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Persons with Disabilities and Their Motives for Participating in Sports

Nagoor Meera Abdullah[1]*, Mohamad Nizam Mohamed Shapie[1], Norazhan Che Lan[2], Asiah Mohd Pilus[2] and Mohamad Nizam Nazarudin[3]

[1]Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi Mara, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
[2]Universiti Teknikal Malaysia, 76100 Durian Tunggal, Melaka, Malaysia
[3]Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to identify motives for athletes who are disabled to participate in sports. Hundred (n=100) respondents (60 male; 40 female), aged between 16 and 55 and who are wheelchair bound participated in this study. Close-ended questionnaire that tested five motives were distributed to the participants. They were: ask-oriented motives, social-integration motives, fitness-oriented motives, ego-oriented motives and social-affective motives. The SPSS version 5 was used to analyse data. Descriptive statistical method to obtain mean and the standard deviation and independent T-test showed no significant difference in motives factors among the male and the female athletes ($p = .091$; $p > 0.05$). There were no significant differences on both gender perceived fitness-oriented motives ($p = .697$; $p > 0.05$) and social-affective motives ($p = .124$; $p > 0.05$) and task-oriented motives ($p = .895$; $p > 0.05$) as the main factors for participation. However, there were significant differences in social-integration motives ($p = 0.043$; $p < 0.05$) and ego-oriented motives ($p = 0.033$; $p < 0.05$). It is important to encourage sports participation among persons with disabilities and the facilities need to be disabled friendly.

Keywords: Motives, persons with disabilities, physical fitness

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E-mail addresses:
nameera_ab@yahoo.com.my (Nagoor Meera Abdullah),
nizam7907@salam.uitm.edu.my
(Mohamad Nizam Mohamed Shapie),
norazhan@salam.uitm.edu.my (Norazhan Che Lan),
asiah@utem.edu.my (Asiah Mohd Pilus),
drnizam.ums@gmail.com (Mohamad Nizam Nazarudin)
* Corresponding author

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INTRODUCTION

The term sports include all forms of competitive or even recreational physical activities. One of the focus areas in sport psychology is on sports socialisation, or the reasons or motivation to participate in sports. It is important to understand

what motivation is in the context of sports and participation. Every individual has different motive to participate in sports such as enjoyment, physical fitness, social relationship or goal attainment (Bartle & Malkin, 2000). Jennings (1997) revealed a direct relationship between sports participation and parental influence. Young athletes stated that their reasons for participating were to improve skills, to experience challenge, have fun and to be physically fit (Shapie, Oliver, O'Donoghue, & Tong, 2014). Even though people with disabilities are less likely to engage in regular or moderate physical activity than people without disabilities, yet, they have the same needs to promote their health and prevent secondary disease (Henderson, 1999). People with disabilities may experience life in a different way and so, it is possible that they may be socialised into sports differently than able-bodied athletes. Person with disabilities are identified as a targeted subgroup at particular risk for disease and premature mortality that can be reduced or prevented by increasing participation in regular physical activity (Santiago & Coyle 2004). Earlier studies suggest that athletes who are visually-impaired tend to be inactive throughout their life (Abdullah, Ampofo-Boateng, & Zawi, 2008)

Many athletes with disabilities agreed that their participation in sports affirmed their competence and worth (Caruthers & Hood, 2004). According to Bartle and Malkin (2000), an increase in participation in wheelchair sports, is an indication adolescents with disabilities were motivated to remain healthy, competent and socially active. When comparing wheelchair-bound participants and non-participants, those engaging in physical activities or sport have a positive spirit of well-being and high vigour with lower tension, depression, anger and confusion (Bartle & Markin, 2000). The success in wheelchair sports stems from a number of factors, including perseverance, overall health and quality of the equipment. Jennings (1997) reported that adults and youth participants who use wheelchair have different source of motivation. . Youth participants with disabilities focus their participation reasons around fun, being with friends, improving skills and being competitive.

Many individuals with a spinal cord injury (SCI) rely on their wheelchairs to complete their daily mobility tasks. Unfortunately, there are many mobility challenges for wheelchair users. Meyers, Anderson, Miller, Shipp, and Hoenig (2002) found that wheelchair users reported curbs, uneven terrain, and travel surface as barriers to their mobility. Kilkens, Post, Dallmeijer, van Asbeck, and van der Woude (2005) reported that skills performance to be moderately associated with participation. Therefore, the inability to perform certain skills can affect the athletes' independence and participation in daily activities (Oyster et al., 2012). In the past, deaf athletes were often associated with school for the hearing impaired. Participation in sports is no exception. Selecting the right activity

can produce a very positive and beneficial experience for them.

Additionally, there are certain accepted psychological principles that can be used to motivate athletes with disability. (Roy Choudhury 2001). Motivation is vital in competitive sports, where the athletes and players try their best to accomplish the goal to perform better in competition. Nosek and Hughes (2003) stated that women have greater risks of psychological problems and women with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged group. Self-esteem and its related constructs appear to play a central role in the psychological well-being of the disabled. Thus, the aim of the study is to identify the motives for disabled people to participate in sports.

METHODS

Design

This is a quantitative research to explore and investigate the motives for sports participation among the disabled. A questionnaire survey was conducted using 100 respondents who were wheelchair athletes.

Sampling

A total of hundred (n=100) respondents (60 male; 40 female), aged between 16 and 55 and who are wheelchair bound took part in the study. They were from Industrial and Rehabilitation Centre for Physical Disabilities, Spastic Children Centre of Selangor, Cheras Rehabilitation Centre and Wheelchair Tennis Malaysia.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire comprised closed-ended items. There were two sections: Section A consisted of 10 multiple choice structured questions to obtain demographic data such as age, marital status, education level and occupation. Section B consisted of questions that required Likert-type Scale responses for five motivation factors: Task Oriented Motives, Social Integration Motives, Fitness Oriented Motives, Ego Oriented Motives and Social Affective Motives were adapted from Bartle and Malkin (2000), and Shapiro and Yun (2003). The reliability of the instrument was high with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.75.

Data analysis

The analysis was conducted using the SPSS method. Descriptive statistical method such as mean and the standard deviation and independent T-test were used in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic data

Sixty male and 40 females wheelchair bound respondents took part in the study. They were mostly athletes, basketball and tennis players (refer Table 1).

Table 1
Type of sports based on gender

Numb	Sports	Male	Female	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Athletics	8	5	13	13.0
2.	Basketball	7	5	12	12.0
3.	Swimming	2	1	3	3.0
4.	Table tennis	7	9	16	16.0
5.	Powerlifting	4	3	7	7.0
6.	Wheelchair tennis	12	8	20	20.0
7.	Boccia	6	4	10	10.0
8.	Others	14	5	19	19.0
	TOTAL	60	40	100	100

Table 2 shows the motivation factors for male and the female respondents. For the male respondents, the mean value for the social integration motives was the highest among the five factors (2.92) followed by the fitness oriented motives (2.90), social affective motives (2.65), task oriented motives (2.52) and the lowest was the ego oriented motives (2.35). For the female respondents, the fitness oriented motives (2.85) was the highest among the 5 factors examined in the study, followed by social integration motives (2.72), task oriented motives (2.50), and social affective motives (2.43) and the lowest was the ego oriented motives (2.10).

Table 2
Comparison of motivation factors based on gender

	Male		Female	
	Mean (m)	Rank	Mean (m)	Rank
Social Integration	2.92	1	2.72	2
Fitness oriented	2.90	2	2.85	1
Social Affective	2.65	3	2.43	4
Task Oriented	2.52	4	2.50	3
Ego oriented	2.35	5	2.10	5

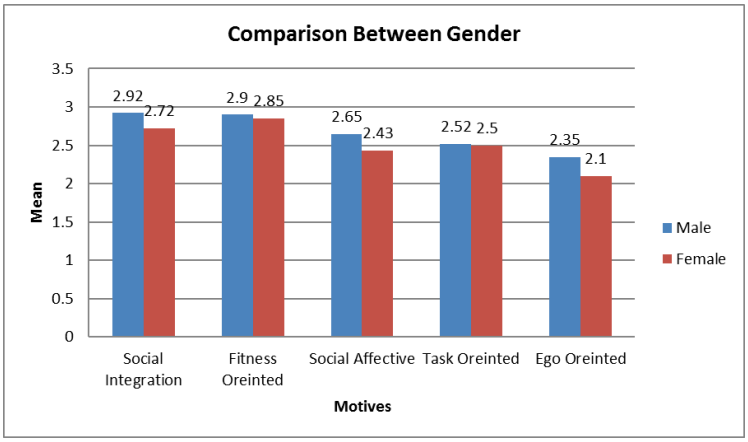

Figure 1. Comparison of Motivation factors based on gender

Table 3 shows the results of t-test between genders. There was no significant difference in motivation factors among the male and females (0.091, p>0.05).

Table 3
T-test result between male and the female athletes

Gender	N	Mean (m)	T	df	Sig. (2
Male	60	2.12			
Female	40	2.00			

**(p<0.05)*

Table 4 shows the *p* value for the five motivation factors. There is no significant difference in motive among the male and the female wheelchair athletes (p=0.091; p>0.05). There are no significant differences on both gender perceived fitness-oriented motives (p=0.697; p>0.05) and social-affective motives (p=0.124; p>0.05) and task-oriented motives (p=0.895; p> 0.05) as the main factors for participation. However, there are significant differences in social-integration motives (p=0.43; p<0.05) and ego-oriented motives (p=0.033; p<0.05).

Table 4
Result of t-test based on the five motive factors

Motives	T	Sig. (2 tailed)
Social Integration	2.050	.0438888
Fitness Oriented	0.3900000	.697
Social Affective	1.552	.124
Task Oriented	0.1303	.895
Ego oriented	2.169	.033

**(p<0.05)*

Based on the results, the social integration motive ($p=0.43$; $p<0.05$) was significant and male athletes had higher scores. A social integration motive is the second most important motive for females. The male respondents strongly agreed that sports can give them the opportunity to explore and experience new environment rather than to socialise as expressed by the females. Social integration was more important for athletes with disabilities. Bartle (2000) also found that only significant difference between able and disabled male adolescent basketball players was that the latter emphasised on social integration as the primary motivation factor.

Fitness is the second most important motivation factor. The male respondents were concerned with their public appearance and therefore, exercise was important for them in order to be physically fit compared with women. Santiago and Coyle (2004) indicated that nearly half of the women with disabilities were unable to do work due to their disability or illness but they engaged in physical activities to remain healthy. Blinde and McCalister (1999) identified the dominant theme among the women was to maintain their physique. Women perceived sports and physical activity as a way to help preserve and maintain a healthy body.

Both genders scored high on the Social Affective Motives factor. The male athletes indicated parental and familial support and encouragement as very important while the female respondents place a higher value on and the companionship of their loves ones. According to Feminist Majority Foundation (2001), female athletes with acquired disabilities already have support from their teachers, coaches, friends and partners. Cresswell, Hodge and Kidman (2003) surmised that participation in any kind of activity by persons with disabilities depends on the friendship and relationship with others. Social support by friends, family members and health care personnel appears to be a powerful determinant of their disability adjustment (Krischner, Ormond, & Gill 2000).

Items on improving skills level were regarded as important by both genders. The Ego oriented motives is the least important among all the factors for both genders. Wilhite, Keller, Hodges, and Caldwell (2004) tested disabled basketball athletes

on task and ego orientation. They revealed that task orientation scored higher than ego. Therefore, it is essential to note that the advantages of supporting task oriented approaches in sport.

All six items in ego oriented motives (ego motives, recognition, personal reward, getting medal, gain respect, take the sport as the challenge and instead of being in the group) showed that the male athletes scored higher than the females show of their masculinity and male identity. Youths cited competition as their primary motive, similar to their able-bodied counterparts, while the adults cited the health aspect of exercise as a primary factor.

CONCLUSION

It is a truism that through sports, we can embrace people from all walks of lives, and in this case bringing the disabled into the mainstream and offer them a more meaningful live. Participating in sports will arguably allow them to have a sense of belonging by socialising with the able-bodied, and the opportunity to explore new environment and places.

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