HOMESICKNESS DEGRADES SKI-RACING PERFORMANCE TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE RELATIVE AGE EFFECT AND PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

Diploma Thesis

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Magistra degree at the Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck

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Statutory Declaration

I declare hereby that I have authored this thesis independently, I have not used other than the declared sources and resources and I have explicitly marked all the material, which has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources.

Innsbruck, August 20, 2019

Geiger Astrid
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DANKE Mama und Papa.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSAI-2</td>
<td>Competitive State Anxiety Inventory- 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>disqualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNF</td>
<td>did not finish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNS</td>
<td>did not start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRI</td>
<td>Dundee Relocation Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRI_sum</td>
<td>Sum of answers of Dundee Relocation Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ1, HQ2,… HQ26</td>
<td>homesickness questions 1-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>mean value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAE</td>
<td>relative age effect</td>
</tr>
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<td>r</td>
<td>effect size</td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>standard deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>relative age quarter 1 (January, February, March)</td>
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<td>Q1(1)</td>
<td>relative age quarter 1 of 1st year eg. year 2000 (if 2 birth years in same age category)</td>
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<td>Q1 (2)</td>
<td>relative age quarter 1 of 2nd year eg. year 2001 (if 2 birth years in same age category)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>relative age quarter 2 (April, May, June)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 (1)</td>
<td>relative age quarter 2 of 1st year eg. year 2000 (if 2 birth years in same age category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 (2)</td>
<td>relative age quarter 2 of 2nd year eg. year 2001 (if 2 birth years in same age category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>relative age quarter 3 (July, August, September)</td>
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Q3(1) relative age quarter 3 of 1\textsuperscript{st} year eg. year 2000 (if 2 birth years in same age category)

Q3(2) relative age quarter 3 of 2\textsuperscript{nd} year eg. year 2001 (if 2 birth years in same age category)

Q4 relative age quarter 4 (October, November, December)

Q4(1) relative age quarter 4 of 1\textsuperscript{st} year eg. year 2000 (if 2 birth years in same age category)

Q4(2) relative age quarter 4 of 2\textsuperscript{nd} year eg. year 2001 (if 2 birth years in same age category)

T difference in mean value

TFAI Three-Factor Anxiety Inventory
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

Abstract

Homesickness is an ever-present phenomenon especially for children who decide to attend ski-specific boarding schools although they have not experienced being away from home for a longer period of time. Homesickness influences cognitive and physical performance. Studies investigating whether homesickness degrades ski-racing performance in consideration of the relative age effect (RAE) and performance anxiety seem to be lacking in current literature. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the relationship between the relative age effect and performance anxiety as well as homesickness and ski-racing performance. In the skiing season 2015/16, seventy-three 10 to 14 year old athletes of two ski-specific boarding schools in Austria were surveyed on homesickness and ski-racing performance.

Significant differences were shown regarding homesickness and its degradation of ski-racing performance considering the relative age and performance anxiety. Moreover, boarders with higher general adaptation scores have less performance values and boarders with less performance values have reached higher social factor value points. No significant results were found regarding the relative age effect and performance anxiety in relation to ski-racing performance. 50% of athletes, who rated themselves homesick were not classified as homesick by care workers or coaches, however, a significant difference could not be detected.

The results suggest that homesickness decreases ski-racing performance and the difficulty of externally evaluating homesickness in students is present. A suggested strategy to prevent homesickness involves ‘homesickness talks’ within supervisors and between supervisor and athletes.
Zusammenfassung

Heimweh ist ein omnipräentes Phänomen, das speziell bei Kindern eintreffen kann, vor allem bei jenen, die sich für einen Besuch einer (Ski-)Internatsschule entscheiden, obgleich sie noch keine Erfahrungen bezüglich Wegbleiben von Zuhause gemacht haben. Es wird vermutet, dass Heimweh die kognitive und physische Leistungsfähigkeit beeinflusst.


Es besteht ein signifikanter Zusammenhang zwischen Heimweh und Ski-Rennspezifischer Leistungsfähigkeit unter der Berücksichtigung des Relativen Alters und Wettkampfangst. Zusätzlich haben InternatsschülerInnen, die eine höhere generelle Anpassungsfähigkeit aufweisen, schlechtere Performance-Punkte, die Leistungsschwächeren zeigen wiederum höhere Werte beim Sozialfaktor. Es wurden keine signifikanten Ergebnisse angesichts des Relativen Altersseffekts sowie der Wettkampfangst betreffend der Ski-Rennlaufspezifischen Leistungsfähigkeit gefunden. Obwohl 50% aller AthletInnen sich selbst mit erhöhtem Heimweh einstuften, wurde dies nicht von ErzieherInnen oder TrainerInnen bestätigt, jedoch konnte hierbei kein signifikanter Unterschied gezeigt werden.
Es kann bestätigt werden, dass Heimweh die Ski-Rennlaufspezifische Leistungsfähigkeit beeinträchtigt, und eine Schwierigkeit der externen Evaluation von AthletInnen mit Heimweh gegeben ist. Um dies zu verhindern werden präventive Vorgehensweisen angeboten, die “Heimweh- Gespräche” zwischen den einzelnen ErzieherInnen und TrainerInnen, sowie mit den SchülerInnen inkludieren.
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

Preface

...do they like me...what do they think...can they see I cried....Do they know I want to go home....how should I tell the coaches... I do not want to talk to them....they might not understand.... Huuuuuhh... why am I here.....I cannot stand it....I don’t want to stay here....but what do my parents say... again they have to come and get me.....aaaaaaaaahhh.... can I still be part of the team although I go home all the time...I have stomachache....every second week the same...what shall I do...I really enjoy skiing... I am not sure if the others want to talk to me... I need to call my mum...

(recollecting my thoughts at the age of 12, at a ski camp with the Vorarlbergian Ski Association)

If I think back to my childhood, the word homesickness or rather the feeling I had, caused unhappiness, loneliness and distance within me. As a ski racer in the Ski Federation of Vorarlberg I had the opportunity to take part in many training sessions on the glacier during fall. The first year I was part of the team I just could not deal with leaving my family.

Thinking back, the thoughts written down above pop up into my head and I can still feel how it was. I segregated myself from my teammates; I was not sure if they liked me, I imagined they knew how I felt and would not understand. I acted weirdly, sat at the table on my own to have dinner, others asked me to join them but I just did not feel well, I was scared, I did not understand...

...then, my dad came to pick me up, and everything was okay again.

Separation from somebody or something might be one of the most challenging interpersonal problems existing, which could lead to behaviour – and personality changes. This can trigger a homesickness reaction (Zwingmann, 1962). The “universal” (Stroebe, Schut, & Nauta, 2016, p.44) but “underresearched phenomenon” (Watt & Badger, 2009, p.517) of homesickness might show variation between age, gender, and origin (Url & Thurber, 2012), but is definitely a common existing experience within different cultural and societal
Homesickness is familiar to different people experiencing distinct situations: immigrants who decided to move from their home-country to another, refugees who had to flee involuntarily, soldiers who have been fighting in different wars from past to present. People who have to travel much or decided to move because of a better job opportunity and pupils, when they go to summer camp or even when they attend boarding schools.

In my case, it was my own choice to leave home in order to become part of the provincial ski team. I followed my dream to become a professional ski racer. Due to my fear of becoming homesick, however, I decided against enrolling in a boarding school. At the age of 17, I quit skiing and when looking back, I know, I decided against an optimal performance-enhancing living environment.

My diploma thesis is addressed to all the boarding house personal, the coaches, the educators, teachers, mothers and fathers who deal with homesick pupils and might lack understanding, as well as people just interested in the topic. It has been written to gain sensitivity. From my personal experience I suppose it could affect the ski-racing performance, and support from confidants would have been very important for me.

According to Stroebe et al. (2016), the feeling of slight homesickness is a normal reaction when leaving family, friends and home, however, measuring this ambiguous phenomenon is challenging (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, & Van Heck, 1996). The following work includes surveying insight into the phenomenon of homesickness, and its relation to physical performance, the relative age effect and performance anxiety.
1 Homesickness

In former times literature has been dealing with homesickness of its heroes and heroines, such as Robinson Crusoe 1719, Heidi 1880, and Ulysses 1922. Various definitions do not mitigate the signs of weakness and immaturity, which society imposes on the sufferers; however, the different reasons of the occurrence of homesickness show the relevance of dealing with it. Several studies demonstrate the difficulty of leaving home and its outcome from past to present (Jahn, 2007; Matt, 2011).

1.1 A Record of Homesickness

The feeling of homesickness was better known as “nostalgia”, the term is still used as the medical wording for homesickness nowadays. The Swiss Doctor Johannes Hofer invented this word in 1688 (Gerschmann, 1975). It derived from the Greek “nostos” meaning “return”, “homecoming” or “fortime” and “algos” meaning “pain” (“nostalgia,” 2019). In this thesis the words “nostalgia” and “homesickness” are going to be used interchangeably. Even the early medical text by Harder from 1678 referred to the experience of relocation by adults and used the term la maladie du pays for it (Harder & Hofer, 1678) The French Abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos also called it “hemvé” and supported the explanation of the malaise (Encyclopédie où dictionnaire raisonné, 1967 as cited in Leuschner, 1991).

Homesickness was seen physically in the first half of the 18th Century, and was more psychologically explained in the second half. Not only Hofer (1688) but also many physicians after him believed nostalgia to be more a physical condition rather than a feeling (Gerschmann, 1975). When people moved from one place to another, there was also a difference in air and air pressure which people missed; it was explained as longing for the pure Swiss air, or also referred to the good air of
Rostock (Jaspers, 1909; Zedler, 1735). Additional reasons for the “syndrome” (Fisher, 1989, p.35) were believed to be other traditions and different drinking water. The symptoms were rather metabolically and materialistically explained. However, several other scholars such as J. Cartheuser in 1771 or Albrecht von Haller in 1777 revised their physiological explanation to a rather psychological one (Leuschner, 1991). In 1768, Zuckert stated that people’s emotional stability were the critical factor of homesickness and focused on indirect and individual determining factors (Zuckert, 1768). Later also Julius Heinrich Gottlieb Schlegel (1835) opposed the physiological view. He insisted homesickness to appear because of an intensive childhood impression, which the sufferers still prefer as adults (Leuschner, 1991). Romantic literature supported this idea of the connection to family, home and nature living on in an adult age. This is similar to Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalysis and the “Unconscious” (Leuschner, 1991).

This phenomenon of nostalgia was very openly talked about during the time when immigration as well as slavery started in the United States (Matt, 2011). When the Puritans came to the U.S. in the early 17th Century, approximately 1/6 went back straight away, because of suffering from homesickness; similar occurrences took place in Canada, as well as Central and South America when colonists decided to turn back home (Matt, 2011). Colonists showed their connection to home by naming places after those they left behind, bringing plants with them and even using the architecture of their old homes into their new homes in order to feel comfortable (Matt, 2011). As early as 1791 a study was conducted by Corp, in which relocated British army recruits showed symptoms and illnesses. One soldier had symptoms such as giddiness, noise in the ears, bad dreams, insomnia and melancholy, which improved after returning back home (Fisher, 1989).
Gold miners near San Francisco Bay (1850s), portrayed in Figure 1, were waiting for hours in very long queues in the hope of receiving mail from home. The chance to receive such a desired letter was very rare and the excitement therefore big, if this happened (Matt, 2011).

![Figure 1: Goldminers lining up in front of the post office (Soulé et al., 1855, p.260)](image)

However, homesickness started to become an issue. Measures were taken against homesickness amongst others. Soldiers were ridiculed and confronted with shame, some faced the death sentence (Bowman, n.d.). In the 20th Century homesickness was seen as jeopardizing development. The expansion of military bases was in danger, because of homesick recruits, who would not go abroad. Figure 2 shows how the US military service stated their opinion on homesickness in a newspaper.
Likewise, companies and corporations needed their labour forces to redistribute not only nationally but also internationally (Matt, 2011).

![Figure 2: Newspaper article from the US army during WW1 (Matt, 2013, p.182)](image)

After World War I child psychologists, such as John Watson proposed to parents not to show too much intra-familial emotional affection to their children, but shake hands in the mornings and evenings instead, and send them away to summer camps or relatives in order for them to be perfectly prepared to leave home in adult age (Watson, 1928).

In 1925, the psychologist Karl Marbe argued ‘homesickness’ not to be a disease but usual behaviour of normal and abnormal, intelligent and unintelligent as well as young and old people that results from designated conditions (Marbe, 1925). Nonetheless, a lack of examination leads to rather sparse knowledge about homesickness. Psychoanalytics such as Fodor (1950), Nicolini (1926), and Sterba (1940) maintain homesickness to be an unconscious longing for the womb and the breast of the mother or the penis of the father. Homesickness touches a broad field, not only with its historical stories but also with its ways to characterisation and definitions.
1.2 Defining the term homesickness

Only few people have dealt with the topic of homesickness and most of them have their own way of describing the term, which makes the difficulty of explanation finding obvious. The term has different approaches, in which many researchers have dealt with distinguished definitions (Fisher, 1989; Stroebe et al. 2016; Url & Thurber, 2012; Van Vliet, 2001). A very broad and general definition by online source dictionary.com defines homesickness as “Sad or depressed from a longing for home or family while away from them for a long time” (“homesickness,” 2019). It includes being in a negative situation while experiencing a strong desire for home and the people there.

More detailed ways of defining homesickness have come from health and psychology academics believing that unfavourable side effects occur with the relation of place changes (Fried, 1966). According to Benn and colleagues, homesickness acts as a complex state of motivation, cognition and emotion, which could lead to depressive mood and numerous psychosomatic symptoms, triggered by thoughts of home, and the wish to return home (Benn, Harvey, Gilbert, & Irons, 2005). Other researchers are also supportive of this opinion. Leaving might include depressive reactions (Eurelings-Bontekoe, Tolsma, Verschuur, & Vingerhoets, 1996; Fisher, 1989) and unstable relationships, which can lead to loneliness (Archer, Ireland, Amos, Broad & Currid, 1998; Yeh &Inose, 2003). Hence, whether the case of homesickness applies, is always concerned with gained experiences, psychological self-assessment and the coping-strategy of the new situation of one’s own, alludes Jahn (2007).

According to Stroebe et al. (2016), there are two different positions. One approaches a loss-oriented way of dealing with home, and what and who is left behind, thinking merely of home. The other includes a restoration-oriented access
to the topic, mentioning the difficulties of the new environment. Examples for the first approach would be homesickness is “a depression-like reaction to leaving a familiar environment, characterized by ruminative thoughts about home and the desire to go back to the familiar environment” (Eurelings-Bontekoe, Brouwers, & Verschuur, 2000, p.444). Backed up by Vingerhoets (2005, p.14) “Homesickness reflects problems with separation from the home environment”. According to Url and Thurber (2012), thoughts of home are problematic and include many different aspects of home. There might also be materialistic objects included, which people felt connected to and yearn for after leaving (Url & Thurber, 2012). These definitions mainly act on the factor home and the missing of it, which might also include material possession. Examples for the second approach, mentioning difficulties of the new environment, would be Watt’s and Badger’s statement that homesickness “[…][arises] in separation from the old location as well as […] in entry to the new location” (Watt & Badger, 2009, p.526). Further on, homesickness is “a state of distress characterized by adjustment difficulties and intense longing for home and ruminations about home after having left home” (Van Vliet, 2001, p.115).

As already stated, for Stroebe et al. (2016) homesickness does not necessarily only relate to “home” (p.345) but also to the “new place” (p.345), the variation of the most common definitions and their investigation of statements helped them to specify their own including both: “Homesickness is ‘a mini-grief’, a negative emotional state primarily due to separation from home and attachment persons, characterized by longing for and preoccupation with home and often with difficulty adjusting to the new place” (Stroebe et al., 2016, p.350).

There are many authors explaining their findings about homesickness and age. Van Tilburg (2005) states that less than 10% of people have never felt
homesick, it can still be felt after nearly 60 years away from home. Having that in mind, it seems obvious that the younger generation encounters the phenomenon similarly. Fisher explicitly captured children, teenagers and students being involved in dealing with homesickness. “Homesickness’ ... is used to describe the psychological experiences which occur following a transition. It is particularly pertinent for situations where a person leaves home, typically this involves young people who leave home for educational, training or vocational purposes” (Fisher, 1989, p.21). Following this definition, which was used as the principle definition for this diploma thesis, there is different knowledge about homesick regarding people of every age, ethnicity and gender (Url & Thurber, 2012).

1.3 Current deliberations and knowledge of the phenomenon

In 1962, Charles Zwingmann had already stated that homesickness, a term he used to describe “nostalgic phenomenon” (p.308), was an understudied topic, and it has not developed strongly since. His explanation for this is the difficulty of the topic being situated between the fields of psychology and psychiatry. In the psychological aspect it might be too “pathological”, compared to “not enough pathological” for psychiatrists (Zwingmann, 1962, p.308). Some researchers are of the opinion that it should be diagnosed as a mental disorder. It has not been referenced with a medical concern (Stroebe et al., 2016), although it is characterized by symptoms of somatic and psychosomatic nature.

The Scottish psychologist Shirley Fisher is one of the fewer, who dealt with the topic of homesickness in detail (Jahn, 2007). She conducted various studies at universities, and boarding schools in order to find out more about its definitions, aspects and psychological effects to help create the Dundee Relocation Inventory (DRI) as an instrument to measure homesickness (Fisher,
The questionnaire was designed with the help of her earlier findings and also recreated in a second version. Her findings suggest that, for instance, of 25 students of the Dundee University in Scotland 72% reported feeling homesick in their first university year, which declined to 48% in the second to fourth year (Fisher, 1985). She has concluded of all her findings that approximately 50-75% of the general population have felt homesick once in their lifetime, whereas 10-15% of sufferers have to deal with heavy issues (Fisher, 1989). This is not to be underestimated. Opposing, she also mentioned that one-third of the homesick only respond to a certain weight bearing, and would not be homesick in the first place (Fisher, 1989).

English et al. (2017) emphasized similar findings. They examined 174 undergraduates of different ethnic backgrounds in their freshman year at an U. S. college. They were asked to fill in at least four weekly reports on homesickness. Ninety-four percent reported having felt homesick at some point during the first 10 weeks of college and the remaining 6% reported never having felt homesickness in those 10 weeks (English et al., 2017).

Although it seems as if society judges this “nostalgic phenomenon” (Zwingmann, 1962, p.308) as “wimpish” or weak, it is an absolutely normal reaction and is likely to fade away over time (Fisher, 1989, p.25). However, the general opinion about this weakness was that girls and women were allowed to be homesick in contrast to men who were characterized as unmanly when feeling akin (Zwingmann, 1962). Nowadays this social stigma might have changed, but there seem to be ambivalent results concerning homesickness and gender differences, as only indecisive answers could be found in literature (Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1985; Moeini, Abasi, Afshari, Haji Hosseini, & Ghaleiha, 2018).
1.3.1 Differences in people affected by homesickness

Homesickness depends on many individual factors; some people are more touched by it than others. Fried (1966) looked at the domestic factors of homesickness and found out that Chicago’s slum occupants complained about feeling homesick after they had to move to another place. He concluded that the lower the income, the stronger the reaction to homesickness (Fried, 1966).

Watt and Badger (2009) evaluated that people who experience a greater need to belong also tend to be more homesick. People committed to objects and places, very rooted and materialistic people, as well as people with personal restrictions (Jahn, 2007) are more troubled by nostalgia. At variance, Zwingmann (1962) mentioned that intellectuals, religious and fanatics do not respond as much to homesickness. He also pointed out that most of the children who are homesick are either neglected, with attachment capabilities and few trust or the opposite, namely, spoilt children. Furthermore, pupils with a strong attachment to their parents separate with difficulty but are able to adapt more easily afterwards (Zwingmann, 1962). Children are often sent to camps during summer, and experience the longing for home. Url and Thurber (2012) analysed 336 boys (aged 10 to 14) in an all boys’ 2-week summer camp. 83% of the boys rated being homesick at least once during the stay. 12 children were found to be severely depressed because of homesickness. This was examined using the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI). Furthermore, 19 boys showed mean results on homesickness for their entire stay (Url & Thurber, 2012). According to Ribisch, the different structure of the day and the fact that many children are together with few adults for instance in a summer camp but also in a boarding school, involves high flexibility and adaptation from the children’s side (1993). This also applies to boarding school attendants. Although the setting and the position of the educators
might be stricter, there is a big difference to home, and the supervision slightly lessened (Fisher, 1989).

Furthermore, Fisher, Murray and Frazer (1985) stated that attention and love is mostly needed when slightly ill, this could lead to homesickness. Pupils in boarding schools for instance then prefer to request this love from their parents, instead of their supervisors. Those people who are vulnerable to homesickness have different catalysts to become homesick and experience different characteristics of it (Fisher, Murray, & Frazer, 1985). Some of those trigger points could be colours and sounds or tastes and odor from home (Jahn, 2007), or daily routines in which people realize they are somewhere else, e.g. when after showering they want to get the towel from a specific location, but it is not there, it is the location the towel would be at home (Fisher, 1989). These approaches mostly arise from psychological nature and are bristled with individual pathological reactions.

1.4 The nature of homesickness symptoms

The variety of symptoms of homesickness defined by psychological, somatic, psychosomatic, social and behavioural characteristics, appear in the case of this occurrence. In previous centuries it was commonly believed that symptoms can lead to death (Jahn, 2007) because of marasmus, exhaustion or nervous consumption (Larbig, 1982) or suicide (Zwingmann, 1962), even nowadays (Moeini et al., 2018).

According to Moeini et al. (2018), depression is a leading symptom associated with homesickness. An increase of homesickness leads to a decrease of happiness and becomes “a factor in development and exacerbation of depression” (Moeini et al., 2018, p.76). Even before feeling homesick, for instance because of
moving to a far away university, depressive reactions can occur. Another primary symptom stated by Booreng (2019) is anxiety, which can develop to an anxiety disorder (Url & Thurber, 2012). These two symptoms refer to similar characteristics, e.g., anxious and depressed people are influenced by a lack of social interaction (Brewin, Furnham & Howes, 1989) and act helplessly and passively in social events (English, Davis, Wei, & Gross, 2017). Urani et al. (2003) even called it social anxiety and the need of social support.

Adjustment problems in new environments are named several times (English et al., 2017; Tartakovsky, 2007) and the concern of not being able to build up a new social life in the new places (Watt & Badger, 2019). This might lead to a negative attitude towards the new environment and makes the person live mentally in the old home (Fisher, 1989). This “loosing (of) one’s self”, how Shuster explains it (2016, p.118), not living in reality anymore but escape from it, can occur when affected people see home as a seductive location (Shuster, 2016). Moreover, other behavioural changes such as crying, listlessness, moping, alienating oneself, being passive, the avoidance of talking to others, usage of alcohol and drugs, negative emotions, rigidity, introversion and lack of self-esteem are common (Doherty, 1940; Scopelliti & Tiberio, 2010).

As implied already, health consequences of psychological and physical nature (Stroebe et al., 2016) as well as psychosomatic and somatic responses can accompany homesickness. This goes from loss of appetite, stomachache, headache, and sleep disturbance to gastrointestinal difficulties, immune deficiencies, insomnia, and even diabetes (Url & Thurber, 2012; Watt & Badger, 2019).

Although the symptoms of homesickness are treated separately, homesickness itself is excluded from treatment. According to Fisher, it is a
“posttraumatic stress syndrome”, but not an illness (Fisher, 1989, p.35). She is one of the very few researchers who developed strategies to deal with this syndrome.

1.5 Psychological models and coping strategies

According to Zwingmann (1962), when people move to other places, they might react as if they want to live through the past (at home) again. This applies to people, who have the potential to become homesick, and can also occur before they move somewhere. “Living through the past” is retrospection and looks for satisfaction, which the past can give in the present. Zwingmann described it as a depiction of a “retrospective I” (Zwingmann, 1962, p.313).

Fisher created an “attentional resource model” depicted in Figure 3 and explained the complex processes of homesickness with it. On the one hand there is the separation from home, which triggers problems and disrupts the psyche of the sufferer. On the other hand, the new environment includes negative factors such as pressure and possible unhappiness as well as the aim of commitment. If it is not possible to achieve control and commit fully on new tasks and the whole challenge of novelty, people can sink into ”escapism” leading to home thoughts, and the desire to return. However, if the person concerned tries to fully commit to the new environment, there is a chance to adapt and overcome homesickness (Fisher, 1989).
A new environment can serve as an attentional resource for adjustment and adaption if committed to the challenge of new experiences and not losing control in the desire for home (Fisher, 1989). If it is not possible to subdue compulsive home ruminations, Stroebe et al. (2016) developed another pattern to cope with separation from home environment. They divided coping strategies into home-related and new place-related solutions, represented in Figure 4. Stroebe et al. (2016) correspond to Fisher (1989) with the attempt to approach “home-related” and “new place-related” separately. Followed the standards formed by Thurber (2005) only one stressor should be focused on, avoiding the other. As an example, dealing with the new place, while keeping “home” out of mind, includes: distracting oneself with different projects, finding new people to talk to, making yourself comfortable in your new home, etc. Vice versa, concentrating only on the
“home-related” aspects would mean: to try to prevent getting homesick beforehand, take time to connect with home and imagine people saying supportive words. Parents should prepare care workers with coping strategies for their child (Stroebe et al., 2016).

**Figure 4:** Stroebe et al. intervention strategies (2016, p.10)

**1.6 Homesickness related to performance**

Several studies demonstrated that there is a connection between cognitive and motor decline and social isolation (Buchmann et al, 2010; Hawkley, Thisted, & Cacioppo, 2009; Lotvonen et al., 2018). A study by Buchman et al. (2010) conducted in elderly homes shows loneliness to have an adverse effect on bodily functions such as the physical activity level. Approximately 1000 elderly people were tested and the significant results showed 80% more rapid motor decline between lonely people and people who did not feel alone (Buchman et al., 2010). A similar study by Hawkley et al. (2009) investigated whether physical activity correlates with loneliness in adults. Resulting, the feeling of being alone cannot
only lower the duration of physical activity but also the frequency of how much people exercise (Hawkley, Thisted, & Cacioppo, 2009).

In 2018, Lotvonen and colleagues supported the theory by showing that 12 months after moving into an elderly home, symptoms of depression occurred on a daily or weekly basis within 22% of the dwellers. 39% of people conceded feeling lonely numerous times a week or month. Physical performance decreased significantly measured by grip strength test, 4 m walking test, and chair stand test. The decline of performance increased more in participants seeing the future negatively, than those who had a positive attitude towards the future. The more lonely the elders felt, the slower the mean walking speed (Lotvonen, Kyngäs, Koistinen, Bloigu, & Elo, 2018). In contrast, Lund et al. could not find any significant evidence that loneliness affects physical abilities in their cross sectional study of middle-aged adults (Lund, Laban, Petersen, Dissing, Hansen, & Rod, 2018). However, the definition of loneliness cannot be used interchangeably with homesickness. It can be a possible outcome when homesick, but there are many other characteristics, which define homesickness, such as anxiety, sleeping problems or stomachache (Fisher, 1989; Watt & Badger, 2019). Furthermore, students and children need to be regarded separately concerning loneliness or homesickness due to the fact that aging brings along various consequences, such as health decline (Leopold & Engelhardt, 2013). Therefore, it cannot be applied for students and children alike.

Some authors found evidence concerning homesickness and performance in the younger generation and demonstrated that symptoms of homesickness have interference with academic performance, lack of attention, which is also possible to occur when homesick, can lead to negligence of academic affairs (Stroebe et al., 2016). Absent-mindedness is another issue interfering with academic abilities,
not forgetting that those aspects can influence the lives of the students on a long-term basis, e.g., “employment prospects, graduate admission” (English et al., 2017, p.2) and drop out from university (Thurber & Walton, 2012). Other cases did not find any evidence concerning homesickness and performance in the younger generation (English, 2017; Van Vliet, 2001). The only study found, which used the Dundee Relocation Inventory was Burt in 1993. He investigated 152 Australian first year students, with a mean age of 21.2 years. Only one participate scored 0 on the homesickness scale, which meant everybody else showed some degree of homesickness. His results showed that homesickness correlated with the reduction of concentration, but there were no significant results of a decrease of academic performance as a consequence (Burt, 1993).

Although there is significant evidence that homesickness affects academic performance, very little information about homesickness and physical performance exists. Hodge (2010) found out that athletic and psychological functions of Olympic athletes are influenced by homesickness after the first week of living in the Olympic environment and lead to anxiety, which can interfere with preparation for the competition. Furthermore, Anderson et al. (2006) believe that physical activity is also influenced by behavioural self-regulation (Anderson, Wojcik, Winett, & Williams, 2006). This could be the case when feeling homesick, e.g., when being abroad at college or on travels because of sport competitions.

Fisher (1989), who is of the opinion that homesickness is more likely to occur when doing mental work as compared to physical work, conducted a study in which homesick and non-homesick students had to type a specific word a 100 times using the keyboard of a computer without looking at the screen. They had to guess how many times they had written the word correctly. Results showed that
homesick students made more mistakes than the non-homesick; in addition, they overestimated their error reports (Fisher, 1989). Fisher explains the outcome as a matter of absentmindedness and being disturbed by different other thoughts which might be triggered by homesickness (Fisher, 1989).

The American study by Duchesne et al. (2011) analysed coaches’ experiences with their international athletes. The idea of homesickness and performance was seized but only in regard to the communication of coaches with their athletes (Duchesne, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2011). In a qualitative study head coaches of university soccer teams in the US were interviewed about their coaching, also in relation to international university students. These students experience different situations in a new culture. All of the coaches were of the opinion that it was very important for the internationals to feel “accepted and comfortable” (Duchesne, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2011, p.9). The coaches did their best to help the students to feel happy. The absence of comfort and inclusion, could influence their performance (Duchesne, Bloom & Sabiston, 2011).

Above-mentioned studies all contained subjects aged from students to pensioners; Fisher (1989) performed measurements with the youngest study population. So far, there have been no studies published to the author’s knowledge, which included teenagers and children under 18 regarding physical performance.
2 Relative age effect

People, moreover pupils, are categorized in accordance with their chronological age in order to display development related to age. This happens not only in schools but also in a competition setting in sports to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for success (Engebretsen et al., 2010; Helsen, Van Winckel, & Williams, 2005; Wattie, Cobley & Baker, 2008). The cut-off date for different age group classes is mostly the 1st of January; regarding ski racing this is also the case. The division into age categories can show an age difference of nearly 1 year or 264 days, if one athlete’s birthday is on the 1st of January and the others athlete’s birthday is on the 31st of December. This leads to a relative age effect (RAE) (Engebretsen et al., 2010; Helsen et al., 2005; Wattie, Cobley & Baker, 2008). The RAE exists when an unequal distribution of athletes born in the four relative age quarters occurs.

A year consists of four quarters: the first quartile contains January, February and March (Q1), the second includes April to June (Q2) and Q3 from July, August and September, the fourth one, from October to December represent Q4 (Helsen et al., 2005; Müller, Hildebrandt, & Raschner, 2014; Musch & Grondin, 2001). Those people who were born earlier in the year are relatively older and closer to the cut-off date (Helsen et al., 2005; Müller, Hildebrandt, & Raschner, 2014; Musch & Grondin, 2001). Barnsley et al. first documented this phenomenon in Canadian ice hockey in 1985.

Although RAE has gained much research, mostly in team sports such as basketball, baseball, handball, soccer, rugby, ice hockey and volleyball, etc. (Delorme, Boiché, & Raspaud, 2009; Delorme & Raspaud, 2009; Hurley, Lior, & Tracze, 2001; Medic, Young, Starkes, Weir, & Grove, 2009; Nakata & Sakamoto, 2011; Schorer, Cobley, Büsch, Bräutigam, & Baker, 2009; Sherar, Baxter-Jones,
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Faulkner, & Russell, 2007; Till, Cobley, O'Hara, Cooke, & Chapman, 2014), and also in individual sports including tennis, track and field, swimming and sumo (Edgar & O’Donoghue, 2005; Medic et al., 2009; Nakata & Sakamoto, 2011), the phenomenon and its merged factors and instability is not completely understood (Schorer, et al., 2009). Rhythmic gymnastics, gymnastics and dancing for instance show no influence of the RAE or reversed RAE (Baker, Schorer & Cobley, 2010; Delorme & Raspaud, 2009; Lames et al., 2008). Van Rossum (2006) explained this being a result of need of aestheticism. However, the occurrence of the RAE entails repercussions to many sports people of different disciplines.

2.1 Consequences of the relative age effect

The nature of the RAE can be cognitive, physical, emotional and motivational (Musch & Grondin, 2001; Jiménez & Pain, 2008). Relatively older athletes generally display superior physical features (Baker, Schorer, & Cobley, 2010), which is visualized in the following example: a 10-year-old child that is born in Q1 has not only up to 10% more life experience (Müller et al., 2012) but also different bodily requirements with a height of 1.54m and 49kg compared to a Q4 born child that is likely to be 1.26m tall and weighs 22kg (Tanner 1978; Tanner & Whitehouse, 1976). Therefore, a physically more developed body occurs more often in relatively older pupils compared to younger ones (Jiménez & Pain, 2008; Musch & Grondin, 2001). Physical and anthropometric changes could lead to better performance (Helsen et al., 2005; Jiménez & Pain, 2008; Sherar et al., 2007; Williams, 2010). As a consequence, in relatively younger and not as successful competitors intrinsic and extrinsic motivational problems can occur which can influence the involvement in sport (Helsen, Van Winckel, & Williams, 2005) and can lead to a dropout in an early age (Feltz & Petlichkoff, 1983;
Helsen, Starkes, & Hodges, 1998). Especially during puberty the changes of body and mind can affect performance (Cobley, Baker, Wattie, & McKenna, 2009; Engebretsen et al., 2010). All of those aspects can encourage “decision making, abstract thinking and creativity leading to be more responsive in training” (Baker, Janning, Wong, Cobley, & Schorer, 2014).

Furthermore, short-term and long-term effects and concerns arouse in different positions for the relatively older and relatively younger athletes (Cobley et al., 2009). Due to the fact that coaches and officials confuse maturation with talent and they often focus on short term success (Votteler & Höner, 2014), more successful athletes (often relatively older ones) are offered better opportunities than younger ones. It includes better access to schools and universities, better chance in team selection or attendance of professional leagues, leading to better training opportunities, better coaches, better training facilities, etc. (Helsen et al., 2005). According to Helsen et al. (2005), current talent finding procedures lack of importance of technique but select physically strong athletes. As a Q1 born athlete in Austrian soccer the chance to be selected into a development centre is 5.7 times higher than an athlete born in one of the last 3 month of the year. The selection criteria in relatively older athletes was independent of their maturation, however for the relatively younger athletes early physical maturation was the only chance to be selected (Müller, Gonaus, Perner, Müller, & Raschner, 2017).

People’s successes and failures characterize their self-esteem and self-image. Younger athletes, who are not successful, can be highly affected in their self-esteem (Helsen et al., 2005). On the one hand some researchers such as Schorer et al. (2009) stated that a decrease of the RAE is found over time, effects decline in higher levels (Ibáñez, Mazo, Nascimento, & García-Rubio, 2018) and younger participants selected into talent programs do not differ physically from
their older counterparts (Carling et al., 2009). On the other hand, researchers discovered that the RAE persists to university (Azevedo, Pinto-do-O, & Borges, 1995) and can even take up to 30 years (Lefevre, Beunen, Steens, Claessens, & Renson, 1990) to have the same performance level as relatively older colleagues. Concluding, not every pupil is allowed the same opportunities, which can lead to a “waste of potential” (Jiménez & Pain, 2008, p.1) and is unethical to the relatively younger athletes (Müller et al., 2012). Furthermore, relatively younger peers get less chance to reach an elite level leading to drop out (Müller, Müller, Hildebrandt, & Raschner, 2016) because of the likeliness of more relatively older reaching this.

2.2 Display of the relative age effect in different sport disciplines

Ibanez et al. (2018) stated that in junior basketball in Spain, 80% of the players were born in the first half of a year. In a detailed analysis of the U 18 Adidas Next Generation Tournament 68% of the players were born in the first half of the year (Ibanez et al., 2018). The Spanish professional leagues include 60% of players born before July (Esteva et al., 2006).

Sandercock et al. (2013) found that relatively older boys show a higher cardio respiratory fitness then athletes born later and were able to produce higher results in leg power in relative and age-normalized units. Furthermore, their handgrip and jump results were higher (age-normalized). However, no higher relative strength could be measured (Sandercock et al., 2013).

A Canadian longitudinal study from 1985 to 1999 by Gronding and Trudeau about National Hockey League (NHL) involving goalkeepers reported 68% of them were born in Q1 and Q2. This could be a result of early maturation,
although the other factors were not considered and a definite explanation cannot be given (Grondin & Trudeau, 1991).

In German soccer the RAE was displayed by 57%-65% of players from locally selected youth teams or amateurs were born before mid-year. 67% to 72% of young players were born either in Q1 or Q2 on an elite academic level and in international club tournaments. The chance to be selected to a competence centre was twice as high for athletes born in Q1 than in Q4 (Romann & Fuchslochner, 2013).

2.3 Relative age effect in skiing

Sports, which are culturally important in different countries, such as skiing (in Austria), are affected by the RAE (Müller, Hildebrandt, & Raschner, 2014). Researchers found that the relative age effect is present in every age group and every level of ski racing, including World Cup, the Junior World Championships, Youth Olympic Games (YOG) ski racers 2012 in Innsbruck, on an Austrian national Kids Cup level, and on a provincial Teenage Cup level (Baker et al., 2014; Müller et al., 2012; Müller et al., 2015; Raschner, Müller, & Hildebrandt, 2012).

In agreement with Baker et al. (2014), in FIS World Cup races a small but significant effect was present regarding a biased distribution of the RAE, including all racers attending born after 1970 found on the official website of the International Ski Federation (FIS). In contrast, Bjerke and companions (2017) are of the opinion that an “underdog effect” (McCarthy & Collins, 2014) occurs in male World Cup ski racers, meaning that there is an inverse RAE present in racers between 1995 and 2014. The study was conducted by looking at the World Cup points of the best 50 male racers. Relatively younger male athletes could gather
more World Cup points compared to relatively older male athletes (Bjerke et al., 2017).

Raschner et al. (2012) stated that the YOG (2012) in Innsbruck showed an overrepresentation of athletes born in Q1. The winter sports festival included 1021 athletes in 15 different disciplines of which alpine skiing was classified as a strength-related sport. Strength-related disciplines showed the highest RAE compared to endurance related and technique related sports. Furthermore, alpine skiing in particular represented the highest RAE. Due to the fact that in skiing sometimes two age groups are combined to one class (Q1(1)-Q4(2)), meaning for instance January born teenagers born in year 2000 (Q1(1)) and December born athletes from year 2001 (Q4(2)) are ranked in the same competition class. There can be a maximum difference of nearly two years, a significant overrepresentation of athletes born in Q1(1) and a significant underrepresentation of athletes born in Q4(2) was revealed. In addition, the likelihood of participation in strength related sports at the YOG was 11 times higher for relatively older athletes compared to relatively younger athletes (Raschner et al., 2012).

According to Müller et al. (2012), the importance of being physically fit in skiing is a very essential requirement, which could influence the RAE enormously because of the fact that maturation influences power and is rather given in relatively older participants than in younger ones. This has been supported by the results concerning the YOG presented above (Raschner et al., 2012).

The frequentation of ski boarding schools is an advantage in order to provide the best requirements to become a professional ski racer. Without those schools, chances to reach the top are reduced (Müller et al., 2015). This is why it is important to examine the entrance exams of such boarding schools (Raschner et al., 2005). Three boarding schools in Austria were tested, in which entrance
exams contain a skiing specific part as well as a physical performance test. The latter is similarly important than the skiing and if there are deficiencies, the exam cannot be passed. 989 ski racers between the ages 9-10 and 14-15 were tested. The examination involved all athletes including the years 1995 to 2012. Results showed a biased distribution to every age quartile already at the age of 9-10. Therefore, relatively younger pupils have a 1.58 higher chance to pass the entrance exams. Relatively older athletes gained already acceptance previous to the selection at the entrance exams (Müller et al., 2015). Regarding the RAE and the results of the entrance exams, no significant differences could be presented between those who passed and those who did not pass the exam. The level of performance was not influenced by the distribution of the quartiles, which did not significantly differ. Müller and colleagues assume that only the physically well trained show a positive prospect towards the development system in alpine skiing. Their physical homogeneity can lead to high level skiing in a children and teenage age (Müller et al. 2015).
3 Performance anxiety

3.1 Definition of performance anxiety

According to Cheng et al. (2009) the definition and diagnose of anxiety is very complex. There is still no agreement on describing the phenomenon. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines anxiety as following:

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat. (“anxiety,” 2019)

Multiple other aspects are associated with anxiety, including fear, shame, guilt (Janis 1971), distress, anger and excitement (Izard, 1972). Irrelevant thoughts, lack of confidence, fear of failure, self-focused attention, self-efficacy and outcome expectancy are also linked to anxiety (Cheng, Hardy & Markland, 2009). Furthermore, it is identified with apprehension, nervousness, intrusive, persistent and ruminative thoughts (Janelle, 2002; Martens, Burton, Vealy, Bump, & Smith, 1990; Woodman & Hardy, 2001), as well as physiological changes in heart rate, skin conductance and epinephrine (Hardy & Hutchinson, 2007). These characteristics accompany different components of cognitive anxiety (worry), physiological arousal and somatic anxiety and are responses to given situations.

Worry, which is synonymously used with cognitive anxiety, affects performance in two possible ways: the reduction of the effective attentional capacity came into existence because of the contribution of processing resources, and the initiation of storage (Hardy & Hutchinson, 2007). It also supplies a motivational function via a self-adjusting control system to indicate a possible
danger (Cheng et al., 2015) or the importance of a situation (Hardy & Hutchinson, 2007).

In accordance with Leary, competitive anxiety or performance anxiety is a sub-category of social anxiety (Leary, 1992). Cheng and colleagues define “the construct of performance anxiety” as reference “to an unpleasant psychological state in reaction to perceived threat concerning the performance of a task under pressure” (Cheng et al., 2009, p.271).

As with anxiety, the sub-category performance anxiety associates reactions such as autonomic arousal, worry and self-oriented cognitions, which lead to disruption attentional processes (Smith, Smoll, & Wiechman, 1998; Smith, Smoll, & Passer, 2002). According to Powell, 2% of the population and 16% of 2212 professional musicians of orchestras suffer from debilitating performance anxiety. Although in sports psychology the relationship between competitive anxiety and sports performance has been much dealt with (Woodman & Hardy 2001), general comprehensive results cannot be made, but in the following paragraphs detailed results of different studies are going to be picked up.

Athletes notice the challenge of competition in different ways, the same situation might be perceived as threatening or stressful to one person, challenging to another and unimportant, or just part of the game to a third (Powell, 2004). Being able to deal with stressful events in a competition setting plays an essential role on successful accomplishment (Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996). Environmental elements can appear more severe, therefore, certain tasks might feel more difficult, e.g., if a ski racer is scared hills or slopes appear to be steeper (Stefanucci, Proffitt, Clerkin, Cody & Parekh, 2008). According to Stern, uncertainties, such as exaggerated environmental appearances can occur if
perception is affected during physical performance, this can lead to lack of performance (Stern, Cole, Gollwitzer, Oettingen, & Balcetis, 2013).

The most sensitive performers are children, according to Smith et al. (2017), they appear to be most fearful of lack of success. Their evaluation by coaches and others lead to high expectations of themselves which inhibits performance (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007). However, in Hanin’s opinion (2010), managing performance anxiety equals confrontation with change. Change has multiple meanings for various athletes (Hanin, 2010).

3.2 Debilitating versus facilitating performance anxiety in sports

Participants of competitive sport often deal with performance anxiety and its positive and negative impact on enjoyment, self-efficacy and lasting participation (Hoover et al., 2017). Researchers state that anxiety and good performance do not go together (Burton & Naylor, 1997; Jones, 1995; Jones & Hanton, 2001). Anxiety results in lack of success in trained competitors (Stern, 2013). Furthermore, performance anxiety is associated with individuals who are in high expectations of themselves, this can hinder from scoring high results in competitions because of their feeling of being ordinary. The concern is only directed to themselves and is not present with others (Powell, 2004). Contrary, the idea of striving for perfection can also result in better performance. Also Eysenck et al. (2007) are of the opinion that negative effects of performance anxiety can result in increased effort, and therefore, push performance. This finding could be used as an explanation for successful performance although athletes feel anxious (Hanin & Syrjä, 1996; Pijpers, Oudejans, Holsheimer, & Bakker, 2003).

Two theories try to explain the interdependency between arousal and performance. According to Raglin (1992), the level of arousal ranges from very
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low level to moderate level; a simultaneous performance improvement goes with it. The peak of performance is reached when the degree of performance stays within this range. Performance rapidly declines if the level of arousal increases above the moderate range (inverted-U shape) (Raglin, 1992). Yuri Hanin’s theory (2010) slightly differs from the inverted-U shape. His theory demonstrates the most conducive anxiety level to be very individual and performance to be best in low or high anxiety phases rather than moderate. The individual variability is therefore considered (Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning IZOF) (Hanin, 2010).

Specific examples for debilitative or facilitative performance anxiety are found in Lundquist et al. (2011), who tested 84 athletes in a Swedish sport high school. 28.4% of elite athletes and 40.4% of sub-elite athletes showed debilitative cognitive anxiety symptoms. Facilitative cognitive anxiety was found in 47.1% of elite and 34% of sub-elite participants. Concerning somatic anxiety the percentage of participants who felt debilitated included 13.4% elite and 24.3% sub-elite students. 51.6% elite as well as 37.2% sub-elite athletes felt facilitative (Lundquist, 2011). A partial difference for the facilitative cognitive anxiety items could only be seen at lower intensity. Many reactions of the participants could not be could not be categorized in any of the two perceptions (Lundquist, 2011).

Hardy and Hutchison (2007) conducted a climbing study and found a significant difference in performance anxiety regarding cognitive anxiety and climbing level. Ten rock climbers between 19 and 27 years of age with climbing levels between very severe and extremely severe on a scale starting from moderate to difficult, very difficult, severe, very severe, extremely severe (subcategories E1-E9, while E9 is the hardest). They were tested on cognitive and somatic anxiety at their leading limit and two levels below their leading limit.
Results showed higher cognitive anxiety correlated with enhancement of effort, this led to improvement of performance (Hardy & Hutchison, 2007).

In a meta-study with the focus on cognitive anxiety 43 studies were analysed, which included the measurement of cognitive anxiety before a sports competition in a field setting. 7% showed non-significant results, a positive relationship was found in 23% of the studies and the remaining 60% reported a negative relationship between cognitive anxiety and performance (Woodman & Hardy, 2003).

Craft et al. (2003) include 29 studies from October 1999 onwards, which used the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory- 2 (CSAI-2) to analyse the relationship between sport performance and anxiety, and were English-language based. The mean overall correlation of cognitive anxiety as well as somatic anxiety and performance could not present significant results, although the prediction suggested a negative linear relationship between cognitive anxiety and performance and a small relationship between performance and somatic anxiety (Craft et al., 2003). Comprising, the occurrence of performance anxiety is ambivalent and rather individual. No clear statement can be seen, for whom it functions as debilitating and for whom facilitating. Although the CSAI-2 is popular to examine performance anxiety and sport performance, there are other methods to analyse this phenomenon, such as Cheng et al.’s three dimensional conceptualization of performance anxiety (2009).

3.3 A three-dimensional conceptualization of performance anxiety by Cheng, Hardy and Markland

With the help of their newly created examination tool the Three Factor Anxiety Inventory (TFAI) the interplay between performance anxiety and performance can
be conducted (Cheng et al., 2009) It includes three sub-categories, namely cognitive, physiological and regulatory factors. The regulatory factor examines the production of positive effects in performance anxiety and was named the most crucial factor in order to be able to maintain or even enhance performance. Cheng et al. (2011) conducted a study, in which the researchers tried to validate their inventory on 99 elite taekwondo athletes. Results of the study (2011) included a non-linear relationship between physiological anxiety and performance. This means, performance increased by growing perceived control when only low physiological anxiety was given. Low physiological anxiety and perceived control, which functions as a sub-element of the regularity factor, were responsible for worst performance (Cheng et al., 2011).

The single sports was chosen among others because researchers believe performance anxiety to be greater in individual sports than team sports, in elite levels and objectively scored sports (and alternatively non-contact sports) (Cerin, 2004; Martens et al., 1990; Woodman & Hardy, 2003; Zamani & Moradi, 2009). However, Woodman & Hardy (2003) had to withdraw their assumption that performance anxiety is greater in individual sports than team sports, because they found no statistical significant difference in performance anxiety between team sports and single sports (Woodman & Hardy, 2003). Anxiety depends on individual factors, such as mood and interpretation and setting of the situation (Cheng et al., 2009). The coherence with homesickness is explained in the following chapter.
3.4 Relationship between homesickness and performance anxiety

Azizi (2015) tested 80 non-native PhD students at the Shiraz University of Medical Science, Iran, in order to determine the relationship between anxiety and homesickness. The results were evaluated by a Persian homesickness questionnaire and Sarason’s test anxiety questionnaire, which show a significant relationship between loneliness and anxiety. Furthermore, contrary to his expectations a significant negative relationship between anxiety and the desire to return home was found. This implies subjects with high values of performance anxiety, scored less value points on the return-home factor. As a justification he mentioned a hard trial of adaptation to the new environment to overcome the longing for family. Moreover, as a result a significant negative relationship between anxiety and nostalgia for the family and the desire to return to the home and adaptation in females were presented (Azizi, 2015). Homesickness should not be underrated; it influences people in various fields.
4 Research aims and hypotheses

Although researchers have examined the effects of homesickness on cognitive performance as well as physical performance, little is known about homesickness and competitive sports, much less about the effects on ski-racing performance. A former world class ski racer from Austria, Hannes Trinkl, has stated several times that he was homesick, already before he had to leave for races, and has never really liked travelling (Feischl, 2014; Vielhaber, 2015). However, there are no studies to the author’s knowledge, which examined the impact of homesickness on skiing performance. Added in consideration is also the difficulty of measuring the repercussions of homesickness as well as focusing only on the two factors homesickness and ski-racing performance. Thus, it is of importance to include the relative age effect as well as performance anxiety to this analysis, which interfere with ski-racing performance (Schmid, 1988; Shepard, 1980). The relative age effect is one of those factors, which numerous times, showed significant effects on children and teenager ski racer aged 10-14 (Müller, Hildebrandt, & Raschner, 2014; Raschner, Müller, & Hildebrandt, 2012; Müller et al., 2016; Müller et al., 2017).

The aim of this thesis was to investigate whether homesickness has an impact on ski-racing performance of pupils attending ski boarding schools. A further aim was to assess the correlation between homesickness and performance considering the relative age effect (RAE) and performance anxiety.

In the study, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H1 Homesickness degrades ski-racing performance in relation to the Relative Age Effect and performance anxiety.

H2 There is a difference in ski-racing performance between boarders with a lower rate of homesickness compared to boarders with a higher rate of homesickness.
H3 There is a difference in the extent of homesickness between boarders who were born later in the year (Q3 and Q4) and boarders who were born earlier in the year (Q1 and Q2).

H4 There is a difference in ski-racing performance between athletes who were born later in the year (Q3 and Q4) and athletes who were born earlier in the year (Q1 and Q2).

H5 There is a difference in the assessment of athletes’ homesickness by care workers and by athletes themselves.

H6 There is a difference in performance anxiety between athletes who were born later in the year (Q3 and Q4) and athletes who were born earlier in the year (Q1 and Q2).

H7 There is a difference in performance anxiety between athletes with better ski-racing performance and athletes with less ski-racing performance.
5 Methods

5.1 Participation

The study was conducted in the academic year 2015/2016 including 10 to 14 year old pupils of two different ski boarding schools, namely Ski-Mittelschule Schruns (Vorarlberg) and Ski-Mittelschule Neustift (Tyrol). All of them participated regularly in “Landescup” races (teenage cup races) or international kids cup races.

5.2 Study procedure

The study was performed on two different days for two different schools in December 2015. Prior to the start of the study, parents were informed about the study procedure, and asked to sign a written consent. Furthermore, they signed the information letter for their consent. For the purpose of this study, parents as well as pupils did not know that the questionnaire measured homesickness (blind). Pupils received a short oral introduction and a written explanation about what they were asked to do before they started the assessment. Then the pupils were asked to fill out the Dundee Relocation Inventory (Fisher, 1989) in order to determine the case of homesickness and the Three-Factor Anxiety Inventory measuring performance anxiety by Cheng, Hardy and Markland (2009) to discover any chance of performance anxiety. Additionally, their skiing-coach as well as their care workers were interviewed on the topic of homesickness. Regarding performance, race results were taken from skizeit.at as the performance value.
5.3 Measures and instruments

5.3.1 Dundee Relocation Inventory

The second version of the Dundee Relocation Questionnaire (DRI) was used to measure homesickness (Fisher, 1989). This version contains 26 items with three options to choose from: “never”, “sometimes”, “often”. The questions are formulated positively and negatively; in order to calculate them, the negative items were inverted in the statistical calculations. Two items of this questionnaire were slightly adapted in order for the pupils to understand. Namely, question 9 (HQ9) from “Ich fühle mich hier ausgefüllt” was changed to “Mir fehlt es an nichts, ich bin hier gänzlich zufrieden” and HQ13 from “Ich finde meine Arbeit hier interessant” to “Ich finde meine Aufgaben hier interessant”. According to Fisher (1989), homesickness shows rather a reaction pattern to an event in the past than a physical sickness, therefore symptoms such as depression and anxiety can occur. Fisher categorizes homesickness as a “posttraumatic stress syndrome” (Fisher, 1989, p.35). The Dundee Relocation Inventory was taken as an instrument to measure homesickness, because back in 2015 it seemed to be available easily, and it was already translated into German. Furthermore, Homesickness, Cognition and Health (Fisher, 1989) described the development of how and why this inventory was established and the area of homesickness. Moreover, Fisher seemed to be a professional in the field of homesickness and was cited numerous times, by fellow researchers. For the data analysis of homesickness the different items of the DRI were summed up to a score (DRI_sum), which means, the higher the value the more homesick the pupils are. Additionally, the four factors the DRI includes, such as home factor, social factor, general adaptation factor and satisfaction factor have their own individual sum
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

score to calculate with. The classified questions for the different factors are the following (Fisher, 1989, p.125, 139):

*Home factor*, which consists of items regarding family and place of belonging:

I miss home.

I miss my family.

When I have problems I contact my family.

I would like to go home more often than I do.

I regret having moved here.

I cannot stop thinking of home.

I wake up wishing that I were home.

*Social factor:*

I miss having someone close to talk to.

There are people here in whom I can confide.

I feel needed here.

*General adaptation factor:*

I feel lonely here.

I feel threatened here.

I feel secure here.

I feel uneasy here.

I feel unloved here.

I feel unsettled here.

I feel able to cope here.

*Satisfaction factor:*

I made a mistake moving here.

I feel very satisfied here.

I have many friends here.
I feel excited about my tasks here.
I feel fulfilled here.
I feel optimistic about life here.
I feel happy here.

(Fisher, 1989, p.125, 139)

5.3.2 Three Factor Anxiety Inventory

Performance anxiety was tested with the Three-Factor Anxiety Inventory (TFAI) by Cheng et al. (2009) and translated into German by Univ. Prof. Dr. Martin Kopp and Assoz.-Prof. Priv.-Doz. Mag. Dr. Gerhard Ruedl. The TFAI is a “three-dimensional first-order model” (Cheng et al., 2009, p.277) to measure the complex relationship between anxiety and performance. It includes three subscales cognitive, physiological and regulatory factors. Using one or two subcomponents each. The 25 items include worry and self-focused attention for the cognitive dimension, autonomous hyperactivity and somatic tension to more precisely define the physiological dimension. Furthermore, perceived control is a subcomponent of the regulatory factor, which is not included with this specific idea in other questionnaires. The subscales refer to a “multidimensionality in test anxiety” (Cheng et al., 2009, p.272). Negative dimensions are represented by cognitive and physiological anxiety factors, whereas the more positive related factor is represented by the regulatory dimension. Answers can be selected through a five-point Likert scale covering 1 meaning “totally disagree” to 5 meaning, “totally agree”. The questions for the different factors include a factor loading for the data analysis ranging from 0.35 to 0.79 and are classified as following (Cheng et al., 2009, p.276):

Cognitive anxiety:
Worry:
I am worried that I may not perform as well as I can.
I am worried about making mistakes.
I am worried about the uncertainty of what may happen.
I am worried of the consequences of failure.

Self-focus:
I tend to dwell on shortcomings in my performance.
I find myself evaluating myself more critically than usual.
I am very conscious of every movement I make.
I am conscious that others will judge my performance.
I am conscious that people might disapprove of my performance.
I dwell on how I might fail to impress important others.
I am very aware of the possibility of disappointing important others.

Physiological anxiety:

Autonomic hyperactivity:
My heart is racing.
My hands are clammy.
I feel the need to go to the toilet more often than usual.
My mouth feels dry.

Somatic tension:
I have slight tension headache.
I feel easily tired.
My body feels tense.
I feel restless.

Regulatory dimension of anxiety:
Perceived control:
I am confident that I can stay focused during my performance.

I believe in my ability to perform.

I feel ready for my performance.

I believe that I have the resources to meet this challenge.

I believe my performance goal is achievable.

I feel confident about my upcoming performance.

(Cheng et al., 2009, p.276)
5.3.3 Care workers’ interview

The care workers were interviewed regarding every athlete and answered two questions: “Do you think XY could be homesick?” and “Has XY explicitly told you that he/she feels homesick?” Those two questions created the possibility factor (question 1) and an utterance factor (question 2) which was used in the data analysis.

5.3.4 Ski-racing performance

Assessing performance in sports is difficult and lacks the investigation of learning. Many different factors influence performance. Transitory factors such as health status, state of training, setting and environmental conditions as well as nutrition might affect the outcome of performance (Schmidt, 1988; Shepard, 1980). When looking at skiing performance or ski-racing performance material factors as well as psychological and physiological elements have to be considered, too (Neumayr, Hoertnagl, Pfister, Koller, Eibl, & Raas, 2003). Physiological components include a variety of different skills, which are essential for a well-trained athlete. Endurance, strength, velocity and coordination support successful competition (Neumayr et al., 2003) Technical skills cannot be neglected but are the basis of skiing (Gilgien, Reid, Raschner, Matej, & Holmberg, 2018). Summing up, the ski-racing performance is dependent on many factors and very difficult to consider when in the end the basic goal is what remains, namely to be as fast as possible until the finish line. In order to prolong a skiing career, results in form of points are the most important value.

Therefore, using the web platform skizeit.at, which lists all competition results, assessed the performance factor. “Landescup” races and International kids cup races were taken to find a numeric value, which represents performance via skizeit.at. The value was measured by taking three races (minimum) and five
races maximum. Each position in the ranking was divided through the amount of participants in this age class. Then the average mean of all the races and the amount of races was taken as numeric value to represent performance value.

The following example represents the measuring routine:

The placement of a ski race was divided through the amount of racers who reached the finish line. The smaller the value, the better the result of the ski racer, the better the ski-racing performance. The value was rounded to two decimal place. If the athlete did not finish (DNF) the race or was disqualified (DIS) they got the factor DNF=1. Due to the fact that the reason of not finishing or being disqualified is unclear, they were punished the same way as a person who became last (24/24=1), as the athlete could have been in the lead until three gates before the finish line and then could have had straddled and becoming disqualified. If racers were on the starting list but did not start (DNS) no factor was counted.

Example:

\[
\frac{30}{43} = 0.70; \frac{10}{17} = 0.59; \frac{9}{26} = 0.35; \text{DNF}=1; \frac{29}{44} = 0.66; \frac{23}{46} = 0.50 \\
(0.70 + 0.59 + 0.35 + 1 + 0.66 + 0.50)/6 = 0.63
\]

The value was taken from all disciplines no matter if it was Slalom, Ski-Cross or if they had a technique-comparison-competition so that the whole range of the races was concerned.

\[5.3.5 \text{ Relative age effect}\]

The athletes’ birth dates were collected in order to find out which month of the year they were born in to find out whether one of the 4 quartiles of a year was overrepresented, meaning if more athletes were born in a specific quartile of the year and if a relative age effect was given. A year includes four quarters: the first
quartile from January to March (Q1), the second includes April to June (Q2), Q3 contains from July, August and September and the fourth one, October, November and December represents Q4 (Helsen et al., 2005; Müller, Hildebrandt, & Raschner, 2014; Musch & Grondin, 2001).

5.4 Data analysis

SPSS statistics version 24 was used to conduct the empirical data evaluation, whereas for most of the homesickness calculations the home-back sleepers were excluded from the measurement, because it is assumed that the people who reside at home are not homesick. However, the measurements were calculated including the home-back sleepers, mostly if homesickness was not relevant and the hypotheses were looking for differences in ski-racing performance, RAE or performance anxiety.

As a consequence, the athletes (boarders) were divided into two groups after having conducted a median split at 7 with the DRI sum, id est “athletes with a lower rate of homesickness” (<7) and “athletes with a higher rate of homesickness” (>8). The significance level was put to p>0.05 with a high significance of p>0.01.

The interaction between homesickness and ski-racing performance in due consideration of the relative age effect and performance anxiety was assessed with a partial correlation. The relative age effect was dichotomized combining Q1 and Q2, and Q3 and Q4 and together with performance anxiety used as covariates. Mostly, hypotheses of differences were rendered and frequency analyses were conducted. Independent-Samples T-tests were used to evaluate differences between the home-back sleepers and boarders concerning ski-racing performance, RAE distribution and performance anxiety, as well as homesickness (DRI) and its 4 different factors home, satisfaction, social and general adaptation. Differences in
ski-racing performance, RAE distribution and performance anxiety, as well as homesickness (DRI) and its 4 different factors home, satisfaction, social and general adaptation were tested between boarders with a lower rate of homesickness and boarders with a higher rate of homesickness. Variables such as RAE were dichotomized (Q1+Q2 and Q3+Q4) in H1, H3, H4 and H6. Homesickness was dichotomized with a median split in “boarders with a lower rate of homesickness” (<7) and “boarders with a higher rate of homesickness” (>8), in H2 and H3. Furthermore, assessment of athletes’ homesickness by care workers and by athletes themselves was calculated with an one-way ANOVA, using the mean value of three to four care workers and coaches and split the answer in “homesick” (DRI_sum >0.5) and “not homesick” (DRI_sum<0.5).
6 Results

6.1 Descriptives

73 participants, 27 female (37%) and 46 male (63%), were included in the study. They ranged between 10-14 years of age and the mean age was 11.9 ±1 year. Not all of the conducted stayed in the boarding house, 78.1% did stay in the boarding house, 21.9% lived at home. Furthermore, 57.9% of the participants were born in the first or second quarter of the year (Q1=29.8%; Q2=28.1%), whereas the number decreased in the third and fourth quarter of the year (Q3=26.3%; Q4=15.8%). These results are depicted in figure 5. Concerning ski-racing performance, the mean value of performance was 0.54 with an SD of ±0.20 (min=0.04; max=1.00). The lower the value, the better the race results and therefore the ski-racing performance.

6.2 Rates of homesickness

A significant difference in homesickness was found between home-back sleepers and boarders (T(71)=2.19; p=0.03), with more value points of homesickness in boarding school participants (M=9.82; SD=6.00) compared to home-back sleepers (M=6.44; SD=2.83). The boarding school sleepers were then divided into two groups after having conducted a median split, id est “athletes with a lower rate of homesickness” (<7) and “athletes with a higher rate of homesickness” (>8). In Table 1 it is shown, how “lower rate homesickness of homesickness” and “higher rate of homesickness” is distributed in general and in regard to sex, RAE.
Table 1

Distribution chart of lower/higher rate of homesickness regarding sex and RAE in percentage terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>lower rate of homesickness (&lt;7)</th>
<th>higher rate of homesickness (&gt;8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>distribution</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♂</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♀</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3  *Homesickness appears restrictively*

Homesickness decreases ski-racing performance in boarders significantly (H1) (p=0.05) with a small to medium effect (r=-0.26). The negative effect size relates to the classification: the fewer performance points the better the ski-racing performance, yet the higher the homesickness points the higher the rate of homesickness. The controlling variables were the dichotomized RAE (Q1+Q2 and Q3+Q4) and performance anxiety used as covariates. Figure 6 shows the depiction of the result in a scatterplot.
There is no significant difference in ski-racing performance between boarders with a lower rate of homesickness and boarders with a higher rate of homesickness (H2). The “boarders with a lower rate of homesickness” display a mean performance value of $M=0.56$ with a $SD=0.18$, whereas “boarders with a higher rate of homesickness” present a mean value of $M=0.48$ with a $SD=0.21$ ($T(55)=1.48; p=0.15$). Different factors of the DRI have been analysed too. No significant difference in ski-racing performance was present between boarders with a lower rate of homesickness and boarders with a higher rate of homesickness when analysing the individual homesickness factors such as the home factor ($T(55)=-0.35; p=0.73$), as well as the satisfaction factor ($T(55)=-1.37; p=0.17$). A significant difference in in ski-racing performance was found between boarders with a lower rate of homesickness ($M=0.57; SD=0.46$) and boarders with a higher rate of homesickness and ($M=0.46, SD=0.20$) in regard to a detailed examination of the general adaptation factor ($T(55)=2.22; p=0.03$). There is a

*Figure 5: Scatterplot of the correlation of homesickness and performance.*
tendency to a medium effect size \((r=0.29)\). A high significant difference \((T(55)=2.66) \ p=0.01\) in ski-racing performance between boarders with a lower rate of homesickness \((M=0.57, \ SD=0.16)\) and boarders with a higher rate of homesickness \((M=0.44, \ SD=0.44)\) and a medium effect size of \(r=0.34\).

There is no difference in the extent of homesickness between relatively older boarders \((Q1+Q2)\) and relatively younger boarders \((Q3+Q4)\) \((T(55)=1.58; \ p=0.12)\). However, having calculated the same for all participants including the home-back sleepers there is a significant difference in the extent of homesickness \((T(71)=1.95\ p=0.05)\). Pupils being born in quartiles 1 and 2 have a higher mean \((M=10.2\ SD=6.11)\) than pupils born in Q3 and Q4 \((M=7.66\ SD=4.63)\) with, the effect size is small \((r=0.23)\).

No significant difference in ski-racing performance is present between relatively older athletes and relatively younger athletes \((T(71)=1.32; \ p=0.10)\) \((H4)\).

No significant difference can be shown between athletes and their stated level of homesickness and the care workers and coaches \((H5)\), who were asked whether it is the case that individual athletes are homesick \((F=1.07; \ p<0.40)\). There is no significant difference between the self-declared homesickness of boarding school pupils and the care workers’ opinion about the chance of homesickness. However, the cross tabulation shows that 18 athletes \((50\%)\), who reported themselves to be highly homesick were characterized to be highly homesick by their care workers and coaches. Though, the other 18 athletes \((50\%)\) who rated themselves highly homesick, were classified as not homesick by their care workers and coaches. The detailed percentages are published in Table 2.
Table 2
Amount and percentage of homesickness and non-homesickness according to students and care workers & coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not homesick according to student</th>
<th>Homesick according to student</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not homesick</td>
<td>11 (52.4%)</td>
<td>18 (50%)</td>
<td>29 (50.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worker or coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homesick</td>
<td>10 (47.6%)</td>
<td>18 (50%)</td>
<td>28 (49.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worker or coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td>36 (100%)</td>
<td>57 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No significant differences in performance anxiety were shown between relatively older and relatively younger boarders (T(69)=1.07; p=0.29) (H6).

No significant difference was shown in performance anxiety between ski racers with higher performance to ski racers with lower performance (T(71)=1.68, p=0.10) (H7).
To the best of the author’s knowledge, this is the very first study investigating homesickness and performance in alpine ski racers. Ski-racing performance in boarders suffering from homesickness was significantly lower compared to ski-racing performance in home-back sleepers. There is no comparable data in literature concerning the same type of sports performance in relationship to homesickness. However, it can be confirmed, that loneliness, as a symptom of homesickness, influences people’s physical performance negatively. Loneliness was found to create a more rapid decline (80%) of motor skills, such as finger tapping skills, muscle strength, legs and hip mobility as well as a walking test in community dwelling elderly people compared to elders who rated themselves not lonely (Buchman et al., 2010). This finding could also be applicable when tested in a student population. Interestingly, when dividing the present student population into boarders with a lower rate of homesickness and boarders with a higher rate of homesickness, no significant difference could be found in ski-racing performance. It seems to be independent of the intensity of homesickness, whether or not students show their best physical performance. Solely the fact that homesickness occurs is decisive enough for a decline in physical performance. Duchesne et al., (2011) who interviewed soccer coaches on the importance of comfort without homesickness in order to show best physical performance in international students, confirmed this.

Not only physical performance, but also cognitive performance was found to be negatively influenced by homesickness and its related symptoms (Burt, 1993; English et al., 2017; Fisher, 1989; Stroebe et al., 2016). Results of a computer-keyboard test show a significantly more erroneous outcome of homesick subjects compared to non-homesick subjects (Fisher, 1989). However,
using the DRI as measurement tool, Burt (1993) states, that homesickness in an Australian student population only influences levels of concentration, and not academic performance. Measurements of cognitive performance are lacking in the present investigation and could be included in a follow-up study in order to assess the relationship between homesickness and performance as a whole - physically and cognitively.

When taking a more detailed look into the individual factors of the homesickness measurement tool (DRI), students with higher general adaptation scores show less physical performance. Therefore, it could be concluded that students with less physical performance have a higher ability to adapt to a new environment, but contrasting, are not able to seal off from outside distractions, which could lead to the loss of physical performance. Accordingly, the social factor is significantly higher in boarders with a lower rate of homesickness than in boarders with a higher rate of homesickness. Adaption and performance restricted social activities might lead to general adaptation issues. Vice versa, those who are able to adapt properly, might not be able to provide succeeding performance. It is common belief that athletes doing individual-sports often lack of social skills (Kohn, 1986). This indicates a possible lack of social competences. Anderson and Morrow (1995), Kohn (1986) and Stephens and Bredemeier (1996) confirm this opinion by stating that in competition and performance-oriented settings antisocial behaviour is promoted.

Although ski-racing performance is mostly defined by race results, e.g., to reach the finish line as fast as possible, a variety of skills and different intrinsic and extrinsic factors (material, physical and psychological fitness, etc.) influence performance enormously (Gilgien et al., 2018; Neumayr et al., 2003). Transitory factors such as health status, state of training, setting and environmental
conditions as well as nutrition might affect the outcome of performance (Schmidt, 1988; Shepard, 1980). Physiological components include a variety of different skills, which are essential for a well-trained athlete. Endurance, strength, velocity and coordination support successful competition (Neumayr et al., 2003).

The relative age effect as well as performance anxiety are two further important influencing determinants. They were included in the study as covariates controlling the relationship of homesickness and performance. Up till now, the relative age effect was found and proven in various sport disciplines, among others in alpine skiing detailed analyses have been accomplished. In every age category as well as level, from Kids cup to World cup, researchers found significant RAE; athletes born later in the year are naturally disadvantaged compared to athletes born earlier in the year (Baker et al., 2014; Müller et al., 2012; Müller et al., 2014; Müller et al., 2015; Raschner et al., 2012).

Homesickness can affect children of different age groups, in the present study ages 10 to 14, showing that there is no difference between relatively older boarders compared to relatively younger boarders concerning homesickness. Url & Thurber (2012) take this argument to another level, stating, that there is no significant difference in homesickness even between adults and children. As the present study suggests, children within an age group attending a boarding school do not show differences in regard of homesickness and their relative age. However, regarding not only boarders, but also home-back sleepers a significant difference concerning homesickness in the whole study population was found. Students in age quartiles Q1 and Q2 tend to have higher homesickness scores than students in quartiles Q3 and Q4. Since home-back sleepers are not thought to be homesick, one approach to explain this result could be that home-back sleepers imagined being away from home when filling out the questionnaire. For example,
being on a glacier course away from home for several days. Yet, this was not an instruction given to the home-back sleepers when filling out a questionnaire.

Furthermore, no significant difference was found regarding the relative age and ski-racing performance in the whole study population, independent of homesickness. This finding can be explained by Müller et al., (2015). They tested three Austrian boarding schools between the years 1995 and 2012 and examined the entrance exams including a test of physical motor skills and a skiing-specific test. Two schools included participants aged 9 to 10. One of their aims was to find out whether the relative age affected the results of the entrance exam and the performance level of motor skills (Müller et al., 2015). According to their opinion, the RAE was already present before athletes took the entrance exam and no more differences in favour of relatively older athletes occurred during the entrance exam.

Similarly to the RAE, performance anxiety has also been proven to strongly influence competition sports performance (Hoover et al., 2017). However, in the present study, no significant difference concerning performance anxiety in ski racers born later in the year (Q3 and Q4) and ski racers born earlier in the year (Q1 and Q2) could be found. One attempt to explain this finding could be that performance anxiety can be found in every athlete, indifferent of his or her age (Cheng et al., 2011). Scholars proved a relationship of debilitative as well as facilitative outcomes concerning performance anxiety (Hardy & Hutchison, 2007). This is regarded as a very individual matter - if an outcome is debilitative for one athlete, it could be facilitative for the other athlete (Lundquist et al. 2011). Complementary result could be found in the relationship between ski-racing performance and performance anxiety. Ski racers with better performance do not differ in performance anxiety to ski racers with worse performance. Although it
has been argued (Cheng et al., 2011) that performance anxiety may be greater in higher levels of performance, this is rather applicable in the comparison of more contrasting levels, such as competitions on national level compared to competitions in Olympic Games.

Regardless of competing on a national or international level, care workers and coaches hold an influencing position, not only regarding ski-racing performance, but also in developing social skills. It could have been expected of care workers to be able to identify ski racers who were homesick and those who were not homesick. Yet, personal statements about homesickness in each athlete compared to athletes self reported homesickness differed by half of the study population. Although statistically there was no significant difference, 50% of athletes who rated themselves as homesick were not classified as homesick. This goes in line with a U. S. study on boys attending a summer camp. The question was raised whether cabin leaders can percept the boys feeling of homesickness (Url & Thurber, 2012). Their result showed correlations with the boys’ self-reports and the cabin leaders’ perception. However, both studies showed that on the one hand cabin leaders and on the other hand care workers and coaches could not detect more than half of children feeling severely homesick. Concluding, the possibility occurs that a care worker or coach could not detect one in two pupils, who are homesick, as homesick. The cabin leaders judged only 31% of the highly homesick boys as highly homesick (Url & Thurber, 2012).

The ski-boarding schools investigated in this study installed preventive arrangements in order to avoid homesick feelings in there athletes and in order to create a comfortable surrounding. “Get-to-know-you ski days” or “get-to-know-sports days” are executed. at the beginning of the school year or before the actual start of the school year. Furthermore, a buddy system has been created in which
every first- and second-grader is assigned an older buddy from grades three or four, of which they get information, help etc. of any sort. Additionally, the “Hort ABC” and the homesickness guidelines (attached in the appendix) give information about the structure and facts of the boarding school, and help to know what to do when feeling homesick. Tips for parents and students are provided with suggestions for the pupils to make sure to not be passive and they should actively look for friends, think about why they could be homesick, look for somebody to talk to and bring little stuffed animals from home to feel comfortable. Parents are encouraged to show patience for their children by giving them freedom and not too much attention in order to develop. They should stick to agreements, e.g. how long they speak on the phone to each other, and do not stave off the farewell. Moreover, the days in the two inspected boarding schools seem to be structured very tightly concerning time, one justification for that is because there should not be too much time to think about home and develop feelings of homesickness. The well-educated and experienced staff members see the importance to be in good communication with parents and pupils, and help both parties wherever they can. However, it would be of utmost importance to take further actions to find a way to be able to figure out those missing 50%. The possibility that the care workers are of a different opinion is very high. In order to prohibit misunderstandings or misperceptions of pupils’ homesick feelings, specific homesickness-talks are suggested between care workers as a team and between care workers and individual pupils. When conducting the study, cases of pupils leaving school because of homesickness were present; this might be preventable in the future.
7.1 Limitations

In the present study, three to five race results published at the platform skizeit.at were used in order to create the performance factor. Although the biggest aim in competition is to win, this should not be the only element regarded when rating a ski racer as successful. Other elements should be taken into account, such as technical development. Therefore, this is seen as a limitation of the study. The calculation of performance points have been created by the author of the present study because the Austria Ski Federation provides no validated performance points for race results in these age groups. This results in a difficulty of comparing ski-racing performance on a regional level.

Another limitation could be the time point of measurements. Three months after the start of the school year, the initial amount of homesickness might have decreased. However, due to the fact that it was contrasted to race results, it might not have influenced the outcome of the study. Another approach for a follow-up study could be the inclusion of academic performance assessments in comparison to race results under the influence of homesickness, since literature already defines an academic decline when suffering from homesickness.

7.2 Conclusion

The results of this diploma thesis imply that homesickness has an effect on ski-racing performance, which should not be underestimated. Not only to guarantee optimal settings to develop successful ski racers but especially to protect a young soul from being exposed to homesickness feelings, which can lead to physiological and psychological impairment. The difficulty of externally identifying those who suffer from immense homesickness and its proper handling is additionally present. In order to prevent homesickness, it involves the
continuation of precautionary arrangements, respectively, the inclusion of such. ‘Homesickness talks’ within supervisors and between supervisor and athletes are suggested, to be able to act and react faster, if the case of homesickness arises. Based on these findings, future studies in the field of homesickness and its outcome on performance, especially related to boarding schools should be intensified. Furthermore, a repositioning regarding the control of the relative age effect would be desirable, as well as more detailed analysis of performance anxiety and its explanations on debilitative and facilitative effects.
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Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

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Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance


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Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance


Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance


Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

Psychology, 73(3), 555.


anxiety, and confidence in three sport teams and three individual sports.

*Knowledge and Research in Applied Psychology, 40, 63-73.*


Geschätzte Eltern,

Im Zuge einer Studie der Universität Innsbruck am Institut für Sportwissenschaften soll in der nächsten Schulwoche den SchülerInnen ein Fragebogen ausgehändigt werden, der mögliche Einflüsse auf die Leistungsfähigkeit im alpinen Skisport herausfinden will.

Die SchülerInnen werden dabei aufgefordert Anthropometrische Daten, wie Name, Geburtsdatum etc. anzugeben, um mit Hilfe von Rennergebnissen die Leistungsfähigkeit zu untersuchen.

Astrid Geiger, eine Studentin der Universität Innsbruck wird diese Studie im Zuge ihrer Diplomarbeit durchführen, und versichert, die Daten nicht an Dritte weiter zu geben. Die Daten werden ausschließlich für universitäre Zwecke verwenden und anonym behandelt.

Wir bitten um Einverständnis zur Teilnahme Ihrer Tochter /Ihres Sohnes:

_________________________________________

Zur Kenntnis genommen: ____________________________

Vielen Dank für Ihre Zusammenarbeit!

Mit Sportlichen Grüßen

____________________  _______________________
Schoder Marcel (oder Harald Kirchmair)    Geiger Astrid
Erklärung Studie

Liebe Sportlerinnen und Sportler

Im Zuge meiner Diplomarbeit meines Lehramtsstudiums an der Universität Innsbruck am Institut für Sportwissenschaften, möchte ich bestimmte Einflüsse auf die Leistungsfähigkeit im alpinen Skisport herausfinden und dir dazu einige Fragen stellen.

Bitte fülle den Fragebogen zu deiner Person und die nachfolgenden Fragen aus, alle Inhalte werden vertrauenswürdig behandelt und nur zum Zweck meiner Studie verwendet.

Bitte lies nun die folgenden Aussagen sorgfältig durch und kreuze die Antworten NIE, SELTEN oder OFT an, je nachdem was deinem Gefühl in letzter Zeit am ehesten entspricht. Denke nicht allzu lange über einzelne Antworten nach und achte darauf, dass du auch tatsächlich alle Fragen beantwortest.

Vielen Dank

Astrid Geiger
Fragebogen Anthropometrie

Name:

Geburtsdatum:

Trainingsgruppe/Trainer:

Skiverein:

Ich bin

O SkifahrerIn O SkispringerIn
O SnowboarderIn O LangläuferIn

Ich wohne unter der Woche...

O im Internat O Zuhause bei meiner Familie
Fragebogen SchülerInnen

Ich habe ein schlechtes Namensgedächtnis.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Wenn ich etwas mache, mache ich es gut.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Ich komme in meiner neuen Umgebung gut zurecht.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Ich vermiss mein Zuhause.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Ich bin optimistisch was das Leben hier angeht.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Ich vermiss jemanden, mit dem ich wirklich reden kann.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Ich bin hier glücklich.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft

Ich vermiss meine Familie.

O nie O manchmal 0 oft
Mir fehlt es an nichts, ich bin hier gänzlich zufrieden.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich fühle mich hier nicht geliebt.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich fühle mich hier unruhig.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Wenn ich Probleme habe, wende ich mich an meine Familie.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich finde meine Aufgabe hier interessant.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich fühle mich hier gebraucht.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich fühle mich hier unwohl.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich würde gerne häufiger nach Hause fahren.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft

Ich bereue es, dass ich hierher gezogen bin.
0 nie  0 manchmal  0 oft
Es gibt hier Menschen, denen ich mich anvertrauen kann.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Ich fühle mich hier sicher.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Ich kann nicht aufhören, an Zuhause zu denken.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Ich fühle mich hier sehr zufrieden.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Ich habe hier viele Freunde.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Ich fühle mich hier bedroht.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Wenn ich morgens aufwache, wünsche ich mir, Zuhause zu sein.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Es war ein Fehler, hier herzuziehen.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft

Ich fühle mich hier einsam.
O  nie  O  manchmal  0  oft
Bitte zutreffendes ankreuzen:
Je mehr du mit der Aussage übereinstimmen, bitte desto weiter rechts ankreuzen - je weniger du mit der Aussage übereinstimmst, bitte desto weiter links ankreuzen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerierung</th>
<th>Aussage</th>
<th>Stimme gar nicht zu</th>
<th>Stimme ganz zu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ich bin besorgt, dass ich vielleicht nicht meine beste Leistung bringe.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ich bin besorgt, Fehler zu machen.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ich bin besorgt über die Unsicherheit, was passieren könnte.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ich bin besorgt über die Folgen, wenn ich versage.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ich tendiere dazu, mich mit meinen Leistungsdefiziten zu beschäftigen.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ich beurteile mich selbst kritischer als üblich.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ich nehme jede Bewegung, die ich mache, bewusst wahr.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ich bin mir bewusst, dass andere meine Leistung beurteilen werden.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ich bin mir bewusst, dass andere meine Leistung missbilligen könnten.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ich beschäftige mich damit, dass es mir misslingen könnte, wichtige Personen zu beeindrucken.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ich bin mir der Möglichkeit, wichtige Personen zu enttäuschen, sehr bewusst.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mein Herz rast.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Meine Hände sind feucht.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ich muss öfter als üblich auf die Toilette.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mein Mund fühlt sich trocken an.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ich habe leichte Spannungskopfschmerzen.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ich fühle mich leicht müde.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mein Körper fühlt sich angespannt an.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ich fühle mich ruhelos.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ich habe Vertrauen, dass ich während des Wettkampfes konzentriert bleibe.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ich vertraue auf meine Leistungsfähigkeit.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ich bin bereit für meinen Einsatz.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Ich bin überzeugt, ich habe die Fähigkeiten, diese Herausforderung zu bestehen.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ich bin überzeugt, dass mein Leistungsziel erreichbar ist.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ich bin bezüglich meiner bevorstehenden Leistung zuversichtlich.</td>
<td>☐①②③④⑤⑥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview ErzieherInnen-TrainerInnen

Name TrainerIn/ErzieherIn______________________________

Besteht die Möglichkeit, dass XY Heimweh hat?

O nie  O manchmal  0 oft

Hat XY Ihnen gegenüber Heimweh geäußert?

O nie  O manchmal  0 oft
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance
**Externe Schüler**


**Essen im Internat**

Das Essen im Internat wird täglich liebevoll und frisch von unserem Küchenteam zubereitet und wurde mit einer Ernährungsexpertin auf die Wünsche der Kinder abgestimmt. Das Essen ist gesund und schmackhaft.

**Ferien**

Unsere Ferien sind Sommerferien, Weihnachtsferien, Semesterferien, Osterferien und Sonderferien im Monat Mai.

**Feste**


**Fortbildung**

Unsere Einrichtung ist ein Ort der Begegnung, Bildung und Betreuung. Um unsere pädagogische, qualitativvolle Arbeit weiterhin zu erhalten, nehmen wir regelmäßig an Fortbildungen teil.

**Fundsachen**


**Freizeit**

Das gemeinsame Tun und Erleben entwickelt bei Kindern eine lebensbejahende Einstellung. Bei uns lernen sie vielfältige Freizeitgestaltungsmöglichkeiten kennen und nutzen. Sie haben die Möglichkeit, sich außerhalb von Schule und Training anders zu begegnen und kennenzulernen.

**Geburtstag**

Dieser besondere Tag für jedes Kind wird gefeiert! Es wird gesungen, es gibt einen Kuchen und ein kleines Geschenk.

**Gruppen**

In unserem Hort haben wir drei Hortgruppen. Die Kinder werden von drei Hortpädagogen und vier Hortassistenten betreut.
Hafung

Hortpädagogen
Die PädagogInnen sind für die pädagogische Tagesleitung und Aktivitäten sowie Angebote rund um den Jahreskreis zuständig und verantwortlich.

Hortassistenten
Die AssistentInnen unterstützen die PädagogInnen in ihren Tätigkeiten des Tagesablaufes.

Heimweh

Internet/Computer
Der Einsatz des Computers/Internets im Hort steht den Kindern nur zu bestimmten Zeiten zur Verfügung. Bei uns wird nicht mit dem Computer gespielt. Der Computer und das Internet dienen hauptsächlich zur Wissensverweiterung und zur Lernunterstützung. Dabei wird natürlich auf die Gefahren des Internets eingegangen und der richtige Umgang damit auch als gesunde, sinnvolle Basis für das spätere Leben näher gebracht. Wichtige Infos über unseren Hort finden Sie auch auf der Homepage unter www.skimmittelschule-neustift.at Rückmeldungen und Mitteilungen können Sie auch per Email senden: internatski@tsn.at

Internatsbeitrag
Der Beitrag ist 10 Mal pro Jahr zu entrichten.

Informationstafel
Im Eingangsbereich finden sie an unserer Info Tafel alle wichtigen Informationen zum Hort, Schule und Training. Außerdem erfahren sie aktuelle Angelegenheiten, geplante Bildungsangebote, Geburtstage oder wichtige Infos zum Tagesablauf.

Jahreskreis
So wie ein Kalenderjahr seine immerkehrenden Fixpunkte hat, so hat auch unser Hortjahr seine fest bestehenden Anlässe und Festivitäten. Neben den kirchlichen Feste erleben die Kinder: Geburtstagsfeiern, Faschingsfest, verschiedene Themenfeste, Familien-Sommerfest und Feste im Jahreskreis.

Konzeption
Unsere Hortkonzeption beinhaltet alles Wichtige über Rahmenbedingungen, die pädagogische Arbeit, Eltern- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und was sie sonst noch wissen wollen.
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

Krank sein
Die Eltern sind verpflichtet, kranke Kinder aus dem Internat abzuholen. Bei schwerwiegenden Krankheiten und Infekten lassen sie ihr Kind bitte solange zuhause bis es ansteckungsfrei ist.

Lernen

Mittagessen
Das Mittagessen nehmen wir gemeinsam im Speisesaal ein. Vor jedem Essen gibt es ein gemeinsames Ritual und auf Tischmanieren legen wir großen Wert.

Natur
In unserer Freizeit bewegen wir uns viel und gerne in der Natur.

Öffnungszeiten
Der Hort (Internat) ist von Sonntagabends bis Freitag geöffnet.

Projekte
Wir arbeiten immer wieder an Projekten. Diese entstehen aus Beobachtungen, Erlebnissen, Gesprächen und Impulsen der Kinder und Pädagogen.

Pädagogisches Programm
Qualitätsmanagement
Qualität widerspiegelt im wesentlichen Werte, Überzeugungen, Wünsche und Bedürfnisse, die in der Betreuung der Kinder involvierten Personen und Gruppen. Qualität ist deshalb unsere gemeinsame Aufgabe. In unseren wöchentlichen Teamsitzungen werden unsere pädagogische Arbeit, die Organisation und die Tagesstruktur betrachtet, reflektiert und transparent gemacht.

Regeln

Ruhepause
Nach dem anstrengenden Vormittagsprogramm, ob Training oder Schule, sollen die Kinder sich ausruhen. Unsere „Zimmerruhe“ gibt den Kindern die Möglichkeit sich auszurasten und Energie für den Rest des Tages zu tanken.

Spielabende
Einmal wöchentlich findet im Internat ein Spiele Abend statt, wir spielen gemeinsam mit den Kindern unterschiedlichste Gesellschafts- und Unterhaltungsspiele.

Tagesablauf
Da unser Jahr in Trimester aufgeteilt ist, orientiert sich der Tagesablauf unserer Freizeit nach dem Stundenplan der Schule.

Telefon
Sie können uns gerne telefonisch unter der Nummer 05226 / 2340 in unserer Einrichtung erreichen. Allerdings ist unser Telefon nicht ständig besetzt. Ab 11:00 sind die HortpädagogInnen erreichbar. Die Hortleiterin Barbara Schwaninger erreichen sie unter 0650 / 3040232.

Träger
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

W

Ski-racing demands new experiences and the relocation of children. The impact of these challenges may be significant, especially in terms of emotional well-being and academic performance. Research has shown that homesickness can negatively affect athletes' mental health and overall performance in ski-racing.

Z

The impact of homesickness on ski-racing performance can be mitigated through various strategies. Regular contact with family and friends, adequate preparation, and positive mental attitudes are crucial for athletes to cope with the stress of ski-racing. Training programs and mental skills development can also help athletes manage the challenges of competition and travel.
Homesickness and Ski-racing Performance

Was können Sie als Eltern helfen, um „Heimweh“ zu lindern?

- **Verbindlichkeit**: Mit dem Austausch der Skisituation hat sich Ihr Kind für das Leben im Internat entschieden. Daher sollten Sie auch in schwierigen Heimwehsituationen das Ziel nicht aus den Augen verlieren und konsequent die Verbindlichkeit des Kindes zum Internatsleben fordern.

- **Abwarten**: Bitte reagieren Sie nicht gleich, wenn Ihnen Ihr Kind negative Geschichten oder Erlebnisse aus dem Internatsalltag erzählt. Oft hat sich die Stimmung bis zum nächsten Tag schon wieder völlig entspannt.

- **Zeit, Ruhe und Geduld**: Geben Sie dem Kind die Ruhe, sich auf die für Sie beide neue Lebenssituation einzustellen. Geduld ist ein sehr wichtiger Faktor, um Heimweh zu bekämpfen. Bitte reagieren Sie niemals aggressiv und haben Verständnis für die Heimweh ihres Kindes. Uns ist es ein großes Anliegen, dass Sie sich nicht von positiven Gefühlen getragen werden.

Was kann ich als Eltern dazu beitragen, dass das Heimweh abklingt?

- **Warum habe ich Heimweh? Zunächst ist es immer gut, zu überlegen, was der Grund für das Heimweh sein könnte. Ist es die ungewohnte Umgebung, ein Streit, Einsamkeit, die dich und deine Freunde mit deinem Buddy oder Erzieher über deine Gefühle.**

- **Du fühlst dich einsam**: Du fühlst dich nicht wohl, du fehlst niemanden kennt. Versuche jemanden, der dir sympathisch ist, einmal nett zu grüßen und nach seinem Namen zu fragen. Neue Freunde geben dir Sicherheit und lassen das Heimweh oft verlieren.

- **Versuche dich nicht zurückzuziehen**: Gerade, wenn das Heimweh besonders schlimm ist, solltest du dich auf keinen Fall zurückziehen, sondern gehe zu deiner Gruppe und nimm an angebotenen Aktivitäten teil. Denn Heimweh ist oft ein sehr spontanes Gefühl, welches auch schnell wieder vergehen kann, wenn du etwas dagegen unternimmst.


- **Telefonieren:** Du darfst jeden Abend nach dem Abendessen mit deinen Eltern telefonieren.

- **Lieblingsstück:** Es ist ganz wichtig, dass du von zu Hause dein Kuscheltier, deinen Lieblingspolster oder andere Sachen, die dir viel bedeuten mitnimmst. Denn es gibt dir ein vertrautes und sicheres Gefühl.

**Wenn gar nichts hilft...**

Wenn du trotzdem noch großes Heimweh hast, haben die Erzieher für dich im Büro einen sehr guten Heimwehhonig, der mit wertvollen Kräutern in der Apotheke zusammengemischt worden ist. In ganz schweren Fällen verteilen die Erzieher Heimwehnutella, welches mit einem Geheimrezept zubereitet wurde und bis jetzt noch jedem Kind half, die Nacht gut zu verbringen.

**Zum Abschluss:**