

## Motivational orientations and participation motives among adult *Liha* players

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**Abstract:** In the Philippines, literature is scant regarding adult sport participation. Recently, a publication by Santelices and Cua (2010) revealed an underground sport which had its roots from the American sponge racket table tennis. The sport called *liha*, a Filipino term for sandpaper has long been played underground. Given the sport's adult orientation and unique features, this study aimed to determine *liha* players' motivational orientations using the self-determination theory framework, as well as their motives for participation.

A triangulation using both cross-sectional quantitative and qualitative methods was used. Subjects were 105 male *lihadors* from different training and playing venues, specifically Ultra (n=30), Marikina (n=28), Navotas (n=28) and Rizal (n=19). Ages ranged from 18 to 79 years old. Mean age was  $49 \pm 12$  years ( $M \pm SD$ ). The age range of 45-60 yrs. old got the most number of respondents, proving the game's adult orientation. Majority of the respondents had one to five years of experience. Each subject was asked to answer three questionnaires face-to-face, namely, a demographic survey, a 28-item sport motivation scale, and an open-ended three-item listing of the most important reasons for participation. Analysis of means revealed identified regulation as the highest response ( $x=5.69$ ;  $SD=0.08$ ) and amotivation as the least ( $x=2.35$ ;  $SD=0.09$ ). Moreover, 305 responses from the open-ended three-item listing method were analyzed and clustered under different sub-themes based on similarity in meaning. Among all subscales according to age, highest response was health/fitness (16.72 %), second was exercise (13.11 %), and third was affiliation (11.8%). Data gathered from this study gives an understanding of *liha's* existence, at least in the locations studied. Hence, results of this study may guide and motivate our local government units, national sports associations and clubs to come up with comprehensive programs and refinements for the promotion of *liha's* health and fitness, recreation, and even high level competition potentials.

**Keywords:** motivational orientations, participation motives, *liha*, Philippines

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

In the Philippines, literature is scant regarding adult sport participation. The high cost of the relatively few sports available, like badminton, bowling or swimming renders adult engagement in sports or physical activities available only for the middle to high class. This is what has been usually known, until recently, a publication by Santelices and Cua (2010) revealed that an underground sport which had its roots from the American sponge racket table tennis, have been continually played "underground" by low to middle class, early to late male adults for more than 60 years now in various areas all over the country.

The sport is called *liha*, a Filipino term for sandpaper. Only in recent years has *liha* started gaining public knowledge due to the staging of official local and international tournaments. With the sport's unique features, especially since adults are more oriented at this, the researcher wanted to conduct a pioneering examination of the players' motivational orientations and their motives for participation.

The self-determination theory (SDT) has been helpful in understanding motivational orientations and participation motives among different age groups including adults (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Since it is

concerned not only with the specific nature of positive developmental tendencies, but also with the social environments that are favorable or not toward these tendencies, this theory can lead to a better understanding of the *lihadors*.

SDT distinguishes among three types of behavioral regulation that are associated with varying degrees of self-determined motivation. One form of motivation is intrinsic motivation (IM). In this regard, involvement is characterized by an internal locus of causality and individuals consider their actions to be self-determined and volitional. Pelletier et al. (1995) suggested three types of intrinsic motivation, namely IM to experience stimulation, IM to know and IM toward accomplishments. A second type of motivation is extrinsic motivation (EM) in which individuals engage to attain a desired outcome, such as a tangible reward or to avoid a potential punishment (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Introjected regulation is more self-determined since this expression of extrinsic motivation depends upon self-control. With this, the individual's goal is to avoid negative feelings such as guilt and anxiety, as well as to experience positive ego-related feelings such as pride (Ntoumanis, 2005). The next place on the continuum is identified regulation, wherein motivation centers on feelings of personal importance and the value of engaging in the activity. Last in the continuum, the most

complete form of internalization in extrinsically motivated behavior is integrated regulation. Individuals who have this are motivated to engage in activities because their involvement in such tasks provides harmony or coherence with other aspects of their values and their identity (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

A third category of motivation is known as amotivation. It represents a psychological state in which one is not able to regulate oneself with respect to the behavior. In this circumstance, the individual does not feel in control and the locus of control is external (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

In addition, self-determination theory proposes that humans have three fundamental needs that must be satisfied in the social context. The first need is to feel autonomous in performing an activity. Autonomy involves being volitional and acting in such a way as to represent one's integrated sense of self (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The second need is to perceive relatedness with others in the community of involvement. A third fundamental need is to perceive competence in relation to the activity. Competence is widely regarded as fundamental to the expression of motivation in the sport context (Reinboth and Duda, 2006). A number of researches support the view that individuals who experience higher levels of satisfaction of the three fundamental needs express more self-determined forms of regulation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Within the framework of SDT, various scales have been developed to assess varying motivational orientations. Among these, a sport-context motivation measure, Sport Motivation Scale (SMS), has been developed and shown to have satisfactory psychometric properties. The SMS (Pelletier et al., 1995) is a 28-item inventory divided into seven subscales that measures amotivation (AM), three forms of extrinsic regulation [external (EXT), introjected (INT), identified (IDE)], and three types of intrinsic motivation (intrinsic motivation to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation) all set to a 7-point Likert scale.

In determining *lihadors'* motivational orientation, the 30-item Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ) by Gill et al. (1983) would have been a good choice. However, such used questionnaires may not be sufficient in accounting for the uniquely Filipino sport culture. In a study by Cagas et al. (2010), a new method of acquiring participation motives was introduced. They asked exercisers to list all the possible reasons on why they or people they know have exercised in the past. Exercise Motivation Inventory Subscales were used to categorize the answers into existing themes. This study of 129 Filipinos aged 15-21 years old, found that the three most frequently identified reasons for exercise were: weight management (e.g. to lose weight), strength and endurance (e.g. to increase strength), and appearance.

At present, *liha* is not as popular as the sponge-bat and hardbat modern table tennis that are usually played in tournaments. *Liha* table tennis, with its sandpaper covered bat, is described as a low spin game -

thought as the main reason to be its most attractive feature for adult participation. With the recent organization of formal *liha* clubs like the one in Marikina, along with the introduction of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) international *liha* rule in local and international *liha* tournaments, *liha* is on its most dynamic stage.

Adhering to the demands of art. XIV, section 19 (1) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which states that, "The state shall promote physical education and encourage sports programs, league competitions, and amateur sports, including training for international competitions, to foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence for the development of a healthy and alert citizenry", and further by art. XIV, section 2 (5) wherein "The State shall provide adult citizens, the disabled and out-of-school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency, and other skills", physical activity is most likely to occur when organizers are able to identify and address the needs and motivational orientations of the participants (Ashford et al. 1993).

Now that this sport culture has been subject to crucial changes, along with more *lihadors* coming out to participate in official tournaments, a study on the players' motivational orientations would be pivotal to further *liha's* positive direction. Knowledge and assessment of the present *lihadors'* motivational orientations and participation motives would shed light on the decision process for taking part in this sport, (Morgantown, 2001) and therefore assist in planning, promoting, and maintaining a *lihador's* participation (Ashford et al. 1993) in this unique and rich Filipino sport culture.

## 2. METHODS

A triangulation using both cross-sectional quantitative and qualitative methods was used. A survey kit composed of a demographic questionnaire, a 28-item SMS, and an open-ended 3-item form was translated into Filipino through expert validity. Face validity was then made by asking five *lihadors* through email correspondence to encircle words that are hard to understand. Upon return of the questionnaire, expert validity was again used until it went to a pilot testing with 5 subjects. Upon success in this phase, final survey was conducted which had 105 male *lihadors* subjects at different training and playing venues in the national capital region of the Philippines, specifically Ultra (n=30), Marikina (n=28), Navotas (n=28) and Rizal (n=19). Ages ranged from 18 to 79 years old. Mean age was  $49 \pm 12$  years ( $M \pm SD$ ). After data collection, the respondents' questionnaires were grouped according to the venues with which data was gathered. For the tabulation of the demographic profiles, each of the provided answers was assigned a numerical value, and was tabulated accordingly. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) software was used throughout the quantitative aspects of the research. The level of significance was set at  $p = 0.05$ .

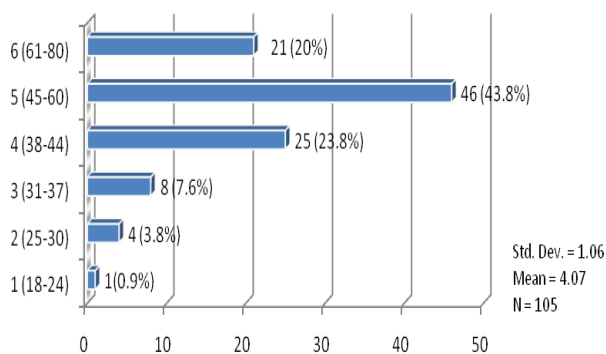


Figure 1. Number of respondents according to age.

Age range 45-60 yrs. old (Category 5) got the most number of respondents, proving the game’s adult orientation. Moreover, majority of the respondents had one to five years of experience.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 SMS data

After questionnaire answers were encoded and checked for internal validity, the following variables were used in the analysis: amotivation (AM), external regulation (EXT), introjected regulation (INT), identified regulation (IDE), internal motivation (IM) to experience stimulation (IMS), IM to know (IMK), and IM to accomplish (IMA). Analysis of means revealed identified regulation as the highest response (SD=0.08), while amotivation had the least (SD=0.09). For intrinsic motivation, IM to experience stimulation had the second highest response, and the highest mean as compared to the two other IM factors.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for motivational orientations

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
AM	105	2.352380952	0.9791672	0.09555693
EXT	105	5.214285714	0.9629111	0.093970502
INT	105	5.447619048	0.9956004	0.097160654
IDE	105	<b>5.688095238</b>	0.8748495	0.085376573
IMS	105	5.628571429	0.7845521	0.076564444
IMA	105	5.588095238	1.008367	0.098406544
IMK	105	5.383333333	1.01436	0.098991403

An independent samples t-test for levels of participation gives enough statistical evidence to conclude that five motivational factors, namely AM, EXT, INT, IDE and IMS, differ significantly between

levels of participation. Only responses for IMA (0.35) and IMK (0.27) are insignificantly different between levels of participation. Among the five factors, players engaged in competition rated higher or inclined more to the liking state as compared to those who play for leisure/recreation.

Age was another stratification variable considered for this study. However, independent samples t-test showed no significant difference among age groups.

On the other hand, there is enough statistical evidence to conclude that the mean response for EXT, INT, IDE and IMS are significantly different between marital statuses of players with married players giving a higher response rating than single players.

#### 3.2 Open-ended three-item listing data

Data gathered from this instrument yielded 96.8% responses or 305 answers. These data were coded using PMQ themes. These motives were independently analyzed according to age groups and clustered on similarity in meaning under different 15 sub-themes.

Among all subscales, health and fitness had the highest response (16.4%), second was exercise (13.11%) and third was affiliation (11.8%). These kinds of responses came mostly from the 45-60 year old group and are highly attributed to the needs of adults. Actual sport context and even its culture and tradition, especially at varied environments on which *liha* games are played are seen to have highly supported these results.

Table 2 - Participation motives identified by *lihadors*

Subscales	Sample Statements	%
Health and fitness	<i>I always feel energized</i>	<b>16.72</b>
Socialize/ Affiliation	<i>I gain meet people and gain more friends</i>	11.80
Exercise	<i>Daily exercise is very important</i>	13.11
Upbringing	<i>I have been playing this sport ever since. So I play it up to now</i>	1.31
Better than rubber	<i>There is lesser spin, so I enjoy it more than rubber</i>	5.90
Profit	<i>Sometimes, I learn</i>	4.92
Enjoyment	<i>I enjoy doing it</i>	8.52
Ease of practice	<i>I don't run out of breath</i>	4.26
Recreation	<i>To get rid of boredom</i>	6.89
Competitiveness	<i>So I can continue joining tournaments</i>	9.84
Healthy image	<i>Even if I'm already 60 years old, I feel as if I'm still 30</i>	7.54
Learning	<i>I still learn from every game</i>	1.97
Travel	<i>I can visit different places</i>	2.30
Ill-health avoidance	<i>I have an increased resistance to diseases</i>	2.62
Low-cost of participation	<i>I need not spend much to participate</i>	2.30

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### SMS

This study shows Identified Regulation, the last type of extrinsic motivation as the dominant motivational orientation. IR is in operation when the individual comes to value and judge the behavior as important and performs it out of choice. The activity is still performed for extrinsic reasons (e.g., to achieve personal goals); however, it is already internally regulated and self-determined (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Due to this kind of orientation, it is posited that *lihadors* participate in this sport because they feel their involvement contributes to their personal growth and development. The result tells us that in general, subjects of this study are already near being intrinsically motivated, with IM to experience stimulation already being the second dominant. This data may prove useful for its organizers especially in the way they design future *liha* tournaments. These also imply that at present, most *liha* players are still on the level of enthusiasts and not yet on the competitive athlete level who dominantly has the IM to succeed.

##### Level of participation

It is important to note that level of participation corresponds to the place where subjects play *liha*. Those subjects who answered at Ultra were classified as competitive since it was a national tournament. On the other hand, those subjects who answered at Marikina, Navotas, and Rizal were classified as recreational since the time of data collection was during the usual *liha* practices. This study which shows AM, EXT, INT, IDE and IMS to differ significantly between levels of participation and between places where *liha* is practiced maybe directly linked to the *lihadors*' level of autonomy. In a study made by Philippe and Vallerand (2008), it was strongly suggested that actual autonomy-supportive environments do have an indirect effect on people's psychological adjustment overtime through the motivational sequence posited by SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The present *liha* playing venues are then shown to be autonomy-supportive. However, for the five significantly different motivation factors, players who are engaged in competition tend to rate higher or more inclined to the liking state compared to those who play for recreation. In line with autonomy, this means that those competing are already more autonomous, which is a natural case, than those still at recreation level.

##### Age

There was no significant difference in the motivational orientations according to age. This is contrary to the findings of De Pero et.al (2009) which found EM to be a key motivational factor for the ageing athlete depending on his/her competition level and also found the lowest degree of self-determination at oldest age to represent a risk factor for drop-out and interruption of the lifelong sport career. Although this may fail to yield any substantial information, the

findings in the free-listing methodology accounts for the participation motives according to age.

##### Marital status

Although unexpected, results show significant differences in the mean responses for EXT, INT, IDE and IMS between marital statuses of players. For the four motivational factors, married players tend to give a higher response rating than those single players. No research was found to account for such result. However, upon consideration of the consequences that a married *lihador* in the Philippines has to deal with, like haggling time for employment or for taking care of the family members, in exchange for pleasure or benefits derived from playing *liha*, it is no wonder why married players are more on the liking side. With more extrinsic reasons being significantly different, *liha* may be a married man's way of taking a break and having fun. Unlike single players, the available time they have for *liha*, along with the many opportunities for extrinsic gains may account for the lesser liking tendency.

##### Open-ended free listing method

Data from SMS and free-listing method correspond to each other. It was earlier mentioned how a person with identified regulation orientation considers sport involvement to contribute either to one's growth or development. Health and fitness is shown in this study as the primary goal. Moreover, the second highest response being IM to experience stimulation corresponds to the third highest response in the free-listing method which is socialization / affiliation.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The optimal motivation for adherence to a sport and physical activity will likely occur when the organizers are able to identify and address the needs and motivational orientations of the participants (Ashford et al. 1993). Hence, our results may guide and motivate our local government units, national sports association and clubs to come up with comprehensive programs and refinements for the promotion of *liha*'s health and fitness, recreation and even high level competition potentials.

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