

## EFFECTS OF SPORTS CLUB MEMBERSHIP, SEX, AND AGE ON PHYSICAL SELF-CONCEPT AND GOAL ORIENTATION IN GERMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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### Introduction

The development of both a positive self-concept and an adequate goal-orientation is generally seen as a crucial factor in childhood and adolescence (e.g., Harter, 2007). Due to its social and performance-orientated structure, sport acts a socializing agent and plays an important role for the setting of these individual attributes (e.g., Conzelmann et al., 2011). However, little is known about the status quo of physical self-concept and goal-orientation in children of primary school age and in which extent it is affected by sports club membership, sex, and age. The aim of the present study was to analyze these relationships.

### Methods

A sample of 365 primary school children of second ( $n = 176$ ,  $M_{age} = 7.5$ ) and fourth grade ( $n = 189$ ,  $M_{age} = 9.5$ ) completed questionnaires of physical self-concept and goal-orientation (see Lohbeck et al., under review). Items were reduced and linguistical simplified to be suitable for primary school children; in case of lack of understanding they were explained by the first author. Overall, the validation of modified questionnaires led to satisfying results (see Lohbeck et al., under review).

### Results

Data were analyzed in separate 2 x 2 x 2-ANOVAs with physical self-concept and goal-orientation as dependent variables. With regard to the physical self-concept, children belonging to a sports club reported significantly higher values than non-involved children,  $F(1,357) = 54.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{p2} = .13$ , as well as boys than girls,  $F(1,357) = 9.93$ ,  $54.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_{p2} = .03$ . Age had no effect,  $F(1,357) = 1.56$ ,  $p > 2$ . Relating to goal-orientation, sports club membership and sex had effects only on some subscales, however, second graders generally scored higher values than fourth graders, e.g.,  $F(1,357) = 22.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{p2} = .06$ .

### Discussion

Findings show that yet in primary school age being in a sports club has a positive effect on the physical self-concept. The difference between boys and girls was found in prior studies too and has to be considered as a gender effect. Surprisingly, 7-year-old children demonstrated stronger achievement goals and motivation than 9-year-old children. Further studies should include motor performance tests to assess not only the level of physical self-concept but also its veridicality.

### References

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