

HOW ETHNOGRAPHY MAY INSTRUCT BIOCULTURAL RESEARCH?

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Conducting biocultural research in anthropology remains to be one of biggest challenges in our discipline. To implement a biocultural synthesis in anthropology it is necessary to select an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding culture that is both ethnographically valid and adequate for operationalization in complex biocultural models. The solution to connecting the culture as an aggregate and collective phenomenon with individual beliefs, behaviour and health outcomes became more feasible with the theoretical and methodological breakthroughs in cognitive anthropology, and in particular, after the development of the theory of cultural consensus. By using the example of the recent pilot study conducted within the framework of the project "Modernity stress, youth and migration" we demonstrate how ethnographic research may be used to direct, optimize and complement the quantitative research based on the integration of demographic, psychological and biomedical data (including anthropometric, physiologic and salivary biomarkers). In this project individual subjective and objective stress outcomes are researched in relation to culture changes associated with modernity in the postsocialist transitional society. We demonstrate the analytical usefulness of using interviewing and freelisting as ethnographic techniques for defining variables of interest in domains of everyday life of Croatian youth and the results of the cultural consensus analyses in various everyday life-domains such as education, employment, family, material goods, leisure time, social support and participation, premigratory potential.

Key words: *biocultural synthesis, ethnography of stress, cognitive anthropology, youth, Croatia*

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MOTOR SKILLS IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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The purpose of the research is to determine a development of motor skills of 6-7 year old children who attend elementary schools. The participants were divided into an experimental group with 22 children (12 males and 10 females) and a control group with 21 children (10 males and 11 females). None of the participants has any restriction for physical education classes. In the experimental group, the physical education classes were conducted by the instructor using methods and techniques of an advanced motor skill training. In the control group the physical education classes were conducted by an elementary school teacher. Methods of research included an evaluation of motor skills which were measured by a calculation of the gross and fine motor skills consistency. The results of the study show that the level of fine motor skills in the experimental and control groups differs. The corresponding indicator is 81% among 6 year old children and 89% among 7 year old children in the experimental group. In the control group the average indicator of fine motor skills is not above 65% among 6 year old children and 75% among 7 year old children. It may be concluded that the level of gross and fine motor skills in the control group is lower than in the experimental one, and physical exercises without stimulating the physiological functions and without training are not effective.

Key words: *motor skills, fine and gross motor skills, preschool children*

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