

The Role of Motivation Towards Sports Participation among Student-Athletes

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Abstract. This study aimed to investigate the role of motivation in the sports participation of student-athletes in Iligan City, Philippines. The Motivation for Sports Measure-Revised (MSM-R), adapted from the Motivation for Physical Activity Measure-Revised developed by Ryan et al. (1997), was utilized to assess motivation, while the Sports Participation Model Questionnaire (SPMQ) developed by Aicenena (2012) was employed to evaluate athletes' sports involvement. A total of 1015 college student-athletes from various Colleges and Universities in Iligan City participated by completing a series of questionnaires pertaining to motivation and sports participation. Analysis of the motivation subscales revealed that appearance, competence, and social interaction exhibited significant associations with sports participation among the student-athletes. Conversely, interest/enjoyment and fitness did not demonstrate a significant relationship with sports participation. These findings suggest that appearance, competence, and social interactions are the primary drivers motivating student-athletes to engage in sports activities. Hence, the findings of this study indicate that student-athletes participate in sports not primarily out of interest, enjoyment, or fitness concerns, but rather to enhance their physical attractiveness and social interactions. This underscores the importance of understanding motivational factors influencing sports participation and their implications for promoting and sustaining engagement among student-athletes.

Key words: motivation; sports participation; athletes

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, there has been a substantial increase in interest in children's or youth's participation behavior in sports context. Numerous researchers have examined the reasons for children or youth to participate in sports or physical activity (e.g. Hu et al., 2021; Kokko et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018).

Motivation is considered a key factor that affects the participation of a person into a certain sports branch (Molanorouzi, 2015). Motives for adult participation in physical activity: type of activity, age, and gender. *BMC public health*, 15, 1-12.). Studies in this area try to find answers to questions such as "Why and how do people join in sports activities actively?" The purpose of research is to find answers to questions concerning reasons that are taken into consideration while playing football for example? Why does an athlete walk kilometers of distance alone? Why do athletes spare their 10 to 20 hours of time a week for running? Why does a parachutist dare to jump down from thousands of feet height?

The concept of motivation is frequently used in psychology in the context of sport and recreation. It can be defined as an energy that determines and steers human behavior (Adair, 2003). Petz (2005), it defines motivation as a condition where we are driven from the "inside" by some needs, impulses, desires, wishes, or motives and directed towards obtaining a goal that comes from the outside functions as a stimulus for behavior.

Sport is a physical activity that gives participants a chance to experience enjoyment and competition, while at the same time acquiring positive outcomes such as new challenges, social interactions, skill enhancement, and increased levels of fitness as well as enhanced physical and mental health (ISC, 2003). Adolescents and

emerging adulthood is a time of physical, social, psychological, and structural changes, which may influence barriers to and motivations for physical activity. Physical activity and exercise when undertaken regularly are highly beneficial for health and for physical and psychological well-being.

Physical and psychological health has been shown to benefit from regular participation in physical activities. Health reasons are, however, not the only motives individuals have for taking part in sports. Motives related to appearance, competition and excitement, fun, and enhanced competence, are a few other reasons

The role of physical education and sports activities in society and every individual provides the foundation of all information needed to understand the nature and the scope of sports activities. The role of sports in today's world, and the contribution of students involved in physical education and sports activity can make to society. Sports activities are a growing and expanding field. The growth is reflected in the widening of scope in the specializations of the study (Wuest, 2009).

Researchers have investigated and established several key reasons for participation in sport and recreation. Justifications for participation in sports and recreational activities include; enjoyment, skills development, friendships, competitions, fitness, health, achievement, status, fun, energy, and stress release (Hoe, 2007; Australian Bureau of Statistic, 2007; Ebben&Brudzynski, 2008; Hossini, Seyfari, &Fathi, 2012; Peters, Scholtz&Weilbach, 2014).

According to Hoe (2007), the motives for participation in sport and recreation vary and are individual-specific. Sawir, Marginson, Duenert, Nyland, and Ramia (2007) contended that engagement in sports or recreation activities serves to eliminate discrimination. Asihel and colleagues (2005) opine that sporting activities create environments that are socially cohesive and tolerant of a diverse population. In the long term, student engagement in sports and recreation activities reduces alienation, increasing one's chance of involvement in the life of the community (O'Sullivan, 2006).

Therefore, the concept of being motivated to participate especially in a sports activity is determined as a research subject for further investigation and study; and therefore, the literature includes numerous studies defining reasons that essentially steer individuals to join sports and physical activities and to categorize these reasons (Gill et al., 1983; Gould et al., 1985; Kaya, 2003; Klint et al., 1983; Kolt et al., 1999; Sit et al., 2006; Sirin et al., 2008).

METHODS

Subjects

The population of this study was composed of student-athletes from different Colleges and Universities in Iligan City. A purposive sampling procedure was employed. A total of 1,015 student-athletes who participated in formal sports competitions and any level of participation were taken as respondents of the study.

Research Instrument

The principal instrument that was used in this study is a questionnaire which consists of three (3) parts. Part I composed the demographic profile of the respondents which contains the athlete's age, gender, school, type of sport, and level of participation. Part II consists of the motivation for Sports Measure-Revised (MSM-R), a modified version of the motivation for Physical Activity Measure-Revised (MPAM-R) developed by Ryan, Frederick, Lepes, Rubio, and Sheldon (1997). The 30 questions were categorized into 5 types of motivation: appearance, competence, fitness, interest/enjoyment, and social. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Part III covers sports participation. This was measured through the Sports Participation Model Questionnaire (SPMQ) which was developed by Avicenna (2002). The SPMQ which has a Cronbach alpha of 0.873 was composed of seventy questions, where the subjects were to choose "agree" or "disagree" with each statement reflecting on how they feel about the sport in general, in youth sport or school sport, and how they feel about their teammates, coaches or even their opponent.

Statistical Analysis

The analysis of data was carried out in several steps using the SPSS Version 20.0. The estimation-maximization technique of imputation was used to replace values that were missing at random. Specifically, descriptive statistics was used to assess the demographic profile of the respondents while Pearson R was used to test the significant relation between and among variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study on the Role of Motivation Towards Sports Participation among Student-Athletes sheds light on the demographics of the respondents, revealing key characteristics of the student-athlete population. The findings indicate that a significant proportion (49.8% or 505 individuals) of student-athletes surveyed are aged between 17 to 19 years, aligning with the typical age range of tertiary students in the Philippines. Females constitute the majority at 50% (507), outnumbering male student-athletes who make up 47.2% (479), with a minority identifying as bisexual (0.1%). This gender distribution highlights the dominance of female student-athletes within Colleges and Universities in Iligan City. In terms of sports participation, 45.5% (462) of student-athletes are engaged in multiple sports, with basketball being the most popular single sport at 16.6%, followed by badminton (13.3%), volleyball (12.3%), futsal (4.4%), and Frisbee (1.6%). Additional sports like table tennis, chess, taekwondo, lawn tennis, karatedo, and softball exhibit lower participation rates ranging from 0.5% to 0.9%.

Regarding competition engagement, the majority (76.9% or 781) of student-athletes actively participate in local competitions, with regional competitions attracting about 12.5%, and national competitions involving 3.4%. Participation rates in interschool competitions stand at 23%, while international competitions have the lowest engagement at 0.5%. These demographic insights provide a foundational understanding of the student-athlete population and set the context for analyzing the role of motivation in sports participation among this particular group.

The findings of this study further highlight significant correlations between motivation and sports participation among student-athletes, with a p-value of .114. This suggests that as student-athletes motivation increases—characterized by their desire, wish, motive, and purpose to achieve a goal—their engagement in sports also tends to increase, indicating a positive relationship between these factors. Moreover, that appearance, competence, and social factors are positively correlated with sports participation. Appearance shows a p-value of .220, competence with .084, and social with .147. These findings imply that student-athletes perceive appearance, competence, and social interactions as important motivators influencing their involvement in sports activities. This consensus among respondents underscores the importance of these specific motivations in driving student-athletes engagement and commitment to sports.

Discussion

It is well-established that a sense of competence has a powerful impact on achievement-related behavior and motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Several studies, for example, have suggested that parents who give their children a positive sense of competence are more likely to adopt an intrinsic orientation toward achievement. The sense of competence will demonstrate an interest in challenge, mastery, and curiosity relative to children with a negative perception of competence (Boggiano and Pittman, 1992 as cited by Bawa, 2019). A significant body of research indicated that a positive view of one's level of competence has various beneficial consequences for achievement, including positive effect, greater effort, and persistence (Phillips, 1984 as cited by Montibeller et al., 2015).

Aside from competence, social has also been positively correlated with sports participation. Studies indicated that the opportunity for social interaction is an important part of the attraction to sport (Bayyat, 2020; Ziab et al., 2023). Students value the opportunity that physical activity provides to belong and to form affectional relationship with others. Desiring to be with classmates, friends, romantic partners, and family via sport can be a powerful prompt for physical activity. Many sports activities such as those most frequently engaged in by participants, including volleyball, basketball, and badminton, involve high degrees of social interaction and thus provide a sense of belongingness and connectedness to a significant other (Eubank, 2024; Stenseng et., 2015).

Conversely, the findings of this study do not find enough evidence to show that interest/enjoyment and fitness/health play a role in sports participation among college student-athletes. These results suggest that these factors may not be the primary drivers of engagement for student-athletes. Rather, this aligns with the concept of controlled motivation, where individuals feel compelled to participate in physical activities due to external pressures or perceived outcomes rather than genuine intrinsic interest (Aicher & Brenner, 2015). Controlled forms of motivation often lack autonomy and are associated with instrumental goals such as improving physical appearance or achieving specific fitness outcomes (Khan et al., 2012). When individuals engage in sports primarily for extrinsic reasons, such as to meet external expectations or attain external rewards, their motivation may become more contingent and less enduring compared to activities driven by intrinsic enjoyment and personal fulfillment.

Therefore, the comprehensive understanding of motivational factors influencing sports participation among student-athletes underscores the importance of cultivating intrinsic motivation through the promotion of competence, autonomy, and relatedness within sports environments. Encouraging a positive self-perception of competence and fostering supportive social interactions can enhance the enjoyment and long-term commitment of student-athletes towards sports involvement, promoting holistic well-being and sustained participation in physical activities.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to assess the role of motivation in sports participation among student-athletes in Iligan City, Philippines. The research utilized a descriptive-correlational approach to examine relationships among key variables. The study focused on examining the relationship between student-athletes' motivation and their engagement in sports. Results indicated that a majority of respondents were aged between 17 to 19 years old and participated in multiple sports at the local level. A positive correlation was observed between motivation and sports participation, with appearance, competence, and social factors significantly influencing participation.

Specifically, the study revealed that student-athletes were motivated to participate in sports primarily due to factors related to appearance, perceived competence, and social interactions. Conversely, fitness and interest were not found to be significantly associated with sports participation, suggesting that students' involvement in sports was not driven by fitness goals or intrinsic interest in the activity.

These findings highlight the importance of motivation in fostering increased sports participation among students. By understanding and addressing motivational factors such as self-perception, skill development, and social connections within sports contexts, educators and coaches can enhance student-athletes enjoyment, commitment, and overall well-being through sustained engagement in sports activities.

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