

Achievement Motivation among High School Basketball and Cross-Country Athletes: A Personal Investment Perspective

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Goal perspective research in the sport setting has primarily focused on task and ego goal orientations, while failing to address the influence of social goals (e.g., Urdan & Maehr, 1995). Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) personal investment theory allows researchers to examine achievement motivation from a multidimensional perspective that incorporates social factors of motivation. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986) of basketball and cross-country athletes via semi-structured interviews. Results from content analyses revealed that athletes defined positive and negative experiences through task-, ego-, and socially-oriented personal incentives as well as sense of self and perceived options components. Socially-oriented personal incentives and sense of self components were more prevalent for the basketball athletes than for the cross-country athletes. Notable sport group differences suggest the need to further examine social factors of motivation with a broader representation of individual and team sport athletes.

Manuscript received 22 December 1998; Revision submitted 27 September 1999.

The authors would like to thank Diane Gill, Dan Gould, Robert Weinberg, and the reviewers for their helpful comments during the preparation of this manuscript.

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Achievement motivation remains a central issue within sport psychology as researchers continue to examine an individual's choice, effort, and persistence related to physical activity participation. Much research conducted in the area of achievement motivation has been based on Nicholls's (1984, 1989) goal perspective theory. This theoretical perspective states that individuals strive to display high ability and to avoid demonstrating low ability. In addition, definitions of success and failure are based on two goal orientations. A task goal orientation is characterized by self-referenced perceptions of competence and emphasizes effort, task mastery, and performance improvement. An ego orientation includes norm-referenced perceptions of competence and an emphasis on winning and positive social comparison with others.

Many researchers in sport psychology have examined the characteristics and beliefs regarding individuals' task and ego goals in the sport setting (e.g., Duda, 1989; Lewthwaite, 1990; Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993; Vealey & Campbell, 1988). Duda (1989) found that task-oriented individuals perceived that sport should enhance self-esteem, effort, cooperation, and citizenship. Conversely, ego-oriented participants identified relationships between sport and self-esteem and social status. Other investigators have examined goal orientations within academics and sport (Duda & Nicholls, 1992), and from a gender (e.g., Duda, 1988) and cross-cultural perspective (e.g., Hayashi, 1996). Hayashi's (1996) study revealed that weight training participants belonging to Hawaiian and Anglo-American cultures defined positive experiences in physical activity through an interdependent perspective as well as through typical task and ego goal orientations. Specifically, these individuals described positive experiences in sport as when they were connected to others, conformed to group norms, and possessed a commitment to others. In sum, Hayashi's (1996) findings suggested the presence of an additional social goal orientation in sport.

Urdan and Maehr (1995) have recently resurrected Maehr and Nicholls' (1980) original conceptualization of achievement motivation and have encouraged the inclusion of socially-oriented goals. Specifically, Urdan and Maehr (1995) defined social goals as "the perceived social purposes of achievement or failure" (p. 213). Social purposes are characterized by the gaining of the approval of others and bringing honor to one's in-group (e.g., family, community).

The sport setting provides achievement situations that are impacted by numerous social contextual factors. Athletes are involved in a complex blend of social interactions and relationships with teammates, coaches,

referees or judges, and spectators. Although it appears that the sport environment could promote the adoption of social goals as defined by Urdan and Maehr (1995), and would provide an ample setting for examining multiple goal perspectives, research examining social goals in the sport setting has been lacking.

A review of literature did reveal, however, that researchers (e.g., Anderman, 1999; Blumenfeld, 1992; Wentzel, 1993) in the field of education have expanded their work in motivation and achievement to include social goals. In a study examining students' affective school experiences, Anderman (1999) discovered that task goal orientation, sense of school belonging, and social goals (i.e., relationship and responsibility goals) predicted increased positive affect for sixth grade students, while an ability (i.e., ego) goal orientation predicted an increase in negative affect. In looking at relationships between different types of goals and outcomes, Wentzel (1993) has demonstrated that the pursuit of mastery (i.e., task), evaluation (i.e., ego), and social goals were significantly and positively correlated with student achievement. Evaluation and social goals emerged as stronger predictors of students' grades than mastery goals. The pursuit of social goals was also identified as a significant, independent, and positive predictor of effort among sixth- and eighth-grade English students (Wentzel, 1996). In a later study, Wentzel (1998) found that "supportive qualities of interpersonal relationships were significant predictors of academic and social aspects of motivation" (p. 207) and identified the need for more research on the social origins of motivation in the classroom setting during early adolescence. Based on her own observations and on previous research, Wentzel (1992) proposed that "high levels of achievement cannot be sustained without the joint pursuit of social, performance, and learning goals" (pp. 291–292). In an article on the clarification and expansion of goal theory, Blumenfeld (1992) also noted the importance of considering the impact of interaction among multiple goals (i.e., mastery, performance, and social). She concluded with recommendations for new methods of inquiry such as expanding questionnaire studies, which isolate variables, and providing more thick description.

Within the field of sport psychology, the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (Duda, 1992) has been the dominant measure used for research in goal theory. This measure isolates the variables of task and ego orientation. Additionally, because measurement difficulties arise from the high correlation of social and task goals, the questionnaire does not account for social factors of motivation.

Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) personal investment theory (PIT) provides sport psychology researchers with a framework that accounts for the inclusion of social influences in the examination of achievement motivation. According to this theory, behavior and the meaning of the situation are important in the study of motivation. The meaning of a situation involves three interrelated components: (a) personal incentives, (b) sense of self, and (c) perceived options. Personal incentives are defined as facets of the environment that are attractive or unattractive to an individual. Task personal incentives are characterized by skill improvement and mastery (i.e., task goal orientation), while ego personal incentives promote winning and doing better than others (i.e., ego goal orientation). Contrasting with both task and ego personal incentives, social incentives encourage conformity to others' expectations. When social personal incentives are embraced, effort is encouraged and "the goal is to enhance relationships with others" (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986, p. 56). Through the demonstration of effort and good intentions, individuals are often seen as being faithful and can subsequently obtain social approval.

The sense of self component is defined as "the more or less organized collection of perceptions, beliefs, and feelings about who one is" (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986, p. 59). The four components of sense of self are: (a) self-identity (the perception of one's social or cultural groups and its expectations), (b) self-reliance (the perception of one's ability to control his or her own destiny), (c) goal-directedness (the ability to set goals and organize behavior according to these goals), and (d) sense of competence (beliefs about one's ability). Finally, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) characterized perceived options as alternative activities that participants recognize as available and acceptable.

PIT incorporates social factors of motivation in three distinct ways. First, the personal incentives category includes social goals in addition to the readily accepted task and ego goal orientations. Next, sense of self is characterized in part by self-identity which involves the perception of one's social or cultural group and its expectations. Finally, perceived options for participation in various activities are often influenced by social aspects such as affiliation, opportunities to help and/or socialize with others, and family relationships.

A limited amount of research has been conducted in the business (e.g., Shwalb, Shwalb, Harnisch, Maehr, & Akabane, 1992), academic (e.g., McInerney & Sinclair, 1992), and exercise (e.g., Duda & Tappe, 1988; Tappe & Duda, 1988; Tappe, Duda, & Menges-Ehrwald, 1990) settings

based on Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) personal investment theory. For example, Tappe et al. (1990) found that adolescents' personal incentives for exercise, perceptions of sense of self, and perceived options for exercise predicted variance in exercise behavior for both males and females. In addition, a relationship between components of personal investment and life satisfaction among physically active middle-aged and older adults was found to exist (Tappe & Duda, 1988). Specifically, those participants who perceived congruence between their desire to interact with others and program affiliation opportunities were more likely to be satisfied with life in general.

Despite such findings within the exercise domain and Duda's (1992) call for goal-related research in the sport setting, Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) PIT has not been utilized within the sport domain. The absence of research based on PIT is surprising considering that social contextual factors have been identified to influence achievement motivation of sport participants (e.g., Duda, 1992; Nicholls, 1989). Furthermore, the very nature of various types of sporting activities (e.g., team-oriented vs. individual-oriented) suggests possible differences in achievement motivation, particularly with regard to social goals.

Cox (1994) has proposed that team sports (e.g., basketball, baseball, and soccer) be called interactive sports in that successful participation requires interaction between team members. In order for participants in these types of sports to experience success, they must be compatible, cooperative, and able to contribute to the unified goals of the team. Additionally, individuals accept various roles that aid their sport group in achieving objectives such as a team victory (Yukelson, 1984). For example, the role of a point guard in basketball centers around controlling the basketball and passing it to post players who have a potentially greater role in rebounding and scoring. Similarly, guards are expected to defend the perimeter while post players defend the lane area. Thus, all five players on the court must work together to score more points than the opponent, achieving the team's goal of winning the game. Furthermore, Carron (1980) contends that sport groups possess "a sense of shared purpose or objectives, structured patterns of interaction, structured modes of communication, personal and/or task interdependence, and interpersonal attraction" (p. 177).

In contrast, sports (e.g., cross-country running and skiing, golf, individual swimming events) that involve minimal interaction between team members have been labeled as coactive (Cox, 1994). Due to the lack of overt interaction, coactive sport participants primarily rely on themselves

for motivation and are characteristically independent. For instance, although a cross-country runner's place of finish ultimately contributes to a team score, the place of finish depends on personal motivation and performance. He/she does not receive direct or physical aid from teammates.

According to the previous description of differences in the nature of team and individual-oriented sports, it is evident that social factors of motivation may be different for basketball and cross-country sport athletes. Although sport psychology research examining relationships between achievement motivation and sport type is lacking, research has been conducted in the areas of intrinsic motivation and attribution. For example, Kamal, Alharoun, Metzals, and Parsons (1985) found that the mean response for intrinsic motivation was greater for individual sport athletes (i.e., skiers) than for team sport athletes (i.e., basketball players). Tenebaum and Furst (1985) used a broader range of individual (boxing, table tennis, track and field) and team (soccer, team handball, basketball) sports in their examination of the relationship between sport attributions and sport type. Their study revealed that individual athletes attributed unsuccessful sport events more internally than team athletes. These studies indicate that individual sport athletes' perceptions tend to rely more on their own performances, rather than on external factors or fellow team members' performances.

The results of previous research (e.g., Wentzel, 1996, 1998) have revealed that achievement motivation research should take into account social factors of motivation and the nature of and research involving different types (e.g., individual and team) of sport suggest that motivational tendencies may differ according to sport type. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the achievement motivation of high school basketball and cross-country athletes based on the personal investment theory (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986). Specific research questions that were addressed were: (a) What is the nature of the personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options of high school basketball athletes?; and, (b) What is the nature of the personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options of high school cross-country athletes?

METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 12 high school athletes from a public school district in Texas. Six athletes (three female, three male) for each sport group

(i.e., basketball, cross-country) participated in the study. The criteria for an individual's inclusion in the study included: (a) sophomore or junior grade level, (b) participation on basketball or cross-country teams, and (c) a minimum of one year of high school athletic experience (i.e., classified as a member of his/her respective team for at least one season). The selection of basketball and cross-country was influenced by several factors. First, basketball and cross-country represent highly interactive/team-oriented and low interactive/individual-oriented sport activities, respectively. The second factor was the primary investigator's familiarity with basketball and cross-country through participation and coaching experiences. Third, in an effort to minimize extraneous variables, basketball and cross-country were selected as sports in which both males and females compete at the high school level. Finally, the athletes were participating in off-season programs and time constraints for the interviews were less restrictive. This also allowed the athletes to describe perceptions of previous sport experiences that may be more generally representative of their experiences in contrast to perceptions dominated by a relatively recent competition (i.e., having a game or meet in the same week of the interview).

Individuals were solicited for the study based on purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) which allows for the selection of participants who can provide rich and detailed information with respect to the purposes of the study. Specifically, athletes were matched by gender, sport, participation level, and the ability to express themselves. Additionally, the sample was limited to those athletes involved in sport activities that were either team-oriented (i.e., basketball) or individual-oriented (i.e., cross-country) in nature. Athletes who were involved in both types of activities were not allowed to participate. For example, one cross-country runner was omitted from the study because she also participated in team relay events in track and field, which is more of a team-oriented sport activity. The twelve research participants ranged from 15 to 17 years of age. Ten of the participants were Caucasian and two of the participants were Hispanic American. The basketball participants were more experienced in their specific sport participation as they averaged over seven and a half years of experience ($M = 7.6$ years) while the cross-country runners averaged just over two years of experience ($M = 2.1$ years).

Interview Format

In line with Blumenfeld's (1992) recommendation for more thick description in the investigation of goal theory, the nature of achievement

motivation was examined via a semistructured interview format. The interview was based on previous sport psychology research using a similar methodology (e.g., Gould, Finch, & Jackson, 1993; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1989; Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991). Each interview consisted of three sections. The first section provided the respondent with introductory information such as the researcher's name, the purpose of the study, and the assurance of anonymity through assignment of a pseudonym.

The second section included items based on sport experiences that explored the nature of the athlete's personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options according to the personal investment theory (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986). The wording of the items was primarily designed to tap the tendencies of individuals to define success or lack of success according to personal incentives and sense of self variables. It was determined that asking participants to describe specific situations that promoted perceptions of positive or negative experiences, rather than asking them to define success in general, would elicit information that was more rich and detailed. Thus, this study rests on the assumption that the participant's descriptions are generally representative of his or her experiences (i.e., positive, negative) in sport. The first six interview items represented different ways of coaxing out perceptions of positive and negative experiences in terms of personal incentives and sense of self variables. The final two items were more direct and aimed at investigating the participant's perceptions of perceived options. The interview format was pilot-tested to validate the quality and perception of the questions. Results indicated that the questions were clear and appropriate for eliciting targeted information. The specific interview items and associated components from Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theory are included in the Appendix.

In the third section, an informal member check was conducted (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The interviewer briefly summarized the participant's responses and the participant was permitted to make additional comments or clarify his or her answers. Finally, the interviewer thanked the participant for involvement in the study.

Procedure

The data collection protocol was completed over a two-month period. With the aid of the athletic director of the public school district and each coach, informational meetings were arranged with the researcher, coach,

and potential participants in attendance. Each coach was then contacted approximately two days later to secure participants for the study. Informed consent and permission to audiotape the interviews were obtained before the interviews were conducted. The interviews were completed by the primary researcher in a familiar environment at each participant's school campus. The data collection process consisted of 45- to 60-minute interviews using the previously described interview format.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through content analysis guided by Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theoretical framework, using procedures based on previous sport psychology work (e.g., Gould et al., 1993; Scanlan et al., 1989; Weiss et al., 1991). Researchers (e.g., Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996; Patton, 1990) have identified multiple approaches for analyzing qualitative data. Specifically, Patton (1990) has proposed that both inductive (i.e., allowing themes to emerge) and deductive (i.e., using a predetermined set of themes and categories) approaches are appropriate for organizing raw data. Because the purpose of this study was to examine Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) personal investment theory in the sport setting, the data in this study were deductively classified, after first identifying raw data themes through a consensual validation process. It should be noted that a limitation in using this approach regards the possibility of bias in interpreting the data only in terms of the categories represented in the theory. To minimize bias, multiple researchers were involved in the data analysis and an external auditor was used to validate the results. Hence, by having multiple individuals classify the data, potential bias from one individual was controlled.

The first step in the analysis of data consisted of the transcription of each interview by the primary investigator. The second step in the analysis process was the identification of raw data themes. Two researchers who were trained in the interview methodology independently read the transcriptions until they became familiar with them. Each researcher then selected and identified appropriate raw data themes (i.e., quotes) for each participant's interview based on the nature of the study. Finally, both researchers reached a consensus regarding the final selection of raw data themes for each interview.

The selected raw data themes were categorized, clustered, and classified into lower order themes. The next step involved the assessment of the

nature of personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options and determinants for each group (i.e., basketball, cross-country). Specifically, lower order themes were clustered into appropriate higher order themes within Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theoretical model. Finally, similar higher order themes were combined into major categories that met the following criteria developed by Scanlan et al. (1989): (a) all individual themes which constitute the major category must be inclusive (capture the previous lower order themes); (b) all individual themes within the major category must be mutually exclusive (distinct from each other); and (c) a higher order theme must capture most of the lower order themes, leaving as few unclustered lower order themes as possible.

It should be noted that there has been a debate regarding the classification of goals (e.g., social approval) that appear to be both ego-oriented and socially-oriented. Previous research has shown that identifying social approval as an ego goal may mask its true nature (Hamilton, Blumenfeld, Akoh, & Miura, 1989). This study attempted to represent the true nature of the personal incentives for this group of participants. Therefore, those incentives (e.g., gaining social approval, representing one's school) that represented an individual's intentions to maintain positive relationships within a larger social unit (i.e., friends, family, school) rather than an effort to avoid appearing unable to achieve were labeled as social personal incentives. This interpretation fits within the constraints of Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theoretical model in which social incentives encourage conformity to others' expectations and the demonstration of virtuous intentions and serve to enhance relationships with others.

Consensus validation between the two coders for each category level (e.g., lower order themes) was established before proceeding to the next iterative level (e.g., higher order themes). If there was a disagreement, each coder provided a rationale for his or her decision and conferred with the other coder until an agreement was reached. At the conclusion of all analyses, an external reviewer conducted a confirmability audit to validate the consistency of the actions and conclusions of the coders according to guidelines suggested by previous research in sport psychology (e.g., Scanlan et al., 1989; Weiss et al., 1991). Specifically, this individual randomly selected various raw data themes and clustered them into lower and higher order themes, and then categorized them into the final major categories. The results of this audit yielded an acceptable reliability level of over 75% for the basketball and cross-country groups.

RESULTS

General findings of the content analysis are reported according to each of the research questions of the present study. The first research question investigated the nature of the personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options of high school basketball athletes. The second research question addressed these factors of sport participation for high school cross-country athletes.

The findings of the content analysis for both groups revealed that basketball and cross-country athletes described their positive and negative experiences in terms of the personal incentives and sense of self components of Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theory. The personal incentives category includes task (i.e., skill improvement, mastery), ego (i.e., winning, positive social comparison), and social (i.e., conformity to others' expectations, enhancing relationships) incentives. The four components of sense of self are: (a) self-identity, (b) self-reliance, (c) goal-directedness, and (d) sense of competence. The third component of Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theory, perceived options, was assessed through direct questioning of involvement in other activities and reasons for choosing certain activities for participation.

Profile of Basketball Athletes

The first research question examined the personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options of high school basketball athletes. The players defined their positive and negative experiences in sport in terms of Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options components. Figure 1 provides an example of the data analysis through a schematic representation of positive experiences for the basketball players.¹ Tables 1 and 2 provide a more comprehensive view of the data via the frequencies for lower data themes for positive and negative experiences of the sport groups (i.e., basketball, cross-country).

Personal incentives. For basketball athletes, the personal incentives category for positive and negative experiences was defined by task (e.g., effort, improvement, lack of effort, lack of task mastery), ego (e.g., winning, recognition, losing, negative social comparison), and social (e.g., team-

¹Schematic representations of negative experiences in sport participation were not included because of the general similarity to positive experiences and due to space limitations. This information is available upon request from the author.

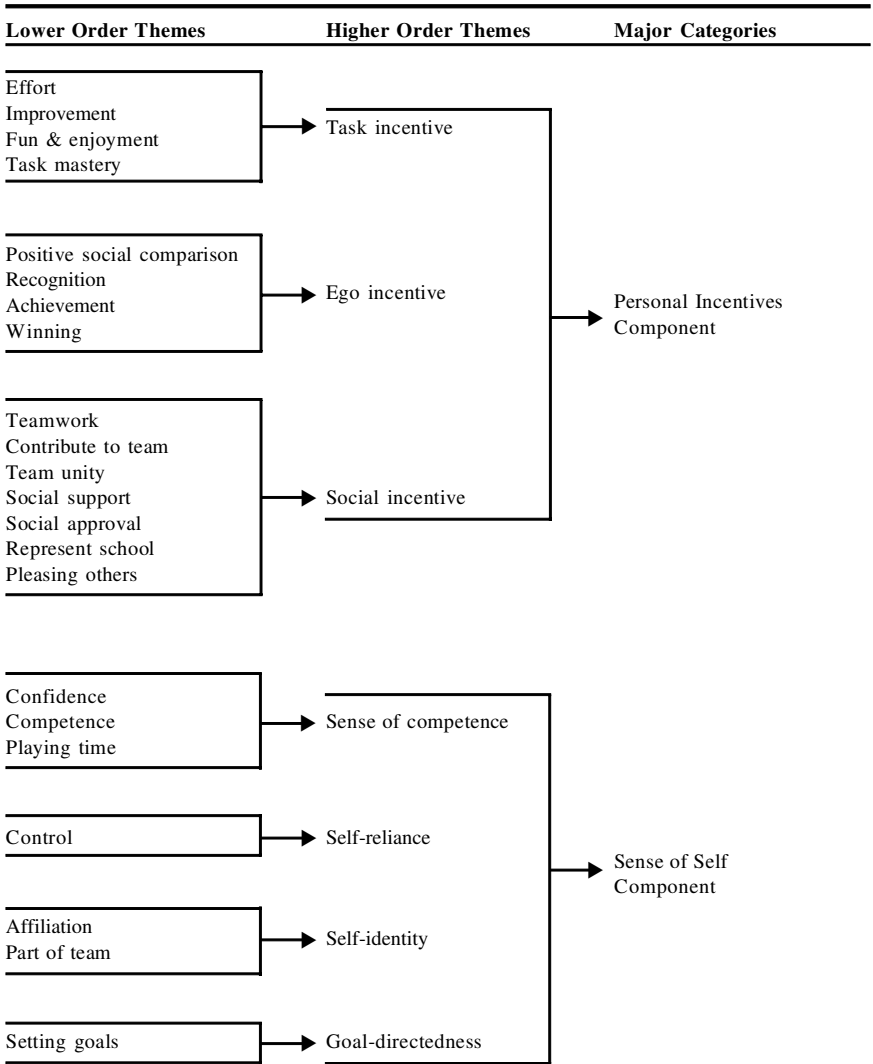


Figure 1. Positive experiences in sport participation among high school basketball athletes.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution for Positive Experiences for High School
Basketball and Cross-Country Athletes

Major Category Higher Order Themes Lower Order Themes	Number of Respondents	
	Basketball Athletes	Cross-Country Athletes
Personal Incentives		
Task incentive		
Effort	6	6
Improvement	6	5
Fun and enjoyment	3	1
Ran good time	0	4
Task mastery	2	1
Completed task	0	3
Fitness	0	1
Surpassed expectations	0	1
Ego incentive		
Positive social comparison	5	6
Recognition	5	5
Achievement	5	2
Winning	6	0
Social incentive		
Teamwork	5	1
Contribute to team	5	1
Team unity	5	0
Social support	4	0
Social approval	2	0
Represent school	1	1
Pleasing others	1	0
Social support for others	0	1
Sense of Self		
Sense of competence		
Confidence	5	5
Competence	2	3
Playing time	1	0
Self-reliance		
Control	1	5
Self-motivation	0	1
Self-identity		
Affiliation	4	0
Part of team	3	0
Goal-directedness		
Setting goals	1	4
Achieving goals	0	4

Table 2
Frequency Distribution for Negative Experiences for High School
Basketball and Cross-Country Athletes

Major Category Higher Order Themes Lower Order Themes	Number of Respondents	
	Basketball Athletes	Cross-Country Athletes
Personal Incentives		
Task incentive		
Lack of effort	5	5
Lack of improvement	1	5
Ran slow time	0	4
Lack of fun and enjoyment	1	2
Failed to meet expectations	0	3
Lack of task mastery	2	0
Playing in a slump	1	0
Failed to complete task	0	1
Lack of fitness	0	1
Ego incentive		
Negative social comparison	3	6
Losing	5	1
Lack of recognition	1	4
Lack of achievement	1	3
Social incentive		
Letting others/team down	4	1
Lack of teamwork	4	0
Lack of team unity	4	0
Lack of social approval	1	1
Lack of contribution to team	1	0
Lack of complete team	1	0
Lack of teammates' effort	1	0
Dependence on others	1	0
Lack of respect from others	1	0
Sense of Self		
Sense of competence		
Lack of confidence	5	6
Overconfidence	4	0
Lack of competence	2	2
Lack of playing time	2	0
Self-reliance		
Lack of control	4	4
Lack of motivation	1	2

work, team unity, letting others/team down, lack of teamwork) incentives. Specifically, the task incentive lack of effort evoked perceptions of lack of success. For instance, “[I did not feel successful in] junior high ’cause we had a real good team and our coach was pretty good but sometimes in practice we’d goof around just ’cause we were all such good friends and we. . . . I mean we wouldn’t go at it as hard as we should’ve.” In contrast, players felt successful when their performance resulted in recognition as, “it’s just the greatest feeling in the world when someone comes up and says that [you were unconscious] to you because I mean, you know, you were . . . you were it as far as the game goes. There’s nine other guys out there they could have been watching but they were watching you.” With respect to social incentives, players were not pleased when playing basketball was characterized by the social incentive letting others/team down. For example, one participant perceived that she was letting her team down because an injury had negatively impacted her performance. She said, “[I did not feel successful because] I thought I let the team down ’cause I couldn’t perform to the best of my ability.”

Sense of self. For positive and negative experiences of basketball athletes, the sense of self category consisted of the higher order themes sense of competence (e.g., confidence, competence, lack of confidence, overconfidence), self-reliance (e.g., control, lack of control), self-identity (e.g., part of team, affiliation), and goal-directedness (e.g., setting goals). In relation to pleasant experiences in basketball, players’ sense of competence consisted of confidence. For example, “[I felt proud and satisfied because] I think we just got it in our minds that we were gonna win.” In contrast, respondents were not pleased with their sport participation when they experienced a lack of competence. Specifically, “[I did not feel good] because I wasn’t like a good basketball player . . . I wasn’t good at it.” Negative experiences also resulted when basketball players perceived they did not have control over the situation. One player reported, “[I did not feel successful because] I was feeling really bad. I was really sick that game and I couldn’t do anything about it.” Only positive experiences in basketball participation were associated with the higher order theme self-identity. For example, basketball athletes enjoyed participation when it corresponded with being part of a team, as “[I felt proud and satisfied because] it’s [promotion to the varsity team] important to me ’cause it just makes me feel like I’m part of somebody . . . you just want to be in the crowd.” Finally, one basketball participant perceived experiences in a positive manner when it involved the ability to set goals and organize behavior accord-

ing to these goals. Although one participant experienced failure following a shooting slump, her comments reflected positive experiences as she talked about expectations for future outcomes of participation and what she could do “to make it better.”

Perceived options. The alternative activities that were perceived to be accessible and acceptable for the basketball participants were church (e.g., Fellowship of Christian Athletes), school (e.g., National Honor Society), volunteer services (e.g., Special Olympics), and work. The players also identified that their participation was determined by religion, affiliation, future opportunities, fun, time, finances, grades, and opportunities to help others or for personal growth.

Profile of Cross-Country Athletes

The second research question examined the personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options of high school cross-country athletes. The cross-country participants also reported their perceptions of sport participation according to personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options. Figure 2 provides a schematic representation of positive experiences in sport participation among cross-country athletes. Tables 1 and 2 reveal the frequencies of lower data theme responses for the sport participants.

Personal incentives. Task (e.g., effort, ran good time, lack of improvement, ran slow time), ego (e.g., positive social comparison, recognition, negative social comparison, lack of recognition), and social (e.g., teamwork, contribute to team, lack of social approval, let team/others down) incentives emerged regarding positive and negative experiences of cross-country athletes. Task incentives such as lack of improvement were related to unpleasant perceptions of running cross-country as one participant noted, “[I did not feel successful because] it’s the middle of the season and I should be doing . . . improving every week but just for some reason that one meet I always. . . . I just probably go down a little bit.”

Alternatively, cross-country sport participants reported pleasurable sport experiences as a result of positive social comparison, an ego-oriented theme. Specifically, “then you feel like you really accomplished something ’cause not . . . you know, not everyone can say that they run cross-country and do the workouts.” The socially-related theme contribution to the team also evoked perceptions of success. For instance, “[I felt successful because] I just tried to get the least amount of points for the team as I could.” Nega-

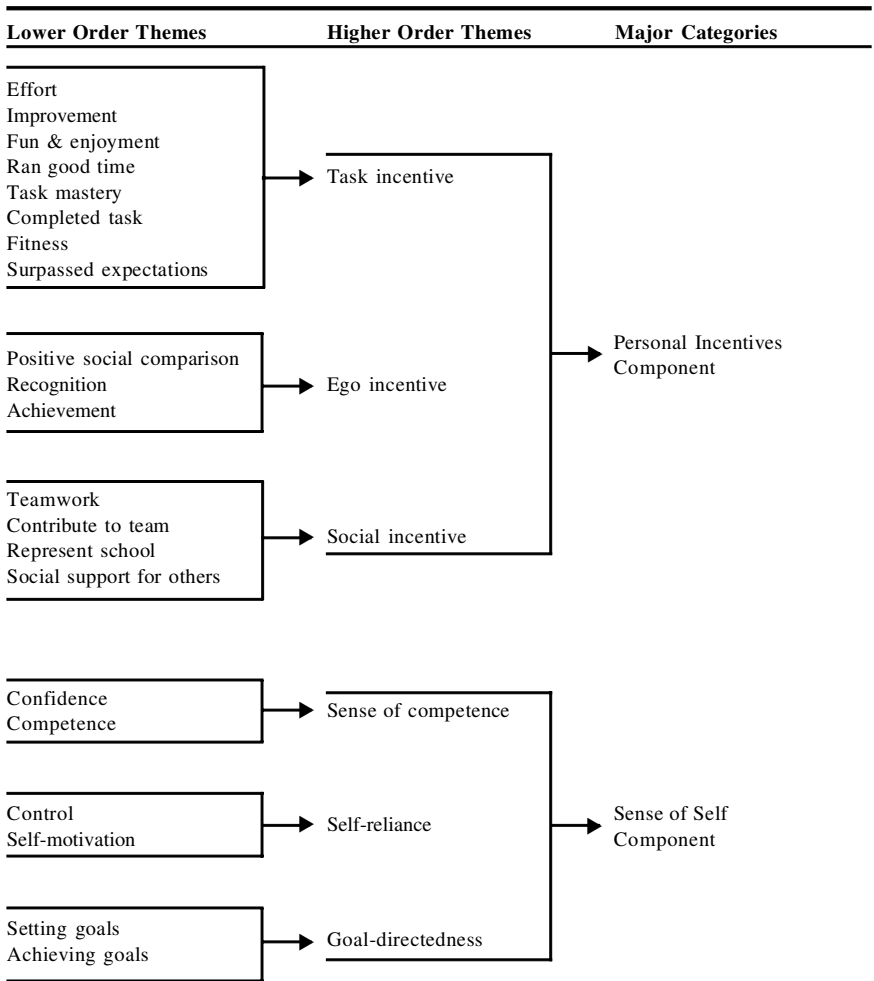


Figure 2. Positive experiences in sport participation among high school cross-country athletes.

tive perceptions of running followed perceptions of lack of social approval as, “[I did not feel good because] I thought they [people] might think I wasn’t trying or know I didn’t do my best.”

Sense of self. Cross-country participants reported their positive and negative experiences in terms of sense of competence (e.g., confidence, competence, lack of confidence, lack of competence), self-reliance (e.g., control, lack of control), and goal-directedness (e.g., setting goals, achieving goals). Feeling confident in one’s ability as a runner contributed to positive experiences for the cross-country participants. For example, one runner noted perceptions of pride and satisfaction in relation to confidence: “I was focused on the race and I just . . . I knew I was going to do better than usual.” Lack of competence contributed to perceptions of lack of success: “[I did not feel successful because] it’s just like I wasn’t good or anything.” Individuals’ self-reliance was associated with unpleasant experiences through lack of control. Specifically, “[I did not feel proud because] it just didn’t happen. I couldn’t make myself go.”

In contrast, perceptions of complete control of one’s performance was consistently cited as a contributing factor to pleasant experiences for cross-country runners. For instance, “it makes you feel good if you’re running individually and you do good whereas most teams you’re depending on other people to help you out . . . you’re just one on one with, you know, you and everybody else.” Setting and achieving goals also resulted in pleasant experiences for runners, as “I felt good because I set out for a goal and I had . . . I made my goal.”

Perceived options. Cross-country athletes reported alternative participation in community (e.g., youth division of the Lions Club), school, church, work, professional activities (e.g., writing for local paper), and volunteer services. Their participation in various activities was determined by religion, grades, ability, enjoyment, affiliation, fitness, family influence, future opportunities, and opportunities to represent school and help others and for personal growth.

DISCUSSION

The present study consisted of an analysis of achievement motivation among basketball and cross-country athletes based on Maehr and Braskamp’s (1986) personal investment theory (PIT). The first research question examined the nature of achievement motivation among basketball participants. The results revealed that basketball players used personal

incentives that were task (e.g., improvement, lack of effort), ego (e.g., recognition, losing), and social (e.g., teamwork, letting others/team down) in nature to define positive and negative experiences in basketball. The meaning of sport situations was also characterized by the individuals' perceptions of who they are (i.e., sense of self). Basketball participants described their experiences in terms of sense of competence (e.g., confidence, lack of confidence, overconfidence), self-identity (e.g., affiliation, part of team), self-reliance (e.g., lack of control), and goal-directedness (e.g., setting goals). The players identified alternative activities (e.g., church, school) considered to be accessible and acceptable and highlighted a variety of determinants (e.g., affiliation, fun, time, finances) for participation.

The second research question addressed the nature of personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options among cross-country athletes. Results revealed that cross-country participants described their sport experiences according to task (e.g., effort, lack of improvement), ego (e.g., recognition, negative social comparison), and social (e.g., teamwork, lack of social approval) personal incentives. Runners also described positive and negative experiences according to sense of self which consisted of sense of competence (e.g., confidence, competence, lack of confidence), self-reliance (e.g., control, lack of control), and goal-directedness (e.g., setting goals, achieving goals). They reported several alternative activities (e.g., community, school) for participation and highlighted determinants such as ability, fun, and future opportunities as reasons for participation.

The findings of this study provide support for Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theory as both basketball and cross-country sport participants described their sport experiences in terms of personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options. The results also revealed the presence of socially-oriented motivation as athletes described positive and negative experiences in sport from a social perspective. For example, perceptions of teamwork contributed to pleasant experiences in sport, as "[I felt successful because] we all came together finally, started making the shots go in, and working as a team, and running all the plays together." Also, "[In regard to running with a teammate in workout] we'd kinda just pull each other." These and other socially-related perceptions of sport participation provide support for research that has encouraged the inclusion (e.g., Urdan & Maehr, 1995) and detected the presence (e.g., Hayashi, 1996) of socially-oriented motivation. The reported perceptions of athletes in this study are of a social nature, and would be mislabeled and subsequently, misunderstood if only task (e.g., effort and improvement) and ego (e.g., winning

and social comparison) goal orientations were utilized to understand achievement motivation of the participants.

Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) PIT allows for task, ego, and social goals to be identified. With further use, it is likely that specific types of social goals (e.g., social support, team unity, contribution to team, social approval) will consistently emerge and be labeled. This information will then be available for use in future investigations within the realm of achievement motivation.

The data also indicated variations in achievement motivation among sport groups (i.e., basketball vs. cross-country). For example, basketball players cited a relationship between the ego incentive of winning and positive experiences in sport, while winning did not emerge as a theme for cross-country runners. This may occur as a result of the nature of success according to each group. There are just two competitors or teams in basketball, and one is either on the winning or the losing team. In contrast, there could be more than 200 competitors in cross-country, so that if one defined winning as finishing first, then one's potential for losing would be far greater than for winning. Therefore, cross-country runners may adjust their perceptions of experiences so that participation can result in pleasant and successful experiences according to their place (e.g., in the top 20) or their time.

With respect to social incentives, it was evident that socially-oriented motives played a larger role for the team-oriented athletes (i.e., basketball players). Only six social personal incentives emerged for the cross-country athletes with each theme being reported by one participant and only theme (i.e., social support for others) uniquely represented cross-country runners. In contrast, at least four basketball participants identified seven social personal incentives and 11 themes were uniquely reported by basketball athletes. Specifically, four themes reflecting positive experiences (i.e., team unity, social support, social approval, pleasing others) and seven themes reflecting negative experiences (i.e., lack of teamwork, lack of team unity, lack of contribution to team, lack of complete team, lack of teammates' effort, dependence on others, lack of respect from others) represented social personal incentives for the basketball group.

Variations in perceptions of social incentives such as team unity/lack of team unity and teamwork/lack of teamwork in achievement motivation appear to be linked with the nature of each sport as interactive sports involve a greater amount of interaction between team members as identified by Cox (1994). Furthermore, Carron (1980) contends that sport groups

such as basketball teams possess “a sense of shared purpose or objectives, structured patterns of interaction and modes of communication, personal and/or task interdependence, and interpersonal attraction” (p. 177). Thus, team unity and teamwork may be important for these basketball players because they contribute to team success and subsequently, to individual success. Similarly, the emergence of other unique social incentives (e.g., social approval, lack of contribution to team, dependence on others) reflect the basketball players’ perceptions of interdependence among team members and the public nature of individual performances within the larger team sport context.

Sense of self components also differed between basketball and cross-country sport participants. Only the cross-country runners reported the achievement of goals in relation to positive experiences in sport. For these runners, the achievement of goals may be more evident since goals would be more individually based than for a basketball player. For example, cross-country runners may tend to evaluate the achievement of goals according to personal times rather than contribution to team score. Conversely, basketball players may consider personal statistics in relation to team victory or achievement.

With respect to self-identity, the lower order themes of affiliation and being part of a team contributed to positive experiences only for the basketball participants. Although cross-country runners form a team, performance is more independent and not directly influenced by other team members. As noted earlier, basketball team members experience shared goals, specific patterns of communication, and/or task interdependence (Carron, 1980). Therefore, affiliation with teammates and belonging to a team may have been more salient for the basketball players in this study.

In relation to negative experiences and the sense of self, basketball athletes did not feel competent when they experienced a lack of playing time and consequently did not enjoy participation in basketball. This perception of sport participation did not surface for cross-country athletes. For the cross-country runners in this study, limits of participation or lack of opportunities to compete in meets did not exist and thus, were not related to feelings of competence.

This research study was limited in scope in that it was based on the perceptions of sport experiences among 12 high school athletes. The strength of the social personal incentives among the basketball athletes and distinct variations among the cross-country and basketball athletes, however, suggest the need to further examine social factors of motivation with a broader

representation of individual and team sport athletes. Although some researchers (e.g., Kamal et al., 1985; Tenenbaum & Furst, 1985) have compared intrinsic motivational and attributional characteristics of individual and team sport athletes, very little achievement motivation research has been extended into the domain of sport groups. Examining achievement motivation among individual and team sport athletes from a multiple goal perspective may provide researchers and practitioners with further insight into the possible social motives for sport participation.

This research presents implications for practice and research, particularly in terms of situational factors (e.g., motivational climate) related to goal perspectives. Ames and Archer (1988) have proposed that motivational climate serves as a function of the evaluation process as well as the goals to be achieved. Although sport psychology research (e.g., Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992; Solmon, 1996) has emphasized the motivational implications of ego- versus task-involving motivational climates, the results of this research present a case for examining the existence and promotion of a social motivational climate. The athletes in this study, particularly the basketball players, indicated the importance of social factors in achievement motivation. Hence, it may be beneficial for coaches of high school athletes to consider: (a) incorporating social motives into team practices and competitions (e.g., setting specific, short-term team and individual goals that contribute to team achievement), (b) including team contribution in addition to personal accomplishments in the process and communication of evaluation and reward systems, and (c) providing opportunities (e.g., informal social events) beyond the actual sport setting that foster affiliation and belonging.

Although the present study offered an initial contribution to the literature concerning motivational orientations of athletes in particular sport groups, more research is needed. This study found evidence for social factors of motivation among the research participants by using the broader theoretical framework offered by Maehr and Braskamp (1986). This study also revealed that the athletes value multiple personal incentives in that they reported positive and negative experiences in terms of task, ego, and social goals. This suggests the importance of taking a broad perspective when examining the motives of high school athletes and the associated motivational climate of high school athletic programs.

Finally, the direction of the relationship between sport involvement and motivational orientation should be examined. Are socially-oriented athletes more attracted to sports that involve high levels of interaction or does

a highly interactive sport environment create situations in which athletes become more socially-oriented? Future studies might investigate the tendency of athletes who have a dominant motivational orientation (i.e., ego, social, task) to participate in specific sports, or the possibility that participation in specific types of sports influences the nature and magnitude of motivational orientations.

More research in this area is warranted as researchers attempt to understand achievement motivation in the sport domain. Specifically, there is a need to examine socially-oriented motivation for a greater understanding of achievement motivation. Sport research in achievement motivation has continually relied on quantitative measures primarily based on task and ego goal orientations to the exclusion of other relevant goal orientations. Only when researchers broaden their conceptualization of achievement motivation and explore underused testing sites (i.e., diverse sport groups) will we gain a more comprehensive understanding of achievement motivation.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW ITEMS

The interview items and associated components from Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) personal investment theory included the following:

1. Think about and describe a time when you had experienced success in a specific sport situation (*personal incentives, sense of self*).
2. Think about and describe a time when you had experienced a lack of success in a specific sport situation (*personal incentives, sense of self*).
3. Think about and describe a time when you felt good about yourself in a specific sport situation (*personal incentives, sense of self*).
4. Think about and describe a time when you did not feel good about yourself in a specific sport situation (*personal incentives, sense of self*).
5. Think about and describe a time when you felt proud and satisfied with something you had experienced in sport (*personal incentives, sense of self*).

6. Think about and describe a time when you did not feel proud and satisfied with something you had experienced in sport (*personal incentives, sense of self*).
7. Describe other activities that you are involved in outside of sport (*perceived options*).
8. State determinants for whether you participate in sport or in other activities (*perceived options*).