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## SOCIAL STATUS OF ATHLETES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

*Abstract:* The latent structure of manifest status characteristics has been analyzed on different samples from the Serbian population described by different sets of status variables by means of different methods for analyzing latent structures in several studies conducted in different periods of social, political and economic development. Accordingly, the results obtained from the analyses have been different; however, there have regularly appeared some stable latent structures, such as parents' educational and professional status, respondent's educational and professional status, as well as family's socio-political engagement, residence status and economic status. For the past time, great social, economic and political changes have taken place. These changes have inevitably had some impact on both the configuration of status characteristics and the number and nature of latent status dimensions. This study will present the results obtained during this period of the country's social, political and economic development, in which a representative set of status characteristics describes a representative sports sample from the Serbian population.

*Key words:* structure, characteristics, social status, factor, sport, segment.

### INTRODUCTION

More serious attention to sports for persons with disabilities was paid only after the Second World War. The considerable number of people who acquired some form of disability simply forced the most developed states to provide this huge population with appropriate conditions for equal life and work, and participation in sports activities was certainly one of the most important parts of that equality. The importance of sports for persons with disabilities was also recognized in this country, but its development was hampered by a lot of difficulties and unresolved issues. Among other things, educational programs did not adequately cover this subject. Although some topics had been studied earlier, Sports for Persons with Disabilities as a separate course in the academic programs of faculties of sports and physical education appeared only a decade ago. The inclusion

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of this subject in the curricula came as a consequence of reality, which required the faculty teaching staff to be qualified for working with that population. The recent practice in the implementation of sports activities of persons with disabilities fully confirms the necessity of this subject. Moreover, students have also demonstrated great interest in this issue (Popović, et al. 2015: 181). Sport has become more democratic than before, since a person's position in the social field has a much weaker, although still significant, influence on whether he or she will play sports and to what extent. This can be attributed to the convergent effect of a number of factors. The first is undoubtedly the growing popularity of most, even some earlier, elite sports, and the second is the increasing throughput of status channels resulting in a higher degree of intergenerational and intragenerational social mobility. However, the intensity of sports activity still significantly depends on the position of people in the social field, especially on their position in the socialization segment of the field, and it is very likely that it will depend on that for a long time to come.

## METHODS

### SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS

The selection of a sample of respondents was conditioned by organizational and financial capabilities needed for conducting the research procedure. It was necessary to provide a sufficient number of qualified and trained measurers, certain instruments and standardized conditions to carry out the planned research.

The measurements were performed in clubs, schools and associations of athletes with special needs.

In order to conduct the research correctly and obtain results sufficiently stable in terms of sampling error, it was necessary to include a satisfactory number of respondents in the sample. The sample size for this type of research is conditioned by the research goals and tasks, the size of the population and the degree of variability of the applied system of parameters.

Based on the selected statistic-mathematical model, program, goals and stated hypotheses, it was determined that the sample would include 75 karatists, 57 judokas, totaling 132 respondents. The sample size met the following criterion: to allow as many degrees of freedom as any coefficient in the pattern matrix or any correlation coefficient equal to or greater than .30 to be considered as nonzero with an inference error of less than .01.

In order to apply adequate statistical methods successfully, the number of subjects in the sample, according to the latest beliefs, must be greater than the number of variables applied.

In addition to the above, the respondents also had to meet the special conditions as follows:

- respondents were male;
- respondents' age was defined on the basis of chronological age, so that the research involved respondents from 18 to  $27 \pm 0.5$  years;
- respondents were members of a club, sports group or association that brought together Special Olympics athletes;
- respondents had to attend training classes regularly, which was determined based on records kept by coaches or teachers.

In defining the population from which the sample of respondents was extracted, no other restrictions or stratification variables were applied.

#### SAMPLE OF VARIABLES

Social characteristics are understood as the characteristics of some groups or social institutions to which a person belongs or with which he/she is affiliated.

Within the integral anthropological status, in the social space, the subjects of the largest number of previous studies referred to the position of a person in the social field, i.e. to the issues of social differentiation, social stratification and social mobility (Hosek 2004). While the notion of social mobility is relatively clear, the notions of social differentiation and social stratification are often confused and sometimes identified with the notion of class differences. One of the reasons is certainly the lack of adequate cybernetic models on which research into social differentiation would be based.

In previous studies, several first-order factors of social status were identified through the use of factor methods within individual subsystems

#### SOCIALIZATION SUBSYSTEM

Educational status - the level of education of the individual in society,  
and  
basic residence status - characteristics of the place where the subject spent early childhood.

#### INSTITUTIONALIZATION SUBSYSTEM

Professional status - the degree of the individual's expert power or the individual's position in a work organization,  
socio-political status – the individual's position in socio-political organizations,  
political orientation.

#### SANCTION SUBSYSTEM

basic economic status - family net income and items that are standard in the family,  
lifestyle - above-average standard of living, and  
current residence status - characteristics of the place where the individual currently lives.

So far, there has been developed only one model of social status that has provided a real scientific approach to studying the structure of stratification dimensions. The model was constructed by Saksida and was later used as the basis for many studies conducted by other authors (Saksida, Petrović 1972: 1417-1418); (Saksida, Caserman and Petrović 1974: 10-11); (Momirović, Hosek 1975: 17-18). Designed as a phenomenological model, it has undergone several changes over time, but it has remained suitable for studying social changes. For the assessment of social status in this research, the model developed by the aforementioned authors, as well as the INST2 supplement and the SS MIN questionnaire were applied (Boli et al. 2015: 208-209), (Popović et al. 2016: 218).

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- (1,2) What is your father`s / mother`s highest level of education? (EDUF), (EDUM)
- (3,4,5) What is your / your father`s / your mother`s level of foreign language knowledge? (FOLR), (FOLF), (FOLM)
- (6) What type of secondary school do you attend? (SECSCH)
- (7,8) What is your father`s / mother`s qualification recognized at his/her last workplace? (QUALF), (QUALM)
- (9:10) What was your paternal / maternal grandfather`s education? (EDUPGRF), (EDUMGRF)
- (11) What was the grade point average in the last year of your schooling? (GPA)
- (12) What has been your sport activity to date? (SPORT)
- (13, 14, 15) What was the type of place of residence where you / your father / your mother lived until 15 years of age? (PL15R), (PL15F), (PL15M)
- (16) What is the type of place of residence of your family? (PLFAM)
- (17,18) Are your father and mother engaged as municipal councilors or MPs? (POLITF), (POLITM)
- (19) Does your family have ...? (FAMHA)
- (20) What is the average amount of household waste in square meters per your family member? (WASFAM)
- (21) How comfortable is the apartment your family lives in? (APACOMF)
- (22) What is your household`s total monthly income? (INCOME)
- (23) What sport did you / your father / mother do? (SPORTR), (SPORTF), (SPORTM)

## METHODS OF PROCESSING RESULTS

The value of research does not only depend on the sample of respondents and the sample of variables, that is the value of basic information, but also on the applied methods for the transformation and condensation of this information. Some scientific issues can be solved using a number of different and sometimes equally valuable methods. However, with the same basic data, different conclusions can be drawn from the results of different methods. Therefore, the issue of selecting individual data processing methods is quite complex.

In order to arrive at satisfactory scientific solutions, the researchers used, first of all, correct, secondly, adequate, impartial and comparable procedures that corresponded to the nature of the stated problem and allowed extraction and transformation of appropriate dimensions, testing hypotheses about these dimensions, determination of differences, relations, prognoses and diagnoses as well as regularities within the research area.

Keeping that in mind, for the purpose of the present study, the researchers selected those methods that were considered to be appropriate to the nature of the problem and not to leave too great restrictions on basic information.

The problem of social differentiation, and even more the problem of social stratification, is related to several methodological issues of mathematical and statistical nature whose solutions have not been found or have not been satisfactorily found for the simple reason that those problems have not been posed or have not been properly or explicitly posed.

The most important among them is, undoubtedly, the problem of linearity of relations among status variables. Most methods for determining latent stratification dimensions are based on the component or factor model, i.e. models that belong to the general linear model.

In most of the studies conducted in this country, component model-based methods have been applied more often in the real, but not infrequently in the image space. The latter has proven to be much more convenient. However, difficulties were posed by procedures for determining the number of significant image factors. The factor model has been applied very rarely, and not without reason; the invariance of solutions has always been considered an absolute advantage and has influenced the preference for the component model. The two methods, whose logical basis is very consistent with the essence of the problem of the latent structure of stratified dimensions, have rarely been applied in this country.

Of those, Kaiser and Gaffrey's analysis, which maximizes the reliability of isolated latent dimensions, is particularly favorable because in the exploratory phase, in which is currently the research of latent stratified dimensions, it is perhaps most important to determine their existence with a sufficiently high degree of reliability. However, the component model in Harris space has an absolute advantage and certainly represents the optimal procedure due to its metric invariance and realistic positioning of the main axes that is consistent with their significance in the common subspace (Harris, Kaiser 1964: 357); (Mulaik 1972: 177).

Of the transformation methods, orthogonal ones have proven to be completely inappropriate (varimax has been most often used, but rarely as the only transformation procedure). Of the oblique methods, the oblimin method in the covarimin variant is used almost exclusively. However, there is no doubt that the model best suited to the configuration of the vectors of status variables is the model of independent sets from the ortho-oblique family which began to be applied more intensively only in recent years.

Regardless of the method used for extraction and transformation of latent dimensions, the serious issue is whether, based on status variables of the actuarial type, it is possible for latent dimensions to be attributed the type of existence that is attributed to them in other anthropological studies in which variables are defined not only by better measuring instruments, but also in the way that they are logically suitable for determining real dimensions. At this point, it is not entirely certain whether latent stratification dimensions are just suitable classification categories, and nothing more. Based on all the above, it was decided to use confirmatory factor analysis under the component model for statistical data processing in this research. All the data in the present study were processed at the Multi-disciplinary Research Center of the Faculty of Sports and Physical Education, University of Pristina, by means of the DRSOFT system of data processing programs developed by (Popović 1980: 121-122); (Momirović, Popović 2003: 115,139, 151).

## INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using component analysis of variables for assessing the social status of athletes with special needs and applying Momirović's  $\beta_6$  criterion, there were obtained four characteristic roots that can be considered statistically significant. The total percentage of the explained variability of the system of variables applied is 55.11%. Table 1 reveals a monotonic decrease of both the characteristic root and the percentage of the explained variance from 18.34%

for the second main component to 10.42% for the fourth main component, and it can be considered as a product of hyper factorization. This is most likely the case if the communalities of variables whose value in the whole matrix is equal to one are also taken into account.

Tabela 1. Main components of social status

	FAC1	FAC2	FAC3	FAC4	h <sup>2</sup>
SOO	,26	,55	,51	-,02	,56
SOM	,55	,35	,28	,30	,63
SJT	-,07	,39	-,14	-,06	,17
SJO	,34	,50	-,15	,37	,54
SJM	,31	,33	-,24	,12	,52
KSŠI	-,16	,10	-,08	-,20	,16
KO	,27	,23	,49	-,29	,47
KM	,26	,41	,45	,02	,45
ODO	,28	,26	-,05	,21	,64
ODM	,28	,20	-,07	,12	,60
UPGŠ	-,09	,01	,38	-,32	,28
TDAS	,34	,47	-,35	,16	,40
TMPDT	,85	-,37	-,04	-,09	,87
TMPDO	,87	-,36	-,04	-,11	,90
TMPDM	,81	-,38	-,06	-,10	,83
TMSSB	,75	-,36	-,11	-,11	,75
AOOIPO	,29	,22	,01	,31	,27
AMOIPO	-,07	,04	,13	,02	,20
DTPI	,07	,19	,16	-,06	,29
KKMČD	,03	,49	,28	-,07	,36
KSTP	-,17	,03	,11	,18	,09
UMPDT	,19	-,03	,45	-,47	,50
KSTI	-,12	-,43	,46	,52	,68
KSOT	,02	-,36	,51	,56	,73
KSMA	-,02	-,49	,30	,55	,64
Kara.koren	3,83	3,00	2,33	1,85	
% Varijansa	18,34	15,02	11,33	10,42	
Kumulat. %	18,34	33,36	44,69	55,11	

Tabela 2. Matrix of the social status cluster

	OBL1	OBL2	OBL3	OBL4
SOO	-,05	-,09	,39	,09
SOM	-,23	,26	,20	-,10
SJT	,20	,40	,08	-,35
SJO	-,16	,19	-,11	,33
SJM	,09	-,00	,29	,70
KŠŠI	,00	-,00	,04	,66
KO	,07	-,02	,65	,29
KM	,14	,06	,80	,12
ODO	-,10	-,01	,24	,11
ODM	,16	,30	,08	,12
UPGŠ	,93	-,02	,01	,09
TDAS	,94	-,01	,04	,13
TMPDT	,91	-,01	-,02	,03
TMPDO	,86	,04	-,01	-,07
TMPDM	,20	,12	,29	,02
TMSSB	-,08	,00	,13	,79
AOOIPO	,06	,23	,60	-,24
AMOIPO	-,20	,16	,45	,23
DTPI	,88	-,04	-,05	,04
KKMČD	,15	,42	,06	,11
KSTP	-,05	-,82	,05	-,11
UMPDT	,04	-,81	,18	-,01
KSTI	,08	-,36	,19	-,07
KSOT	-,05	-,21	,09	11
KSMA	-,23	,26	,20	-,10

Tabela 3. Matrix of the structure of social status

	OBL1	OBL2	OBL3	OBL4
SOO	,01	,00	,07	-,09
SOM	-,19	,31	,19	-,11
SJT	,22	,40	,12	-,36
SJO	-,19	,18	-,08	,58
SJM	,14	,06	,49	-,68
KSŠI	,04	,06	,37	,76
KO	,09	,03	,63	,23
KM	,12	,08	,79	,39
ODO	-,11	-,04	,27	,14
ODM	,18	,34	,10	,09
UPGŠ	,93	-,04	,07	,06
TDAS	,94	-,02	,09	,09
TMPDT	,91	-,03	,03	,00
TMPDO	,82	,01	-,01	-,10
TMPDM	,17	,10	,35	,06
TMSSB	-,05	,01	,11	-,26
AOOIPO	,02	,19	,55	-,19
AMOIPO	-,19	,20	,67	,26
DTPI	-,89	-,08	-,03	,07
KKMČD	,16	-,77	,45	,13
KSTP	-,02	-,81	-,03	-,11
UMPDT	,07	-,79	,10	-,01
KSTI	,10	-,03	-,14	-,04
KSOT	,01	,00	,17	-,09
KSMA	-,19	,31	,19	-,11

Tabela 4. Oblimin factors intercorrelations

	OBL1	OBL2	OBL3	OBL4
OBL1	1,00	-,01	,06	-,03
OBL2	-,01	1,00	,10	,01
OBL3	,06	,10	1,00	,02
OBL4	-,03	,01	,02	1,00



Variables that have the largest projection on the **first oblimin factor** are those used to assess **educational status** defined by the degree, quality and scope of education of respondents and their parents as well as their level of qualification recognized in their current or previous job. The variable *where did you previously live* was used for assessing **basic residence status** defined by the characteristics of the place where the subject and his parents come from. That primarily refers to the type of settlement – whether it is a city, town or village. Both of these statuses are subordinated to the **socialization subsystem**.

Saturation of factors also involves a variable of how well-to-do the family is, which is used to assess the lifestyle. This factor is sometimes of dubious existence as it is defined as the possession of those material goods that, at the present stage of this country's economic development, do not yet represent the effect of the usual, normally represented mode of consumption. It refers to owning a cottage, car, computer, paintings of greater value, etc. "Lifestyle" is probably not the best term for this dimension. In some analyses, a similar dimension is termed as above-standard economic status. However, as this factor usually appears as a dimension different from the factor of economic status, it is probably a case of specific consumer orientation that is not so much a consequence of economic power, but has the function of forming a certain lifestyle. Recognizing the real fact that athletes as entities realize various roles in various groups during their life, it becomes clear that the first oblimin factor that provides the most important kinesiological reality represents the dominant feature of athletes with special needs and can be nominated as a **factor of general social status**. Tables 2, 3 and 4.

The **second oblimin factor** is defined by lifestyle variables and economic status that belong to the **sanction or consequence subsystem**. The factor is also defined by one variable for assessing **educational status** which is subordinated to the **socialization subsystem**. This latent dimension is bipolar, and its dominant characteristic is a low lifestyle, poor economic status and poor involvement in sports organizations. The **sanction or consequence subsystem** is responsible for the social evaluation of role performance in the institutionalization subsystem. This subsystem consists of a hierarchical network of social roles, and it is in the system of possession, consumption and other measurable effects of position in the institutionalization subsystem. The **socialization subsystem** has the function of preparing the individual to take a certain position in the network of roles in the institutionalization subsystem. The socialization subsystem essentially represents all forms and levels of training an individual to communicate with the social environment and therefore to efficiently perform roles in the institutionalization subsystem. In the operationalization of the model, however, for a number of methodological reasons, the socialization subsystem is limited to the formal level and type of education, and only to those circumstances under which the socialization process took place and which can be directly registered, measured or assessed.

The **third oblimin factor** is clearly determined by variables for assessing the **institutionalization subsystem**. The first two variables define **professional status** that is defined by the individual's position in the hierarchy of professional roles determined by regulators which depend on socio-economic relations from the social division of labor. This dimension of social status, the most important among the dimensions belonging to the institutionalization subsystem, is usually defined by the position in the workplace,

that is the degree of expert power and position in the professional bodies and organizations. The other two variables determine **socio-political status**. **Social status** is defined by the individual's position in the hierarchical network of roles in nonpolitical social organizations. This hierarchical network includes roles in scientific, professional, cultural, humanitarian, sports and other organizations at all levels, from the local community and municipality to the republic, state and international levels. This factor should be significantly related to educational and residence status, and particularly to professional status. **Political status** is defined by the degree of possession of political power. In the world, political power depends on two factors. The first is the position in state and parastate organizations that make decisions, implement them or control their implementation, and the second is membership and position in the ruling party. In most countries, including this country, the two factors are not independent. Both of these statuses are defined by the individual's position in the system of institutionalized social roles. Thus, it is assumed that there is a hierarchical network of interrelated professional, social and political roles which, due to the importance of their institution and values, influence social differentiation of people. In addition, it is the assumption that every activity, or every social role, on the basis of which society perceives the individual as its active member, is formally or actually institutionalized. It should be borne in mind that, indeed, in any normal organized society, there are practically no roles that are not institutionalized. It is obvious, namely, that families, work organizations, educational institutions, social and political organizations, religious organizations, etc., are essentially institutions in which a hierarchy of social roles exists more or less formally.

The **fourth oblimin factor** has the greatest relationship both with the variables used to assess **educational** status and variables for assessing **current residence status**. It could be concluded that the **socialization subsystem** and **sanctions or consequence subsystem** are responsible for this dimension.

It is especially important to emphasize the interactive influence of primary factors of social status on determining the overall status position. None of these dimensions is in itself a measure of the overall status position, but that position depends on the interactive constellation of primary factors and is defined by the participation coefficients of each status dimension.

Although all studies carried out in this country suggest that educational status has by far the highest coefficient of participation in the formation of the general factor of social status, this factor is highly saturated with professional status, basic economic status and basic residence status.

This issue of athletes with special needs who engage in karate and judo to be further explored with new methods and new assessment instruments in order to provide a deeper and more meaningful analysis of subjects' social status.

## CONCLUSION

The study was carried out with the aim of determining the structure of social status of athletes with special needs who engage, karate and judo within Special Olympics. For that purpose, 132 athletes involved in regular training were examined.

In order to assess social status, the researchers used the model developed by the authors as follows: (Saksida and Petrovic, 1972, pp. 1417-1418); (Saksida, Caserman and Petrovic, 1974, pp. 10-11); Momirovic and Hosek, 1975, p. 17-18.). The INST2 supplement and SSMIN questionnaire were applied in the research.

All the data in the present study were processed at the Multidisciplinary Research Center of the Faculty of Sports and Physical Education, University of Pristina, using the DRSOFT system of data processing programs developed by Popovic (1980 and 1993, pp. 121-122) and (Momirovic and Popovic, 2003, p. 115,139, 151).

Using component analysis of variables for assessing the **social status** of athletes with special needs and applying Momirovic's  $\beta_6$  criterion, four characteristic roots that can be considered statistically significant were obtained. The total percentage of the explained variability of the system of variables applied is 55.34%. Table 1 indicates a monotonic decline in both the characteristic root and the percentage of the explained variance from 15.02% for the second main component to 10.42% for the fourth main component, and it can be considered as a product of hyper factorization. This is most likely the case if the communalities of variables whose value in the whole matrix is equal to one are taken into account.

The following variables have the largest projection on the first **oblimin factor**: *do you play any sports, your academic achievement, where did you live previously? how well-to-do is your family?* etc. This **oblimin factor** is featured by variables for assessing educational status which is subordinated to the **socialization subsystem**, as well as by one *lifestyle* variable that belongs to the **sanction or consequence subsystem**.

Accepting the real fact that athletes as entities realize various roles in various groups during their life, it becomes clear that the first **oblimin factor** which provides the most important kinesiological reality represents the dominant characteristic of athletes with special needs and can be nominated as a **general factor of social status in the broadest sense**.

The second **oblimin factor** is defined by **lifestyle** variables and economic status that belong to the **sanction subsystem**. Variables for assessing **educational status** from the **socialization subsystem** are also involved here. This latent dimension is bipolar and is characterized by a low lifestyle, poor economic status and poor involvement in sports organizations.

The third **oblimin factor** is explained by variables used to assess the **socialization subsystem**, one variable for assessing the institutionalization subsystem and the variable for the assessment of the **current residence status**, or the **sanction or consequential subsystem**.

The fourth **oblimin factor** has the greatest relationship with variables for assessing *mother's and father's qualifications, father's foreign language proficiency, and family's current residence*. It could be concluded that the **socialization subsystem and the sanction or consequence subsystem** are responsible for this dimension.

Considering the difficulties in sampling respondents, it is necessary to make every effort to establish cooperation with the largest possible number of respondents thus obtaining greater reliability of research results.

This issue of athletes with special needs who engage, karate and judo, as well as other sports disciplines, needs to be further explored using new methods and new assessment instruments in order to enter into a deeper and more meaningful analysis of the social status of subjects.

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СОЦИЈАЛНИ СТАТУС СПОРТИСТА  
СА ПОСЕБНИМ ПОТРЕБАМА

## РЕЗИМЕ

Латентна структура манифестних статусних карактеристика анализирана је на различитим узорцима српске популације описаним различитим скуповима статусних варијабли уз помоћ различитих метода за анализу латентних структура у неколико студија спроведених у различитим периодима друштвеног, политичког и економског развоја. Сходно томе, резултати добијени анализама су различити; међутим, редовно су се појављивале неке стабилне латентне структуре, као што су образовни и професионални статус родитеља, образовни и професионални статус испитаника, као и друштвено-политички ангажман породице, боравишни статус

и економски статус. За протекло време догодиле су се велике друштвене, економске и политичке промене. Ове промене су неизбежно имале одређени утицај како на конфигурацију статусних карактеристика тако и на број и природу димензија латентног статуса. У овој студији биће представљени резултати добијени у овом периоду друштвеног, политичког и економског развоја земље, у којима репрезентативни скуп статусних карактеристика описује репрезентативни спортски узорак становништва Србије.

*Кључне речи:* структура, карактеристике, друштвени статус, фактор, спорт, сегмент.

