

# Participation Motivation in University Students Who Engage in Different Team Sports

Umit Dogan Ustun<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Physical Education and Sports Mustafa Kemal University, Hatay, Turkey

\*Correspondence: School of Physical Education and Sports Mustafa Kemal University, Hatay, Turkey. Tel: 90-546-898-5064. E-mail: [umit.dogan.ustun@gmail.com](mailto:umit.dogan.ustun@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the motives for university students who engage in different team sports mutually. The cross-sectional method was used in the study. The study sample consisted of 280 university students from Dumlupinar University School of Physical Education and Sports. The participants were chosen according to stratified random sampling method and participated in the study voluntarily. In the study in order to collect data Turkish version of Gill and colleagues' Sports Participation Questionnaire was used. In the evaluation of the data in addition to descriptive statistical methods, MANOVA was used as the hypothesis test. According to MANOVA results, there were significant differences between the motives for university students in achievement, physical fitness, skills development and movement/being active factors. The findings of this study can assist intercollegiate coaches and athletic administrators to understand the motivational patterns of university students for participating in sports and allow them to develop strategies which can prevent students from quitting sports participation and exercise.

**Keywords:** university students, sports, sports participation, motivation

## 1. Introduction

Sports can be found in everyday life of individuals of all ages with different functions, and nowadays besides being a recreational activity that individuals can participate actively or passively, sports may influence individuals' life as a profession (Aycan & Yıldız, 2016). As being example, sporting events promoted by names such as "Physical Fitness" in the USA and Canada, "Trim Dich" in Germany and "Sports for All" or "Sports Pour Tout" in many countries are rapidly spreading among the masses of people (Erkan, 1994, cited in Ekmekçi, Arslan, Ekmekçi, & Ağbuğa, 2010).

Especially, after the scientifically proven positive effects of regular sports or physical exercise on human health from psychological and physical aspects (U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, 2010), the sport has started to be recommended for people of all ages (Ekmekçi et al., 2010). But, despite the positive effects of sports, researchers have expressed that because of the radical changes in people's everyday life with the rapid advances in technology and industry individuals participate in fewer physical activities (Zorba, 2001, cited in Görgüt & Güllü, 2016).

### 1.1 Literature Review

One of the major questions of psychology is undoubtedly the question "What are the motivational elements behind human behavior?" Why do we produce enormous energy for some activities and why we can't do for some? In sports research the basic answer is motivation. Because, motivation is used to explain the differing behavior of individuals in sporting or athletic situation (Chandler, Cronin, & Vamplew, 2002), and that is the reason why motivation in the sports research is one of the most intensively used terms in explaining concepts such as movement and effective performance (Bollok, Takacs, Kalmar, & Dobay, 2011).

When examined in terms of exercise psychology, participation motivation tries to explain why individuals participate in exercise and sport (Markland & Ingledew, 2007). According to Daniels and Lawton (2003), participation motivation is based on the frontier works of Deci and Ryan in 1980s, which theoretically examines motivation as intrinsic and extrinsic.

According to researchers, motives such as fun, personal challenge, and social affiliation are autonomous oriented, and this lead individuals to exercise and sport more intrinsically. When such intrinsic motivations predominate exercise and sports participation, participation process is likely to be accompanied by a sense of volition and freedom from pressure and therefore long-term commitment is to be expected, and engagement will be accompanied by positive exercise-related cognitions and effect. Motives such as weight loss, improving physical appearance, or pleasing others, however, are more likely to be experienced as internally controlling (e.g., as when one tells oneself "I must exercise to lose weight"), and reflect extrinsic motivation. When one is regulated in a controlling fashion, long-term commitment to an activity is less probable and will be accompanied by feelings of tension and pressure to act (Markland & Ingledew, 2007).

Studies in the extent of the participation motivation theory have been accelerated with the understanding that sport and exercise participation is a good tool for creating a healthy society (Görgüt & Güllü, 2016). And towards this direction, in the literature it is possible to find out studies related to university students (Dwyer, 1992; Dalkıran & Aslan, 2016), high school students (Şirin, Çağlayan, Çetin, & İnce, 2008), and even secondary school (Daley & O’Gara, 1998; Sit & Lindner, 2006) and primary school students (Görgüt & Güllü, 2016).

Researchers indicated that the ratio of exercise and sport participation in the transition from high school to university dropped, that only 38% of university students regularly participated in light tempo exercises and 20% participated in moderate intensity exercises (Douglas, Collins, & Warren, 1997, cited in Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005), moreover, after university graduations, almost half of the students quit sports and exercise (Calfas, Sallis, Lovato, & Campbell, 1994, cited in Kilpatrick et al., 2005). So, the present study aimed to investigate which motives play an effective role in sports participation for university students who engage in different team sports in the extent of participation motivation theory.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Study Design

In the present study, we used the cross-sectional method as study design. According to this method, first, data is collected from the sampling group in order to identify relationships between the patterns and then generalized back to the population (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

### 2.2 Study Sample

In the study, 280 university students from Kutahya Dumlupınar University School of Physical Education and Sports voluntarily participated. The stratified random sampling method was used in order to determine the study sample (Balvanes & Caputi, 2001).

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Demographic Features of the Participants

		N	%
Age (23.28 ± 3.633)	17-22	135	48.2
	23-25	91	32.5
	26 ≥	54	19.3
Gender	Female	69	24.6
	Male	211	75.4
Weekly duration of sport	1-5 hours	114	40.7
	6-10 hours	89	31.8
	11-15 hours	57	20.4
	16 ≥ hours	20	7.1
	Total	280	100.0

### 2.3 Data Collection Tool

In the present study, in order to collect data Turkish version of Gill and colleagues’ participation motivation questionnaire was used. The Turkish version of the questionnaire was first adopted into Turkish by Çelebi in 1993 and then revised by Oyar and colleagues in 2001 by using explanatory factor analytic method (Oyar, Aşçı, Çelebi, & Mülazımoğlu, 2001). According to Oyar et al., (2001)'s findings, the Turkish version of the questionnaire consists of 29 items and 8 factors. In the study, we referenced Oyar and colleagues’ work.

### 2.4 Analyzing of Data

In the analyses of the data first, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated and found as .745 (N=29). In the study in order to avoid type one error and analyze the effect of the independent variable (Sports Branch) on the dependent variable (Participation Motivation), MANOVA was used. However, there are some assumptions for the MANOVA analysis (Alkan & Atakan, 2015). The Box's M Test for analyzing the distributions of the covariance matrices, and the Levene's Test results, which examine the homogeneity of the variances, showed that these assumptions are met.

### 3. Results

**Table 2.** MANOVA Results

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Success	Football	139	1.210	0.234	11.473	.000
	Basketball	92	1.383	0.302		
	Volleyball	49	1.286	0.292		
Physical fitness	Football	139	1.145	0.188	5.943	.003
	Basketball	92	1.237	0.276		
	Volleyball	49	1.131	0.176		
Team Spirit	Football	139	1.131	0.222	5.109	.007
	Basketball	92	1.231	0.280		
	Volleyball	49	1.230	0.314		
Friend	Football	139	1.405	0.363	1.631	.198
	Basketball	92	1.435	0.404		
	Volleyball	49	1.524	0.461		
Fun	Football	139	1.300	0.294	0.318	.728
	Basketball	92	1.313	0.296		
	Volleyball	49	1.270	0.322		
Competition	Football	139	1.213	0.295	2.106	.124
	Basketball	92	1.301	0.353		
	Volleyball	49	1.231	0.328		
Skills Development	Football	139	1.074	0.170	8.33	.000
	Basketball	92	1.185	0.244		
	Volleyball	49	1.109	0.197		
Being active	Football	139	1.112	0.256	5.455	.005
	Basketball	92	1.239	0.367		
	Volleyball	49	1.122	0.261		

There was a significant difference between football, basketball and volleyball players when considered jointly on the variables participation motivation Wilk's  $\lambda = .837$ ,  $F = (16-540) 3.145$ ;  $p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .085$ . A separate ANOVA was conducted for each dependent variable, with each ANOVA evaluated at an alpha level .0062. There was a significant difference between participants participant motivation on success [ $F(2-280) = 11.473$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $p < .006$ ], physical fitness [ $F(2-280) = 5.943$ ;  $p = .003$ ;  $p < .006$ ], skills development [ $F(2-280) = 8.330$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $p < .006$ ], and being active [ $F(2-280) = 5.455$ ;  $p = .005$ ;  $p < .006$ ] with participants who play basketball scoring higher than participants who play volleyball and football. But there were no significant differences between participants participation motivation on team spirit [ $F(2-280) = 5.109$ ;  $p = .007$ ;  $p > .006$ ], friend [ $F(2-280) = 1.631$ ;  $p = .198$ ;  $p < .006$ ], fun [ $F(2-280) = .318$ ;  $p = .728$ ;  $p < .006$ ] and competition [ $F(2-280) = 2.106$ ;  $p = .124$ ;  $p < .006$ ].

#### 4. Discussion

This paper aimed to examine the motives, which direct university students who engage in different team sports to these sports branches mutually. The question of the study was to identify whether sports branch affects the participation motivation of university students. As an answer to research question in the study, Manova results revealed that participation motivation of the participants' significantly differed in achievement, physical fitness, skills development and movement/being active factors (table 2). This result is supported by previous research. For example in their study Morris, Clayton, Power & Han (1995) found that team sports participants placed more emphasis on challenge, fun, and affiliation, while exercise participants rated health/fitness motives to be more important. Furthermore, Bollok et al., (2011) indicated significant differences on participation motives of team sport participants on several factors and pointed out team sport participants were inspired to win over others, unlike those engaged in individual sports. Also, if we examine the literature we can see that motives for sports participation for university students can vary. For example, according to researchers this motive for team sports participants can be "success" (Gürer, Yıldırım, Abakay, Esentaş, & Uğurlu, 2015) or "to have fun" (Frederick & Ryan, 1993). Researchers indicated that energy consumption, success, having fun, skills development and friend are some of the main motives that influence sports participation (White & Duda, 1995; Kiper, 2004; Cerar, Kondric, & Sindik, 2017).

Also, according to descriptive Manova results although "friend" was found to be the most inlying motive, this result was insignificant ( $p > .05$ ). Success was the most inlying significant motive for three of the team sports participants ( $p < .05$ ). In the literature, there are studies with similar or different results. For example, in their quantitative study, Acar and Gündüz (2017) found skills development as the most inlying motive. Similarly, in their study on university students Ekmekçi et al., (2010) found skills development as the most inlying motive, and friend as the most distal motive.

Altıntaş and Bayar Koruç (2014) indicated that different results existing in the literature are a result of different study groups. Because while these groups are sometimes competitive sportsmen sometimes are recreational sports participants. Although present findings show a difference to aforementioned studies, it is important to understand effective motives for sports participation in order to develop strategies for students not to quit sport or exercise.

#### 5. Conclusion

Studies in the literature have indicated that a big majority of students who come to the university have stopped participating in the sport, and after college graduation, almost half of these students have left sport or exercise (Kilpatrick et al., 2005). Determination of the motivations that are active in sport participation is important because these motives can increase the participation of individuals in physical activity (Del Pilar Vilchez & De Francisco, 2017).

Although, present study findings revealed evidence about the motives for exercise and sport participation for university students, future studies must focus on identifying these motives in-depth in order to help university students in increasing their participation in the sport, as well as encouraging their active participation in the sport after graduation.

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