



DYNAMICS OF THE INTEREST AND MOTIVATION IN SPORT-RECREATIONAL ANIMATION WITH CHILDREN

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Abstract:

The current research follows the dynamics of the interest and motivation of 10-12 year-olds in the process of Sport-Recreational animation program, including purposefully planned and realized activities. The role of the interest as well as the motivation of the achievements as basic determiners for the quality of the Sport-Recreational animation programs for children are presented together with opportunities for their diagnostics. The analysis of the results performed in the process of the empirical study gives the chance for the outlining of the basic tendencies and the basic improvement of the attractiveness of the Sport-Recreational animation programs for children in the context of their motivation and interest.

Keywords: sports animation for children, interest, motivation, motivational dynamics, quality of the sport-recreational animation programs

1. Introduction

Animation in tourism in nowadays circumstances is seen as a special form of activity for the socialization of the personality, as means of creation and development of team spirit, pleasure and delight, which are all related to the development of the human. The need for animation really exists, since it is evoked by the actual deficits of the living space, not having found concrete expression in the everyday life of the individual. Effective animation contributes to a great deal to the increasing of emotions and

stimulating of psychological stability of the individual. Animation means management of the relations in the free time of tourists, i.e. *„good program, more adventures, contacts and it is basically the living relation between one guest and the others, the place, the region, the locals, the culture and traditions“* (Dinev / Tomova 2001). Thus, it is placed in *„favour of searching for expressiveness, spontaneity, joy and easiness“* (Bette 1989) as it activates communication processes through participating in specially developed programs. Sport – Recreational animation is with markedly dominant character in comparison with the other types of recreational animation, which is based on the peculiarities of the searching for action needs, recreation, and pleasure. Sport-Recreation animation, being a basic type of animation, has the mission to positively influence the health and emotions of individuals participating in it by helping the regaining of the mental as well as physical energy exhausted by the individual together with the practice of healthy lifestyle. It is *„related to the integration between sports and tourism“* (Tomova / Dinev 2008) and it is *„a sports-touristic service which aims to offer ready-made sports and Sport-Recreational programs for variegation and development of tourist services“* (Garkov / Boyanov / Terzieva 2012). Concerning its content, the different Sport-Recreational programs encompass a great variety of activities for fulfillment which are with different level of difficulty in accordance with the needs of individuals of all ages. They all vary in the strength of their muscles, their dexterity, and their preferences. Sport-Recreational animation activities are *„focused on the reaching of emotional satisfaction through pressure, expectation, exaltation, and liveliness“* (Terzieva / Garkov 2012).

All of the above-mentioned characteristics of animation turn it into an activity which stimulates the increasing of interest and motivation of its participants, and the fact that it is particularly suitable for children. Free time utilization for children through sports activities, included in specially developed programs, is a priority of animation tourism. Sport-Recreational animation for children is a combination of games, attractions and positive emotions. According to Miteva, the gist of children animation lies in the following basic elements:

Several basic relations with other activities determine the essence and types of children’s animation:

- physical (sports) activity;
- play – entertaining plays, plays focused on skill developments, adventure animation;
- communication (social skills and emotional competence);
- creativity – development of the capacity for creative activities (Miteva 2013).

Each and every one of the listed elements has to be taken into consideration upon developing Sport-Recreational animation programs for children. One of the key

requirements which each of the Sport-Recreational animation programs for children is that it „has to be flexible and relating to the children's age" (Dimitrov 2004). The other significant moment is that the interest and motivation of children is determinative for the adequate realization of Sport-Recreational animation programs and it is closely related to its quality.

Motivation lies in the basis of all human activity; it is „a process and a state with a number of interactions and different variables (necessities, intensity of proclivities, provocative value of the goal, expectations, already functional models of behavior, conflicts and contradictions of motives, unconscious factors) acting as behavioral regulators" (Radev 2005).

Over the past years, an increasing interest towards motivation as a key factor in the development of Sport-Recreational animation has been seen, where animation is perceived as a complex of numerous motives and needs: physiological, social, personal. Motivation and success are internal states or conditions that create specific behavior during the Sport-Recreational animation program; they evoke particular wishes which direct children's behavior to specific goals. The strive for success is a motive substantially significant for children, whereas the realization of various activities by them is directly related to the motivation for achievement – it is an important psychological prerequisite for the normal process, being a combination of needs and motives for action in the context of Sport-Recreational animation activities liable to evaluation and more or less success. The motivation for success is a construct which has the following divisions: strive for success in activities and its adequate evaluation; strive for overcoming obstacles with high level of difficulty; tendency to solving of difficult tasks which provoke human abilities; strive for perceiving of information for the abilities of an individual (Radev 2005).

Interests are another important motive for the activities of the individual, which are usually interpreted as „a component of the teleology of activity" (Levitov 1969); „a specific cognitive proclivity" (Leontiev, 1974); a specific cognitive direction (Piryov 1975); „a form of self-expression" (Dewey 1913); a specific form of relation between an individual and an object" (Schiefele / Krapp 1988). The interest, as a relatively durable preference of the activities that goes together with the attitude and results of it, gives the opportunity for the aim and the leading motive to coincide. The interest of children towards Sport-Recreational activities makes it a dynamically active condition based on the satisfaction with the results. The attitude is directly related to personally significant individual interest, which correspondingly is connected to the chance for a reflexive activity and evaluative worth of the sport-recreational situations. The attitude of children towards this activity is a ground part of the whole direction of the personality, expressed by specific Sport-Recreational animation situations. The direction of the

interest as well as the motivation for achievement is closely related to the character and attitude of the individuals being evoked in the circumstances of Sport-Recreational animation activity. All of this leads to the research of the interest and motivational dynamics of children in the process of Sport-Recreational animation services, thus aiming at definition of possibilities for their improvement and development.

2. Material & methods

After determining the divisions, conditions and prerequisites for the increasing of the interest and motivation towards sport-recreational animation activities, a concrete ten-day Sport-Recreational animation program for children of 10-12 years of age has been developed and applied, which serves as a basis for the improvement of the quality of the animation. It basically involves activities from the field of sports, pleasure and culture, where their interrelation, characteristics, place and gradation, both separately and together within the ten-day period, are based to a great extent on the corresponding concept for animation. The different activities included in the hereby presented sport-recreational animation program are organized and realized by the team of animators. Concerning the organization plan, the concrete Sport-Recreational animation program involves the following activities: gymnastics (incl. water), relay-races, football, basketball, volleyball, beach football, beach volleyball, darts, bowling tournaments for various sports, sculpture of sand figures, thematic studios in painting, thematic children's parties and shows (performances), competitions with kites, sea-shore walks, shell-collecting, visits to adventure and aqua-parks, Miss and Mister competitions, fashion shows.

An important element of the design and the methodology of the research is the creation and adaptation of the instruments for its processing. The basic methods used in the process of the empirical study are testing and monitoring.

By the method of monitoring the outer examples of attitude can be successfully researched (the interest and motivation for achievements) as they are reflected into the characteristics and the length of Sport-Recreational animation activities with their results. Its basic aim is to estimate to what extent the application of the developed sport-recreational animation program and the realization of Sport-Recreational animation activities, leads to the enhancing of the interest and motivation among children, how this influences the attitude of children to the activity and its results as well as an initial evaluation as to whether it is effective.

The monitoring as a research method and its effectiveness are connected to the following requirements: it is to be subject to the basic aim of the study; it is to be

preliminarily planned and organized; the results of it are to be registered and filed; it is to be sufficiently concrete, i.e. directed to separate elements from reality; it is to be prolonged and systematic, also based on sensor organs of the observer (Bizhkov / Kraevski 1999).

We have tried to influence the behavior and attitude the least in the process of the research. However, having in mind the aim as a means in that particular moment, we have chosen standardized monitoring without the awareness of the children.

In view of the aims of the study, the hereby criteria are indirectly presented in the developed report for monitoring, and the results are analyzed and given as:

- interest shown on behalf of the children;
- positive attitude and readiness to take part in sport-recreational animation activities;
- attitude, activeness and emotional status of children in the process of various sport-recreational animation activities as well as their desire to self-participate in them;
- evaluation of the achieved results in the process of each and every activity.

For the realization of the appointed aim a Test for motivation has been adapted and used. This test does not investigate the motivation for studying at all, it does investigate the specificity of the motivation towards studying which can be seen with certain school subjects. The methodology includes 15 judgements with 4 options for answer each (true, rather true, rather false, and false). The test is checked for reliability and validity (criteria and construct).

3. Results

After the needed processing of the monitoring results as well as the test for motivation, we can reach the following conclusions in the context of the whole empiric study.

The main goal of the diagnostics is connected with the possibility to check the efficiency of Sports-Recreational Animation activities, and also, how much this motivation in the process of these activities (registered by testing and monitoring) influences the motivation of children to participate in Sports-Recreational Animation programs as a whole.

The comparison of the final test clearly shows a substantial difference between the results of the experimental group (with an active application of a Sports-Recreational Animation program) and the control group. The empirical value of Student's criteria is $t_{emp}=2,67$, and the table value with a level of significance $\alpha = 0,05$ is $t_{\alpha}=1,98$. It can be seen that $t_{emp} > t_{\alpha}$ ($2,67 > 1,98$), (sig. (p) = $0,01 < 0,05$ – significant

difference.). Since the empirical characteristics of the hypothesis is bigger than the theoretical one, we dismiss the Null hypothesis, according to which the difference between the average rates is accidental and instead we accept that the difference is actually statistically significant, e.g. it is due to regular factors. Therefore the average values in the final study (in notional units for motivation assessment) of the experimental and control groups are statistically differentiated. This statistically significant difference shows the efficiency of the applied Sports-Recreational Animation program.

The efficacy is measured by the magnitude of the effect of the experimental impact, which is determined by the changes in the dependent variable, read by the Cohen's d indicator. The verification of the hypothesis and the determination of the magnitude of the effect in both the experimental and control groups are mutually complementing procedures. The verification of the hypothesis shows that the experimental impact has definite and promising effect, and the magnitude of this effect itself is an indicator for the scope and power of the experimental impact. Usually the researchers not only explain if the differences between the meanings of the arithmetic-means count as statistically significant, but also specify the relative power of the effect, brought by the experimental impact (Goodwin 2004). The power of the effect in this particular study is particularly big $d=1,32$ ($\gg 0,8$). Therefore, one can reach the conclusion about the efficiency of the Sports-Recreational Animation program with regard to the children's motivation and their interest and achievements in the course of the realization of the constituent activities.

A more detailed analysis of the motivation test results, conducted both at the beginning and the end of the study, shows a number of interesting dependencies with regard to children's motivation and specifically their achievement motivation in the course of the Sports-Recreational Animation activity. At the beginning of the study only 46% of the children define the Sports-Recreational Animation as something which gives them the opportunity to better understand themselves and their abilities and skills. In the beginning, the activities are thus arranged as to accommodate the possibilities for integration of the different children mainly in a team frame, and later with every next day, activities with higher level of individuality, which presupposes a feeling of exploration of one's own skills and abilities, are gradually introduced.

At the end of the Sports-Recreational Animation program already 90% of the children aged 10 – 12 have a higher assessment of their own abilities and recognize the role of their inclusion in the variety of activities as the main reason for that. This is a powerful motivational factor, connected with the formation of self-identity based on the

success rates in a given activity, which in turn presupposes increased levels of motivation.

At the beginning of the study, 45% of the participants evaluate the Sports-Recreational Animation program as interesting and giving them the possibility to display the maximum of their abilities, but at the end of the study the number is already 78%. The arrangement of the activities in the program accommodates the gradual employment of the personal abilities of each and every participant to their full extend. At the same time, a careful assessment of the various activities can help prevent development of anxiety and stress in children, caused by an inability to fully display their capabilities.

The suggested Sports-Recreational Animation activities are judged as uninteresting at the beginning of the study by 62% of the children, who take part in them only because it is required to do so by their parents or the animators. At the end of the study already up to 82% of the participants in the activities declare that judgement (that the activities are uninteresting) to be not true. The dynamics in the assessment of the offered Sports-Recreational Animation activities can be explained by the impossibility for the children to display their full potential at the beginning of the study, which in turn reflects their chance for success in the competitive elements of the program. The overcoming of the difficulties and the results achieved in the course of time are a base for a positive assessment from the kids with regard to the various activities.

4. Discussion

The interest and motivation for achievement of the children in the course of each and every activity, included in the Sports-Recreational Animation program, are in direct connection with the degree of difficulty of the suggested activity. At the beginning of the study only 35% of the participants judge the difficulties as a motive for achieving success and as making the activities more interesting. In contrast, by the end of the study 88% of the children think that the difficulties arising during the Sports-Recreational Animation activities make them more entertaining.

The indifference to success, provoked by the difficulties, undergoes substantial dynamics in the course of Sports-Recreational Animation activities. Despite the fact that in the beginning the children are not inclined to explore different alternatives for the achievement of real success during the different activities, this behavior, which is connected mainly with the desire to avoid unsatisfactory results, changes in the course of the realization of the Sports-Recreational Animation program.

The difficulties arising during the various activities included in the program are a substantial motivator for the kids. At the beginning of the study just 25% of the children try to analyze their mistakes and fix them. In comparison, by the end, 68% of the kids show desire to achieve better results by trying to avoid previous mistakes. At the beginning of the study the independent completion of the tasks set by the animator during the program is observed with only 29% of the children. The Sports-Recreational Animation program presupposes the arrangement of the various activities in a way that ensures the possibility of gradual increase of the level of independence required from the kids for the completion of different tasks. Motivated to independently carry out the assigned tasks at the end of the study are already 76% of the participants. This is so because the activities included in the Sports-Recreational Animation program and their execution give the children the feeling that they are doing it independently and in the course of the program this feeling deepens even more i.e. the design (content and structure) of the program ensures the possibility for a gradual transition in the role of the animator from an active hands-on instructor at the beginning to a discrete, more passive assistant to the child at the end of the study. This shows the acquired, in the course of implementing of the activities, self-confidence of the children, which by itself can influence their self-belief in a substantial way.

The results about the level of motivation acquired during the implementation of the different activities are statistically significant and are helpful for the better understanding of the influence of the developed Sports-Recreational Animation program on the goal-oriented motivation, which is an extremely important part of the motivation as a whole. Although researching motivation is quite a complicated process, dealing with different factors which guide, regulate and support individual acts in the process of different activities, still, doing this research in the process of Sports-Recreational Animation program we can draw conclusions with regard to the children's attitude towards the activities and the results achieved.

In order to establish the correlation between the success rates and the level of motivation during an activity, the Chi-square (χ^2) method was employed, because the empirical data is presented as variable of two scales – ordinary (success rate) and nominal (level of motivation, which is marked mainly as qualitatively). If the Null hypothesis (H_0) states that between the success rates of the children and their achievement-motivation levels there is no connection, the alternative hypothesis says that such a connection does exist. The empirical characteristic of the hypothesis is $\chi^2_{\text{emH}} = 8,56$, while $\chi^2_{\text{T}} = 4,88$ ($\alpha=0,05$). The comparison of the theoretical and empirical characteristics, i.e. $\chi^2_{\text{emH}} > \chi^2_{\text{T}}$ ($8,56 > 4,88$), allows for the rejection of the Null hypothesis in favor of the Alternative hypothesis, which means that there is regular connection

between the success rates and achievement-motivation levels in sport-animation activities.

During the initial registration of the observed data during the Sports-Recreational Animation activities events and right after the completion of the monitoring phase has been employed a system of codes and arbitrary symbols which helps with the speeding up of the registration of the respective indicators and gives a chance for the monitors to do their job without too much distraction for the kids. After decoding the information is written down in the monitor protocol, which then is processed and the full information about the observed events during the course of the study is extracted and can be seen in Figure 1 below.

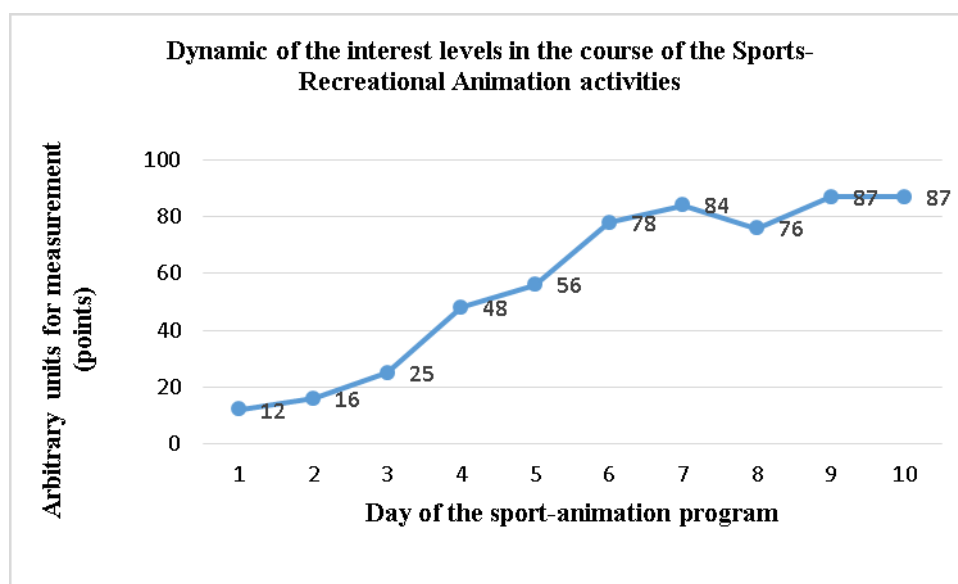


Figure 1

The results of the conducted empirical study convincingly demonstrate that the various activities included in the Sports-Recreational Animation program motivate the children for active and willing participation, what's more, noted was also a positive change in their complex attitude towards the activities as a whole (interests, motivation, reflection and self-reflection).

5. Conclusions

The need for increasing the quality of Sports-Recreational Animation activities really exists because it is a consequence of actual deficits of the contemporary social environment which has not found specific expression in the everyday consciousness of the potential subjects of Sports-Recreational Animation activity. Effective Sports-

Recreational Animation contributes a great deal towards the emotional enrichment and it stimulates the psychological stabilization of a person. That is why the better understanding of the factors contributing to the quality improvement of the Sports-Recreational Animation is an important determinant for its full realization. There are many factors influencing the motivation of a person to participate in Sports-Recreational Animation activities, including: taking an interest in the particular activity, perceiving its usefulness, desire for achievement and realization, self-believe and self-respect, patience and persistency etc.

Researching the interest and motivation for achievements in children (10 – 12 years old) during the Sports-Recreational Animation activities gives us a chance for the adequate measurement of the attitude of the subjects towards the activity and its results. The possibility to follow the motivational dynamic is decisive for the quality implementation of Sports-Recreational Animation activities and their improvement. Ensuring the conscious and purposeful participation of the children in the activities helps them to become more organized and exercise self-control, stimulates their interest and motivation for achievements. There is a natural connection between the children's success rates in Sports-Recreational Animation activities and the level of their motivation for success. The results of the study which gave us the possibility to register the levels of interest and motivation, and their dynamics in the course of Sports-Recreational Animation activities point to a search for ways to explore the limits for self-determination of the children in the process of these activities, as a part of their autonomy and personal identity.

In summary, on the basis of the monitoring data and the resulting conclusions, it can be said that an increased interest in Sports-Recreational Animation activities, with more than half of the children showing strong interest in the separate activities, has been ascertained. This brings us to the conclusion that with the implementation of such programs the number of children willing to actively participate in them increases. Parallel to the increase in interest there is also a visible readiness in the children for a higher degree of independence during the activities and as a whole we can observe a positive attitude towards the Sports-Recreational Animation programs and its results.

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