanism to overcome challenging situations. *It was the last race that I was very sad. We did relays and I was trying to do the time but then we had races and I was very tired. I was with a training colleague and friend, then she helped me to be happier.*

Interviewer: Good, and how do you overcome this kind of thing? What do you do to make it better?

Leonor: I talk to my colleague, I think he is a good person to help us, he is a person to talk to in these situations...she can make us happier and always say the right words to cheer us up and keep us positive. This underlines the importance of having supportive peers.

When recalling her most memorable experience from the sport participation, Lili emphasised that winning the best goalkeeper award in Zagreb made her happy. But what really stood out was when she was playing in a match with a larger team, and there was a big, exciting celebration. *Lili: ... the first one was Zagreb when I got the best goalkeeper award and we finished 4th and I think the second one was Zagreb last summer when I scored a goal from all over the pitch. That was the other one...the first time, I was a little bit smaller, I was happy about it, but there were a lot of people around and I was tired. The second one was during a match, and we were bigger and it was a great pleasure, a lot of people jumped on my neck.*

Parents

Support and Autonomy. The athletes in this study narrated and explained that their parents do not harbour ambitions for them to become professional athletes; instead, their primary concern is that they enjoy sport and maintain fitness. They also emphasised that they like it when parents are involved and have interest in their sport but that they show support, rather than pressure. The athletes also emphasised the sense of autonomy that their parents provided, which in turn, seems to enable a healthy and enjoyable relationship with sport. The interview excerpts from Luca and Maria illustrate this well:

Luca: I don't think they have any big goals for me to become a professional or anything. They just want me to have fun, but also do something for my fitness at the same time and just clear my head there.

Interviewer: How does that feel for you?

Luca: For me it feels very good. When I have support from my parents, I can just play in a more relaxed way, and I don't have any pressure. Some parents also pressure their children. I think my parents do that very well. They just let me decide freely.

Maria: My parents are involved, they help me even when things go less well and anything I need they are there. They go to competitions when they can, my dad less because he works more. But he watches the videos and all that.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Maria: Well, supported. They always say they love to see me and that's it....

Interviewer: Do you think they demand it from you or not?

Maria: Obviously they want to pull me to the best, they help you deal with some attitudes, but in terms of sporting results they don't demand.... I don't feel nervous about having my parents in the stands. So, it doesn't make me nervous.

Meaning

Young athletes articulated their thoughts on the meaning they attributed to their sporting activities. In that sense some of them described their sport participation as something positive, good and useful one can do for themselves, like Monika, who illustrated that she enjoys sport because: *I am doing something good for myself and that is very precious to me, or Felipe, Natation: Ah, yes, sport makes me feel good ...And I feel that I am doing something that I like, something useful.* Further examples include Leona: *But when you've done sport, you just have the feeling that you've done it for yourself, and you're also just a bit more satisfied, a bit more content, a bit calmer. And I like that very much.* Some athletes also regarded sport as a good way of spending their time because it allows them to progress: *It's something you can spend your time on, where you can put your energy, where you can improve. (Timo)*

Accomplishment

Accomplishment was a prominent theme in the data. Athletes valued the goal setting and achieving aspect of their sport participation. This pertained to mastery, in which athletes valued a sense of accomplishing skills and a sense of progress in their sport, as well as achieving competition results.

Mastery

The opportunity the sport participation provides for continuous progress featured in the data. For instance, Maïke highlighted that sport always provides a chance to improve: *You*

can always learn new things. It's never the case that you're now at the best point and you can't learn anything new. It is always the case that you have now achieved something, which is great, and then you can always learn something more. Another illustrative example came from a gymnast: Well, I've tried for years to manage this skill and I just couldn't do it. And I didn't really know what the problem was, and it just didn't work. And the coaches kept saying, "You'll manage, and we'll just do the exercises again and again, and eventually you'll manage. It comes suddenly, and then it works." And, um, yes, and then we practised it more and more. And then once, I think my friends moved to the other apparatus, and then I was there with some others from my group, I was there, and I really wanted to make it. And then I tried, and then, suddenly I was on top like that, and then, that was really cool. And then, of course, the others were like, "yeah", and then they were so happy with you. And that was pretty cool, because with these kips you could also do the heavier exercises directly and directly on the parallel bars. Because before, you could only do gymnastics on the high bar.

Competition

Competition success and winning was also a dominant theme in the data. When reflecting on the positive memorable situations related to sport participation, Adam recalled: *...we played against Soroksár on a big pitch away from home and I scored my first... Or, yes, my first goal on a big pitch, and my dad was right outside the game, so it was really good, and it was a really good feeling that all my teammates were there for me, because I scored the winning goal in the 75th minute and it was a really good feeling!*

What featured also prominently in the data for both, mastery and competition was the importance athletes gave to their supportive social surroundings. This is well reflected in the examples provided above, but also in the story a judo athlete shared about the event: *I think it was really, the girls' team winning the national team championship last year and this year.*

And also, the boys who came third. It was very exciting to see the finals and the fact that we were there, the whole team, supporting and shouting for us, pulling for us. It's a totally different atmosphere when it's just individual [competition]. And then, it's a whole preparation to prepare for that championship, the weigh-ins. Those who have to lose weight, we support them in training. And then it's the day. When the day comes, we are also more agitated. We have to give confidence to the younger ones. And then, this year, the final was really exciting, because by chance I lost a fight in the final that was important for me to win, so we were tied 2-2, because there are five categories. So it was tied there and the last fight was Raquel, because I think she's the youngest of the group. I'm not sure, but she was the one who broke the tie in the final. So, it was very exciting, because even though we lost fights, it doesn't matter because it's all one team fighting for the same thing. So, we have to keep our heads up and try to support and honour. This year was much more exciting because of that, last year also went very well. And that day we all went for dinner and went out. The after competition was really good as well, so I really think this was the happiest moment for me so far.

Combination of Mastery at a Competition

Some athletes were focused on mastery, but in a competitive setting: the happiest situation was at the Club Nationals, when we come out of the water and we celebrate the times and then I am happy when I improve the times in the races... (Leonor).

I can say that when I was at the last competition, when I set a personal best, I was with my assistant, and later the coach came, and I did everything exactly we did in the training session. And for the mindset and all the preparations, there is a certain amount of warm-up, visualisation and so on. I was aiming for six metres, but I ended up with 7 metres and 9 centimetres. I was pleased to see how much I realised that preparation and continuous

training are the key to success. It's like, when you exceed yourself, that's the sweetest thing.

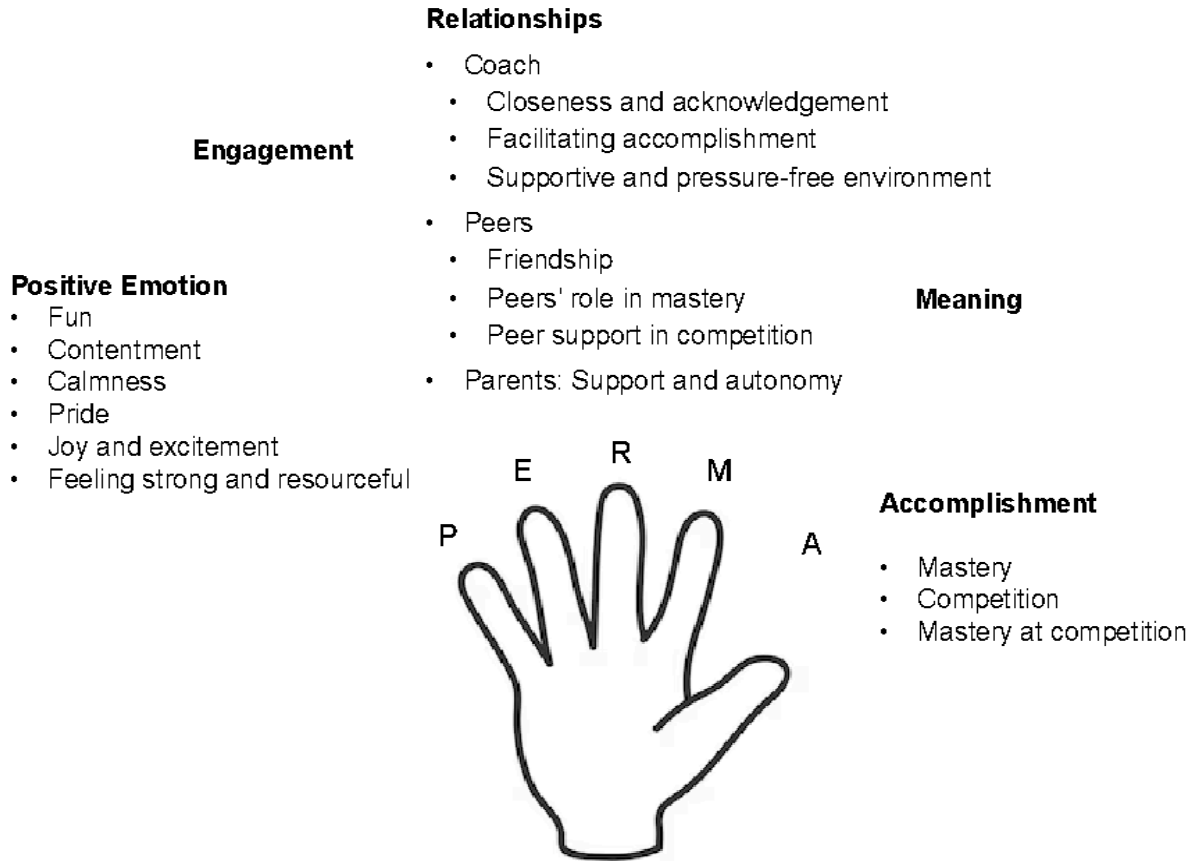
(Ivana)

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

The findings reveal that the PERMA framework is useful to describe young adolescents' self-reported changes in mental health in response to physical activity and sport participation. Our analysis reveals important facets within three of the five dimensions – Positive Emotion, Relationships, and Accomplishment – that provide both theoretical insights and recommendations for practice. Figure 1 provides an overview of the codes that were identified.

Figure 1.

Overview of the codes that were identified with Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) as outcomes of young adolescents' mental health in response to physical activity and sport participation.



The results provide implications to practitioners in the sense that the full range of emotions can be addressed via physical activity, that the network between coaches, parents, and peers is powerful in increasing mental health, that accomplishment is associated with mastery, often performed within competitions. Also, engaging and meaningful activities are helpful to increase mental health, according to voices of youth.

The limitations of the present study are manifold. First, the study does not rely on representative sampling. Convenience sampling was used and the informants differ between countries in many regards: what sport they practised, whether they had disabilities or not, and what relation they had to the interviewer. Many informants reported to train a lot in terms of the volume (hours per week). The sample is too skewed to stratify the sample between high- and low-volume adolescents in order to test whether there are differences in motives, and hence, reported mental health effects. Second, the study takes a qualitative approach and does

not assess cause-and-effect relationships. While our informants claimed that certain factors would increase their mental health, we do not know whether this is actually true. Self-ratings might be biased, for several reasons (e.g., lack of memory of bad moments, overestimation of the role of sport for mental health). Future research may use a quantitative approach to identify changes in mental health that can be attributed to physical activity and sport. Third, the study did not focus on negative mental health outcomes. Factors such as depression and anxiety can be not only reduced via physical activity and sport, but also promoted via physical activity and sport. Thus, future research may also consider negative downstream relations of physical activity and sport participation to get a holistic view of potential positive and negative effects.

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Appendix I

Interview guidelines

Introduction

(Read the introduction to the participants as it is written here.)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This should not take more than an hour of your time. I will ask you questions, which you do not have to answer if you do not feel like it. This conversation is confidential, meaning that I will not tell anyone you know any information you share with me today, not your parents, coaches, or friends. With your permission, I will record the conversation because we need to analyse the interview, but as soon as we do, I will delete it from my phone. Is this okay with you?

Before we start, do you have any questions or concerns?

Warm-up questions

1. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself: where do you come from, and how old are you?
2. What has been your favourite holiday destination? Why? What did make you feel good when you were on holiday?
3. What do you do in your free time? Do any of these things make you feel good? Why?
 - 3.1. Does sport help you feel good? In what way? Why do you feel better after you exercised?
4. What do you particularly do when you feel down? Why?
 - 4.1. Does sport help you feel better when you are down? In what way? Why do you feel better after you exercised?

Sport/PA environment

5. Now, I would like to focus on your sport club. How long have you been practicing your sport? Why did you start with your sport? What are the main reasons you still do it?

5.1. How often do you practice in a typical week? How long are the sessions?

5.2. Do you participate in competitions? What was the highest level-competition you took part in?

5.3. Besides this, do you practice a second or third sport? If yes, how often and for how long?

5.4. How often and for how long you have PE classes at school?

6. What do you like in the sport club and everything that happens within the sport club? Why?

7. What could the sport club do better? Why?

8. Can you describe a typical training session?

Probes: what do you do? What does your coach do? Are your parents involved? What do your colleagues from the club do?

9. Now, I would like you to take a moment to think about one or more situations in which you felt the happiest at your club. Can you describe what happened in as much detail as you can?

Probes: where were you, what were you doing, who was there, what did they do? Why were you happy?

9.1. What were your thoughts, feelings and reactions to the situation?

10. Now, I would like you to take a moment to think about one or more difficult situations in which you felt mentally really bad at your club. Can you describe what happened in as much detail as you can? *Probes: where were you, what were you doing, who was there, what did they do, was this a recurring situation?*

10.1. What were your thoughts, feelings and reactions to the situation? What did you do about it? Who was most helpful to you in this situation?

Coach

11. Can you describe your current coach in three words?

12. How does your coach normally behave during practice? What does s/he say or do?

13. What about the competition: how does your coach normally behave during competition? What does s/he say or do?

14. Now again, think of a very positive and memorable situation that you went through with your coach. Can you describe it in as much detail as possible?

15. Now, can you think of a difficult situation that you went through with your coach? Can you describe it in as much detail as possible?

Peers

16. Are peers from your club important to you? In what ways?

17. Are you satisfied with your peer relationships? If yes, why?

18. Do your peers help you feel good? If yes, how exactly?

19. Were there sometimes situations where you thought that they were not nice? What happened: can you describe the situation?

Parents

20. Are your parents involved in your sport activities? If yes, in what ways?

21. (if yes) What do you think they expect from you in terms of sport?

22. (if yes) How does that make you feel? Can you describe a situation when you felt this way?

23. Is there anything else that I forgot to ask you or that you would like me to know?

THANK YOU!

Appendix II

Interviewers

Interviewer: Iva Glibo

Country: Germany

Institute: Technical University of Munich

Iva Glibo is a doctoral candidate at the Chair of Sport and Health Management where her work focuses on sustainable development. Her research expertise include a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies useful for this project. She published on youth sport and mental health, both in academic and non-academic outlets. She is also a Committee member in ENGSO Youth and has extensive experience in the work on international sport with focus on youth.

Interviewer: Claudia Nystrand

Country: Finland

Institute: Monaliiku

Claudia Nystrand has been working as Managing Director for Monaliiku since March 2015. She is responsible for the not-for-profit organization's strategy, funding opportunities and external relations. She has strong skills in project coordination, budget monitoring and evaluation.

Interviewer: Paulina Perusina

Country: Croatia

Institute: Rijeka Sports Association for Persons with Disabilities

Paulina Perusina is an EU project manager, certified leader in the development and implementation of projects financed by the EU. She has experience in organization and implementation of local, regional, national, and European projects. She is currently the coordinator of the Erasmus+ and EVS program, as well as event manager, organizing larger events, such as Street Art MUV festival (i.e., a two-day Street Art festival for youth in Volosko) and Creative Evening within the project OKiZA (i.e., Opatija's culture and green activism).

Interviewer: Tania Vieira

Country: Portugal

Institute: Sport Alges e Dafundo

Sport Alges e Dafundo is a renowned sports center nestled in the heart of Lisbon. It has been instrumental in shaping champions both in sports and life since its inception in 1915. This prestigious sports facility offers a wide array of opportunities, ranging from martial arts to basketball, and has consistently nurtured talent and instilled values in aspiring athletes. Tania is an esteemed coach at Sport Alges e Dafundo.

Interviewer: Bence Garamvolgyi

Country: Hungary

Institute: Budapest Association for International Sports (BAIS)

BAIS is based in Budapest, Hungary. The primary goal of the organization is to advance participation in grassroots sports activities and support the development of healthy attitudes among young people regardless of their origin and social status. The secondary goal is to bring people together through the shared passion for sports and physical activity. BAIS' motto is building bridges through sport.

Hooray



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