

Social determination theory and motivation in sport



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Understanding of motivation in terms of sports is vital for predicting the reasons for sports engagement and commitment (Iso-Ahola and St. Clair, 2000). Thus, a thorough exploration of how types of motivation (i. e., intrinsic vs. extrinsic) are associated with sports engagement is vital for keeping an interest in sports. Several sports studies have integrated the self-determination theory (SDT) framework to understand sports commitment (Pelletier et al., 2013). SDT suggests that individuals determinedly try to control their own social environments in order to adhere to three basic psychological needs, explicitly, the perceptions of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Mallet, 2007). The perception of competence refers to the opportunity to express one's own competence or capability (e. g., physical or mental prowess), whereas relatedness is the sense of belonging to a certain group or community. Autonomy is related to the ability to act or express oneself in ways that match one's own needs and value system (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Autonomy is certainly correlated with self-determination and placed on an internalised continuum with amotivation (i. e., the least amount of self-determination) at one end extrinsic motivation in the middle, and intrinsic motivation for stimulation at the other end (Ryan et al., 1992; Vallerand, 1997).

SDT hypothesises that sports involvement motivation is multidimensional, integrating intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Vallerand, 1997). Intrinsic motivation (IM) refers to participation solely for pleasure, fun, or satisfaction resulting directly from the activity itself (Deci and Ryan, 1985). An intrinsically motivated participant will voluntarily participate in an activity in the lack of physical rewards or external gain

(Deci and Ryan, 1985). There are three subscales under the IM aspect, explicitly, IM to know, IM to accomplish, and IM to experience stimulation. IM to know includes concepts such as motivation to explore, learn, and understand. IM to accomplish refers to motivation to conquer, increase efficacy, and feel competent (Teo et al., 2015). “ Accomplishment-oriented individuals interact with the environment to feel competence, a sense of mastery, and satisfaction” (Deci and Ryan, 1985). IM to feel stimulation refers to motivation to experience stimulating sensations (e. g., ecstasy, thrills) derived from participating in a given activity, such as bungee jumping or sky diving (Teo et al., 2015).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation (EM) is associated with an external locus of control (Mallet, 2003) or “ engagement as a means to an end and not for the sake of the activity itself” (Deci, 1975, p. 23). It was originally accepted that EM was provoked only by external rewards however; Ryan et al. (1992) argued that there are in fact different EM subscales that can be ordered along the self-determination spectrum, such as EM for external regulation, EM for introjection, and EM for identification (Deci and Ryan, 1985). EM for external management refers to behaviour prompted by external motivation sources, such as; money, gifts, rewards or constraints imposed by others (e. g., criticisms or punishment) (Teo et al., 2015). EM for introjection refers to external motivation (internal pressures) such as self-guilt to perform or anxiety (Teo et al., 2015). For example, professional footballers feel compelled to succeed and be extremely fit but feel embarrassed when they do not live up to expectations (Pelletier et al., 1995). EM for identification happens when individuals recognise and classify certain

behaviour as significant and, therefore, perform it for extrinsic reasons such as to achieve personal goals (Teo et al., 2015). But, EM for identification is thought to be internally regulated and self-determined. For example, professional footballers participate in team-building exercises that could contribute to their personal growth and development as players (Teo et al., 2015).

Finally, amotivation, the least form of motivation, is found at the end of the SDT scale; it is equivalent to the idea of “learned helplessness” (Abraham et al., 1978, p. 50). SDT suggests that amotivated athletes may no longer recognise any worthy motives to train or play and may ultimately lose interest in sports. Works on sports motivation based on gender differences has been inadequate (Teo et al., 2015). Many studies exposed that female competitors established superior concentration on fun, satisfaction, and pleasure, which are fundamental characteristics of IM (Chantal et al., 1996; Fortier et al., 1995; Pelletier et al., 1995). This is apparent in the study by Gill et al. (1983) on children age 8-18 years old during a summer sports camp and in Fortier et al. (1995) on 399 Canadian athletes established that males exhibited higher levels of EM, while females were more IM focused.

Furthermore, studies on 63 Bulgarian competitors (Chantal et al., 1996) and 365 US swimmers (Gould et al., 1985) established that males exhibited higher levels of EM categorised by their focus on competition, winning, rewards, and recognition. In addition, further evidence is drawn from a study conducted by Kingston et al. (2006) on 172 US university students, he concluded that males with sports scholarships showed considerably higher levels of EM, specially EM for external regulation (obtaining measurable rewards), compared with females counterparts.

Likewise, Monazami et al. (2012) study's which contained of 112 Iranian athletes, showed that male athletes recorded higher in EM to identify regulation, EM to external regulation, and total EMin comparison to the female athletes. In distinction, Kim et al.'s (2003) study on 101 US and 298 Korean athletes concluded that IM was more noticeable among males. Once again, Zahariadis et al.'s (2005) Spanish study on 452 students established that male students in PE lessons displayed significantly higher levels IM than the females. Lastly, a contemporary study on 632 Malaysian athletes, revealed that males tended to exhibit higher levels of intrinsic motivation as opposed to the females who tended to display higher levels of extrinsic motivation (Chin et al., 2012). Outside of gender variances, studies between athletes competitive and casual have also produced considerable attention among sports psychologists (Teo et al., 2015). Collected works discovered that competitive Greek gymnasts (Koumpoula et al., 2011) and English soccer players (Lowther et al., 2004) displayed higher levels of IM whilst also showing lowered levels of lower EM (Teo et al., 2015). Elite gymnasts presented higher levels of task orientation, which is positively connected with greater IM (Koumpoula et al., 2011). In dissimilarity, casual players tended to show higher levels of EM and lower IM. In a study conducted by Lowther et al. (2004) of 53 football players (professional, semiprofessional, and amateur) it was discovered that amateur players exhibited the lowest IM among the three groups whilst professional players recorded highly in IM but also displayed low EM scores. Koumpoula et al. (2011) also conducted a study on 98 gymnasts and concluded that gymnast in the casual or amateur group also displayed high EM for introjection regulation compared with those in the competitive

Therefore, based on previous research as outlined above, it is apparent that sports engagement and commitment is strongly correlated with demography (gender) and by ability (competitive or casual). This is apparent as females proved to show higher levels of intrinsic motivation whereas males were more likely to display extrinsic motivation. In addition, those with higher ability (competitiveness) displayed higher levels of intrinsic motivation above extrinsic motivation in comparison to those who did not perform on a regular basis.

The purpose of this study is to add further insight into the phenomena of motivation whilst also aiding those within sport i. e. sport therapists and coaches etc. Within the world of sport, athletes can perform successfully one day, and perform disastrous the next, thus resulting in amotivation in some cases. Therefore, in order to address amotivation in sport and encourage more people to participate in sport, it is essential to gain knowledge in sport motivation. Wider implications for these results is that, they will be beneficial especially to coaches, as they also now understand and make informed choices to determine sport performance i. e. intrinsically or extrinsically motivated players. These findings could also be invaluable for future sports development programs, sustainability of the sports itself, and laying the foundation for future cross-cultural comparison studies (Teo et al., 2015). The purpose of this study is to investigate different types of motivation among sport oriented university students based on gender and the sport type (i. e., competitive vs. casual).