Gender Differences in Task and Ego Goal Orientations and Motivation in Sport Participation

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Gender differences in task and ego goal orientation and sport participation were investigated among 717 college students. Participants completed the Task and Ego Orientation Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ; Duda and Nicholls, 1992) and the Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ; Gill et al., 1983). Results revealed that there was no significant correlation between gender in terms of task and ego goal orientations and motivational factors. However, there is a significant difference between task orientation and ego orientation. Both male and female college students are geared towards task orientation. As for the motivational factors, males give more importance on team affiliation, friendship and achievement status than females. Fun was the highest motivational factor given among male and female college students.

KEY WORDS: Task and Ego Orientation, Participation Motivation, Sport.

Individuals are motivated to demonstrate high ability in the achievement related contexts, but ability does not have the same meaning for all people. Nicholls (1984, 1989) suggests that people identify with two independent goal orientations, task and ego, and these goal orientations influence how individuals construe ability and define success.
In the educational context a study by Nicholls, Pashnick and Nolen (1985), established evidence that task and ego goal orientations are associated with different beliefs about the wider purposes of education. Task orientation has been found to be associated to the belief that one should undergo education so that one's commitment to society and desire to continue learning should be enhanced. In contrast, ego orientation is associated with the belief that education is a means to an end, namely wealth and enhanced social status.

The relationship of task and ego orientation and students beliefs about the causes of success in school was conducted by Nicholls and his colleagues (1989). Results indicated that students with a strong task orientation were more likely to believe that success in school stems from working hard, cooperating, being interested in one's work and trying to understand rather than memorize. Ego orientation, on the other hand, was linked to the belief that success in school comes from being smart, trying to outperform other students and knowing how to impress the teacher.

The relevance of task and ego goal perspectives has been manifested in the sport domain. The Task and Ego Orientation Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ) was specifically developed to assess individual differences in the tendency to be task-and-ego oriented (Duda, 1989, 1992; Duda & Nicholls, 1992). A study on the relationship between achievement goal orientation and beliefs of children ages 10 to 11 about competitive sport made use of the Task and Ego Orientation Sport Questionnaire. Results indicated that a task orientation was linked to focus on cooperation and the belief that success stems from effort. A task orientation was positively correlated with repeated enjoyment in sport activities. While an ego orientation associated with an emphasis on work avoidance and the view that tactics and external factors are the causes of success in sport. (Duda, Fox, Biddle & Armstrong, 1992).
Kim & Gill (1997) took the different approach in comparing the relevance of task and ego orientation in sport between different cultures. A total of 244 males and females participated in the study. All the participants completed the Task and Ego Orientation Sport Questionnaire and Intrinsic Motivation Inventory. The results demonstrated a significant correlation between task and ego orientation. Task orientation was significantly associated with the dimensions of intrinsic motivation. Enjoyment/Interest, Perceived Competence and Effort/Importance dimensions for male athletes. The dimensions for female athletes were Effort/Importance and Enjoyment/Interest. Therefore, males were higher than females by two dimensions.

Another research made by White, Duda, & Keller (1998) was the relationship between goal orientation and the perceived purposes of sport among youth participants. 192 youth participants took part in the study. 100 males and 92 females were involved in a variety of organized sports such as soccer, swimming, basketball, and ice hockey. The findings indicated than males more than females perceived that the function of sport participation was to increase status and popularity, teach deceptive behaviors and superiority, and increase competitiveness. Findings also showed that participants who were strongly task oriented perceived that the purposes of sport were to increase self-esteem, advance good citizenship, foster the value of mastery and cooperation, and encourage a physically active lifestyle.

**Participation Motivation**

Typical of early descriptive research conducted in participation motivation was a study by Sapp & Haubenstricker (1978). As a part of a larger study for the state of Michigan, they examined reasons for non-school sport participation for more than 1,000 boys and girls ranging in age from 11 to 18 years. Results revealed that major motives cited for participation were fun, skill improvement, physical fitness gains, to be with friends, and the desire to make new friends.
Gill et al. (1983) created a participation motivation inventory based on two pilot studies and administered it to 1500 participants at a summer sports school. Participants were interviewed and asked to rate the relative importance of various reasons for their participation in sports. Their responses were then factor analyzed to identify general categories or dimensions of participation motivation. Eight general motivational factors were found: achievement or status motivation, team spirit, fitness-oriented reasons, energy release, skill development, friendship, fun, and miscellaneous reasons.

Gill, Gross, & Huddleston (1983) made the next significant step in this line of research by tapping a large number of youth participants across a wide variety of sports. A total of 1,138 boys and girls participating in university summer athletic camps took the Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ). Findings showed that the most important reasons emerging for boys and girls were to improve skills, to have fun, to learn new skills, to be challenged, and to be physically fit.

Matthes and Battista (1985) compared reasons for participation in physical activity across athletes and non-athletes and across gender. Results revealed that males and females both rated health and fitness as most important, females rated competition significantly lower and social experience significantly higher than males, and athletes assigned significantly higher scores than non-athletes to competition.

In a local study Kim, Gun-Do (1995) examined the participation motives of 279 Filipino Taekwon-do Jins in Quezon City. There were more male participants than females. There were also significant differences between the males and the females in terms of the duration of their participation, number of training sessions per month, belt color or rank and exposure to competitions. Females maintained that they like to learn the skills in a short time, which justifies the fact that they attend the training sessions at a shorter period of time than the males.
Males on the other hand join Taek won-do for relaxation especially when life’s pressure builds up and it further contribute to their emotional well being. The study also identified the primary socialization agents in Taek won-do participation as friends and family.

A study on profile of physical activity and participation motives among selected retirees in University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City was done by Derit, A. (2003). Results revealed that fitness was the most important participation motive among male and female retirees. Gender differences with regard to participation motives are insignificant. However in factors fitness, fun, energy release, and achievement status males dominated while females scored higher in factors such as team affiliation and skill development.

Understanding these differences, the researcher believes that instructors hold a great task in tapping students’ capabilities by recognizing their innate potentials and the vital role that Physical Education plays in molding the individual physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and psychologically. The purpose of this study is to examine gender differences in terms of task and ego goal orientations and what motivates them to participate in the different service physical education courses.

**METHOD**

**Sample**

A sample of N = 717 Filipino college students (307 males and 410 females) from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) enrolled in selected Service Physical Education courses such as badminton, basketball, lawn tennis, table tennis, soccer and volleyball were randomly selected in the study.
Measures and Procedures

Individual differences in goal orientations were measured by administering to each subject the Task and Ego orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ) designed by Joan L. Duda. The thirteen-item TEOSQ (Cronbach alpha's = 0.81 and 0.76 for task and ego respectively) requires subjects to think of when they felt most successful in sport and indicated their agreement with items reflecting a task (e.g., I feel successful in sport when I do my very best) and ego (e.g., I feel successful in sport when others can't do as well as me) orientation to subjective sport success. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert type of scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). A mean-score was calculated for every subject for task and ego orientation thus allowing a range from 1 to 5.

The students also completed the Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ; Gill et al., 1983), which consists of 30 items reflecting the possible reasons for participating in sports (Cronbach alpha = 0.89). (e.g., I want to improve my skills, I like to travel, I like to get exercise, etc.). Responses were indicated on a 3-point Likert-type scale with very important scored as 3, somewhat important as 2, and not at all important as 1.

In providing the descriptive statistics of the data, the mean and mean differences were computed. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was also utilized to test the reliability of the items for both questionnaires. ANOVA was used to segregate the variation due to gender and motivation factors. The application of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r) was used to measure the association between the student's goal orientation and the participation motivation in sport among male and female college students. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used in all computations.
RESULTS

The correlation coefficient between Task and Ego was tested to be not significant \((r = -0.073, p<.05)\). The means and mean differences on task and ego goal orientation of both male and female college students are depicted in Table 1. No significant interaction was found between gender and goal orientation. However, there is a significant difference between task orientation and ego orientation. Both male and female college students are geared towards task orientation.

Table 1. Gender differences in task and ego goal orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Task Mean</th>
<th>Ego Mean</th>
<th>Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.70*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.73*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2 presents the correlation values of each motivational factor. It can be gleaned that there is no interaction between gender and motivational factors. Overall, males give more importance on team affiliation, friendship and achievement status than females. On the other hand, both male and female respondents rated fun as the highest reason for sport participation.

The correlation of task and ego goal orientations and motivational factors shows that there is no significant association between task and ego goal orientations and motivational factors (see Table 3). On the other hand examining the coefficient would mean that overall task orientation was linked to skill development while ego orientation was linked to energy release and achievement status.
### Table 2. Gender differences in motivational factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation factor</th>
<th>Male Mean</th>
<th>Female Mean</th>
<th>Diff</th>
<th>Motivation Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill development</td>
<td>2.758</td>
<td>2.707</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>2.733&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team affiliation</td>
<td>2.747</td>
<td>2.667</td>
<td>0.080*</td>
<td>2.707&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>2.818</td>
<td>2.764</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>2.791&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>2.556</td>
<td>2.435</td>
<td>0.121*</td>
<td>2.495&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement status</td>
<td>2.083</td>
<td>2.019</td>
<td>0.064*</td>
<td>2.051&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy release</td>
<td>2.083</td>
<td>2.032</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>2.058&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>2.507</td>
<td>2.446</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>2.476&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational factors</td>
<td>1.922</td>
<td>1.934</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>1.928&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender means</td>
<td>2.434</td>
<td>2.375</td>
<td>0.059**</td>
<td>2.405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significantly different at the 0.05 level.

**Significantly different at the 0.01 level.

Means with the same letter are not significantly different from each other (DMRT).

### Table 3. Correlation coefficient of task and ego goal orientation and motivational factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation factor</th>
<th>Male Task</th>
<th>Male Ego</th>
<th>Female Task</th>
<th>Female Ego</th>
<th>All Task</th>
<th>All Ego</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>-.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team affiliation</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.018</td>
<td>-.076</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>-.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement status</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy release</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>-.069</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational factors</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (two-tailed).**
DISCUSSION

Results indicated that there was no significant difference in task and ego goal orientations and motivation in sport participation among the male and female college students. However, both male and female college students were geared towards task orientation. Physical Education offers a wide-range of sport activities to choose from. As reported by Papaioannou & Goudas Students (1995, in Auweele's, 1999) students are required to participate in the difficulty and nature of various tasks. Students often pose two basic questions to themselves when approaching school tasks: "Can I do it or do I want to do it?" The first question shows concern with one's own competence. Most students eagerly want to be able to accomplish things or have some control over their environment. The second question relates to one's own view of judging his competence at a given task. Tasks are usually evaluated in terms of interest and usefulness for the individual.

There are various reasons why students participate in sport. For the male respondents team affiliation was deemed necessary in joining a sport activity. Team affiliation acquired through sport participation allows individuals to be accepted by their peers, extend their social network and give them a sense of belonging. Sport is one of the avenues to develop relationship with others. Cogan (1968, in Bucher, 1972), indicated that students participate in sport because of a desire to gain understanding of other people that leads to the development of a more positive relationship. Participation in sport would mean meeting new friends, being with friends and wanting to compete. Males are more oriented toward achievement in competitive interpersonal situation. Perceptions of demonstrated competence would mean that one has out performed others (Duda, 1989).

For both male and female college students fun emerged as the highest motivation factor as reason for sport involvement.
This finding was similar to the previous study involving 1,138 boys and girls participating in university summer athletic camp (Gill, Gross and Hudleson, 1983). Individuals choose athletic activities they find enjoyable. Enjoyment would mean experiencing the excitement that goes with playing the sport. For the others, enjoyment would mean a sense of satisfaction in performing well in a given sport situation.

There was no significant association between task and ego goal orientation and motivation in sport participation. Overall, the correlation coefficient indicated that task orientation is associated with skill development. Both male and female college students tend to be task oriented. They viewed sport as a context that promotes personal mastery and skill improvement. They derived greater feelings of satisfaction from mastering experiences and were concerned with demonstrating ability by learning and developing skills. Maehr (1974), pointed out that sport entails standards of excellence, it is a situation in which the performer is responsible for the outcome and the purpose is on demonstrating skill. On the other hand, ego orientation was linked to energy release and achievement status. As reported by Nicholls (1989), ego-oriented individuals engaged in sport as a means to an end. The main focus was to show that one is better than the others. A study by Scanlan (1982), indicated that sport is an evaluative context. By the very nature of sport, one's performance is typically judged in comparison with that of the others. Sport is also one of the outlets for aggressive behavior because it provided a setting where the students can reduce their tension and frustrations in a socially accepted manner.

In the light of the above mentioned findings, it is recommended that instructors recognize the goal orientation and participation motivation of students in order to provide a better atmosphere for learning and performance. Understanding why students choose to participate in selected sport activities will enable the instructors to come up with activities directed towards meeting the student's goals, needs or interests. The instructor
is also encouraged to show empathy with students, particularly those having difficulties in the physical activity domains. These strategies should increase self-determination in the students hence creating a feeling of "want to participate" rather than "I ought to participate".

It is also recommended that a similar study be conducted which deals on why students choose a sport activity over the others. In addition, it is also recommended that further study be made in terms of individual and team sports to provide a comparison between the individual's task and ego goal orientations and participation motivation in sport.

REFERENCES


