

Individual- and contextual-associated variation on achievement and competitiveness motivation in youth basketball: a multilevel analysis

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Introduction: Youth athletes' development has been of interest for coaches, applied researchers, and ultimately young athletes. However, available data is mostly based on unidimensional approaches limiting the understanding young athletes' development process, due to the interacting influences of individuals' characteristics (e.g., growth, size or performance) and training contexts (e.g., club characteristics or socio-economic background). Also, sports expertise development is positively related with accumulation of sport specific deliberate practice. Albeit the limited data, engagement in formal training for extensive period (10 to 20 years of training) demands high levels of motivation from the young athletes. **Objectives:** The present study examined the influence of individual characteristics (age, maturity status, training experience, functional performance) and context of practice (club) on motivation for achievement and competitiveness in youth basketball players. **Methods:** One hundred thirteen male adolescent basketball players (9.53 to 15.51 years) were considered. Athletes were involved in structured basketball training programs from two clubs engaged in the state level championship supervised by *Federação Paulista de Basketball* (FPB). One of the clubs was oriented to high-level players development, while the other club's youth basketball program aimed to support youth development in a socially disadvantaged context. Players were grouped by competitive age groups (under-12, under-13, under-14 and under-15). Accumulated training experience was computed. Maturity status was based on the maturity offset equation. The *Work and Family Orientation questionnaire* (WOFO) and the *Deliberate Practice for Motivation Questionnaire* (DPMQ) were used to assess motivation for achievement and competitiveness. A performance composite score comprising performance on the Yo-yo intermittent recovery test – level 1 and the Line-drill test was determined. Multilevel linear regression models were used to explore the cross-classified influence of individual and contextual effects on the motivation indicators. **Results:** There was substantial variation between players grouped by club for motivation. The athletes engaged the club focused in high-level development were less motivated for achievement and competitiveness than the players from the club focused on supporting youth development in a socially disadvantaged context. Training experience influenced in all motivation indicators. Chronological age and functional performance related to work and mastery orientation. Maturity status was related only to will to compete. **Conclusion:** Conditional on the data, adolescent basketball players' achievement and competitiveness motivation is likely influenced by the training context, in interaction with their individual characteristics, mainly their age and physiological performance development. Youth basketball training programs and coaches involved should consider the interactions between athletes' characteristics with the context of practice to foster their positive development within their expectations.

Keywords: youth sports, motivation, multilevel modeling, positive youth development

