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**Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences**

**The Relationships between Parental Involvement and  
Young Male Athletes' Behavioural Regulations in Soccer**

by

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### Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate: a) the construct validity of the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (Lee & MacLean, 1997) in the Greek language, and b) how young male soccer players perceive and desire parental involvement in their sport life as well as how the parental involvement related to their behavioural regulations and worry. The study was approached through the self determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Four hundred and eighty-seven male soccer players, aged 9 to 15 years of old, ( $M = 11.55$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ) participated in the study, members of urban soccer clubs. The Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (Lee & MacLean, 1997) was used to assess perceived and desired parental involvement (praise and understanding, active involvement, directive behaviour). The Behavioral Regulation in Sport Questionnaire (Lonsdale, Hodge, & Rose, 2008) was used to assess athletes' behavioural regulations (amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic regulation), and the worry subscale of the Sport Anxiety Scale (Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2006) was used to assess athletes' worry. All the instruments were administered in the Greek language. The results of the study revealed that the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire can be an effective measure for examining parental involvement with Greek samples. The analyses showed that perceived and desired praise and understanding as well as desired active involvement had low but significant positive correlations with intrinsic and identified regulation and negative but not statistically significant relationships with the non-self-determined forms of regulation (i.e., introjected, external regulation and amotivation) and worry. Moreover, children's perceived parental involvement and more specifically perceived and desired directive behaviour had low but significant positive relationship with external regulation and amotivation and non-significant relationships with children's intrinsic and identified

regulation and worry. As the role of a sport parent is important, the findings of the study are discussed with positive parenting in mind over children's sport participation.

Implications of the results of this study for sport psychology practitioners are also discussed, as sport parent education workshops are common practice in recent days in Greece.

## Περίληψη

Σκοπός της παρούσας έρευνας ήταν να διερευνηθεί: α) η εγκυρότητα εννοιολογικής κατασκευής του ερωτηματολογίου των Lee και MacLean (1997) στην ελληνική γλώσσα, και β) ο τρόπος με τον οποίο αντιλαμβάνονται και επιθυμούν νεαροί αθλητές την εμπλοκή των γονέων τους σχετικά με τη συμμετοχή τους στο ποδόσφαιρο και πώς σχετίζεται με τις ρυθμίσεις συμπεριφοράς και την ανησυχία τους. Η θεωρία του αυτοκαθορισμού (Deci & Ryan) αποτέλεσε το θεωρητικό υπόβαθρο της παρούσας έρευνας. Στην έρευνα συμμετείχαν 487 νεαροί ποδοσφαιριστές ηλικίας 9-15 ετών ( $M.O. = 11.55$ ,  $T.A. = 1.56$ ), οι οποίοι ήταν μέλη σε αστικές ακαδημίες ποδοσφαίρου. Το Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (Lee & MacLean, 1997) χρησιμοποιήθηκε για να αξιολογήσει ξεχωριστά την αντιλαμβανόμενη εμπλοκή των γονέων από τους αθλητές (επιβράβευση και κατανόηση, ενεργή εμπλοκή, καθοδηγητική συμπεριφορά) και την επιθυμητή γονεϊκή εμπλοκή. Το Behavioral Regulation in Sport Questionnaire (Lonsdale, Hodge, & Rose, 2008), χρησιμοποιήθηκε για να αξιολογήσει τις ρυθμίσεις συμπεριφοράς των αθλητών (έλλειψη παρακίνησης, εξωτερική ρύθμιση, ενδοβολική ρύθμιση, ρύθμιση μέσω τάνυσης, εσωτερική ρύθμιση) και γ) η υποκλίμακα Ανησυχίας από το Sport Anxiety Scale (Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2006), για να αξιολογήσει το αίσθημα ανησυχίας των αθλητών. Όλα τα εργαλεία μέτρησης χορηγήθηκαν στην Ελληνική γλώσσα. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας έδειξαν ότι το Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire αποτελεί αποτελεσματικό εργαλείο μέτρησης για την εμπλοκή γονέων σε Έλληνες νεαρούς αθλητές. Οι αναλύσεις έδειξαν επίσης, ότι η αντιλαμβανόμενη και επιθυμητή επιβράβευση και κατανόηση, καθώς και η επιθυμητή ενεργή εμπλοκή είχαν χαμηλή αλλά στατιστικά σημαντική θετική συσχέτιση με την εσωτερική ρύθμιση και τη ρύθμιση μέσω ταύτισης (αυτοκαθοριζόμενες μορφές ρύθμισης), ενώ είχαν αρνητική και μη στατιστικά σημαντική συσχέτιση με τις μη

αυτοκαθοριζόμενες μορφές ρύθμισης (ενδοβολική ρύθμιση, εξωτερική ρύθμιση, έλλειψη παρακίνησης) και την ανησυχία των αθλητών. Επιπλέον, η αντιλαμβανόμενη και επιθυμητή καθοδηγητική συμπεριφορά είχε χαμηλή αλλά στατιστικά σημαντική θετική συσχέτιση με την εξωτερική ρύθμιση και έλλειψη παρακίνησης στους αθλητές, ενώ δεν είχε στατιστικά σημαντική συσχέτιση με τις αυτοκαθοριζόμενες μορφές ρύθμισης και την ανησυχία των αθλητών. Καθώς ο ρόλος του γονέα στον αθλητισμό είναι σημαντικός, τα ευρήματα της έρευνας ερμηνεύονται και συζητώνται λαμβάνοντας υπόψη το θετικό γονικό ρόλο αναφορικά στη συμμετοχή των παιδιών στον αθλητισμό. Συζητώνται επίσης επακόλουθα για αθλητικούς ψυχολόγους, καθώς στην σημερινή εποχή εκπαιδευτικά σεμινάρια για γονείς αθλητών πραγματοποιούνται σε συχνή βάση.



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

Participation in sport is a key factor for the physical, social and psychological growth of children (Giannitsopoulou, Kosmidou, & Zisi, 2010). Teachers, coaches, peers, and parents all affect and shape a child's sport experience and highly determine if the experience is a positive or negative one. Parents, are the most powerful from all "significant others" as children remain within the family institution for many years, thus parents' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours undoubtedly affect a child's physical activity and participation in sports (Byrne, 1993). Parents provide financial and emotional support by assuming the roles of a motivator, a facilitator and even a coach in a young athlete's life (Hoyle & Leff, 1997). Parental roles, involvement and behaviours and how these influence children's behavioural regulations in youth sport, is an under-researched area in Greece that warrants attention.

Starting with why children participate or withdraw from sport, a number of investigators have used the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which provides a clear-cut theoretical framework explaining children's motivation and behaviour toward physical activity participation. The self-determination theory suggests that motivated behaviour can be divided into two categories, which are typified by varying degrees of self-determination. On the one hand, controlled forms of motivated behaviour are regulated by non-self-determined forces. On the other hand, autonomous forms of motivated behaviour are regulated by internal self-determined forces. Five different types of behavioural regulation can be ordered on a self-determination continuum, across the two broad categories of controlled and autonomous forms.

Intrinsic motivation is characterized as the most autonomous or self-determined form of behavioural regulation and refers to participation in an activity by an individual

for its own sake (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation is a unitary construct. In contrast, Vallerand (1997) separated intrinsic motivation into three equally autonomous forms: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation to accomplish, and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation.

Extrinsic motivation is represented by four types of regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985): external regulation (behaving to attain a reward), introjected regulation (participating because one feels one should), identified regulation (behaviour occurs to achieve a desired outcome), and integrated regulation (participating because it is who and what I am). External regulation and introjected regulation represent controlling types of behavioural regulation. In contrast, identified and integrated regulations are viewed as autonomous types of extrinsic motivation.

Ryan and Deci (2002) also referred to amotivation, which exists when there is lack of motivation. An individual lacks a sense of intention to take part in an activity and questions its continued participation. Thus, the individual is considered to lack self-determination.

Deci and Ryan (1985) posit that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are universally essential for optimal human development, motivation, and integrity. Accordingly, the stimulus for motivated behaviour is having a sense of choice and volition (autonomy), a sense of efficacy in performance (competence), and a need to feel connected and accepted by significant others within one's social milieu (relatedness). The more the individual basic needs are satisfied (i.e. autonomy, competence, and relatedness), the more one's levels of self-determined motivation may increase, and hence lead to enhanced psychological well-being (Deci, 1980).

Parental involvement influences the satisfaction of children's psychological needs while participating in sport. A supportive and challenging environment with

positive feedback by parents may inspire children to develop their interest in sport, to develop a high perception of self-competence, as well as to increase their intrinsic motivation in sport participation (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Kimiecik & Horn, 2012; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2006). On the other hand, excessive interest or controlling behaviours from parents may enhance negative emotional experiences in children's sport (Bois, Lalanne, & Delforge, 2009). These behaviours may lead to lack of autonomy and decrease intrinsic motivation.

The degree of parental involvement appears to play an important role in the way children perceive their parent's participation. As such, moderate parental involvement seems to facilitate sport participation whereas both over-involved and under-involved parents can play a disruptive role (Hellstedt, 1987). Perceived over-involvement may lead to high levels of anxiety and pressure for children that may result in withdrawal from sport. On the other hand, perceived under-involvement may also lead to withdrawal from sport due to the children's perceived lack of support from their parents. Although the degree of parental involvement is important for a child's sporting career, it is also important to highlight that the quality of the parent-child interaction should also be considered. The way parents are involved is fundamental in child's sport participation and success by acting positively or negatively (Brustad, 1993).

According to this, Lee and MacLean (1997) identified four (4) dimensions of parenting practices that characterize the quality of a parent's involvement in a child's sport. These parenting practices include: active involvement, directive behaviour, praise and understanding, and pressure. It is important, however, to mention that parental practices one child considers as acceptable and/or desirable, may create pressure and stress to another child. For example, Wuerth, Lee, and Alfermann (2004) found a significant difference in parenting practices between German athletes at different phases

of their career. Athletes in the initiation phase perceived more directive behaviour, more pressure and also more praise and understanding than athletes in the developmental and mastery phases. Giannitsopoulou et al. (2010) conducted a similar study in Greece and found that the perceived and desired parenting practices varied between sports and career levels. Athletes in rhythmic, artistic gymnastics and swimming scored higher in praise and understanding than athletes in basketball, volleyball and track and field.

Additionally, rhythmic and artistic gymnastics athletes perceived higher active involvement than desired and rhythmic gymnastics athletes perceived higher directive behaviour than desired. All athletes desired more parental pressure. Differences were found in desired praise and understanding between the phases of development, where athletes in the specializing years (developmental phase) desired more praise and understanding than athletes in the initiation and mastery phases. This finding is in contrast with Wuerth et al. (2004) where parental involvement was higher in the initiation phase compared to the other phases.

Based on Lee and MacLean's (1997) conclusions, the parental involvement questionnaire needed further refinement regarding the items included in it.

Giannitsopoulou et al.'s (2010) study examined its psychometric properties for the Greek translation using only Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Thus, one of the purposes of the current study is to conduct separate Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA), based on Giannitsopoulou et al.'s structure, on both the desired and perceived forms of the items to establish if the same scales will emerge.

Almost a decade ago Fredricks and Eccles (2004) discussed the importance of advancing research to examine parental involvement in youth sport. Parents are highly involved and play an important role in youth sport as they can provide immediate and specific feedback. As mentioned before, the parental involvement can influence a child

both positively and negatively. Fredricks and Eccles (2004) stated that “considering the potential of parents to have either a positive or negative role in children’s sports experience, it is unfortunate that research on this topic is limited” (p. 145). A number of studies have been conducted internationally yet in Greece the topic has received little attention. Thus, further investigations for enhancing our understanding on parental involvement and behaviours, and how these influence behavioural regulations in youth sport is warranted. To date, no studies have examined the relationship between parental involvement and young athletes’ behavioural regulations in this sport.

### **Scope and Significance of Study**

The present study was designed to explore parental roles in children’s sport in Greece, and the influence of parental behaviours on the way the children experience the sport of soccer. Soccer is the most popular sport in Greece. The results of the present study can inform and guide parents in understanding the needs of a child in order to be involved and influence his/her life in a positive way. The results will also inform sport psychology professionals, who work with sport parents, coaches and young athletes, on how Greek children perceive and desire parental involvement and whether parental involvement has an effect on the satisfaction of their sport related behavioural regulations.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested:

**Hypothesis 1.** Children’s perceived parental involvement, specifically perceived and desired praise and understanding and active involvement will be positively associated with children’s intrinsic and identified regulations and are expected to be negatively associated with non-self-determined forms of regulation (i.e., introjected, external and amotivation) and worry.

**Hypothesis 2.** Children's perceived parental involvement, specifically perceived and desired directive behaviour will be negatively associated with children's intrinsic and identified regulations and positively associated with non-self-determined forms of regulation (i.e., introjected, external and amotivation) and worry.



## CHAPTER 2

### Review of the Literature

In the review that follows, the significance of sport participation and parental influence in children's lives are presented. Furthermore, the Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and behavioural regulations constructs are discussed in details explaining children's physical activity motivation and behaviour. Moreover, sport related anxiety and how it relates to parental pressure is also discussed. Definitions of parental involvement as well as the types of parenting styles, Grolnick's theory of parenting styles and the types of parental involvement (parenting practices) are provided. Additionally, the association between parental involvement and behavioural regulations, parental involvement and children's anxiety, as well as perceived and desired parental involvement in sport participation, are reviewed according to the studies conducted in the last two decades.

### Sport Participation

Physical activity and sport participation can play a significant role in children's psychosocial health, functioning and general quality of life (Stein, Raedeke, & Glenn, 1999; Steptoe & Butler, 1996). The sport environment enhances holistic development as individuals are challenged cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically.

Unstructured and structured play is very important for children to learn about themselves and the world as well as to develop their physical abilities. Furthermore, sport participation can help children develop useful life skills and motivate them to adopt a healthy lifestyle, as well as offer them the opportunity to find role models that can provide them with guidance and support.

The number of children worldwide who participate in sport has increased over the past decade. According to Ewing and Seefeldt (2002), 47 million youth were

participating in organized sport programs. Nonetheless, according to Brustad, Babkes, and Smith (2001) in some countries children sport participation (ages 10-18) has significantly decreased. Overall, it is estimated that 90% of children will drop out of team sports by the age of 15 (Butcher, Lindner, & Johns 2002; Hirschhorn & Loughhead, 2000).

Children participate in sport for several reasons. Cumming and Ewing (2002) indicated that the most popular reason children participated in sports was to “have fun.” Interestingly, winning was not ranked among the most important reasons for participation. In addition to having fun, children desire to be physically fit, to make new friends and to have psychological health. Other motives included appearance, skill development, excitement and competition (Butcher et al., 2002; Martin, Dale & Jackson, 2001; Pugh, Wolff, DeFrancesco, Gilley, & Heitman, 2000). On the other hand, there is a range of reasons regarding why children withdraw from sport. Motives that cause drop out in sport include lack of fun, focus on competition, stress, pressure, boredom and perceived low levels of competence (Butcher et al., 2002; Pugh et al., 2000).

### **Parental Influence**

Undoubtedly, parents want the best for their children and will do all that it takes to achieve this and they have a strong influence on children’s motivation, behaviour, psychological growth and sport participation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Cote, 1999). Children infer information about their parents’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that may not only affect them in a positive way, but also in a negative way (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Holt, Tamminem, Black, Mandigo, & Fox, 2009; Horn & Horn, 2007).

Hoyle and Leff (1997) stated that parents often take up the roles of motivator, facilitator, and even coach in children’s lives. In these roles parents can provide financial, emotional and physical support. According to this, children are dependent

upon their parents for guidance, advice, transportation, money and supplies. Parents begin with good intentions, trying to introduce their children to participate in sports (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973; Spreitzer & Snyder, 1976) and continue by helping them maintain their sport participation and climb the ladder of sport success (Brown, Frankel & Fennell, 1989; Wuerth et al., 2004).

Thus, it is necessary for parents to be involved to some extent in their children's sport participation. Children, however, need the freedom to explore and make decisions for themselves. Without the freedom of decision making, they begin to feel pressured and trapped in their sport. If parents put pressure on the children, they risk becoming a source of anxiety for them (Stein et al., 1999). Participation in a physical activity under external pressures or high external expectations might undermine the motivation of a child to participate in sports or a physical activity and can subsequently lead to maladaptive effects on the physical and psychological well-being of the child. Anderson, Funk, Elliot, and Smith (2003) acknowledged that as parental pressure increases, children's enjoyment decreases. The degree and type of parental involvement that can either positively or negatively impact the children depends on whether parents are supportive and non-interfering or controlling and stress-causing (Blom & Drane, 2009). Support and encouragement from parents can lead a child to enjoy participation in sports and physical activity and enhance his or her self-esteem. In contrast, external pressures and unrealistic parental expectations regarding a child's participation in sport and physical activity can lead a child to feel stressed and to develop a damaged self-esteem (Reeve & Deci, 1996).

### **Self Determination Theory**

**Presentation and definition.** Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory provides a theoretical framework to investigate and explain children's physical activity

motivation and behaviour. A variety of reasons may explain why an individual participates in a specific activity and these reasons differ in the extent to which they are found within the individual. Depending on the extent to which the reason for the behaviour is internal to an individual, the individual will feel more or less autonomous in self-regulating his or her own behaviour. Behaviours that are not self-regulated force an individual to feel restrained to engage in a specific type of behaviour; the individual can lose the intention and enjoyment for engaging in that activity. For example, high expectations from parents can lead an amateur soccer player to play soccer only because she or he feels obliged to the parents to play soccer. On the other hand, for a professional soccer player participation can be maintained because of a monetary reward related to maintained long-term participation. The motives directing the behaviours of both soccer players are external to the soccer players and are the reasons driving the behaviour. The behaviour of the soccer player is controlled or regulated by external factors and the soccer players do not play soccer out of own volition.

According to self-determination theory, the impetus of motivated behaviour is having a sense of choice and volition (autonomy), a sense of efficacy in performance (competence) and the need to feel connected, cared for and accepted by significant others in one's social milieu (relatedness). Self-determined motivation, as well as mental health and well-being require that these three basic psychological needs are satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Self-determination theory posits that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are universally essential for optimal human development, motivation, and integrity (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). The theory proposes that individuals choose their behaviour in an attempt to satisfy their basic psychological needs (Zhang, Solmon, Kosma, Carson, & Gu, 2011). Vallerand (2001) argued that the effects of innate needs on motivational

consequences are theoretically channeled through the individuals' motivations for exercising. According to Deci (1980), the more the individuals' basic needs are satisfied, the more one's levels of self-determined motivation may increase, leading to enhanced psychological functioning.

Research in physical activity domains support the link between satisfaction of basic psychological needs and enhanced internalization (Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier, & Cury, 2002) and well-being (Reinboth & Duda, 2006). In sport settings, Sarrazin et al. (2002) demonstrated that satisfying psychological needs lead to positive consequences in terms of sustained behaviour and self-determined motivation for sport participation in young female handball players. In Reinboth, Duda, and Ntoumanis' (2004) study it was suggested that perceived competence and autonomy are the dominant predictors of well-being in British athletes. According to Reinboth and Duda (2006) this relationship appears to be influenced by age.

Self-determination theory establishes that a number of social factors will have an influence on the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of the child that develop forms of motivation more or less self-determined (Moreno, González-Cutre, Martín-Albo, & Cervelló, 2010). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), three social factors (structure, autonomy support and involvement) could satisfy the psychological needs and consequently improve self-determined forms of motivation. Specifically, structure provides a heightened sense of confidence, whereas autonomy support removes feelings of being controlled and promotes the understanding of other individuals' points of view. Involvement provides an indication of the extent to which the child can perceive that significant others comprehend his/her efforts to overcome obstacles and in the process, show him/her empathy and understanding (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Behavioural regulations.** Deci and Ryan (1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000)

trichotomized motivation into three distinct parts (i.e. intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation). Intrinsic motivation occurs when individuals engage voluntarily in an activity for its own sake, whereas, extrinsic motivation occurs when individuals are motivated by external factors, such as rewards and social recognition. Intrinsically motivated individuals show interest, experience enjoyment in the activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ntoumanis, 2001), and adhere to participation better than extrinsically motivated individuals (Ryan, Frederick, Lepes, Rubio & Sheldon, 1997). In other words, extrinsically motivated individuals may choose to perform an activity, even though they do not do it for pleasure. Amotivation, or the absence of motivation, is displayed when individuals perceive the contingencies between their actions and the outcomes of their actions as purposeless, and thereby act passively. Amotivation, which is the least self-determined form of motivation, is characterized by lack of intention to engage in a behaviour and is accompanied by the feeling of incompetence.

Four types of extrinsic motivation have been described by Deci and Ryan (1985): external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. According to Vallerand (1997), the different types of motivated behaviours can be ordered along a self-determination continuum. From the lowest to the highest level of self-determination, the motivation types are amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation and intrinsic motivation. External regulation and introjected regulation represent controlling types of behavioural regulation, whereas identified regulation, integrated regulation and, intrinsic motivation represent autonomous types of behavioural regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Participating in sport in order to receive prize money, win a trophy or a medal, to avoid punishment or negative evaluation represents external regulation. Introjected

regulation refers to actions that are performed by individuals when they feel they should take part in an activity. The individuals try to prove their abilities or try to avoid personal failure due to maintain the feeling of worth (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The distinction between external and introjected regulations is that the reason in external regulation is external and controlled by someone else. In introjected regulation, an individual has somewhat internalized the external reason for the activity without really accepting it as a personal reason. However, the introjected regulation is still external to self and the behaviours are still more controlled than determined.

Identified regulation typifies engagement in a behaviour because it is highly valued. The involvement in the behaviour indicates that the meaning and regulation of the behaviour is more internalized and accepted. Finally, integrated regulation, which is the most self-determined type of extrinsic motivation, occurs when identified regulation has been incorporated within the self. Archer and Waterman (1994) stated that the integration of behaviours into an individual's sense of self is a process that occurs over time and within contexts. Youngsters may not establish the required value systems or a conscious understanding of the specific behaviours that reflect those values.

With external and introjected regulations, the behaviour by an individual is not choiceful and is controlled by externally factors (controlling types of behavioural regulation), whereas with identified and integrated regulations, the behaviour is initiated out of choice but it is not necessarily perceived to be enjoyable (autonomous types of behavioural regulation).

On the other hand, there are three types of intrinsic motivation: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation to accomplish, and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation (Vallerand, 1997). According to Vallerand (1997), intrinsic motivation to know is characterized by taking part in an activity for the pleasure that an

individual experiences while learning. Intrinsic motivation to accomplish is referred to the satisfaction an individual feels while trying to accomplish something. Finally, intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation happens when an individual performs an action to experience pleasurable sensations. Intrinsic motivation is characterized by interest in and enjoyment derived from participating in sport, and is the most self-determined regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Research in this area has revealed that self-determined types of motivation (identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic motivation) are more likely to be associated with positive, adaptive, behavioural outcomes, compared to less self-determined types. Biddle, Soos, and Chatzisarantis (1999) indicated that the intention to engage in physical activity was predicted by intrinsic motivation as well as identified regulation.

Vallerand (1997) developed a hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, in which he differentiated among social factors, mediators, motivations and consequences at three different levels (global, contextual, and situational), based on the self-determination theory. According to this model, intrinsic motivation is related to different positive consequences both at a situational level such as in a specific activity, class or training, and at a contextual level such as in the physical education, sport or exercise context. Thus, intrinsic motivation is associated positively with psychological consequences: flow state, vitality, positive affect, enjoyment, satisfaction, interest, concentration, effort, persistence, sportsmanship and adherence to exercise. Moreover, intrinsic motivation is negatively associated with anxiety, burnout, boredom and fatigue.



## **Anxiety in Sports**

According to Smoll and Smith (1996) anxiety is generally defined as an emotional response consisting of cognitive concerns and physiological arousal to a perceived threat. Scholars have distinguished between competitive trait anxiety and competitive state anxiety. Specifically, competitive trait anxiety is defined as a relatively stable personality disposition to appraise sport competition situations in which athletic performance can be evaluated as threatening and to respond with cognitive and/or not state anxiety (i.e. the symptoms experienced in a particular sporting context), (Smith & Smoll, 1990).

There are three types of competitive trait anxiety: somatic, worry, and concentration disruption (Smith, Smoll, & Schultz, 1990). Somatic anxiety comprises the physiological component associated with autonomic arousal (i.e. muscular tension, increased heart rate), worry relates to negative thoughts and negative expectations, and concentration disruption represents self-oriented cognitions that can disrupt attentional processes and other cognitive functions (Smith, Smoll, & Wiechman, 1998). Several studies stated that performance anxiety can have negative effects on performance and enjoyment of sport participation in children (Mahoney & Meyers, 1989; Scanlan, Babkes, & Scanlan, 2005; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Smith et al., 1998).

Among youth, high levels of worry, somatic anxiety, and concentration disruption characterize fear of failure (Conroy, Willow & Metzler, 2002). Children with high sport performance anxiety tend to be especially sensitive to fears of failure and resulting negative social- and self-evaluation. Fear of failure has generally been associated with less self-determined reasons (e.g., external regulation, amotivation) for participating in sports (Conroy, 2004). In Conroy, Coatsworth and Kaye's (2007) study it was also found that fear of failure was linked with higher levels of sport anxiety and

lower levels of self-determined motivation in young female softball athletes.

Passer (1983) found that young soccer players with high levels of anxiety worried more often about making mistakes, not playing well, and losing than did their low-anxiety peers. They were also more worried than low anxiety children about how they would be evaluated by their coaches, peers, and parents, and they believed that failure would elicit criticism from these significant others. In other studies, similar findings were reported (Gould, Horn, & Spreeman, 1983; Rainey, Conklin, & Rainey, 1987; Smith, Smoll, & Passer, 2002).

Conroy (2001) stated that parental demands, family structure, and parent-child communications are key factors in the development of a fear of failure for a child. The anxiety associated with fear of failure can be potentially very damaging to a child's social development. Interestingly, Conroy et al. (2007) reported sport performance anxiety, fear of failure, and associated feelings of low self-esteem in children as young as eight years old.

According to the literature, parental pressure is associated with anxiety (e.g. Collins & Barber, 2005; Gould, Petlichkoff, Peterson, & Bump, 1991; Hoyle & Leff, 1999). In Bois et al.'s (2009) study in a sample of 341 young athletes (basketball players and tennis players), a positive effect of parental pressure on pre-competitive anxiety was reported for tennis players but not for basketball players. This result was due to the individual nature of tennis where parents of tennis players had more opportunities to influence their children. In addition to this, directive parental behaviours were positively associated with anxiety for tennis players.

According to Hellstedt (1990) parental pressure is defined as "the amount of motivational influence the parent exerts on the child athlete to compete in sports, perform at a certain level, and continue sport participation". Hoyle and Leff (1997) stated

that parental pressure is seen as the differences between parents' often over-inflated expectations for their children and the children's more realistic expectations for themselves. Too much pressure leads to high levels of anxiety for the children and tension in the parent-child relationship. In this way, children are afraid of failure that may lead them to withdraw from participating in sport (Butcher et al., 2002).

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents are entangled in their children's lives, in more than one way and even more so in their sporting activities. Stein et al. (1999) defined parental involvement as "the time, energy, and money parents invest in their child's sport participation and includes such things as providing transportation, attending practices and games, providing instructional assistance, and purchasing sport equipment" (p. 592). Fagen and Cowen (1996) termed parental involvement as "the amount of time the parent spent in activities with the child, and participation in relevant areas of the child's life" (p. 87). In addition to this, involvement is conceptualized as "the extent to which a parent is interested in, knowledgeable about, and takes an active role in the child's life" (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, p. 114). In other words, involvement reflects a parent's dedication to the child and positive attention to the child-rearing process (Holt et al., 2009).

### **Parenting Styles**

Parenting style is defined as "a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent's behaviours are expressed" (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 488). Therefore, parenting style is a global/broad concept regarded as the general emotional climate created by parents.

The type of parenting style plays a major role in the way children perceive involvement. Hellstedt (1987) describes parental involvement on a continuum ranging

from under-involvement through moderate to over-involvement. Hellstedt's (1987) study revealed that moderate involvement seems to facilitate a sport career and enables parents to provide support for their children's sport participation. In contrast, both under-involved and over-involved parents may play a disruptive role.

**Under-involvement.** Under-involved parents do not provide enough support to facilitate children's desire to participate (Wuerth et al., 2004). They are detached from children's sport participation, do not facilitate enjoyment, do not challenge them to continue the development of their skills and may cause them stress and anxiety (Stein et al., 1999).

**Disinterested parents.** There are parents who just drop the children off at their sport activities and leave the rest to the coaches. They are usually involved in the social activities of the social community and find children's sport participation beneficial for themselves. In Byrne's (1993) study it was found that 32% of the children participated in sport because their parents wanted them to. Nowadays, most of the mothers have an occupation and this adds to the problem of children being forced to take part in a sport. In this case, children participate in sports because they have to and not because they want to.

**Misinformed parents.** In this category, parents are not involved in children's sport participation in order not to detract from their children's enjoyment of sport. Children want to please their parents by showing them what they learn and can do. On the other hand, when parents are happy with children's success and console in defeat, they help them have an enjoyable experience in sport (Byrne, 1993).

**Over-involvement.** Over-involvement leads to feelings of stress, pressure, anxiety, injury, burnout, loss of enjoyment and embarrassment (Cumming & Ewing, 2002). "Emotionally over-involved parents often think that it is their responsibility to

push, persuade, or support the children's fantasies or sporting objectives, even if the athletes themselves do not share these aspirations. Athletes of parents that are emotionally over-involved often feel that their parents view them as "athletes" and not "individuals" (Cumming & Ewing, 2002).

***Excitable parents.*** According to Byrne (1993) excitable parents tend to be supportive of the coach and attend practices and games without getting involved in the coaching process. Unfortunately, they often get caught up in the heat of the moment. Parents in this category live every moment of the game. The excitement in the heat of the moment could turn them into screaming spectators who use abusive language. They do not realize that what they are doing is wrong. They also don't recognize that their behaviour is embarrassing to their children and that they are setting a bad example (Byrne, 1993).

***Fanatical parents.*** All parents of this type have in common the desire for their child to be a sporting hero or heroine (Byrne, 1993). They celebrate successful performance of their child but they analyze, make suggestions for improvement, and eventually are never quite satisfied. Fanatical parents place extremely high amounts of pressure upon their children in order to succeed. They usually argue with coaches, officials and other parents if they feel that their child is being treated unfairly. They control and push their children to achieve success that is often missing in their adult life. In this way, parents have the experience of victory, glory and fame through their children. Therefore, fanatical parents impose their own motives on them (Byrne, 1993). Additionally, the young athletes, whose parents fall into this category, seem to have high levels of anxiety. Thus, they have difficulty sleeping and eating, tend to lose their enjoyment of playing sports, and eventually may drop out of sports (Cumming & Ewing, 2002).

**Moderate involvement.** Moderate involvement from parents shows children that they are cared for and supported. Children need emotional and psychological support in their sport participation. Children who feel and experience support and encouragement in sport from their parents are more self-confident, their enjoyment is increased and will, most likely, participate in sport for their lifetime (Cumming & Ewing, 2002).

***Authoritative parenting style.*** Martens (1978) highlighted children's need to share their experiences in sports with their parents and to be supported by them. Authoritative parents are more likely to foster positive sport participation. They participate in their child's sport by attending practices and games and supporting environments with disciplined practice, commitment, fair play and sportsmanship. Further, these parents are also more likely to set appropriate development goals for their child's performance (Steinberg, 2001; American Sport Education Program, 1994). In this way, parental involvement creates an environment more receptive to parental influence, a balance of support and structure facilitates the development of self-regulatory skills in the child, and the verbal give-and-take characteristics of parent-child exchanges fosters cognitive and social competence in the child. Therefore, the child becomes responsible and competent who engages in consistent behaviour (American Sport Education Program, 1994).

### **Grolnick's Theory of Parenting Styles**

Grolnick (2003) developed a theoretical perspective of parenting styles based on the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and the pre-existing theories of parenting. According to Grolnick, autonomy support versus control, structure, and involvement, which are concepts of parenting styles, influence the children's well-being and intrinsic motivation to engage in several activities.

Autonomy support versus control points out the degree to which the environment

allows children to feel that they initiate their actions rather than feeling coerced to act in a specific way. Autonomy-supportive parents help children to develop their ability to choose, solve problems on their own, and involve them in decision making (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). On the other hand, children are controlled when they perceive a high amount of pressure to behave a certain way, which can be influenced by evaluation or guilt.

Structure has to do with the extent to which parents provide clear and consistent guidelines, expectations, and rules for their children's behaviours in order to act in self-determined ways (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). In this way, children can be involved in decision making within the limits set by their parents.

According to Grolnick and Ryan (1989) involvement is defined as "the extent to which a parent is interested in, knowledgeable about, and takes an active role in the child's life" (p.114). When parents provide children with resources and support, a sense of autonomy is facilitated. The use of controlling practices, however, can make children have negative feelings about the extent of their parents' involvement. Parental involvement with controlling practices may lead to too much parental involvement that undermines children's autonomy (Grolnick, 2003). The review by Mageau and Vallerand (2003) showed evidence that the right structure and involvement can have positive motivational benefits for children.

Grolnick (2003) also stated that children who grow up in an autonomy-supportive family environment are more self-determined and intrinsically motivated than children who grow up in a controlling family environment. Thus, social agents' autonomy-supportive behaviours impact positively on perceived autonomy, competence and relatedness.

## **Types of Parental Involvement**

**Parenting practices.** Parenting practices (i.e. subdimension of parenting styles) refer to typically domain- or context-specific behaviours and reflect parents' goals for their children (Holt et al., 2009). Lee and MacLean (1997) developed the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (PISQ) to assess parenting practices in sport. More specifically, the PISQ evaluates children's perceptions of four dimensions of parenting practices: active involvement, directive behaviour, praise and understanding and pressure. The active involvement evaluates parental activity in the club either during competition or practice, the directive behaviour measures the extent to which parents control their children's behaviour in sport and the praise and understanding assesses parental behaviours such as praise and empathy.

The participants in Lee and MacLean's (1997) study were eighty-two male and female adolescent competitive swimmers, who identified the frequency with which certain behaviours were exhibited by and desired of their parents. Discrepancies between exhibited and desired behaviour indicated the extent of children's satisfaction with those behaviours. The results of the study showed that participants perceived an excess of directive behaviour and pressure, insufficient praise and understanding but satisfactory levels of active involvement. It was, however, reported that parental pressure was mainly due to the directive behaviour of the parents and not to the amount of parental involvement. Therefore, the quality of the parental behaviour rather than the amount (or quantity) is critical for the relationship between the athlete and parent.

Wuerth et al. (2004) examined the parental involvement from the perspective of young German athletes (of both team sports and individual sports) and their parents. Results revealed significant differences in parenting practices between athletes at different phases of career development. Their findings showed that athletes perceived



only low levels of pressure, but high levels of praise and understanding. Additionally, athletes with a successful career transition reported a higher amount of parental involvement than athletes with no transition. Also, it was found that parents' involvement was higher in the initiation phase (i.e. begin to get involved in sport) than later because athletes in this phase perceived more directive behaviour, more praise and understanding and more pressure than athletes in developmental (i.e. increased commitment to sport) and mastery (i.e. obsession with sport) phases. Furthermore, in Lazopoulou's (2006) study perceived and desired parental involvement in Greek athletes from different sports was examined. Perceived and desired parental involvement was also examined by athletes' parents. Athletes desired less directive behaviour and more active involvement than perceived. Results also indicated differences on how parents and athletes perceived desired directive behaviour, desired active involvement and perceived active involvement.

Additionally, Giannitsopoulou et al. (2010) investigated perceived and desired parental involvement in Greek female former and current athletes from different sports. The results showed that all athletes desired more parental pressure, while in the specializing years (developmental phase) athletes desired more praise and understanding. Moreover, parental involvement differed between sports but not between former and current athletes.

### **Parental Involvement and Behavioural Regulations**

Research from various theoretical perspectives indicate that one of the best predictors of children's continuing involvement and enjoyment in sports is the development of an intrinsic versus an extrinsic motivation for sport involvement (e.g., Brustad, 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991). The ability and desire of a child's long-term sport participation, is dependent on parental involvement, especially during

the preadolescent years (Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). Excessive parental interest in their children's participation in sport may lead to maladaptive behaviours with negative consequences, such as a decrease in motivation and enjoyment and a negative emotional experience (Bois et al., 2009). Therefore, children may drop out of sport. Excessive controlling behaviours from parents can also foster negative emotional experiences in sport. Further, high directive behaviours could then be another aspect of negative patterns of parenting practices. In general, controlling behaviours diminish intrinsic motivation by preventing satisfaction of the need for autonomy (Bois et al., 2009). Lack of autonomy and intrinsic motivation may lead to negative emotional experience such as anxiety or potentially poorer performance (Grolnick, Gurland, DeCoursey, & Jacob, 2002).

Power and Woolger (1994) investigated the correlation between parenting practices and children's experience in age-group swimming. Forty-four young competitive swimmers and their parents took part in the study. The results showed that parental support was positively associated with child enthusiasm, whereas directiveness and performance outcome goals showed curvilinear associations. Specifically, parents who were supportive and reported moderate levels of directiveness and performance outcome goals had children with the greatest level of enthusiasm for swimming. Thus, these parental behaviours may lead to children's enjoyment and intrinsic motivation.

In Averill and Power's (1995) study the relation between parental childrearing attitudes and children's experiences in sport were examined. The participants were forty-nine families of 6-to 8-year-old male soccer players. Results showed that maternal support and expectations were positively associated with the level of child enjoyment, whereas paternal expectations and directiveness were highest when child ability or effort was low. Further, parents showing the highest levels of involvement had children

showing the lowest level of co-operation with the coach. Comparing fathers and mothers, the researchers suggested that they differ in their responsibility for helping a child that has difficulties in sport. Father attempts in helping the child might sometimes undermine the child's effort and enjoyment and, therefore its intrinsic motivation.

Woolger and Power (2000) examined the association between parenting practices and children's intrinsic motivation in swimming. One hundred and thirty-five young swimmers and their parents participated in the study. Results revealed that children's ability in swimming (based on both mother and father ratings and on objective swimming performance) was positively associated with children's reports of intrinsic motivation. Mothers' but not fathers' parenting practices (i.e. directiveness and performance goals) were related to children's intrinsic motivation in swimming when child's ability was controlled: maternal directiveness was negatively associated with intrinsic motivation and maternal performance goals showed a positive association. The highest level of intrinsic motivation was also found among children whose mothers showed intermediate values on performance goals and either high or low levels of directiveness.

Wiersma and Fifer (2008) examined parental involvement in youth sport from parent perspective using ten focus groups of fifty-five parents in total. The emphasis was on both the difficulties and benefits of providing sport opportunities for their children, as well as an understanding of their perception of parental behaviour at youth sport events. The parents had a clear understanding of their role in youth sports, articulated a child-centered philosophy of involvement and clarified how they should behave at youth sport events. Despite that, parents sometimes acted inappropriately (during competitive situations, when they perceive unfair treatment for their child or when their child appeared to be at risk for harm during a game). These findings are in agreement with

Gould, Lauer, Roman and Pierce's (2005) study where well-intentioned adults have a difficult time controlling their emotions.

Additionally, in Wiersma and Fifer's (2008) study it was indicated that the child's behaviours and expectations fed back to the parents' decision making and involvement. Children's performance, the demands of the activity and the perceived benefits gained from the children influenced the way that parents provided support and encouragement.

In Hoyle and Leff's (1997) study, parental support, parental pressure, and parents' role in the sport experience of young tournament tennis players were examined. The results of the study showed that parental support was positively associated with children's enjoyment of tennis. Tennis players, who perceived a high level of parental support, reported greater enjoyment of tennis, viewed tennis as a more important part of their lives, and were better ranked than children who reported a lower level of parental support. There was no evidence, however, that parental pressure was an important factor that influenced participation and performance of tennis players.

When parents create a family environment that is supportive and challenging for their children it can help them develop their interest in and motivation for participation in physical activity through enhanced quantity of communication and support (Kimiecik & Horn, 2012). Kimiecik and Horn (2012) investigated the influence of parenting style on children's physical activity beliefs and quality of parent-child communication. The findings of the present study indicated that parenting style was related to both children's beliefs about physical activity and their perceptions of the quality of communication with their parents. A positive association was also found between children's perception of the openness of their communication with their parents and their physical activity beliefs. Specifically, children who perceived their parents as warm, affectionate, nonjudgmental

(support) and encouraging self-directed behaviour provided greater opportunities for engagement in physical activity. Therefore, when the quality of experience was high, children were motivated to continually participate in physical activity. In addition to this, children who perceived high challenge parental style had higher perception of competence than children who perceived low challenge parental style. Further, high support parental style was associated with a more positively perceived communication process between parent and child.

According to Fredricks and Eccles (2005) parents influence children beliefs and participation in many ways. Parents can be a role model either as a coach or they can participate in athletics themselves. They can also interpret their children's experience and give them messages about their athletic ability and the value of sport participation. Further, both mothers and fathers can provide emotional support and positive athletic experiences for their children's involvement in sport. Fredricks and Eccles (2005) indicated a positive, significant, and predictive association among the parents' perception of the child's ability, his/her own value, and level of participation and perception of competence. It was found that boys reported greater perceptions of competence, were more interested in and enjoyed physical activity, and engaged in physical activity more frequently than girls.

According to Sabiston and Crocker (2008) parental influences are significant sources for enhancing youth physical activity. The results of their study were in agreement with Fredricks and Eccles's (2005) study. It was found that adolescent males reported greater perceptions of competence and value in physical activity than females. Boys also reported less parental influence compared with girls. In Pugliese and Tinsley's (2007) review, five categories of parental socialization behaviour (encouragement, modeling, instrumental, work habits, and general support or influence) were examined.

The studies reviewed indicated that encouragement was significantly linked to children and adolescents physical activity. Parent support and direct help from parents were consistently associated with children and adolescent physical activity. Encouragement was associated with children's competency and behavioural intentions. According to Fredricks and Eccles (2004) encouragement may indirectly influence child's physical activity through a child's own perception of competence.

In Beets, Cardinal, and Alderman's (2010) review the influence of social support from parents toward sport involvement of children was examined. The reviewed studies revealed that children, particularly females, would like to receive more encouragement from their parents. Additionally, the provision of encouragement was mediated through greater physical self-competence and liking of and attraction to sports, which tended to lead to greater rates of participation. On the other hand, praise, which is reserved until after an activity has been performed, was linked to high levels of sport participation and was found to be one of the primary influencers of activity (Beets, Vogel, Forlaw, Pitetti, & Cardinal, 2006; Prochaska, Rodgers, & Sallis, 2002). Overall, the effect of parental social support on sport participation was mediated through psychosocial attributes. Social support from parents influences youths' perceived competence that may increase their involvement in and satisfaction of physical activity.

Beets et al. (2010) indicated that most of the information regarding parental support is derived from mothers. Mothers are more likely to provide support to their children by enrolling them in sports and attending their sporting events. In contrast, fathers use their own activity behaviours to influence their children's sport participation. Instrumental support from fathers also facilitated sport involvement for both boys and girls. The way that children perceive and interpret their parents' actions and beliefs is central to the development of perceived ability and expectations of success (Collins &

Barber, 2005). The results of Collins and Barber's (2005) study indicated that female elite young athletes who perceived their parents to have high expectations for their success exhibited greater levels of confidence than those who perceived their parents to have lower expectations. For these athletes, expectations were primarily perceived as good and reflected their belief in their ability.

Children who have high perceptions of their ability in sports will demonstrate greater motivation, as demonstrated through their decision to become involved, as well as by their levels of effort and perseverance (Bois, Sarrazin, Brustad, Chanal, & Trouilloud, 2005). Bois et al., (2005) stated that parental appraisals have an influence in children's perceived competence about their sport experience. The results of this study also showed the importance of the interpretations that children can make on their parents' beliefs and behaviours. If parents provide positive feedback and reinforcement, children will have enhanced perception of competence, control, positive affect and intrinsic motivation (Ullrich-French & Smith, 2006). In contrast, the majority of the comments from parents during game situations, reflected encouragement and/or instruction, rather than reinforcement to their children due to parents' difficulty to provide immediate reinforcement during competitive situations.

Holt, Tamminem, Black, Sehn, and Wall (2008) examined parental involvement in competitive youth soccer settings. Four families from Canada participated in this study. It was found that parents' verbal reactions to their children's sport performance were placed on a continuum ranging from more supportive to more controlling comments. Further, parents perceived that they had empathy with their children. They perceived sharing the emotions that their children felt in sport, and these emotions appeared to change in relation to dynamic game and contextual circumstances. Finally, parents perceived that they had knowledge and experience of sport that influenced their

involvement by making comments to their children.

Holt et al. (2009) examined parenting styles and practices in soccer and found that autonomy-supportive parents were highly involved without being controlling, and provided appropriate structure. In this way, they allowed their children to be involved in decision making. In contrast, other parents were highly involved but controlling, did little to support their children's autonomy, and provided little structure. It was also found that autonomy-supportive parents in certain situations used controlling practices to influence their children's behaviour that was in contrast to their overall style.

### **Parental Involvement and Children's Anxiety**

Brustad (1996) stated that parental beliefs and expectations are associated with stress and anxiety among young athletes. The pressure that young athletes feel was revealed, for instance, in wrestlers (Gould, Eklund, Petlichkoff, Peterson, & Bump, 1991), swimmers (Lee & MacLean, 1997), and gymnasts (Weiss, Wiese, & Klint, 1989). In some cases parents may perceive their supportive efforts toward developing a child's talents as an investment for which they will eventually receive something in return (Coakley, 2006). This expectation, however, can create feelings of stress and anxiety for the child, and may even develop into a situation where the child experiences feelings of being entrapped in their sport (Raedeke, Granzky, & Warren, 2000).

Anxiety may still exist even if parents do not show negative and controlling behaviours. According to Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, and Pennisi (2008) some athletes' experiences showed that children may feel pressure to make parents proud because they recognize how much effort, time and resources it takes from the parents to provide them with tennis opportunities. This has been shown to occur in some situations even when no parental pressure exists. In a study conducted by Lauer, Gould, Roman, and Pierce (2010) it was found that despite the fact that parents had good intentions, their



behaviours unintentionally became negative and over-involved. The parents did not understand how this unintentional pressure affected their child's psychological well-being.

The results of Kanters, Bocarro, and Casper's (2008) study indicated that parents and their children had a disagreement on both the quantity and quality of parental involvement in the sport of hockey. Parents probably failed to realize that increasing the degree of involvement in their child's sport may be viewed by their children as stressful rather than supportive.

Stein et al. (1999) examined children's perceptions of the level and degree of parental involvement in youth volleyball, soccer and football. An inverted U ("∩") shaped the relationship between children's perception of their parents' degree of involvement (too little, just right, or too much) and children's enjoyment was reported. They also identified a "U" relationship between the children's perception of their parents' degree of involvement and children's stress level. Thus, children who perceived over-involvement or under-involvement from their parents in sport reported lower levels of enjoyment and higher levels of stress than children who perceived their parents to have the right amount of involvement.

### **Perceived and Desired Parental Involvement in Sport**

When considering the parent and child interaction in sport, it is difficult to find a balance between motivation, challenge, and pressure, which is based on the child's perception of his or her parents' behaviours and attitudes. For example, one athlete's optimal push is another athlete's controlling parental behaviour. Factors influencing a player's motivation are dependent on individual differences in intrinsic motivation as well as the personalities of the child and parents (Lauer et al., 2010).

Parental influences impact the behaviour of their children in sport. In Spink,

Strachan, and Odnokon's (2008) study it was found that active parents used more social control when their children were less active. Furthermore, Wilson and Spink (2012) examined if individual differences and intra-individual variability in physical activity might be differentially related to the social influences (i.e. positive, negative, collaborative) adolescents received from their family. The results of the study indicated that positive and collaborative influences were both related to physical activity but there was no relationship between physical activity and negative social influences. A negative relationship, however, was reported between intra-individual variability in physical activity and collaborative social influence. Specifically, when adolescents were less active than their peers, parents were more actively involved in promoting a more physically active lifestyle.

In Holt and Dunn's (2004) study in elite adolescent soccer players from England and Canada it was found that fathers played a role in providing sport-specific informational support to their sons. It is likely that parental advice is welcomed when parents are perceived by their children as having valuable experience and knowledge to offer. Parents, however, can be a source of stress when they provide advice in competitive situations if they have little or no experience in such settings. Wolfenden and Holt (2005) examined players' and parents' perceptions of talent development in elite junior tennis. The results indicated that parents can both help and hinder talent development in elite junior tennis depending on the roles they attempt to fulfill. On the one hand, parents fulfilled significant roles in terms of providing emotional and tangible support and in particular, mothers were more involved than fathers. Furthermore, parents were perceived as a source of pressure when they became over-involved in competitive situations. They also appeared to exert more subtle forms of pressure through their perceived expectations for the child to succeed. In general, parental attempts at providing

tennis-specific advice were negatively appraised by children.

Lauer et al. (2010) examined the parental behaviours that affect junior tennis player development. Parents reported many positive behaviours that facilitated psychological and social development of the child including tangible and emotional support. Parental behaviours that inhibited child development included being negative and critical, yelling, not providing encouragement, over pushing, over emphasizing winning and talent development, and controlling behaviours to promote the attainment of tennis goals. Additionally, parents were directly involved in the sampling and specializing years, and were less involved in the elite years of athletic talent development.

Baxter-Jones and Maffulli (2003) investigated the parental influence on sport participation in two hundred and eighty-two elite young British athletes. Soccer players, gymnasts, tennis players and swimmers as well as their parents participated in the study. It was found that high levels of sport participation in young athletes were dependent on parents. Parents played a significant role in introducing their children to sport. Specifically, 70% of swimmers were first influenced to the sport by their parents, with mothers playing the most significant role. Conversely, fathers played the most significant parental role in introducing their children to soccer. Additionally, 57% tennis players were influenced by their parents. In contrast, in gymnastics mother's (33%) were a main reason for participation. The findings of the present study showed that parental beliefs played an important role in children's participation in sports.

Parental involvement in youth sport is an important topic that impacts a child's psychosocial development and overall experience in sport. There is a gap in the current research, however, where the association between parental involvement, young athletes' behavioural regulations and worry has not been examined. This study was designed to

investigate young male soccer player's perceived and desired parental involvement and its relation to their behavioural regulations and level of worry.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

#### Participants

Male soccer players ( $N = 487$ ), aged 9 to 15 years of old, ( $M = 11.55$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ), residing in the urban area of Athens voluntarily and anonymously completed the questionnaires. Participants were amateur athletes, members of ten local soccer clubs. Players' training experience within the specific clubs was on average 3.1 ( $\pm 2.1$ ) years, while their training regime with the team involved an average of 4.8 ( $\pm 1.3$ ) hours per week. The participating children besides training systematically also had some limited experience in playing informal soccer matches.

#### Procedure

The study was reviewed and approved by the department's Ethics Committee. Moreover, parental consent was required for participation (see Appendix A). An information sheet describing the purpose and procedures of study and outlining their right to withdraw from the study at any time was administered to the parents and/or legal guardians. Before completing any questionnaires all children were asked that their parent/guardian had read and signed the consent form. Neither parents nor coaches were present in the room at the time of data collection. Before completing the questionnaires, standardized verbal instructions were provided by the researcher who was present at all times during data collection to accommodate any questions and/or insecurities. Children completed the questionnaires individually 15 minutes before a practice (see Appendices). The completed questionnaires were placed in an envelope that was sealed before departing the room. To further protect our participants, the data was analyzed and is presented in such way that it would make it impossible to recognize any individual or club.

## Measures

**Behavioral Regulation in Sport Questionnaire (BRSQ).** To assess athletes' behavioural regulations the BRSQ Questionnaire (Lonsdale, Hodge, & Rose, 2008) was used (see Appendix B). For the purposes of the present study we added 3 additional external items. These additional items capture the controlling use of extrinsic rewards, which wasn't measured in the original BRSQ. Furthermore, we decided not to include the integrated regulation subscale because young children have difficulties relating to the questions that measure integrated (Vallerand, 1997, 2001). The 23-item scale captured the identified dimensions of intrinsic regulation (4 items, e.g., Because I enjoy it), identified regulation (4 items, e.g., Because I learn things which are useful in my life), introjected regulation (4 items, e.g., Because I would feel guilty if I quit), external regulation (7 items, e.g., Because people push me to play), and amotivation (4 items, e.g., But I really don't know why anymore). Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale, anchored by Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (5), and were asked to indicate *how well each of the reasons below indicates why you play football for this team*. The questionnaire was translated from the English to the Greek language and back. More specifically, a bilingual translator familiar with the theoretical concepts of self-determination theory translated the instrument. A back-to-back translation was carried out by two translators. One of them also completed a "blind" back-to-back translation, which means that the blind translator was not familiar with the theoretical concepts of self-determination theory, in contrast to the other translator who was. Discrepancies were finally decided by the three translators. Krommidas et al. (2011) have provided support for the psychometric integrity of the BRSQ in the Greek language. The alpha reliability coefficients for the present study were: intrinsic regulation (.71), identified regulation (.59), introjected regulation (.70), external regulation (.80) and amotivation (.81).

**Worry.** Worry was assessed using five items from the worry subscale of the Sport Anxiety Scale (Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2006) rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (see Appendix C). The specific subscale was translated in Greek for the current study. The alpha reliability coefficient for the present study was .84 indicating high internal consistency.

**Parental Involvement.** The Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (Lee & MacLean, 1997) was used as adapted in Greek language at the study of Lazopoulou (2006) (see Appendix D). The instrument included 19 items (the single-item Pressure factor was eliminated following Lee & MacLeans' structure) forming three multi item subscales. These subscales measure Directive Behaviour (e.g., Do your parents tell you what they think you need to work on?), Active Involvement (e.g., Do your parents volunteer to help as galas as officials, whisper, etc?), Praise and Understanding (e.g. After a match do your parents praise you for trying hard?). Participants asked to reveal their perceived parental behaviour as well as their desired parental behaviour. All items are answered on 5-point Likert scales ranging from never (1) to always (5). Giannitsopoulou et al. (2010) reported satisfactory internal reliabilities. The perceived and desired parental involvement questionnaire in the present study demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (apart from perceived active involvement factor, .53) ranging from .60 to .76, (see Table 1).

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

#### Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha for all variables are presented in Table 1. All scales showed adequate internal consistencies. Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the .60 criterion (Aiken, 1996), except from perceived active involvement which demonstrated a slightly lower internal consistency of .53.

Overall, participants appeared to have high scores on the intrinsically motivation subscales and low scores on the non-self-determined motivation subscales. Specifically, mean scores on the subscales that intended to represent self-determined motivation had a mean score above of 4.00 (intrinsic and identified regulation). Mean scores for the three non-self-determined motivation subscales were all relatively low (see Table 1). Participants' low mean scores on the non-self-determined motivation subscales were not surprising in a voluntary physical activity such as soccer (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Ntoumanis, 2005). Furthermore, mean scores for the perceived and desired parental involvement subscales were all relatively high (above  $M = 2.85$ ), with the highest score representing the perceived praise subscale and the lowest the desired directive subscale (for more details, see Table 1).



Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients for all the examined variables*

Perceived Parental involvement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>A</i>
Praise and Understanding	3.70	.86	.66
Active	2.85	.90	.53
Directive	2.96	.91	.79
Desired Parental involvement			
Praise and Understanding	3.68	.89	.71
Active	2.88	.95	.60
Directive	2.74	1.01	.76
Behavioural Regulations			
Intrinsic regulation	4.39	.63	.71
Identified regulation	4.26	.63	.60
Introjected regulation	2.88	.95	.70
External regulation	2.13	.80	.80
Amotivation	1.96	.94	.81
Worry	2.72	.91	.84

### **Perceived and Desired Parental Involvement: Construct Validity**

Lazopoulou (2006) first translated the parental involvement questionnaire in the Greek language. Preliminary examination of the factor structure through exploratory factor analysis supported a 4-factor solution. The purpose of this study is to further confirm the structure of the measure in the Greek language using CFA. This time the original three-factor structure was tested (Lee and MacLean, 1997) with the three factors allowed to correlate and not the 4-factor solution suggested by Lazopoulou (2006). The 19-item model as originally published by Lee and MacLean (1997) was re-tested for

further validation based on Lazopoulou's (2006) translation. Separate Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) to test the construct validity of the Greek version of the perceived and desired parental involvement scales were conducted using the EQS 6.1 (Bentler & Wu, 2004). Three fit indices were used to assess the adequacy of the tested models, which have been shown to be more accurate at rejecting misspecified models: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Values greater than .90 for the IFI and the CFI, are considered to be indicative of adequate fit, although values approaching the .95 are preferable (Hu & Bentler, 1999), whereas values smaller than .08 and close to .05 for the RMSEA are considered supportive of good fit.

Regarding the perceived parental involvement, the examination of the residual matrix for the scale indicated that the error variance of five items was highly correlated with error variance of various other items. Therefore, the particular items were dropped. The revised 14-item solution produced a good fit to the data. The specified three-factor model showed an adequate model fit ( $\chi^2 = 196.45$ ,  $df = 74$ , CFI = .90, IFI = .90, RMSEA = .06). Factor loadings for the three-factor model ranged from .43 to .69, with the exception of one item which had a loading of .39 (which however was significant). The removal of this item did not improve the fit of the model; therefore, considering that the fit was acceptable the item was retained to sustain content validity. The correlation between the factors ranged from .50 to .61. Finally, Cronbach's alpha coefficients are presented in Table 1.

Regarding the desired parental involvement, the examination of the residual matrix for the scale indicated that the error variance of seven items was highly correlated with error variance of various other items. Therefore, the particular items were dropped. The revised 12-item solution produced a good fit to the data. The specified three-factor =

model showed an adequate model fit ( $\chi^2 = 169.30$ ,  $df = 51$ , CFI = .90, IFI = .91, RMSEA = .07). Factor loadings for the three-factor model ranged from .54 to .73, with the exception of one item which had a loading of .34 (which however was significant). The removal of this item did not improve the fit of the model; therefore, considering that the fit was acceptable the item was retained to sustain content validity. The correlation between the factors ranged from .42 to .63. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are presented in Table 1.

The results provide supportive evidence for the construct validity of the Greek version of the perceived and desired version of the parental involvement questionnaire. The factor structure was similar to Lazopoulous' (2006) preliminary study, in which the instrument was initially translated into Greek and tested using EFA. In sum the results of the 3-factor models (both versions) showed good internal consistency (apart from the perceived active involvement subscale which should be further tested) and factorial validity, indicating that can be an effective measure for examining parental involvement with Greek samples.

### **Relationships between Parental Involvement and Behavioural Regulations**

Pearson correlation analyses were performed to examine the degree of the relationships between parental involvement (both the perceived and the desired) and the behavioural regulation subscales and worry. Results from correlation analyses are presented in Table 2. The first hypothesis was partially confirmed showing that perceived and desired praise and understanding and desired active involvement had low but significant positive correlations with intrinsic and identified regulation and negative but not statistically significant relationships with the non-self-determined forms of regulation (i.e., introjected, external and amotivation) and worry. The second hypothesis was also partially confirmed revealing that children's perceived parental involvement

and more specifically perceived and desired directive behaviour had low but significant positive correlation with external regulation and amotivation and had non-significant relationships with children's intrinsic and identified regulation and worry.

Multiple regression analyses were used to predict the subscales of behavioural regulations and worry from parental involvement (both the perceived and the desired subscales). Regarding intrinsic regulation the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 8%,  $F(6, 480) = 6.74, p < .001$ . In the final model only the measure of perceived parental praise and understanding was significant  $\beta = .22, t = 3.71, p < .001$ . No other subscale contributed significantly to the prediction of intrinsic regulation. Concerning identified regulation the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 6%,  $F(6, 480) = 4.95, p < .001$ . In the final model both perceived ( $\beta = .14, t = 2.28, p < .05$ ) and desired parental praise and understanding ( $\beta = .12, t = 2.05, p < .05$ ) contributed to the model. No other subscale contributed significantly to the prediction of identified regulation. With respect to introjected regulation the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 3%,  $F(6, 479) = 2.53, p < .05$ . Both the desired ( $\beta = -.15, t = -2.39, p < .05$ ) and the perceived ( $\beta = .16, t = 2.61, p < .01$ ) active involvement contributed to the prediction of introjected regulation. With regard to external regulation the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 8%,  $F(6, 476) = 6.59, p < .001$ . The desired directive subscale recorded a higher beta value ( $\beta = .18, t = 2.74, p < .01$ ) than perceived active subscale ( $\beta = .15, t = 2.47, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, the perceived praise predicted negatively the external regulation ( $\beta = -.15, t = -2.47, p < .01$ ). No other subscale contributed significantly to the prediction of external regulation. Regarding the amotivation subscale the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 8%,  $F(6, 474) = 6.50$ . The desired directive subscale recorded a higher beta value ( $\beta = .29, t = 2.96, p < .01$ ) than perceived active subscale ( $\beta = .14, t = 2.22, p < .05$ ).

Moreover, perceived praise predicted negatively the amotivation subscale ( $\beta = -.13, t = -2.15, p < .05$ ). No other subscale contributed significantly to the prediction of amotivation. Finally, none of the parental involvement subscales contributed significantly to the prediction of worry.

Table 2. *Pearson correlations between the examined variables*

Subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Perceived Praise (1)	-											
Desired Praise (2)	.65 **	-										
Perceived Active (3)	.38 **	.35 **	-									
Desired Active (4)	.33 **	.41 **	.65**	-								
Perceived Directive (5)	.37 **	.32 **	.38**	.33 **	-							
Desired Directive (6)	.30 **	.31 **	.44**	.45 **	.70 **	-						
Intrinsic (7)	<b>.26 **</b>	<b>.22 **</b>	.06	<b>.11 *</b>	.05	.06	-					
Identified (8)	<b>.22 **</b>	<b>.21 **</b>	.06	<b>.10 *</b>	.11 *	<b>.09 *</b>	.47 **	-				
Introjected (9)	.04	.06	<b>.12*</b>	.01	.08	<b>.12 *</b>	-.01	.16 **	-			
External (10)	-.08	-.06	<b>.17**</b>	<b>.12 *</b>	<b>.11 *</b>	<b>.18**</b>	-.15 **	-.07	.34 **	-		
Amotivation (11)	-.07	-.06	<b>.15**</b>	<b>.10 *</b>	<b>.13**</b>	<b>.20**</b>	-.23 **	-.15**	.26	.56 **	-	
Worry (12)	-.02	-.04	.01	-.01	.03	.09*	-.03	.04	.12 *	.06	.12**	-

*Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

The purpose of the study was duofold. The first one was to examine the construct validity of the Parental Involvement Questionnaire in the Greek language. Praise and understanding, active involvement and directive behaviour for both perceived and desired versions showed good internal consistency. Only the perceived active involvement subscale did not yield good internal consistency. The findings reveal that the perceived and desired scales of the questionnaire are effective for examining parental involvement with samples from Greece.

The second purpose of the study was to examine young Greek male soccer players' perceived and desired parental involvement and its relation to their behavioural regulations and level of worry. As to this, the first hypothesis was partially confirmed as children's perceived and desired praise and understanding and desired active involvement were low but significant positively associated with intrinsic and identified regulations and negative but not statistically significant associated with introjected regulation, external regulation, amotivation and worry. The second hypothesis was also partially confirmed, as children's perceived and desired directive behaviour was low but significant positively correlated with external regulation and amotivation, and non-significantly associated with children's intrinsic regulation, identified regulation and worry.

Regarding to the relationship between parental involvement and self-determined forms of regulation, the analyses showed that only perceived praise and understanding significantly predicted intrinsic regulation. When parents provide positive parental appraisals by giving positive feedback and reinforcement, the sport experience of the children is influenced (Bois et al., 2005; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2006). Children who

perceived support from their parents, by showing warm, nonjudgemental encouraging self-directed behaviour have more opportunities for participation in physical activity (Kimiecik & Horn, 2012). Thus, the quality of parent and child's communication may lead to a higher level.

According to the literature (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Hoyle & Leff, 1997), parental emotional support is positively associated with children's enjoyment and positive athletic experience for their children's involvement in sport. Providing a supportive environment by parents enhances, interest and engagement in sport and, increases their intrinsic motivation in sport participation (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Kimiecik & Horn, 2012; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2006).

Additionally, the findings in the study by Power and Woolger (1994) revealed that parental support was positively associated with child enthusiasm in sport participation, as well as in Averill and Power's (1995) study maternal support was positively associated with child enjoyment in soccer. Hoyle and Leff's (1997) study was consistent with Averill and Power (1995) regarding the positive association between parental support and children's enjoyment. Therefore, supportive parents showing praise and understanding increase children's intrinsic regulation in sport participation and children are more self-determined motivated.

Both perceived and desired praise and understanding significantly predicted identified regulation. According to self-determination theory, this type of regulation is a more autonomous or self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. The results of the current study revealed that when parents provided praise and understanding, children's behaviour was identified regulated. More specifically, supportive parents helped children to have a conscious and high valued behaviour, which was accepted as personally important. According to the literature, there are no studies that support the specific



finding. Further examination is suggested on the relationship between parental praise and understanding, and identified regulation.

Furthermore, desired but not perceived active involvement was low but significant positively associated with intrinsic and identified regulation. For young athletes who desired from their parents to be actively involved during practice or competition, their behaviours were intrinsically and identified as regulated. The young athletes in the present study engaged voluntarily in soccer and experienced enjoyment in sport participation. On the other hand, perceived active involvement had not statistically significant relationship with the self-determined types of regulation, which was in contrast with the hypothesis. The way that young athletes perceived active involvement by their parents did not predict intrinsic and identified regulations. According to Giannitsopoulou et al.'s (2010) study parental involvement differs between team sports, like soccer, and individual sports. In individual sports, like rhythmic gymnastics or swimming, parents transport children to and off the training centers and take part in the sport clubs as members or as administration. On the other hand, in team sports parents have limited opportunities to be involved and take up an active role in the club due to the structure and the organization of the sports by the clubs. Thus, children may feel that their parents were not close to them. That is perhaps the reason why the way that children perceived parental active involvement did not influence their enjoyment and therefore, their intrinsic motivation in sport participation.

Regarding to the relationship between parental involvement and non-self determined types of regulation, both desired and perceived active involvement predicted the introjected regulation on a low level. Desired active involvement predicted negatively the introjected regulated behaviours, whereas perceived active involvement predicted positively the introjected regulation. This finding is in contrast with the

hypothesis, where both perceived and desired active involvement were expected to be negatively associated with non-self determined forms of regulations. According with the current finding, when parents were perceived as active in the club either during competition or practice, children's behaviours were introjected regulated. A possible explanation is that young athletes may perceive that their parents had expectations from them and felt that they should take part in the activity in order to avoid guilt or punishment. Thus, children's motivation is controlled and non-self determined.

As it was expected, perceived parental praise and understanding was negatively associated with external regulation. When young soccer players perceived parental behaviours such as praise and empathy, their behaviours were not extrinsically motivated. Children did not feel that their behaviours are controlled and did not play soccer for external reasons. Furthermore, perceived praise and understanding predicted negatively amotivation. Children did not act without intent in their sport participation when they perceived their parents as supportive.

In contrast with the hypotheses of the study, none of the parenting practices was significantly associated with worry. Providing praise and understanding, active involvement or directive behaviour by parents, the levels of worry in young soccer players' were not influenced. Both perceived and desired parental involvement was not linked with children's negative thoughts about their sport participation during competition. In Bois et al.'s (2009) study directive parental behaviours were positively associated with anxiety for tennis players. Additionally, there is evidence from studies (Gould et al., 2008; Lauer et al., 2010) that anxiety exists not only with negative and controlling behaviours. The results of the present study did not support the above findings from the literature. The way that parenting practices were perceived by the athletes did not influence their levels of worry before or during competition. In other

words athletes' feeling of worry was not due to the parental involvement. A possible explanation is that children's levels of worry are most likely associated with coach and teammates' behaviours and their own levels of competence. They may worry because they did not want to let down their coach or their teammates and did not feel competent enough to participate in competition. Interestingly and optimistically, parents in the present study did not add worries on their children for playing soccer, which may be due to the early stage of the children's involvement with the sport and the absence of expectations by the parents at that stage.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions and Future Research Directions

#### Conclusions

First, the construct validity of the Parental Involvement Questionnaire in the Greek language, was found to be acceptable levels for both the perceived and desired scales, meaning that the instrument can be used in Greek young athletes, where research about parental involvement in Greece is limited.

To summarize the research conducted with the Parental Involvement Questionnaire, perceived praise and understanding as well as desired active involvement was associated with young athletes' self-determined types of regulation. On the other hand, perceived and desired parental directive behaviour related with non-self-determined forms of regulation. However, a relationship between parental involvement and worry was not found.

According to the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), when children are intrinsically motivated, they are more self-determined. Thus, children engage in long-term sport participation. Parents can reinforce or diminish young athletes' self-determination through their involvement in children's engagement in sports. The findings of the present study reveal that when parents understand and praise their child and are also involved their child's sport life, the child's intrinsic motivation is enhanced and therefore its self-determination. When parents exhibit directive behaviour toward their child, these enhance the child-athlete's extrinsic motivation and decrease the self-determination. These findings in simple words signify that parents should keep a stance close to their children, try to be understanding, praise them while at the same time they are careful not to be very directive.

**Limitations**

A possible limitation for the present study might have been the difficulty that some of the youngest children, around the age of 10, expressed in understanding some of the questions and this may have led them to inaccurate answers or to answering randomly. In all cases, the researcher was always present at data collection to accommodate any questions from the participants. The data collection conditions may have caused another limitation. The questionnaires were completed at each club's locker rooms or on their respective courts, both of which are not ideal for data collection. As such, the athletes might have experienced some level of discomfort and disruption during questionnaire administration. Moreover, the questionnaires were administered 15 minutes before practice when children are often impatient to start playing their favorite game and thus they might have answered some of the questions randomly in order to complete them as soon as possible. Lastly, the perceived active involvement subscale of the Parental Behavior Questionnaire did not show good internal consistency, hence, the results may be influenced to some degree.

**Implications for Parents and Sport Psychology Practitioners**

The results of the present study can provide information and guidance to parents relating to their involvement in their children's sport participation. As mentioned above, children are more intrinsically motivated, have more enjoyment, and feel more satisfaction from their sport participation, while drop out from sport is minimal, when their parents are close by, show understanding and offer their praise. The influence parents have on their children highlights parents' importance in the sport environment. Sport parent education through seminars and workshops is a mean for assisting parents to eliminate the excessive directive behaviours. When parents become aware of their child's perceptions and desires and acknowledge that some differences and/or

discrepancies may exist between them and the child, then the parent-child relationship can be strengthened. Parents would benefit from learning how their behaviours can consistently support the child and from monitoring their exhibited behaviours toward the child. It is important that parents start to openly discuss the nature, extent, and specific role of their involvement with the children about the sport. Parents who have an understanding and supportive role give positive value to their children's sport experience. Thus, the enjoyment that young athletes derive from their sport participation will be enhanced.

The results of the current study are also valuable for sport psychology practitioners who work with parents, coaches and young athletes. Sport psychologists conducting workshops for parents ought to inform and guide them about their significant role in children's sport participation. Specifically, these workshops could include suggestions on specific positive parenting practices and optimal involvement. For example, recommending parents to discuss with their child the ways in which they are involved by asking their child how he/she wants his/her parents to be involved can lead to positive sport experience. Sport psychology professionals may also recommend and even initiate coach-parent meetings that will aid both parties clarify its role and how work more efficiently together through better communication.

### **Future Research**

Considering that the perceived active involvement subscale of the Greek version did not show good internal consistency, the items of the specific subscale should be further tested, improved in Greek language and adapted to Greek population. Moreover, in the present study, parental perceptions about their involvement were not examined as well as any differences between mothers and fathers. Brustad, Babkes, and Smith (2004) suggested that parents should be included in future studies about their involvement in

children's sport participation. Comparison between parents' and children's perceptions can be useful and can provide us with more information about parental involvement. Moreover, according to the existing literature, mothers' and fathers' perceptions should be distinguished in the future in order to examine if both parents perceive and desire the same parenting practices.

Additional research is required to investigate whether parental involvement has an effect on the satisfaction of children's sport related psychological needs and whether the psychological needs mediate the relationship of parental involvement and children's behavioural regulations. Self-determination theory suggests that when the three innate psychological needs are satisfied, self-motivation is enhanced and when thwarted, self-determined behaviours and well-being are diminished (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In other words, the most self-determined forms of regulation will guide behaviour when the needs are satisfied, whereas low self-determination is a consequence of a thwarting of the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006).

## CHAPTER 7

### References

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Φόρμα Συναίνεσης Γονέα

Τίτλος Ερευνητικής Εργασίας: Οι σχέσεις μεταξύ της εμπλοκής των γονέων και των ρυθμίσεων συμπεριφοράς νεαρών αθλητών στο ποδόσφαιρο.

1. Σκοπός της ερευνητικής εργασίας

Σκοπός της μελέτης είναι να εξετάσει τον τρόπο με τον οποίο αντιλαμβάνονται νεαροί ποδοσφαιριστές την εμπλοκή των γονέων τους στην αθλητική τους ζωή και πώς σχετίζεται με τις ψυχολογικές τους ανάγκες.

2. Διαδικασία

Το παιδί σας θα συμπληρώσει ένα ερωτηματολόγιο και η ίδια διαδικασία θα επαναληφθεί περίπου 5 μήνες μετά. Η συμπλήρωση θα διαρκέσει περίπου 30 λεπτά. Τα ερωτηματολόγια θα διανεμηθούν στην ακαδημία πριν από την προπόνηση, ενώ κανένας υπεύθυνος της ακαδημίας, ή προπονητής δε θα είναι παρών κατά τη συμπλήρωσή τους. Ένας ερευνητής θα είναι παρών καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια συμπλήρωσής τους για να απαντήσει σε ό,τι ερωτήσεις ή ανησυχίες μπορεί να έχει το παιδί.

3. Κίνδυνοι και ενοχλήσεις

Δεν υπάρχει κανένας κίνδυνος κατά τη συμπλήρωση των ερωτηματολογίων. Εάν κάποια από τις ερωτήσεις κάνει το παιδί σας να νιώσει άβολα, μπορεί να σταματήσει και να διακόψει τη συμμετοχή του.

4. Προσδοκώμενες ωφέλειες

Τα δεδομένα θα μας βοηθήσουν να αναγνωρίσουμε το βαθμό που εμπλέκονται οι γονείς στην αθλητική ζωή των παιδιών και τι συνέπειες έχει η εμπλοκή τους για τα ίδια τα παιδιά-αθλητές. Με τα στοιχεία αυτά θα κατανοήσουμε συμπεριφορές γονέων που έχουν θετικά αποτελέσματα.

5. Δημοσίευση δεδομένων – αποτελεσμάτων

Η συμμετοχή του παιδιού σας στην έρευνα συνεπάγεται ότι συμφωνείτε με τη μελλοντική δημοσίευση των δεδομένων και αποτελεσμάτων της, με την προϋπόθεση ότι οι πληροφορίες θα είναι ανώνυμες και δε θα αποκαλυφθούν τα ονόματα των συμμετεχόντων. Τα δεδομένα που θα συγκεντρωθούν θα κωδικοποιηθούν με αριθμό, ώστε το όνομά του παιδιού σας δε θα φαίνεται πουθενά.

6. Πληροφορίες

Αν έχετε κάποια αμφιβολία ή ερώτηση για τη διεξαγωγή της έρευνας παρακαλώ πολύ επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας.

7. Ελευθερία συναίνεσης

Η συμμετοχή του παιδιού σας στην εργασία είναι εθελοντική. Είστε ελεύθεροι να μη συναινέσετε να συμμετέχει το παιδί σας στην έρευνα.

8. Δήλωση συναίνεσης

Διάβασα τη φόρμα αυτή και κατανόησα πλήρως το σκοπό και το σχεδιασμό της έρευνας. Συναινώ να συμμετέχει το παιδί μου στην ερευνητική διαδικασία.

Ημερομηνία: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Ονοματεπώνυμο και  
υπογραφή γονέα

Υπογραφή ερευνητή

Ονοματεπώνυμο και  
υπογραφή παρατηρητή

## Δημογραφικά

1. Ημερομηνία γέννησης: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Για παράδειγμα, αν γεννήθηκες στις 17 Αυγούστου 1998, παρακαλώ γράψε: 17  
/Αυγούστου/1998

2. Πόσο χρονών είσαι; (Παρακαλώ γράψε την ηλικία σου σε έτη και μήνες) \_\_\_\_ ετών  
& \_\_\_\_ μηνών.

3. Είσαι αγόρι ή κορίτσι? Κύκλωσε το σωστό:     Αγόρι ☐     Κορίτσι ☐

4. Πόσα αδέρφια (αγόρια, κορίτσια) έχεις συνολικά, χωρίς εσένα? (συμπεριλαμβάνονται  
ετεροθαλή αδέρφια ή αδελφές)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Πάνω από 6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Ποιο είναι το όνομα της διεύθυνσης κατοικίας σου και της πόλης σου;

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Ποιο από τα παρακάτω θα περιέγραφε καλύτερα την εθνικότητά σου; **Υπογράμμισε το σωστό.**

Έλληνας ☐ Ρομά ☐ Κινέζος ☐ Άλλης Ανατολικής Ευρώπης ☐ Αλβανός ☐ Ρώσος  
☐ Λευκός και Ασιάτης ☐ Άλλης λευκής φυλής ☐ Σέρβος ☐ Βρετανός ☐ Μαύρος Αφρικής  
☐ Άλλης Ασιατικής φυλής ☐ Βούλγαρος ☐ Πακιστανός ☐ Μαύρος  
Καραϊβικής ☐ Άλλης μαύρης φυλής ☐ Ρουμάνος ☐ Μπαγκλαντές ☐ Λευκός και Μαύρος  
Αφρικανός ☐ Άλλης μεικτής φυλής ☐ Άλλης Βαλκανικής ☐ Ινδός ☐ Λευκός και Μαύρος  
Καραϊβικής ☐ Άλλης φυλής ☐

7. Ποια πιστεύεις ότι είναι η οικονομική κατάσταση της οικογένειά σου;

Πολύ καλή οικονομική κατάσταση	Καλή οικονομική κατάσταση	Στο μέσο όρο	Όχι πολύ καλή οικονομική κατάσταση	Καθόλου καλή οικονομική κατάσταση
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Ποιό είναι το όνομα της ομάδας σου που παίζεις/προπονείσαι σήμερα;

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Πόσες αγωνιστικές περιόδους (σεζόν) έχεις παίξει για αυτή την ομάδα;

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Κατά μέσο όρο, πόσες ώρες την εβδομάδα προπονείσαι και παίζεις για την ομάδα  
σου σε μια αγωνιστική περίοδο; \_\_\_\_ ώρες

11. Ποιο είναι το όνομα του κύριου προπονητή σου στην ομάδα που αγωνίζεσαι/  
προπονείσαι σήμερα;

Το όνομα του κύριου προπονητή της ομάδας μου είναι \_\_\_\_\_

12. Κατά μέσο όρο, πόσες ώρες την εβδομάδα περνάς με τον προπονητή σου;  
\_\_\_\_\_ώρες



## Appendix B

Παρακαλώ τσέκαρε ή κύκλωσε τον κατάλληλο αριθμό που δηλώνει πόσο καλά κάθε μια από τις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις αντιπροσωπεύει τους λόγους για τους οποίους παίζεις ποδόσφαιρο στην ομάδα σου.

Παίζω ποδόσφαιρο για αυτή την ομάδα...	Διαφωνώ Απόλυτα	Διαφωνώ	Ούτε Συμφωνώ Ούτε Διαφωνώ	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ Απόλυτα
1. Γιατί το απολαμβάνω.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Γιατί τα οφέλη από το ποδόσφαιρο είναι σημαντικά για μένα (π.χ., αναπτύσσομαι ως παίκτης, αποκτώ καλή φυσική κατάσταση, παίζω με τους συμπαίκτες μου).	1	2	3	4	5
3. Γιατί θα αισθανόμουν ενοχές αν τα παρατούσα.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Γιατί κάποιοι άνθρωποι με πιέζουν να παίζω.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Για να κερδίσω το κύπελλο ή το πρωτάθλημα.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Αλλά αναρωτιέμαι γιατί συνεχίζω να το κάνω.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Γιατί μου αρέσει.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Γιατί εκτιμώ πολύ τα οφέλη του ποδοσφαίρου (π.χ., μαθαίνω νέες ασκήσεις στο ποδόσφαιρο, γίνομαι υγιής, κάνω φίλους, κλπ).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Γιατί θα αισθανόμουν ντροπή αν τα παρατούσα.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Για να ικανοποιήσω τους ανθρώπους που θέλουν να παίζω ποδόσφαιρο.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Για τα κύπελλα και τα μετάλλια.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Αλλά αναρωτιέμαι γιατί παίζω ποδόσφαιρο.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Γιατί είναι διασκεδαστικό.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Γιατί μου διδάσκει αυτοπειθαρχία.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Γιατί αισθάνομαι ότι πρέπει να συνεχίσω να παίζω.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Γιατί αισθάνομαι πίεση από άλλους ανθρώπους να παίζω.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Γιατί θέλω να κερδίζω διακρίσεις (π.χ., ο παίκτης του αγώνα).	1	2	3	4	5
18. Αλλά οι λόγοι για τους οποίους παίζω δεν είναι ξεκάθαροι πια σε μένα.	1	2	3	4	5

Παίζω ποδόσφαιρο για αυτή την ομάδα...	Διαφωνώ Απόλυτα	Διαφωνώ	Ούτε Συμφωνώ Ούτε Διαφωνώ	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ Απόλυτα
19. Γιατί το βρίσκω ενθουσιαστικό.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Γιατί είναι ένας καλός τρόπος να μαθαίνω πράγματα τα οποία θα είναι χρήσιμα στην ζωή μου.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Γιατί θα αισθανόμουν αποτυχημένος/η εάν τα παρατούσα.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Γιατί αν δεν το κάνω κάποιοι άνθρωποι δεν θα είναι ευχαριστημένοι μαζί μου.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Αλλά αναρωτιέμαι ποιος ο λόγος να συνεχίζω να το κάνω αυτό.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix C

Πολλοί παίκτες/τριες αισθάνονται ένταση ή εκνευρίζονται πριν ή κατά τη διάρκεια των αγώνων. Αυτό συμβαίνει ακόμα και στους επαγγελματίες αθλητές. Παρακαλώ διάβασε κάθε ερώτηση. Κατόπιν, κύκλωσε τον αριθμό που εκφράζει το πώς αισθανόσουν συνήθως πριν ή κατά τη διάρκεια, που συμμετείχες σε αγώνες στο ποδόσφαιρο τις προηγούμενες 3-4 εβδομάδες. Σε παρακαλώ πολύ να είσαι όσο το δυνατόν πιο ειλικρινής μπορείς.

Διαφωνώ Απόλυτα

Διαφωνώ

Ούτε Συμφωνώ  
Ούτε Διαφωνώ

Συμφωνώ

Συμφωνώ Απόλυτα

**Πριν ή κατά τη διάρκεια που έπαιζα αγώνες για την ομάδα μου τις προηγούμενες 3-4 εβδομάδες...**

1. Φοβόμουν ότι δεν θα έπαιζα καλά.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Φοβόμουν ότι θα απογοήτευα κάποιους άλλους.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Φοβόμουν ότι δεν θα έπαιζα όσο καλύτερα μπορούσα.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Φοβόμουν ότι θα έπαιζα άσχημα.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Φοβόμουν ότι θα τα πήγαινα χάλια κατά τη διάρκεια του παιχνιδιού.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix D

Τα παρακάτω θέματα αφορούν στον τρόπο με τον οποίο τις προηγούμενες 3-4 εβδομάδες συμμετέχουν οι γονείς σου στην αθλητική σου ζωή. Δεν υπάρχουν σωστές και λάθος απαντήσεις, οπότε επέλεξε αυτή που εκφράζει καλύτερα εσένα.

Πόσο συχνά...	Ποτέ	Σπάνια	Συχνά	Πολύ συχνά	Συνεχώς
1. ...μετά από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου, σου έλεγαν τι πίστευαν ότι έπρεπε να βελτιώσεις;	1	2	3	4	5
2. ...κατά την προπόνηση οι γονείς σου, σου έκαναν νοήματα για το τι έπρεπε να κάνεις;	1	2	3	4	5
3. ... μετά από τον αγώνα οι γονείς σου σε επαινούσαν για την καλή προσπάθεια;	1	2	3	4	5
4. ...οι γονείς σου συζητούσαν την πρόοδό σου με τον/την προπονητή/τρια σου;	1	2	3	4	5
5. ...οι γονείς σου άλλαζαν το δικό τους πρόγραμμα για να μπορείς να προπονήσεις ή να πηγαίνεις σε αγώνες;	1	2	3	4	5
6. ...οι γονείς σου σε ενθάρρυναν να τους μιλάς για τα προβλήματα ή τις ανησυχίες που μπορεί να είχες στο άθλημά σου;	1	2	3	4	5
7. ...οι γονείς σου έδειχναν να καταλαβαίνουν πώς ένιωθες για το άθλημά σου;	1	2	3	4	5
8. ...μετά από έναν «άσχημο» αγώνα σου επισήμαιναν οι γονείς σου τα σημεία στα οποία πίστευαν ότι έκανες λάθος;	1	2	3	4	5
9. ...οι γονείς σου ζητωκραύγαζαν και χειροκροτούσαν πριν από έναν αγώνα;	1	2	3	4	5
10. ... ακόμη και μετά από έναν «άσχημο» αγώνα οι γονείς σου σε επαινούσαν για αυτά που έκανες καλά;	1	2	3	4	5
11. ...σου έλεγαν οι γονείς σου πώς πίστευαν ότι μπορούσες να βελτιώσεις την τεχνική σου;	1	2	3	4	5
12. ...πριν από έναν αγώνα σου έλεγαν οι γονείς σου πώς να αγωνιστείς;	1	2	3	4	5

Πόσο συχνά...	Ποτέ	Σπάνια	Συχνά	Πολύ συχνά	Συνεχώς
13. ...οι γονείς σου είχαν ενεργό ρόλο στο σύλλογο που αθλείσαι;	1	2	3	4	5
14. ...οι γονείς σου στενοχωριούνταν μαζί σου όταν πίστευαν ότι δεν τα είχες πάει όσο καλά θα έπρεπε;	1	2	3	4	5
15. ...μετά από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου, σου έλεγαν ότι δεν προσπάθησες αρκετά;	1	2	3	4	5
16. ...οι γονείς σου σε πίεζαν να προπονηθείς περισσότερο;	1	2	3	4	5
17. ...πριν από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου, σου τόνιζαν συγκεκριμένα σημεία στα οποία έπρεπε να δουλέψεις για να τα πας καλά;	1	2	3	4	5
18. ...μετά από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου σε συνεχάρουν για τη θέση που πήρες;	1	2	3	4	5
19. ...οι γονείς σου ήταν εθελοντές σε αγώνες και εκδηλώσεις;	1	2	3	4	5

Προσοχή, τα παρακάτω θέματα αφορούν στον τρόπο με τον οποίο εσύ θα ήθελες να συμμετέχουν οι γονείς σου στην αθλητική σου ζωή. Δεν υπάρχουν σωστές και λάθος απαντήσεις, οπότε επέλεξε αυτή που εκφράζει καλύτερα εσένα.

Πόσο θα ήθελες εσύ...	Ποτέ	Σπάνια	Συχνά	Πολύ συχνά	Συνεχώς
1. ...μετά από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου, να σου λένε τι πιστεύουν ότι πρέπει να βελτιώσεις;	1	2	3	4	5
2. ...κατά την προπόνηση οι γονείς σου, να σου κάνουν νοήματα για το τι πρέπει να κάνεις;	1	2	3	4	5
3. ... μετά από τον αγώνα οι γονείς σου να σε επαινούν για την καλή προσπάθεια;	1	2	3	4	5
4. ...οι γονείς σου να συζητούν την πρόοδό σου με τον/την προπονητή/τρια σου;	1	2	3	4	5
5. ...οι γονείς σου να αλλάζουν το δικό τους πρόγραμμα για να μπορείς να προπονείσαι ή να πηγαίνεις σε αγώνες;	1	2	3	4	5
6. ...οι γονείς σου να σε ενθαρρύνουν να τους μιλάς για τα προβλήματα ή τις ανησυχίες που μπορεί να έχεις στο άθλημά σου;	1	2	3	4	5
7. ...οι γονείς σου να δείχνουν ότι καταλαβαίνουν πώς νοιώθεις για το άθλημά σου;	1	2	3	4	5
8. ...μετά από έναν «άσχημο» αγώνα να σου επισημαίνουν οι γονείς σου τα σημεία στα οποία πιστεύουν ότι έκανες λάθος;	1	2	3	4	5
9. ...οι γονείς σου να ζητωκραυγάζουν και να χειροκροτούν πριν από έναν αγώνα;	1	2	3	4	5
10. ... ακόμη και μετά από έναν «άσχημο» αγώνα οι γονείς σου να σε επαινούν για αυτά που έκανες καλά;	1	2	3	4	5
11. ...να σου λένε οι γονείς σου πώς πιστεύουν ότι μπορείς να βελτιώσεις την τεχνική σου;	1	2	3	4	5
12. ...πριν από έναν αγώνα να σου λένε οι γονείς σου πώς να αγωνιστείς;	1	2	3	4	5

Πόσο θα ήθελες εσύ...	Ποτέ	Σπάνια	Συχνά	Πολύ συχνά	Συνεχώς
13. ...οι γονείς σου να έχουν ενεργό ρόλο στο σύλλογο που αθλείσαι;	1	2	3	4	5
14. ...οι γονείς σου να στενοχωριούνται μαζί σου όταν πιστεύουν ότι δεν τα έχεις πάει όσο καλά θα έπρεπε;	1	2	3	4	5
15. ...μετά από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου, να σου λένε ότι δεν προσπάθησες αρκετά;	1	2	3	4	5
16. ...οι γονείς σου να σε πιέζουν να προπονηθείς περισσότερο;	1	2	3	4	5
17. ...πριν από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου, να σου τονίζουν συγκεκριμένα σημεία στα οποία πρέπει να δουλέψεις για να τα πας καλά;	1	2	3	4	5
18. ...μετά από έναν αγώνα οι γονείς σου να σε συγχαίρουν για τη θέση που πήρες;	1	2	3	4	5
19. ...οι γονείς σου να είναι εθελοντές σε αγώνες και εκδηλώσεις;	1	2	3	4	5