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**Parents' expectations and views
of their child's football hobby**

Thesis

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences

School of Sports

Degree Programme in Sports and Leisure Management

26th July 2014



School Kajaani University of Applied Sciences	Degree Programme Degree in Sports and Leisure Management
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Title Parents' expectations and views of their child's football hobby	
Optional Professional Studies	Supervisor(s) Aleksi Nyström & Eveliina Melkko
	Commissioned by Finnish Football Association
Date 4 th april 2014	Total Number of Pages and Appendices 44+3
<p>The aim of this thesis is to describe the expectations and beliefs of parents regarding their child's football hobby. Additionally I wanted to find out about the interaction between coaches and parents. The target group of this study was the parents of E-juniors, aged 11-12 years. The research was carried out with quantitative research method, and the sample group was 181 participants. The answers were collected with an internet survey in the winter of 2013.</p> <p>The results of this study indicate that the most recognizable hopes of parents about their child's football hobby are that the child improves his social skills, gets new friends and acquires physical and mental well-being. Parents also believe that good team spirit and good coaching is essential for child's motivation toward football.</p> <p>Parents were satisfied with the communication between them and coaches. Parents were satisfied with the amount and the style of communication.</p> <p>Additionally, results also highlighted the fact that parents need and want considerable amount of support and knowledge regarding their child's football hobby. The areas where parents especially want more information are the development of the young player and the mental side of the sport.</p>	
Language of Thesis English	
Keywords;	Junior football, Motivation, Interaction
Deposited at	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic library Theseus <input type="checkbox"/> Kajaani University of Applied Sciences Library

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1 INTRODUCTION

In Finland there are about 113 000 junior football players. One of the main goals of Finnish Football Association (SPL) is to make the best possible football experience for junior players. Regarding junior players their parents are in major role, providing financial and emotional support for junior players. Nevertheless, there is not very much information on parent's expectations and beliefs about junior football.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the expectations and beliefs of parents regarding their child's football hobby. Additionally I hope to gain information about the expectations of parents and their interaction between coaches.

The aim of this thesis for the working life (SPL) is to create a basis of information on the amount of support and knowledge the parents currently have regarding the football associated topics, in order to develop further research or programs.

The aims of the thesis to myself is to develop my skills in research related studies, to be able to use physical education for the benefit of supporting and promoting human growth and development. Additionally my aim was to find out about the factors affecting human growth, development and social behavior as well as being able to take them into consideration when instructing physical activity. The aim of the thesis for KUAS is to create a possible connection and cooperation with the Finnish Football Association concerning this issue.

2 CHILDREN'S MOTIVATION TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children have many different motivators to participate to physical activity. These include for example friends, enjoyment, development of skills, development of fitness level and positive feedback from peers. From these are formed four main reasons behind physical activity participation and they are: competence, being part of community, physical condition and enjoyment. (Mäkinen & Syrjänen 1999, 20-21; referenced Gould & Petlichkoff 1989; Weiss & Petlichkoff 1989.) According to Gould, Felz & Weiss (1985) the motivations behind athletes aged 8-11 were for example that they have something to do, get to travel, desire to please parents and peers, competence and enjoyment. The impact of parents and siblings was the second biggest reason for children to start sports (Turpeinen 2012, 74-75). The children of parents who are good athletic role models have higher perception of their own competences, enjoyment and had higher inner motivation (Babkes & Weiss 1999). In order to increase children's motivation toward sport it is essential to promote parents' participation and supportive perception as well as to lower parents' pressure toward their child (Sanches-Miguel etc 2013, 177). However, even without parent and peer support, it is possible for a child to enjoy physical activity participation. In early and middle childhood parental support has a major influence on child, however it diminishes little by little and peer support becomes increasingly influential on physical activity as child grows to later childhood and adolescence. (Ning, Gao & Lodewyk 2012, 6-7.)

Enjoyment has been discovered to be a key factor to maintain positive involvement in physical activity for both boys and girls (Wallhead and Buckworth, 2004). In a research it was found that social motivation is an important factor all over globe for both boys and girls. Health factors do not appear to be motivational for early adolescents (Lannotti etc 2013, 111).

Motivation can be defined to external and internal. External motivation is not coming from inside the athlete but comes from other aspects of life. Young athletes can be motivated by lots of external factors such as rewards, pressure from parents and coaches or by opinions they believe other people have on them. (Ryan & Desci 2007.)

Persons with high perceived ability in physical activity are more motivated from achievement and status reasons than persons with low perceived ability. Athletes higher in perceived physical ability considered skill development, team affiliation, and having fun as more important reasons for their participation in sports than athletes lower in perceived physical ability. (Gaglar 2009, 20.)

A major problem for youth sports is that lot of children drop out from sports from very various reasons. Common reasons to dropping out are that there are more interesting things to do, lack of excitement and lack of time. (Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja, Kontinen 2013. 8-10.)

Certain issues are significantly decreasing motivation for child, for example if the activities are too one dimensional, they lack overall objectives for task and have little or no meaning. In these cases activity becomes too boring which causes them to lose intrinsic motivation. Alternatively, it is possible that a child gets burned out from activities because of too much participating and overtraining. Also overemphasis on winning and too much push to engage in the activity from parents can cause decrease in motivation and ultimately lead to dropping out. (Heidorn 2014, 5.) When the child has opportunities to progress at his own rate, his attitude and motivation toward physical activity may raise (Solmon 2012, 279).

3 FOOTBALL FOR CHILDREN AGED 10-12 YEARS

Finnish Football Association (SPL) was established in 1907. It became part of the world football Federation (FIFA) in 1908 and of European Football Federation (UEFA) in 1954. There are over 1000 clubs belonging to SPL and there are estimated 115 000 registered players. According to a research of the Finnish Gallup there are over 500 000 persons who play football. Finnish Football Association is the biggest sport governing body in Finland. (Finnish Football Association. <http://www.palloliitto.fi/esittely/palloliitto-lyhyesti>. 30.5.2014.)

In Finland the Finnish Football Association is in responsible for all football activity of juniors. There are about 113 000 licensed junior players. Important values for junior football are responsibility, joyfulness, a sense of community and success. These values are creating an atmosphere where the vision “football for everybody” is reached. Football is team sport played with feet, and it is in the between of early specialization sports and belated specialization sports. This means that during the learning of basic physical activity movements there should also be already specialized movement training for football. (Finnish Football Association.<http://www.palloliitto.fi/sites/default/files/liitteet/nuorisotoimintalinja.pdf>. 30.5.2014.)

In the age of 10-12 most of the children already have a few years’ experience and have gone through the creation of basics for football. A child player has been introduced to sport and has done versatile motoric learning. When the child is approaching teenage years significant physiological differences become apparent between individuals. The development of girls is generally two years ahead of boys and between individuals the biological differences may be up to 3-4 years. (Finnish Football Association. <http://www.palloliitto.fi/sites/default/files/liitteet/nuorisotoimintalinja.pdf>. 30.5.2014.)

Recommended training time for children aged 10-12 is 60-90 minutes per time. This includes warming up and cooling down. Games and small games should take approximately 40% of training time, while about 40% of time should be concentrated on developing football skills and to learn how to use them in game-like situation. Because learning of motoric skills develops fast between the ages of 7-12, it is important to learn and teach as much as specific football skills during this age period. (Miettinen 1990, 370.) During one’s own time, training is done as game-like as possible, alone and with friends. Physical training is done

mostly with own body and sometimes the ball is involved. There should be about 2-4 team training sessions and about 10-12 hours of individual training and other physical activity in a week. The main goals for children aged 10-12 are learning to train and learning of basic football skills, picking up tactical basics and learning warm-up, cool-down, basics of nutrition and recovery and fundamentals of concentration and visualization training. (Finnish Football Association. <http://www.palloliitto.fi/sites/default/files/liitteet/nuorisotoimintalinja.pdf>. 30.5.2014.)

During a competition and match players do their best to win, but the attention is still in the leaning of basics. The relation between training and games is important, because if there are too many games, it takes something away from the important training time and if there are too few games, the child is not able to develop his/her skills during challenging competition. A good ratio between trainings and matches is three trainings for one match. Still in this age group, participating in training and games should be voluntary but it is desirable that the child attends regularly and informs about absences. A suitable amount of players in games is 7vs7or9vs9. (Finnish Football Association..<http://www.palloliitto.fi/sites/default/files/liitteet/nuorisotoimintalinja.pdf>. 30.5.2014.)

There are various motivations for children to play football or some other sport. Five most common motivators for children are: perceived competence, fun and enjoyment, parental influence, learning new skills and the influence of friends and equals. (Bailey, Cope, Pearce 2013.13.)

3.1 Child development between 10-12 years

Between ages 10-12 is the golden age of learning new skills (Karvinen, Hiltunen & Jääskeläinen 1991, 107.); (Sandström ja Ahonen 2011, 65.) An essential learning phase for psychomotor skills is the age between 9-12 years. In these growing years the physical development is fast and children are eager to learn new psychomotor movements. (Kauranen (2011, 347; Miettinen 1999, 16.) Fine psychomotoric skills are developing fast so the movements become more fluent than in earlier ages (Miettinen 1999, 16). A child is able to combine things so there should be lot of coordination exercises and the handling of the playing object (Kauranen 2011, 347).

At this age children are usually social, active and interested in various things. Also at this age children's personality is building up and getting stronger. (Nikander 2009, 116–117). Because of the developed muscle and bone structure, children are in a position to learn more complex skills and sports and this can cause them to be wild and active. Because of developed self-esteem they are also more eager to speak for themselves and share opinions. (Nikander 2009, 116-118).

Most of the early adolescents tend to be quite self-conscious, because of the numerous physical and emotional changes that occur (Strommen & Strommen 1985.) Behavior of early adolescents is characterized by moodiness, impulsiveness, peer influence and growing resistance to authority.

4 PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON CHILD REGARDING FOOTBALL

Some research has been done about parents' role and influence in junior sports. Usually parents' participation has been seen as positive but if parents' perception about sport is negative, they may also have a negative influence on the child.

There have been many studies about the influence of parents on their children's involvement and enjoyment in physical activities. In most of these studies it is shown that children of supportive parents accumulate more minutes of vigorous physical activity and have higher level of physical activity than those of uninvolved parents. (Cote 1999; Mcpherson, Curtis & Loy 1989, 40-42; Seppänen 1985, 104-11; Hennessy, Goldberg, Hyatt, Economos 2010). Parental support has a significant impact on enjoyment, objective measurement of performance and on the importance players ascribe to their sport (Coakley, 2006; Hutchinson, Baldwin, & Caldwell 2003.)

Parents can influence on their child with their own example and their views about physical activity. If parents themselves are physically active it increases the children's motivation to participate in sports. (Fredricks & Eccles 2004). Parental support has been found to increase enjoyment, success and motivation for children (Sanchez-Miguel P 2013.) Additionally it appears that good performance of a young athlete only increases enjoyment in sports when parents are part of the common sports experience (Hoyle & Leff 1997.) Parents also offer financial and emotional support of which children between ages 10-12 are still dependent on (Côte 1999; Stroot 2002.)

Parents have a massive influence on their children when deciding to start some particular physical activity. This was the second biggest reason in Turpeinen's research (2012, 74-75). In other studies parental physical activity orientations and parental encouragement levels were found to be significant factors that positively influence a child's decision to participate in physical activity (Brustard R 1993.) In Mäkinen & Syrjänen (1999) study the encouragement from parents and siblings was stated as the most important reason for child to start a football hobby.

Parents' influence can also be negative if parents lay too much pressure on their child and their views about sport and its meaning are different. Children who perceive more pressure from their parents experience less enjoyment of sports. (Sanchez-Miguel etc. 2013).

In junior sports, the pressure to succeed is not too overwhelming when parents' support is real and feedback is constructive and emphatic. This situation is reached when the children and parents share the same view towards sport and its meaning. If the views differ much, a child is put into a hard position. Parents, especially fathers, may see their child's sport hobby as a chance to make up their own unachieved goals in sports and life. If parents have a strong self-esteem and believe in the child's abilities, they are happy about even a small progress, can handle the failures and know how to analyze them with the child. (Mero, Vuorimaa, Häkkinen 1990, 16).

In many cases parental pressure and high expectations are seen to provide a better chance for child to be a professional athlete. However in Carlsson's study it was found that if there is not too big pressure or expectations from parental side to do well in sport there is a better chance of a child to become a top athlete. (1988)

When parents show high expectations, require too much and push the child to achieve specific results or to continue in the sport, the consequence can be that child feel trapped and continue sport only not to let down his/her parents (Nunomura & Oliveira 2013,14.)

4.1 Parents' role in the child's physical activity

According to American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry it is recommended that parents do take an active role in helping their child to gain as a good sporting experience as possible. Parents should provide emotional support, attend games and talk about them afterwards, have realistic expectations, learn about the sport and support the child's involvement, help to handle the disappointments and defeats and model respectful spectator behavior. The parents' role is a motivator, a facilitator and sometimes even a coach for children.

A study showed that parents and children both agree that parents should be "positive, encouraging and non-critical". Parents also considered that they should "not coach from sideline". From children's perspective one of the main issues was not to advise the referees or to yell at them. (Holt, Black, Tamminen 2007. 170).

When the intensity of a sport hobby increases, also the intensity of parents' participation increases. When the child proceeds and moves on playing in a higher level and in older junior

teams, there are more trainings and games which means that parents need to participate more. Parents are more acknowledged to be a part of youth sports than before. (Aarresola, Konttinen 2012, 29). In Jansson's study (2013) she states that according to Rajala (2010) there is decrease in child's physical activity if parents are not willing or they are not capable of paying the expenses of child's physical activity.

4.2 Parents' expectations about children sport

In many cases the reason for enrolling children to youth sports is that the parents try to provide opportunities to socialize the children to grow healthy, responsible, goal-driven and self-motivated people. Parents also consider sports, especially competitive sports, as one key factor in their children's socialization. Parents also believe that by controlling the leisure time activities they can influence what values, attitudes and life skills their children learn during this time.

Recent study has shown that children have a more positive view about their participation in youth sports than their parents have. Children reported that they learned skills and teamwork, developed their character/personality, respected their coach, had a good overall experience, had fun, wanted to play in the league again and wanted to play for the same coach again, all more than their parents did. There should be a significant effort in enhancing parents' experience since they are the ones who make the final decision about children's participation. This might not be a matter of changing the actual youth sport experience but instead improving parents' views of existing experiences. (Schawab, Wells & Arthur-Banning 2013.48).

Most important, parents must understand the value of the feeling their children gain from sports, regardless whether this value is directly observed by parents. Often parents may have bigger expectations for an activity than their children and when those expectations are not met, parents tend to rate the experiences less positive than children. If these too high expectations exist, it can lead to a conflict between children and parents or possibly between parents and coaches. Many coaches are frustrated with parents' complains about their children's playing time or attention they receive. In reality these views are only parents' not children's who participate. To avoid and minimize these situations clubs may want to arrange meetings between children, parents, administrators and coaches, to help to clarify any misconceptions that may exist. The different perspectives that parents and players have about youth sport present

both challenges and opportunities for professionals. (Schwab, Wells, Arthur-Banning 2013. 48-49). The interest of sports clubs to clear up and understand the parents' existing expectations of youth sports can help clubs to meet these expectations. The proceeding secures the loyalty of parents and ensures further support of clubs. (Schwab, Wells, Arthur-Banning 2013.1, 48-49).

4.3 Relationship between coach and parent

One of the primary desires of parents is to be in close communication with the coach. In overall parents value coaches who are fair and honest in dealing with their children, proficient in the skills of the sport, and can teach practices well. (Stewart 1997). In another study parents of adolescents wanted a coach who can implement effective instructional practices, has the skills in a certain sport and can provide opportunities for children to compete and succeed. There were also differences between mothers and fathers. Specifically, mothers valued more a coach who trains with the children himself and can perform/show the skills of the sport. Also mothers preferred a coach who fosters an opportunity to learn and improve new skills slightly more than fathers did. (Martin, Dale, Jackson 2001).

Relationship between the parent and the coach is important and without the support of parents it is hard for any youth team or coach to survive. To develop good relationship, coaches, administrators and parents must identify mutual and common goals and objectives. (Stewart 1994). According to Hopper & Jeffries (1990) problems between parents and coaches occur when there is a failure to verbalize and agree on goals of an athletic program. Many coaches don't have the social skills to interact with parents or they refuse to recognize interaction with parents as an important profession responsibility (Hellstedt, 1987.) To make sure that there are as few conflicts as possible with parents, coaches should be able to relate and identify different types of parents from various families they encounter (Stewart & Graig 1994.)

Parents generally care more about development of sportsmanship and less about their children playing in high level than coaches' think they do. To avoid conflicts both parts need to have an open two-way relationship and recognize the areas of difference. (Stewart 1997). According to Nunomura & Oliveira (2013, 14) the parents should be guided by the coaches by discussing or even through courses that can provide clarification and knowledge on why and

how they can support the sporting child and participate in the sport life of their children in a positive way.

Parents' evaluation and expectations of coaches and youth sports change depending on the level their child is playing. That is a matter the coaches should need to be aware of, if they coach in different levels or in different programs. The parental values may vary. Coaches who are carrying on trainings in same way in various levels may experience increasing parental conflicts. (Stewart 1997).

5 RESEACH PROBLEMS

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the expectations and beliefs of parents regarding their child's football hobby. The aim is to offer these results for the Finnish Football Association in order they could improve their junior work.

The research problems are:

1. What kind of interaction there is between parents and coaches?
2. What is the children's motivation to football assessed by parents?
3. What are parents' expectations about their children's hobby?
4. In what areas concerning football parents need more support and knowledge?

6 RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis process and methods used. It also gives information about the participants and instruments of the study.

6.1 Quantitative research method

In a quantitative research the emphasis is on conclusions about previous research, previous theories and definition of terms. Quantitative research is essentially collecting numerical data to explain a phenomenon. In a quantitative research the research problems are either a question or a group of questions, for which the research is seeking answers. Central themes of a quantitative research are conclusions of previous research, previous theories, presenting hypothesis, explanation of keywords and making results to a statistic form. (Hirsijärvi, Remes, Sajavaara, 1997, 131-136). In a quantitative research numerical data is collected and analyzed through mathematically based methods. It is important to use the right research design and data collection instruments. (Sukamolson 2005, 3). It is vital to choose research instruments carefully, when planning a quantitative research. To create a miniature of a wanted focus group is essential to be able to interpret results. (Valli 2001, 7).

A quantitative research method was chosen for this study because I wanted to get knowledge about the opinions of junior football parents. In that respect a questionnaire seemed a natural way. Through it with a fair amount of answers I assumed to get some kind of picture what the football parents think and expect.

6.2 Survey based questionnaire

The questionnaire was created during the spring and summer of 2013. The aim was to create a questionnaire which answers to the research problems that had been designed. When designing the questionnaire, I used *Mittarin rakentaminen ja testiteorian perusteet* (Metsämuuronen 2002) to help in the forming the questionnaire. I also was in contact with Marko Viitanen from SPL and he gave instructions on what he felt is important for this study.

I chose a questionnaire based survey for my method because it was the best way reach participants from all over Finland quickly and easily. It allowed me to collect a wide amount of research data without costs of printing and posting. It is also easy to ask multiple questions with a questionnaire.

A questionnaire is one of the oldest ways of collecting data. The base of a successful questionnaire is the questions. The form of questions causes the most mistakes in the results of a questionnaire. Questions have to be unambiguous and not leading. Questions are created depending on the goals and research problems of the research. After the research problems are clear and the questions formed according to them the data collecting can be started. (Aaltola, Valli 2010, 103-104).

When creating a questionnaire it is important to pay attention to the length of it and the amount of questions. The participants' attention should be held through the length of the questionnaire. Also a logical continuation of questions and clear instructions on how to fill the questionnaire are necessary and important. A good questionnaire is able to communicate with the answerer and doesn't tie the researcher so it is possible to gather a large material. (Valli 2001, 30-31) .

One strength of a survey based questionnaire is that the researcher is not affecting answers with his own presence, in contrast to for example an interview. The questions are also presented to every participant in the same form, which increases reliability of the research. The researcher saves time and money, because the questionnaire can be done through internet. Also the participants can select the best answering time and are able to consider answers in peace. (Valli 2001, 31). The strength of a questionnaire is evident when collecting data about actions, attitudes and opinions of a large number of people (Alkula, Pöntinen, Ylöstalo 1994, 118.)

In questionnaire based surveys, the answering percent is often relatively low. Another weakness is that the participant doesn't necessarily answer questions in the correct order and also can see the later questions in advance. Thirdly, there is always a chance that participant misunderstands questions, since there is no opportunity for additional instructions. (Valli 2001, 32).

6.3 Participants

The focus group of this research was the parents of E-junior football players in Finland. It was chosen due to the fact that these youngsters have already been participating for a couple of years, but they are still dependent of their parents to a certain level.

The sample of the focus group was 181 parents. This was achieved by sending a questionnaire by e-mail to 39 team leaders of E-junior teams around Finland. They were asked to pass on the link to the questionnaire to every parent of their team's player. It was told clearly that parents are not obliged to take part in this research but it was voluntary. Also it was explained how the results are used and that the identity of participants is kept hidden throughout the research. When selecting teams it was considered that the teams represented different levels and were located geographically all around Finland. This is due the fact that there can be significant differences in operation between teams depending on their location and funds available.

On an average there are about 25 children in one team. If every team leader sent the questionnaire forward to one parent, there would have been about 950 possible participants. In a month's time I received 181 answers. This makes the answering rate about 18%. It is nevertheless hard to estimate precisely that how many parents received the questionnaire and what is the real answering percent. Like previously stated, loss of answers is often significant when a questionnaire based survey is used. The timing of implementation was 25th October 2013 - 25th November 2013 which is off-season for junior teams and it was possible that parents didn't feel interested matters concerning football at the time of year when their child was not actively playing. Nevertheless the amount of participants, 181, is enough to make conclusions and a reliable research.

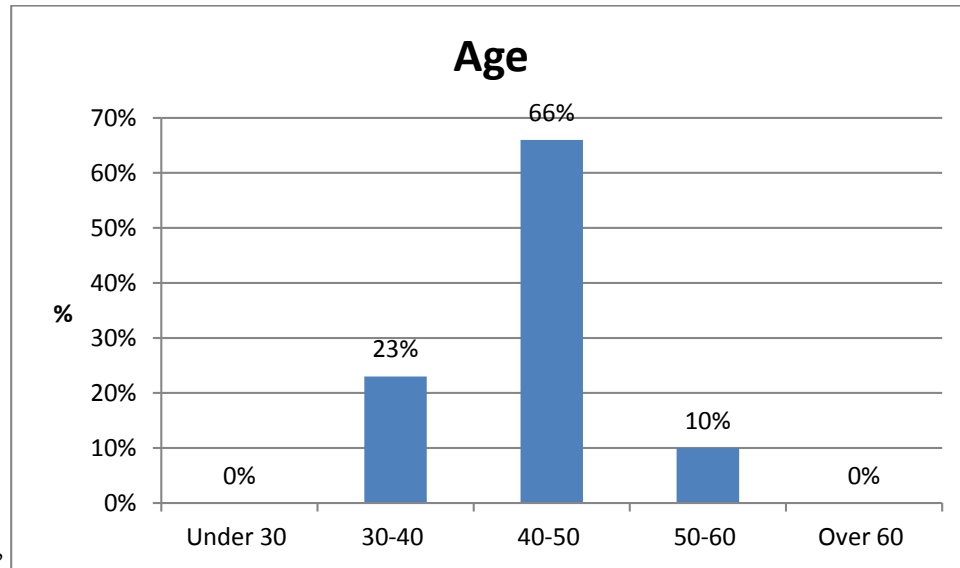


Figure 1. The age of the participants

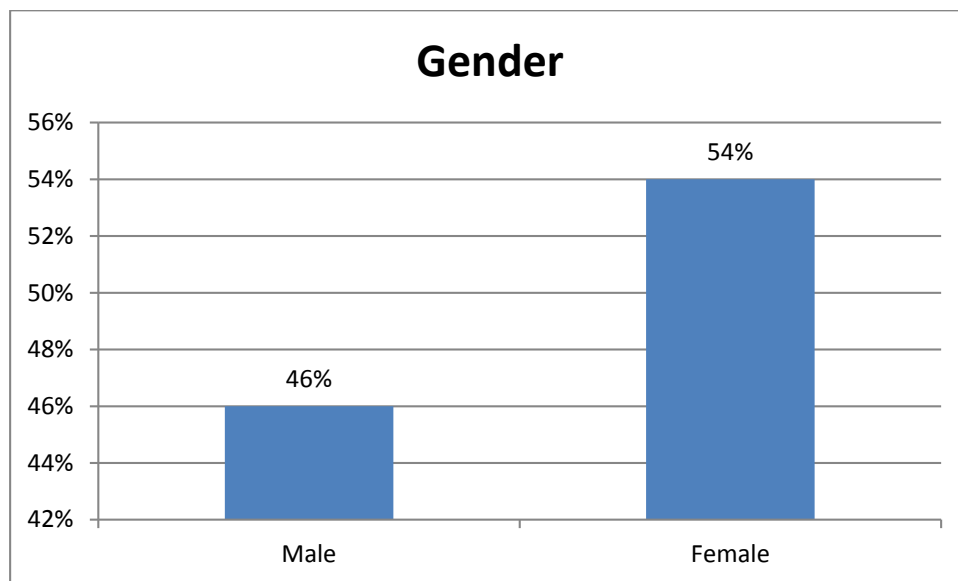


Figure 2. The gender of participants

Parents who participated to this survey were very well educated, with only two percent having only comprehensive school education

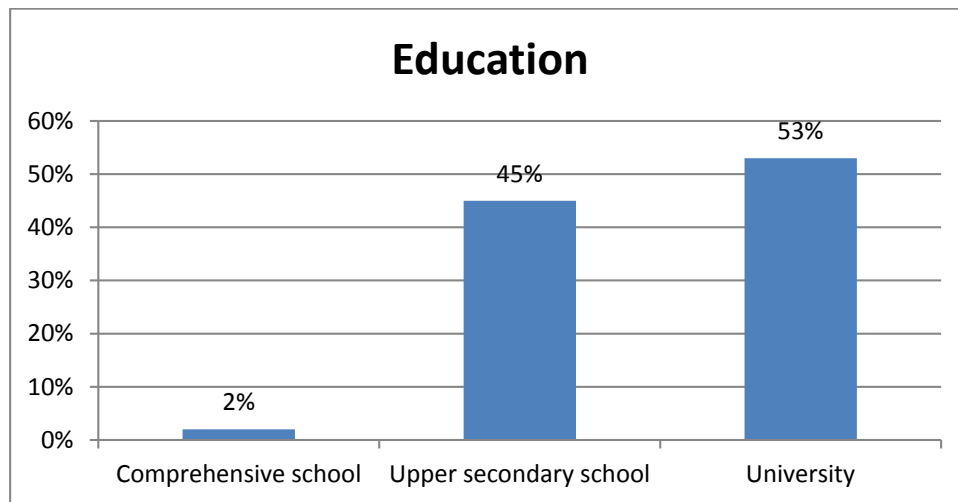


Figure 3. The educational level of parents.

The physical background of parents was mostly physically active. Only 7.3 percent of parents said that they haven't done any physical activity in their youth. Also only 7 percent of participants don't currently do any kind of physical activity.

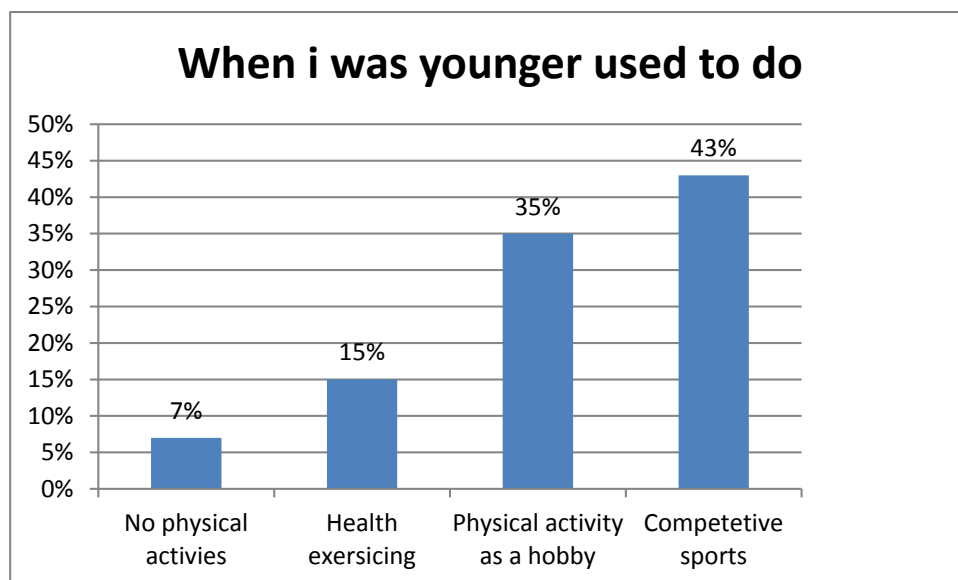


Figure 4. The parents' physical activity in the past.

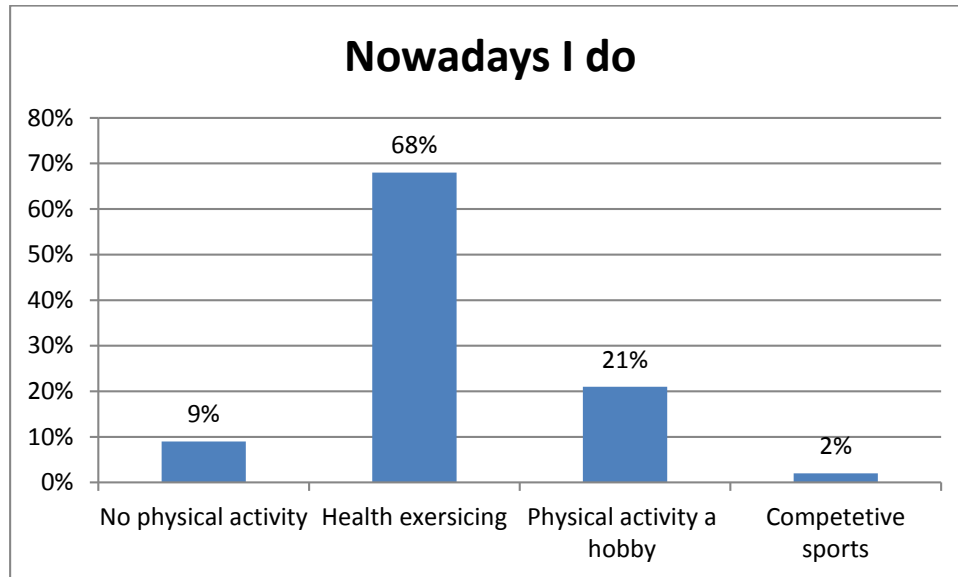


Figure 5. Parents' current physical activity.

6.4 Instrument

The questionnaire was created by using Digium enterprise survey program. In the questionnaire parents are asked about their own physical background, their own involvement and communication with coaches, beliefs about their child's motivation and enjoyment and finally about the areas where the parents need or want more support and knowledge.

In the first part of the questionnaire participants were asked to give information on such variables as gender, age, child's age and own background. The following part of the questionnaire accessed to beliefs about the child's motivation, effects of football, parents involvement in the hobby and communication with coaches and the team. The last part was about the need of knowledge and support in various areas.

Anonymity was guaranteed to every participant of the survey and assurance was given that all the data would be strictly confidential.

While creating the questionnaire, the research problems were guiding the process throughout. I was able to consult two junior football coaches as well as my working life supervisor Marko Viitala about the questionnaire.

6.5 Data analysis

I analysed data using Microsoft Excel program. I formed the results into percentage columns using Excel. The results are shown in numeric and bar chart view using the program. The results are also shown in a percentage form. In questions where I used the likert-scale from 1 to 5, I represented the mean number of answers. In various questions I analysed if the gender of the participant or the gender of participant's child has any difference to results. In these questions I analysed males and females separately to gain information on the gender differences.

7 RESULTS

In this chapter the most important results are represented concerning interaction between parents and coaches, parents' expectations, areas the parents need support and children's motivation assessed by parents. There were 181 answers given in this research. All the given answers were from parents who were between 30-60 years old. Females represented 54 % of participants and males 46 % of all participants.

7.1 What kind of interaction there is between parents and coaches

When asked about parents own participation in their children's football hobby, parents were relatively active. 30 % of parents participate by offering transportation to the child. 80 % of parents reported that they follow games and practices regularly. 73 % do voluntary work for the team and 34 % have some responsibilities in the team, for example coaching. Mothers are more involved than dads except for "work in team" where dads are more involved.

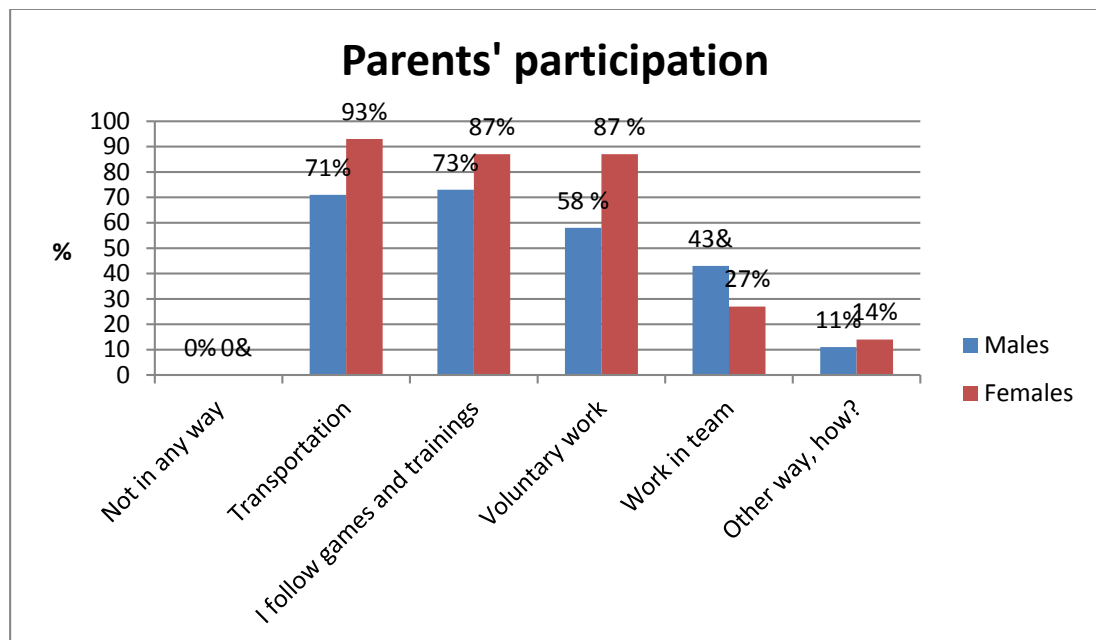


Figure 6. Parents' participation

The most common way of communication between parents and team is done by email. 95 % of parents picked an e-mail as the way by which communication is taken care of and transmitted. Team meetings are a common means of interaction too, with 71 %

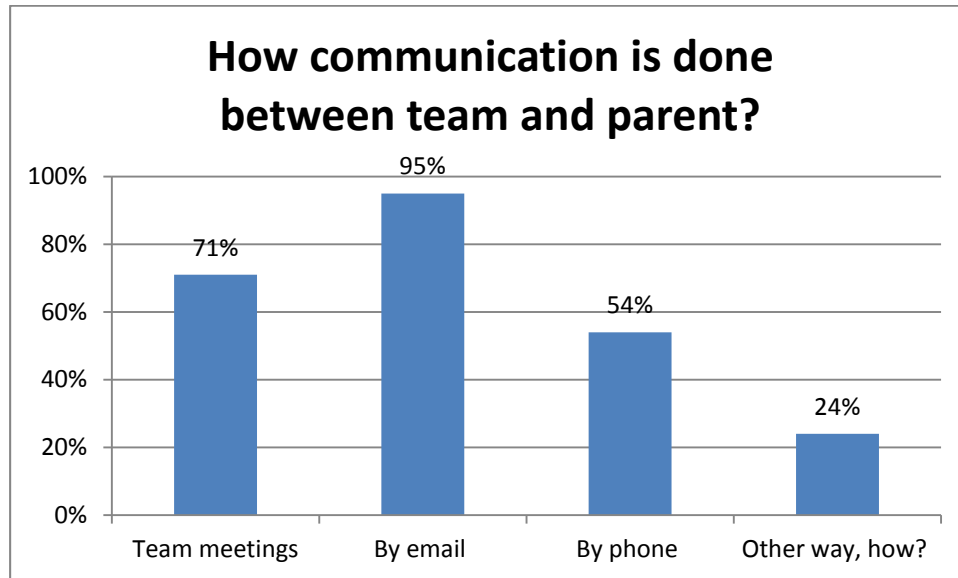


Figure 7. The communication ways between parents and team.

86 % of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they get enough information.

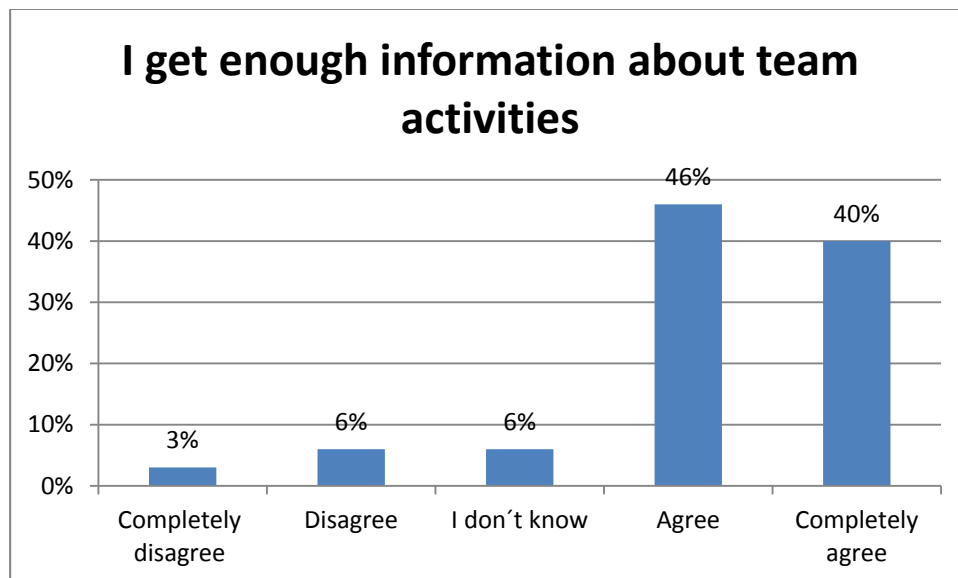


Figure 8. The amount of information about team activities.

The mutual rules of the team were very familiar to parents. To be able to commit to these rules was also seen easy.

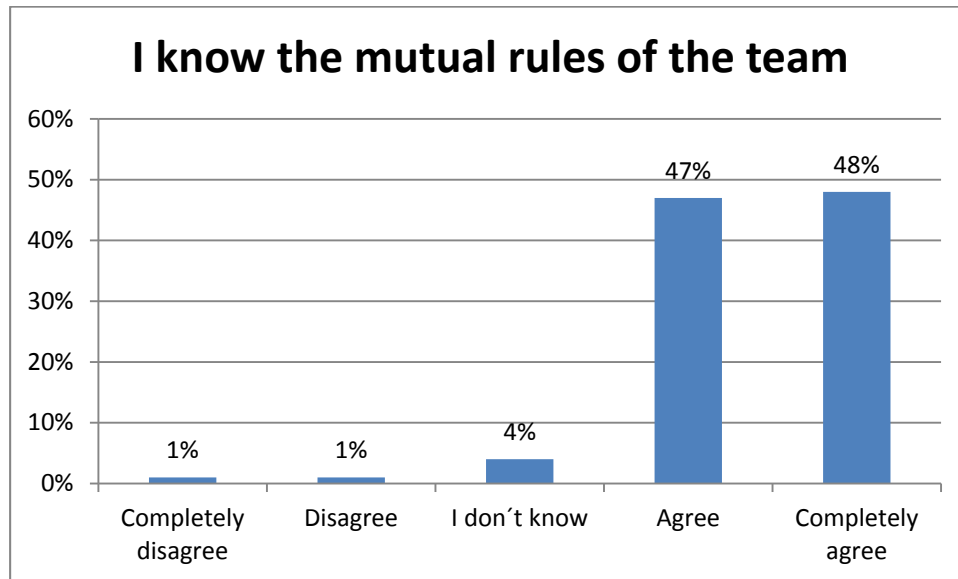


Figure 12. Parents' knowledge of mutual rules of the team.

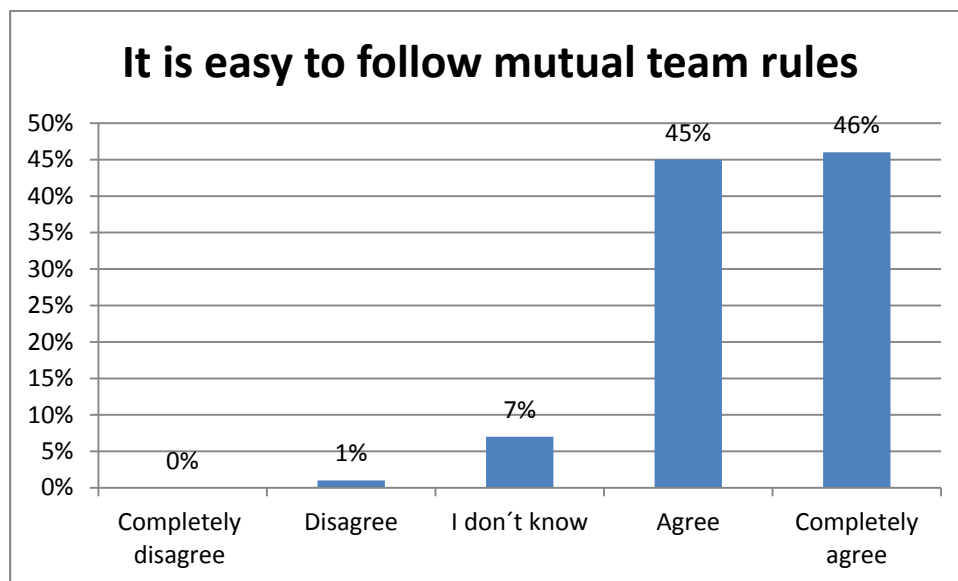


Figure 13. The easiness of following mutual team rules.

7.2 What is the children's motivation assessed by parents?

45 % of parents thought that the spark to start playing football had come from the child. 22 % thought that spark had come from friends and 23 % replied that the spark has come from parents. Another reason that appeared many times in open space answers was that siblings had a big influence. In these results there were some difference between the answers of parents of boys and parents of girls. Parents of boys put more emphasis on themselves compared to parents of girls.

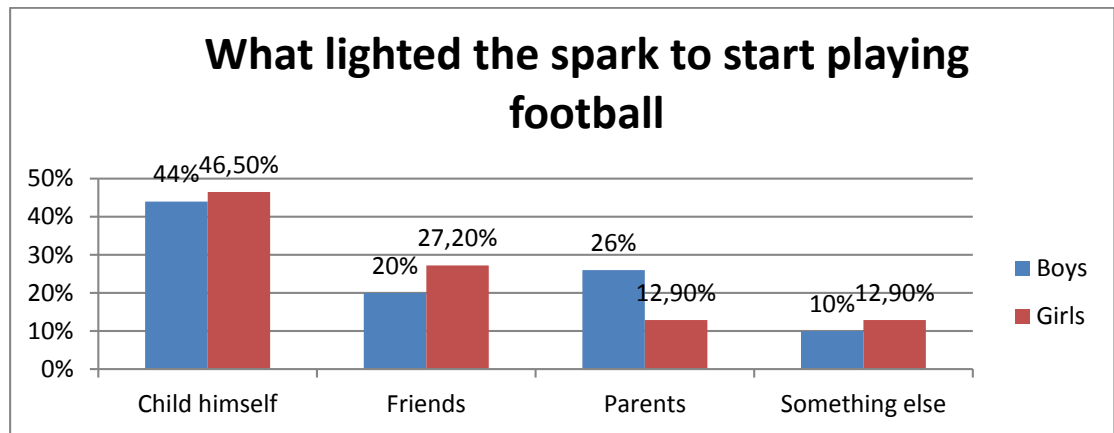


Figure 14. What lighted the spark to start football for child.

Most of the children had quite a long experience in football, 56 % of the children had been playing more than six years. Only 3 % of children had been playing less than a year.

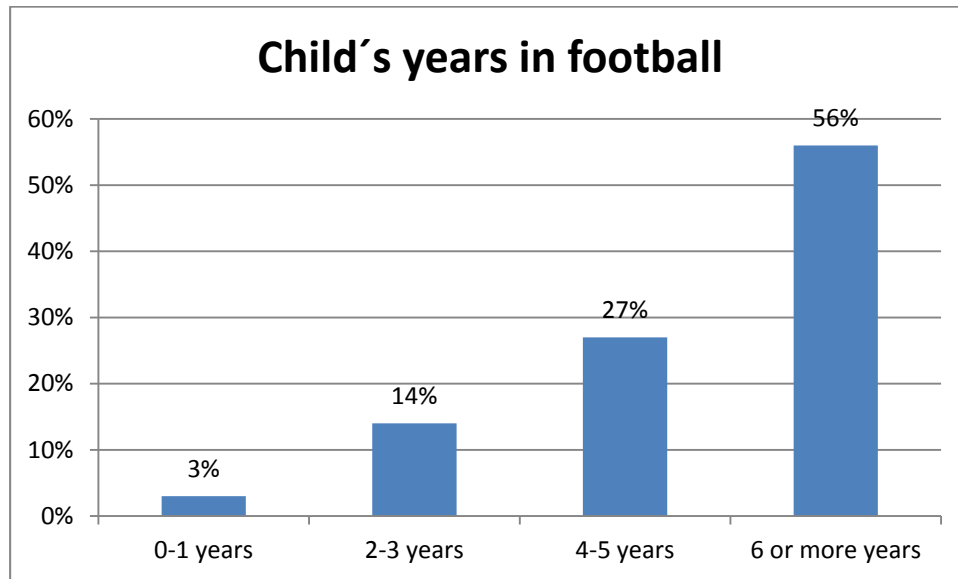


Figure15. Child's years playing football

According to results parents seem to think that their children are well motivated. 59 % of parents thought that their child is currently very interested in the football hobby.

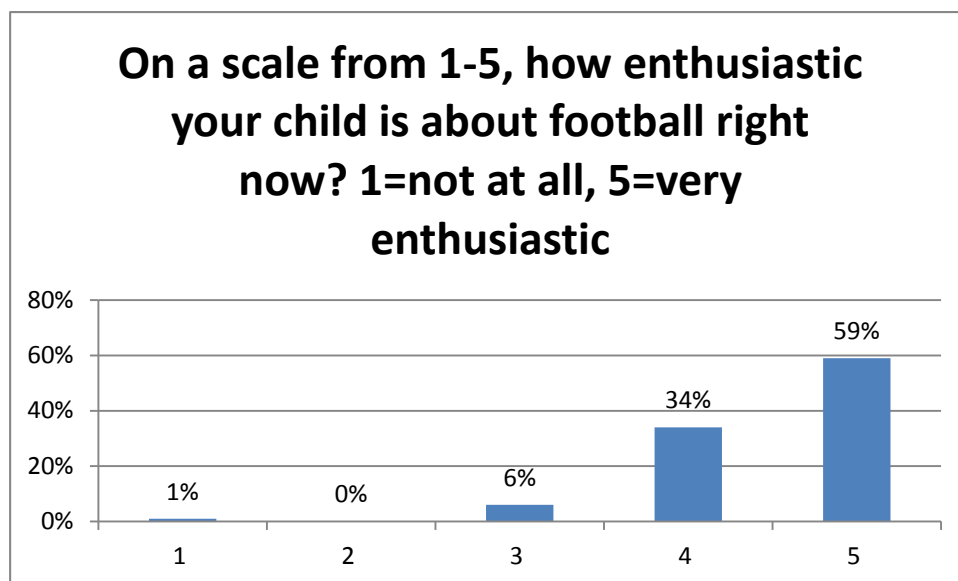


Figure 17. Child's enthusiasm about football.

The most noticeable motivator for children in parents’ minds is the desire to develop in football playing. 80 % of parents thought this developing motivates their children. Also friends and enjoyment that children get from doing physical activity were motivating factors according to parents. Slight differences appeared depending of the gender of parent’s child. Girl players were more motivated by the physical activity than boys whereas role models were more important motivators for boys.

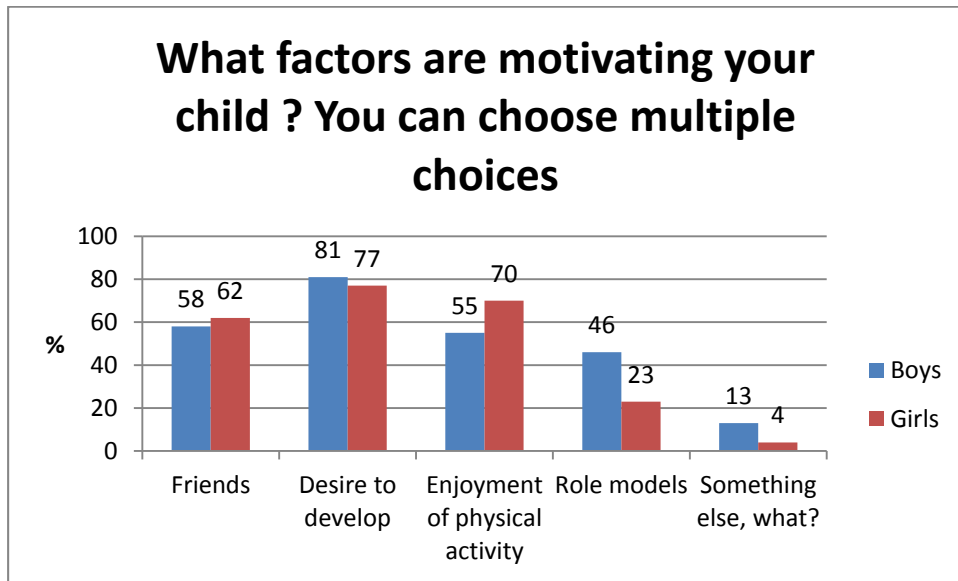


Figure 18. Motivating factors for child.

Parents seem to think that children have lots of friends in the playing team. 96 % of parents totally agreed or agreed on that their children have lots of friends in the team.

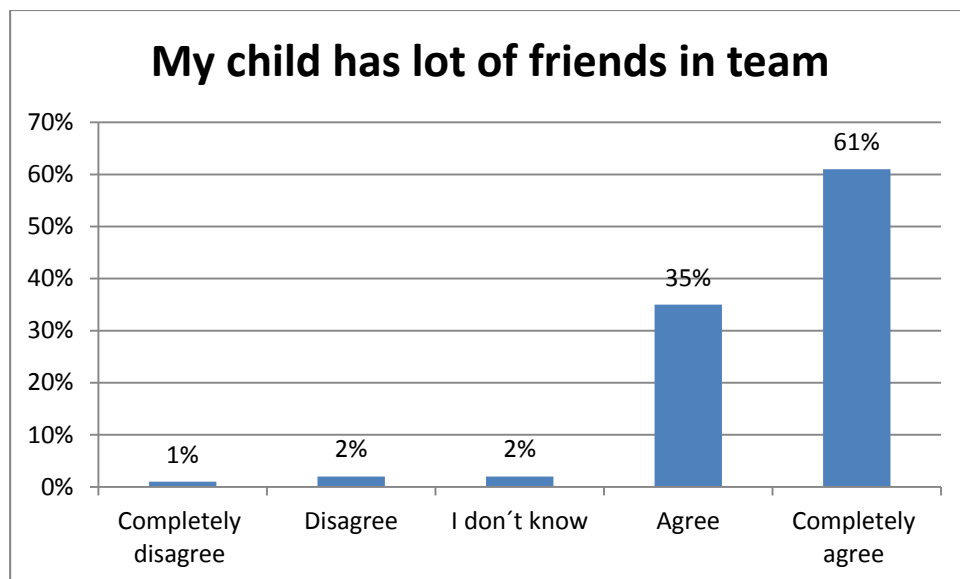


Figure 19. Child has lots of friends in the team.

Almost 50 % of the parents reported that they don't have to motivate their child at all. Only 2 % thought that they need to motivate their child very much.

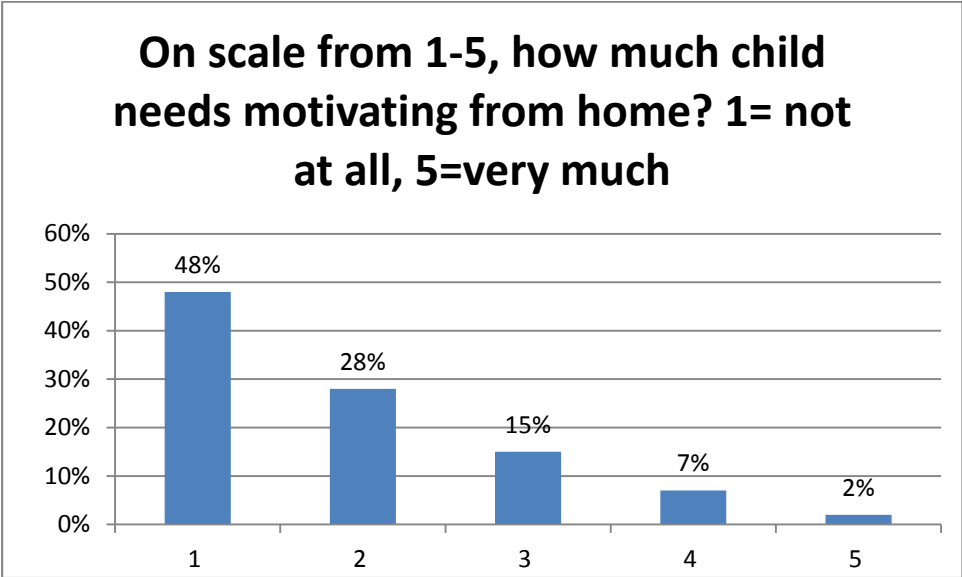


Figure 20. The need of motivating from home.

Nearly a third of children have thought about quitting football in parents' opinion.

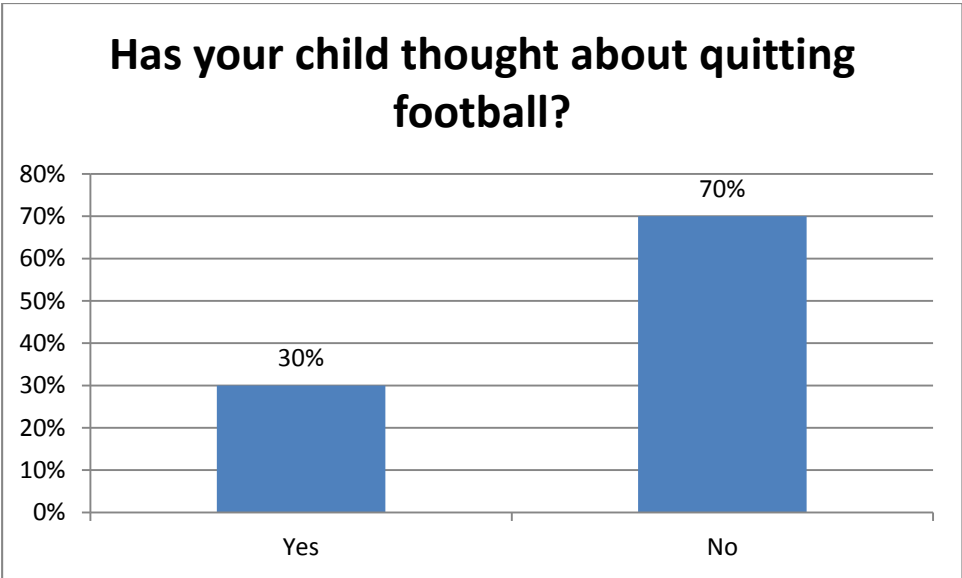


Figure 22. In parents' opinion the child has thought about quitting football.

Reasons for a junior player to consider quitting the football hobby varied greatly. The commitment children had to take was one thing that came up many times in open answers. Also bad coaching or negative behavior of coaches and other adult persons in team were mentioned frequently.

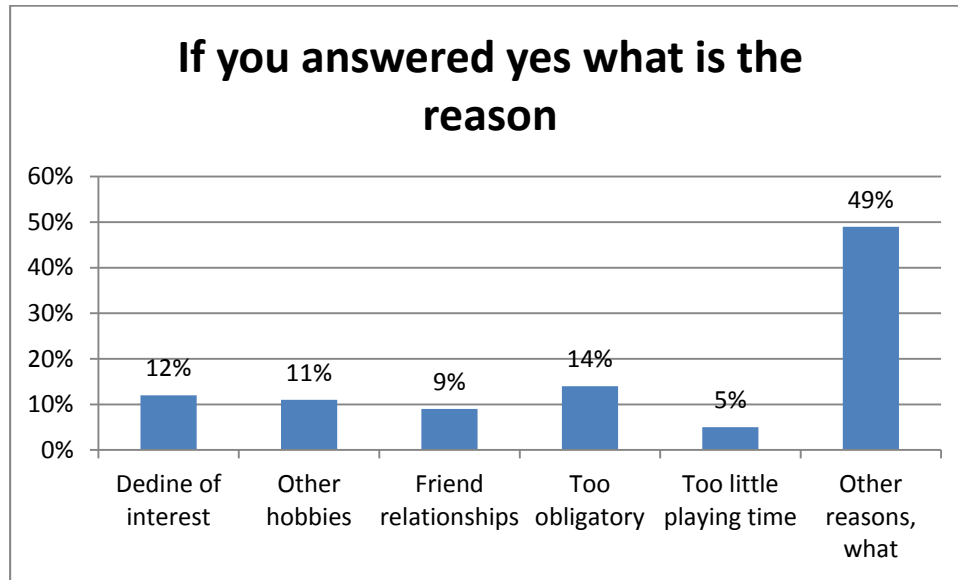


Figure 23. Reasons for considering quitting.

The most important things the parents mentioned to motivate their children were a good team spirit, good coaching and desire to develop. Parents thought that doing well in the competitive side and the opinions of parents affected the least the children's motivation.

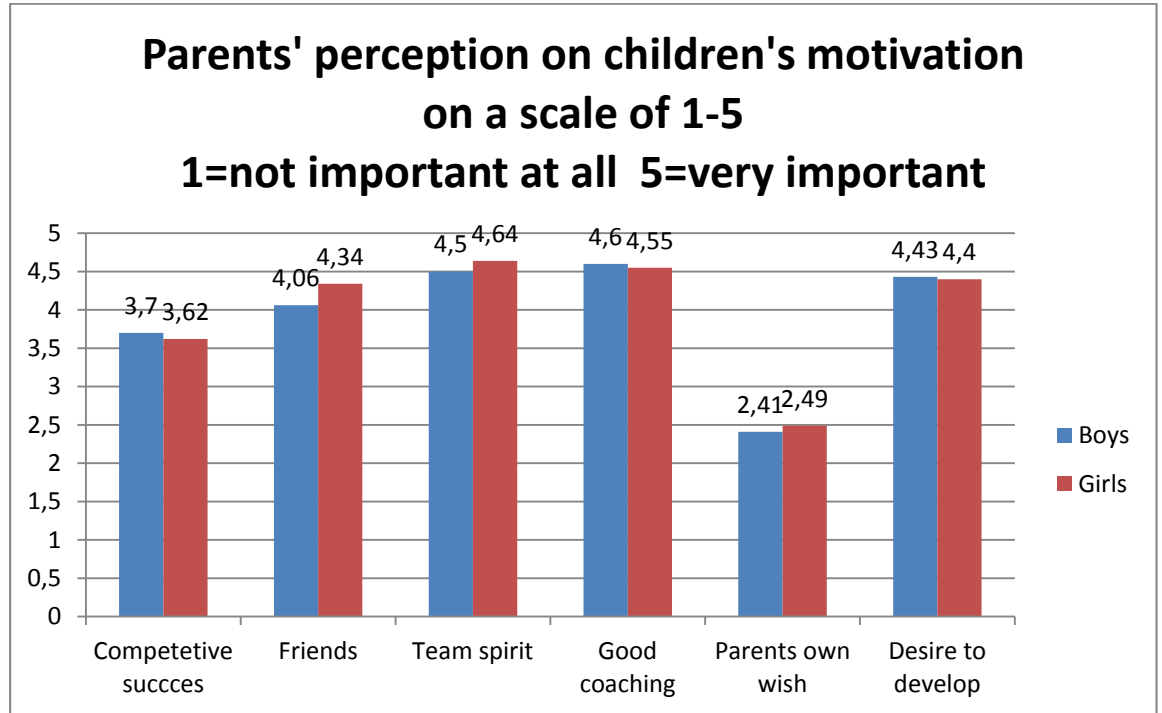


Figure 24. Parents' perception on child's motivation.

7.3 What are parents expectations concerning their child's football hobby

Parents thought that the most positive effects of football on their children are the development of social skills and physical and mental well-being. The mean for improvement of social skills was 4,45. The mean for mental well-being was 4,57 and for physical well-being 4,66. The chance of the child to get a profession from football was not considered important with mean only little over 2. The differences in the results considering the child's gender were small. The only factor there was a significant difference was the chance to be a professional footballer.

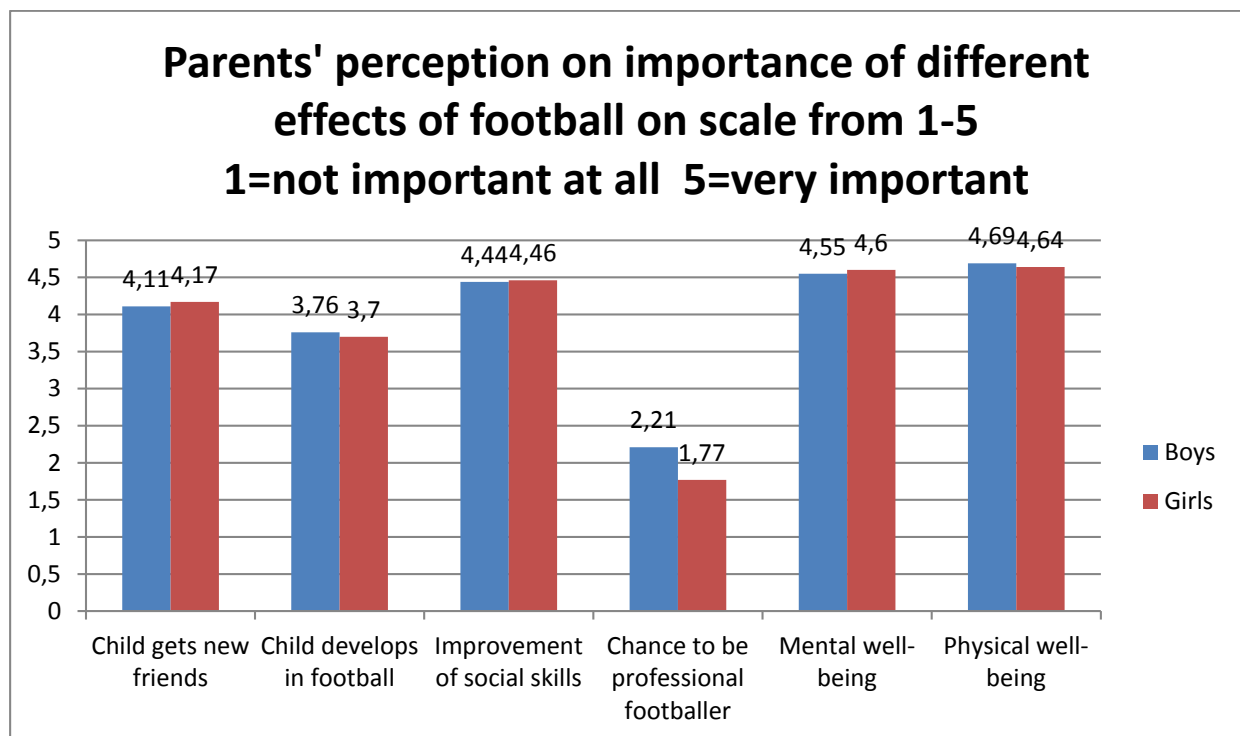


Figure 25. Parents' perception on importance of different effects of football.

These results show clearly that in parents' opinion football has a good effect on children's schoolwork. 71 % of parents thought that a football hobby has a positive effect on school. 14 % of parents answered that the effect is very positive, while 5 % of the parents thought that the effect was negative.

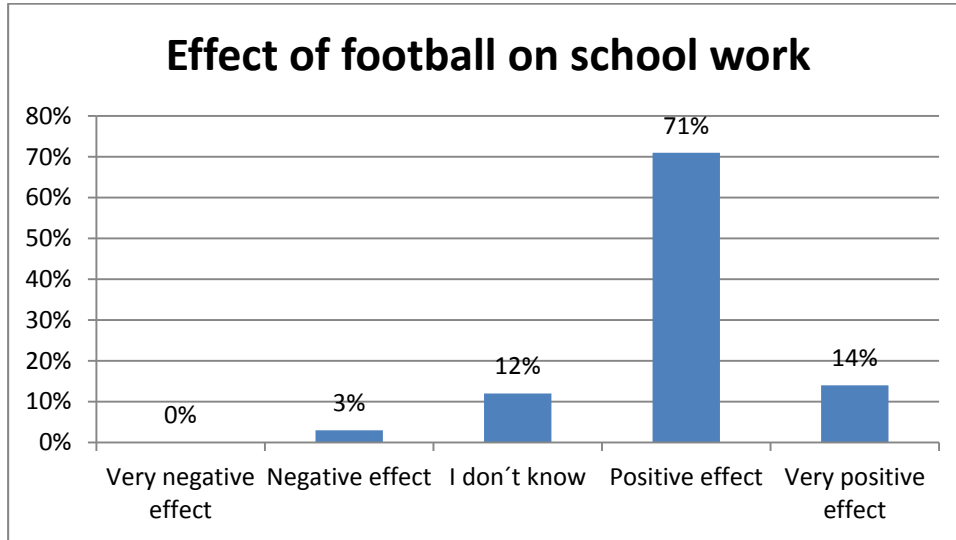


Figure 26. Effect of football on school work

Most of the participants disagreed that an active football hobby too time consuming. 58 % disagreed and 17 % disagreed that a football hobby requires too much time.

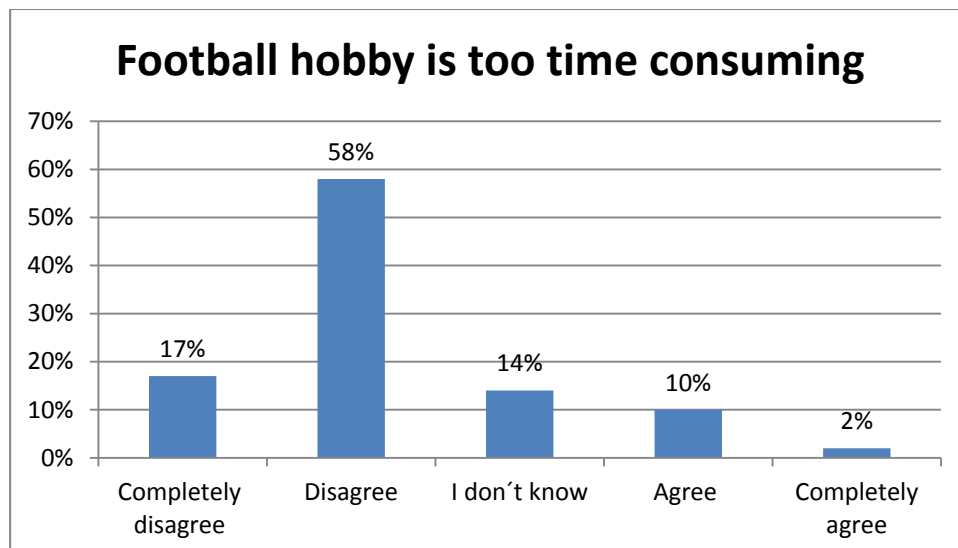


Figure 27. Parents' view on time consumption of a football hobby.

7.4 What are the areas where parents need more knowledge and support

Considering these answers parents wish a considerable amount of support and knowledge in many areas of their child's football hobby. The knowledge of sport was seen the area where least support was needed. The mental side and the development of children were the areas where most knowledge and support was wanted.

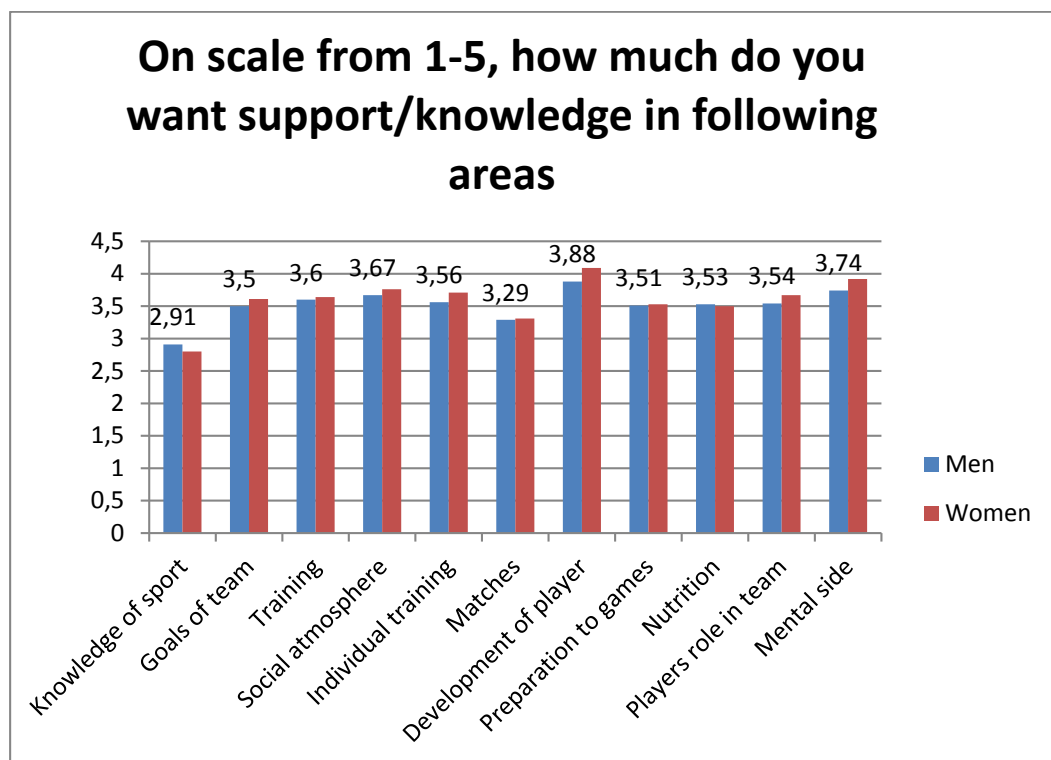


Figure 28. The amount of knowledge and support parents want in different areas.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Interaction between coach and parents

The coach's interaction and communication with parents is vital for a successful sport program for young children. Parents bear big responsibility for their child's sport hobby because children aged 10-12 years are still dependent on their parents regarding transportation, financial and mental support. For that reason there should be emphasis on interacting and communicating with parents.

Results of this study indicate that parents feel that there is somewhat good amount of interaction with parents and coaches. 46 % of parents agree on and 40 % strongly agree on that they get enough information about the operation and activities of the team. Parents are also aware of the team rules.

Interaction or information is mostly carried by email, meetings and by phone. The best result is reached by meetings, when there is a chance to go through information and questions comprehensibly. Additionally, parents have a better chance of asking questions about things that puzzle them. Face-to-face meetings are presumably best, but especially in a smaller club there may be difficulties to arrange them because of small funding, lack of coaches working, and timetable problems.

8.2 Motivation

Parents seem to think that their children have a strong motivation and excitement to football. 59 % reported that their child is very enthusiastic about football. 38 % of the participants also felt that they don't need to motivate their child at all. Most of the parents clearly feel that their child is very motivated for the football hobby.

46 % of the parents felt that child himself was the most important reason that lighted the spark to football. This indicates that most of the children have a good inner motivation at

least when they start playing. The importance of friends and siblings was also selected considerably many times in the questionnaire, and that social aspects also influence the child's decisions.

The parents' answers indicate that desire to develop, team spirit and good coaching are the three most important motivators for their child. These results are similar in previous researches (Petlichkoff 1993; Gould, Feltz & Weiss 1985.) in which friends and learning new skills were found to be the most motivating aspects for the child's hobby. Also the coaches' role and interaction with the coach and team spirit were found to have effect on the child's motivation.

The desire to develop had mean of 4, 4 when asked of the importance on a scale from 1 to 5. To ensure the chances for every player to develop as a footballer, the clubs should concentrate on education of coaches, to offer every child enough playing time in the level that represents his/her current abilities and give variable training focused on current stages of development.

. In parents' opinion the spirit of the team significantly motivates the child's engagement in football. In this age period it is important for a child that he has friends and feels that he is part of the group. Parents feel that it is important for their child's motivation that there is a good, positive spirit in the team.

Although parents feel that their own impact on their child is not that significant, it is likely that the impact is bigger than they believe. According to Hietanen & Kauppila (2007), especially the father has a significant impact on starting physical activity. Parents who participated in this survey were themselves generally very active physically and almost everybody had done and is still doing some kind of physical activity. When growing up in this kind of atmosphere where attitude towards physical activity is positive it influences child's own perception about physical activity. Parents' positive example and children observing their parents' physical activity are primary motivators for the child.

Parents think that their own impact on the child to start football is a bit bigger on boys than girls. It can be due to the fact that parents may subconsciously direct boys to activities that are traditionally seen as male oriented. Sports and especially football has been more suitable for boys, although female sports have gained lots of new exposure and the amounts of girls engaged in sports have increased. Parents might feel that girls who start football do it out of their own interest and not because parents would have guided them towards it. Also the faster

development of girls might be one factor. Results also indicate the parents of boys put more emphasis on the role models than parents of girls do. This can be due to the fact that most of the footballing role models in media are males. There is much less exposure of female football in the media.

Even though parents generally felt that their child has a strong motivation, 30% of parents still reported that their child had considered quitting football. The reasons were diverse, but attention to these reasons should be paid to. The biggest single reason that participants pointed out was the validity of football. Children are all very different, their motivations vary and children also develop in their own tempo. Some might want to be professional players and for others playing football is just a hobby among others. Although football is a team sport every member of the team should be treated as an individual. This is a big challenge because often there are not enough coaches and training/playing is done as a team.

In a previous study lack of time, lack of interest and coaching problems were found to be reasons for dropping out (Molinero, Salguero, Tuero, Alvarez & Marquez, 2006.) According to Patriksson (1988) the motivation for dropping out from sport is usually combination of inner and outer reasons, which includes interest to other subjects and lack of time. Evaluating the child's motivation and finding the things that influence the child's motivation are important aspects in trying to decrease dropping out. A particular challenge comes when children are in their teenage years, but the trend of dropping out is also true in the younger age class teams. In order to decrease the amount of dropping out there should be more knowledge about expectations, reasons and motivation behind football playing of both children and their parents.

The results show that even though children are only between 10-14 years old, a majority of them have a long experience of football. This is a consequence of the trend that children become engaged in different activities very early. Nowadays many parents think that if a child starts for example football in age of 10-12, it is too late for him/her to be able to learn all specialized cross motor skills of football. This trend can also contribute to dropping out. A child may feel before teenage years that he/she wants new activities and experiences because of the fact that there already are so many years of training behind in football. In other words he/she gets fed up with the continuous demanding practice of only one sport.

A conclusion can be drawn that teams and clubs should concentrate on junior work by keeping the quality of operation and developing constantly. There should be chances for every player to develop and it's the easiest way to motivate children. To accomplish this, there is major responsibility for coaches. For this reason clubs should pay attention to education of coaches and encourage coaches to advance their skills and knowledge.

8.3 Parents' expectations

From the results of this study it can be discovered that parents generally are happy and satisfied with their child's football hobby. Parents think that the most important benefits of football for their children are physical and mental well-being as well as improvement of social skills. Results of study made by Finnish Football Association (2014) had the same exact results. The biggest aspect was the physical well-being, the second was the improvement of social skills and the third mental well-being. The above mentioned can be a major challenge for clubs. The teaching of only football skills is not enough anymore; parents expect a football hobby to develop children in a more complete way.

In addition to the physical and social well-being parents also appreciate good coaching and advising good football skills. In the study made by Finnish Football Association (2014) 33 per cent of participants pointed out that the development of football skills is one of the three most important motives of a football hobby. These results of these two studies are similar. In many occasions the coaches of young players, aged 10-14, are not properly educated and don't have the required abilities to coach children and develop them as footballers and persons. Community support, playing experience and coaching experience influence positively the efficiency of a coach (Feltz, Hepler, Roman, & Paiement 2009.) There is also evidence that coaches who took a formal coach education course had better coaching efficiency than a control group who didn't take a coach education course. For this reason football clubs should allow time and funds on education of junior coaches and develop coaching systems for young players. If children feel that coaching is good and effective his or her desire to develop is likely to grow.

The success of the team is not the biggest concern for most of the parents. Teams should be able to combine the elements of teaching football skills and competitiveness to bring up children also socially and mentally. The chance for a child to be a professional footballer is

not seen important in parents' answers. The same results are seen in Stewart's (1994) research. The study made by the Finnish Football Association in 2014 showed that only 3.4 % of parents thought that the chance of being a professional footballer is one of the most important aspects in the child's football hobby.

8.4 Parents' need of knowledge and support

According to results of this study parents do want a considerably big amount of support and knowledge in general. Two areas where parents especially would like to have more support are the development as a player and the mental side of playing.

The parents' knowledge about their child's development is in many cases slim. Many parents do not have enough knowledge or competence to understand the factors of the child's development as a player. This leaves them only with the information they receive from the children themselves and the feedback of the coach.

Children are not aware of their own development and cannot see or verbalize their progress players. The coach's job is to introduce parents to the particulars of the development plan of the age class and goals every year. Additionally, more personal goals and monitoring should be planned. When parents have more knowledge of what kind of goals the player should achieve they can more easily monitor and track the player's development.

The coach's feedback about the player's development to parents is hugely important. Meetings with coach and parent should be arranged at least once in a playing season. When parents get information on their child's abilities, development and other issues, they are able to give more accurate feedback and support to their child.

Another area where parents felt that knowledge is needed is the mental side of playing. Especially in junior football there is not much emphasis on or knowledge of the mental side. Most of the coaches do not have enough know how to successfully understand the mental side of a young player. Young football players may have a lot of mental issues in terms of football. Especially in more competitive teams a young player may feel pressure and compelled to do well and succeed. This comes from coaches, team mates and parents. It would be

important for the child to be able to talk about these things to a person he trusts. Parents are the closest adults to a young child and for a parent it would be easier to interact and support their child if they have knowledge of possible mental aspects.

The area where parents felt that they need the least support and knowledge was the knowledge of sport. Parents think that they have quite a good understanding of rules and tactics of junior football. Some parents might also feel that they do not necessarily need to understand the game completely, and still they can participate.

There were no significant differences between the answers of fathers and mothers. This shows that both mothers and fathers are as involved and they both have similar amounts of knowledge.

8.5 Ethicality and reliability

Ethicality and ethical issues are important when doing any kind of research. Instructions of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences about research ethicality were kept in mind during the thesis process. When collecting data many matters should be considered these includes the anonymity of subjects, different compensation questions, confidentiality and saving the data appropriately (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 27.)

The treating of the subjects of research is vital during any research. The main attention is paid towards the ways of data collecting and test arrangements. When researching persons, the researcher must clarify how to get an agreement from the subjects, what information is given to the subjects and what kind of risks their participation brings. According to Kuitunen (1995, 29) there is a moral demand that a person who is a subject to a research gives an informed consent. An informed consent consists of four matters. A research participant must be aware of what is going to happen or might happen during the research, he must also be capable of understanding this information. The person must be able to rational and mature evaluation. Lastly the agreement to participation must be voluntary, free of forcing. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997 26-27). When this research was implied the anonymity of all subject persons was verified. It was taken for granted that all the results would be kept in strict confidence.

The researcher must avoid dishonesty in all stages of research. The pivotal principles are: not to plagiarize text from another writer, not to underestimate other researchers, not to plagiarize himself and not to generalize results without critique, not to report misleadingly or deficiently and not to use funds of the research to other uses. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997 27-28).

In Golafshani's text (2003) Joppe (2000) defines reliability as: "The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable"

Reliability of this research was established by having a large group of participants and by evaluating the questionnaire and data collecting methods closely. The testing form was made in Finnish to make the questionnaire as clear as possible to all participants.

One limitation to this study is that the answering rate was small. It may be the case that the parents who are most active in team operations were also the ones who answered to the questionnaire. The survey was implied during off-season so it is possible that there have also been some problems with information of the survey.

One limitation is that there was no cross tabulation or use of other statistical analyses. Also the questionnaire was not tested before implementing of the research. These factors decrease the reliability of the research.

8.6 Professional growth

I was motivated to write this thesis. The collecting of data and deciding about the questions were very interesting. The hardest part was writing the discussion part and making the final conclusions after I had collected results.

I chose this subject for my thesis, because football has been part of my life since I was six years old. By practicing this sport I have learned a lot of it from inside. In my family we used to talk and discuss after matches and practices.

I believe I can now recognize the factors affecting occupational well-being better and understand the importance of physical activity during growing years. I understand how I can use physical education for the benefit of supporting and promoting human growth and development. I have learned to understand how important the role of parents is for a young player. A supporting attitude of the parents means a lot for the child, the feeling that his/her parents are interested. It all makes a young player glad and make an effort. The connection and relationship between a coach and parents has to work. This needs constant change of information, possibility for questions and knowledge. I have discovered many of the factors affecting human growth, development, and social behavior and I believe I am able to take them into consideration when instructing physical activity.

I have learned a lot of how to make an academic research. I know now how to search information and how to use it critically. Also I know a lot on how to make a research, form research questions and how to analyze data. The thesis project has taught me how to work more sustainably for a certain goal waiting farther away. I started from developing an idea and objectives. Shaping the questionnaire took a long time and needed thinking and gathering information. I noticed how difficult it is to make the questions so that every participant understands them in the same way and that the questions are not leading. When forming questions the researcher should be acquainted with the field that he is researching. Designing question problems is the first and one of the most important aspects in doing a research.

Also I had to become familiar with the English vocabulary of my research area. It needs many times of reading and changing before the text seems readable even to those readers who are not familiar with the research field.

Further study could be concentrated on what the expectations of coaches are and how they feel about the communication between them and parents. This could offer more insight on what are the areas where there are different opinions between parents and coaches.

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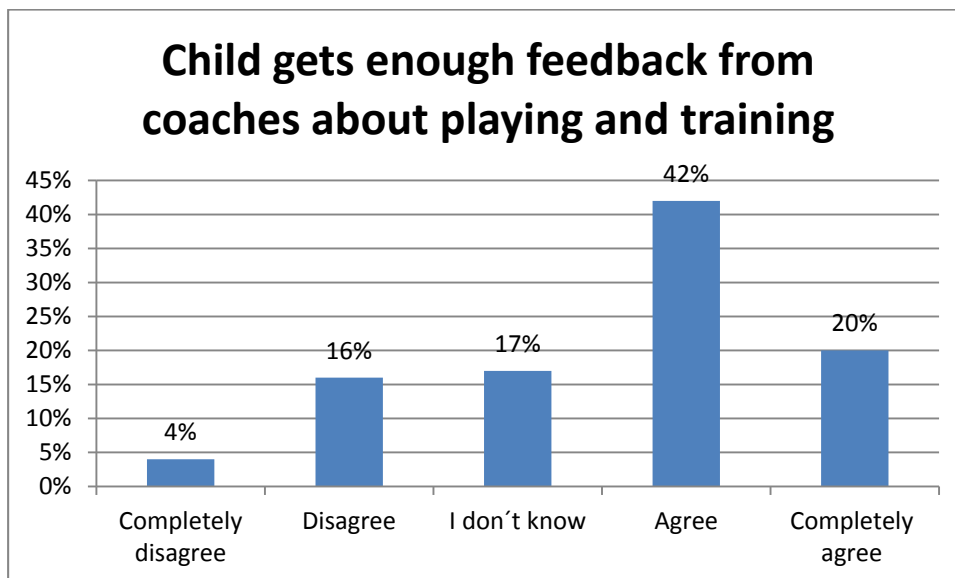


Figure 9. The amount of feedback for the child player

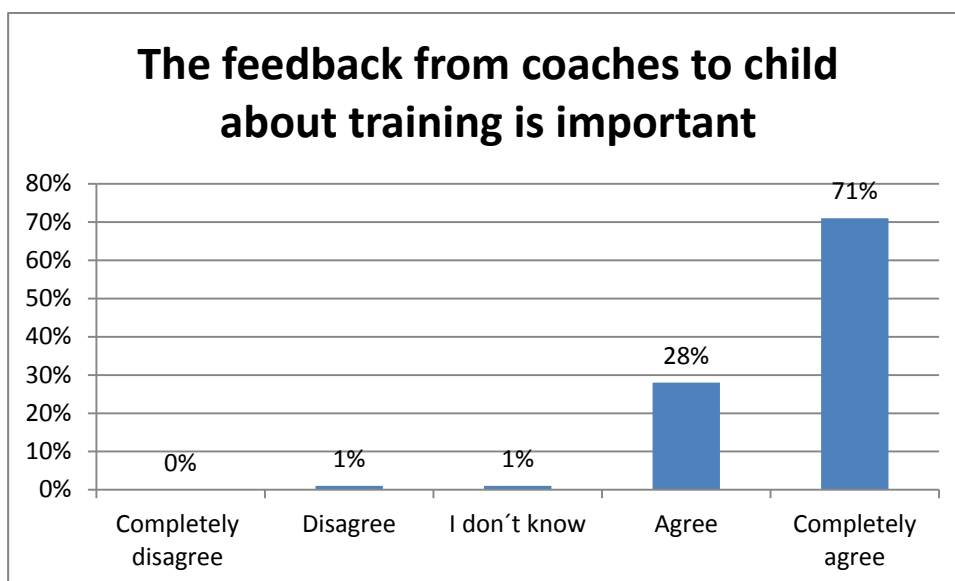


Figure 10. The importance of feedback from coaches to child.

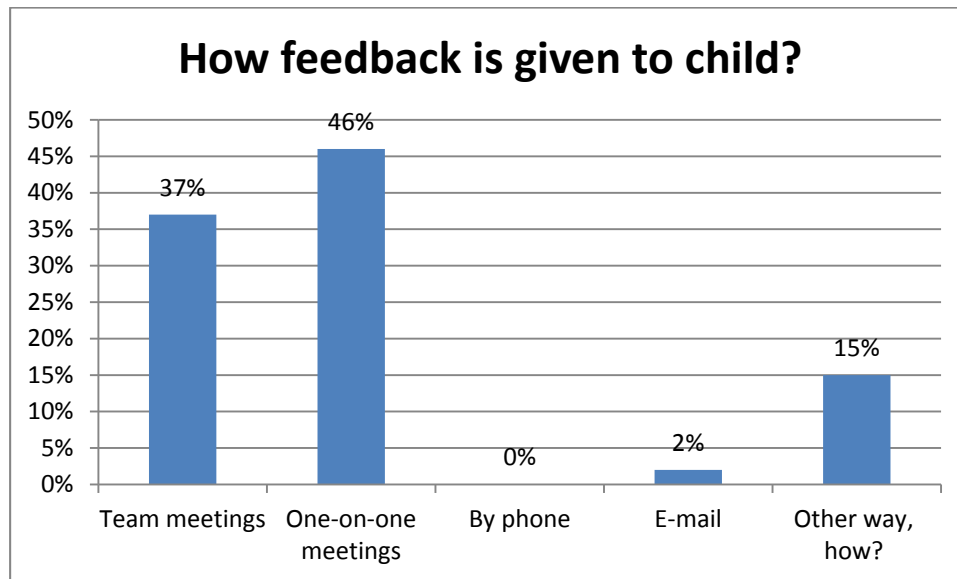


Figure 11. The ways of feedback for the child.

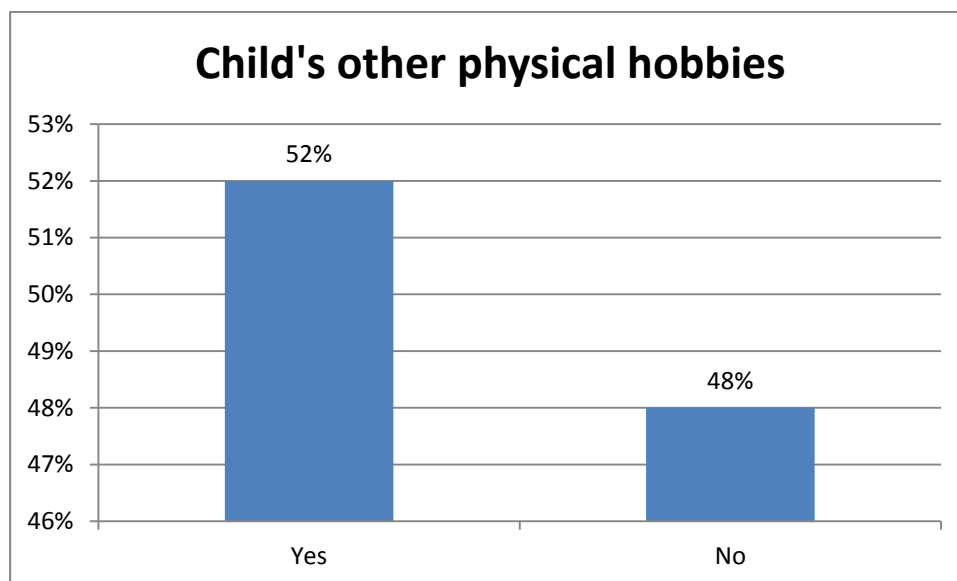


Figure 16. Child's other physical hobbies.

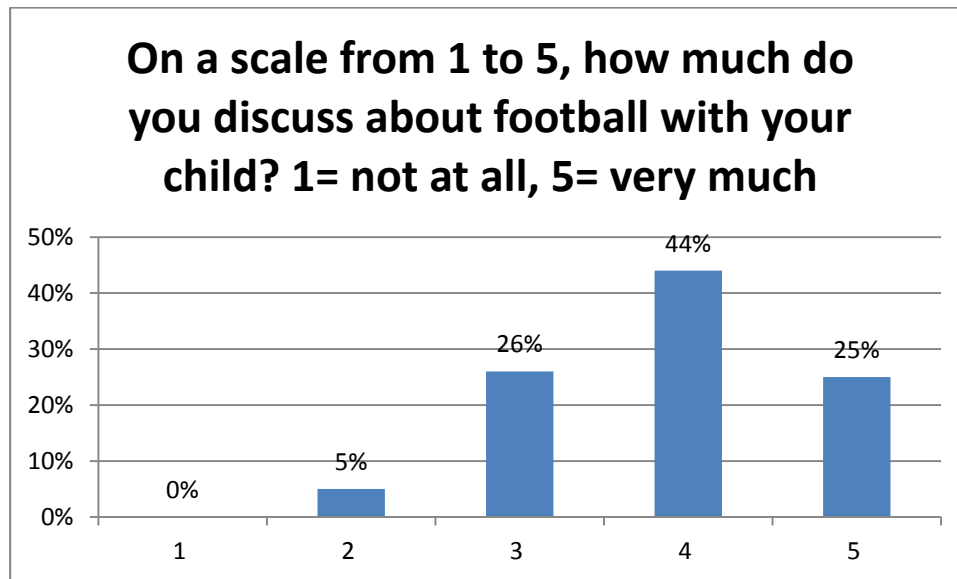


Figure 21. Amount of discussion about football at home.

