

Motives of Malay, Chinese and Indian Football Players

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Abstract Previous research in Malaysia found that the six important motives, given by student-athletes for sport participation, were achievement, body shape, physical fitness, teamwork, learning new skills and challenges. However, research comparing different ethnic on taking part in sports, especially football is limited. The aim of this study is to find the motives of taking part in sport and level of anxiety among Malay, Chinese and Indians. A hundred and thirty student-athletes from different ethnic background were selected, to respond Purpose of Sport Questionnaire. The sample was chosen from the Malaysian Sports Council, during Malaysian Inter-Schools Sports Competition. The result showed that the most highest motive for a Chinese ethnic taking part in football for physically active lifestyle, Malays ethnic for mastery or cooperation and Indians for social status or getting ahead. Sports psychologists, coach or sport officers can use this research to develop appropriate football environment for Malays, Chinese and Indians, to maintain their interest in football.

Keywords Motives · Malay · Chinese · Indian · Football

1 Introduction

Motives can be defined as the intentions that cause a person to move, act or behave in a certain way [1]. Motives for participating in sports are many [2]. Past studies showed that the major motives student-athletes have for their participation are

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enjoying, for arousal, thrills and excitement, achievement, fitness, energy release, skill development, friendship, fun and to become physically fit, healthy lifestyle [3–6].

Social learning theory explains that people are motivated to take part in sports because they want to copy the skills of their sports heroes [7]. Cognitive evaluation theory states that rewards can be divided into two types: controlling and informational. Controlling rewards, such as praise or trophies, are designed to influence (e.g., control) an individual's behaviour, while informational rewards convey information about an individual's competence at a task. If a player believes her coach's praise is designed to control her behaviour, the praise will lower her intrinsic motivation for the task. If, on the other hand, the player believes that the praise is designed to provide information about her successful performance, her intrinsic motivation for the task would increase [2].

There are many reasons why Malaysian athletes begin to participate in sports. For example, in a research study of 200 student-athletes from University Putra Malaysia, it was found that the six important motives, out of 30 motives, given by students for sport participation were achievement, body shape, physical fitness, teamwork, learning new skills and for challenges [8]. The same study also found that friendship and want to become popular are the lowest motive for sport participation among student-athletes at University Putra Malaysia.

A variety of cultural comparative studies have been conducted in the field of sport psychology. Culture may be defined as the changing patterns of learning behaviour and the products of learning behaviour (including attitudes, values, knowledge and material objects) that are shared by and transmitted among members of society, it is an ongoing social heritage [9]. Athletes from different cultural background show different motives for taking part in sport. Some progress has been made in addressing this problem in developed countries, especially comparing among blacks and whites, but a similar research is yet to be conducted in Malaysia. Since lack of research in this area, there is still uncertain on motives of different cultural groups in Malaysia.

A number of researches have been conducted on motives for sports participation in developed countries [2], but there is a lack of such research in developing countries, including Malaysia especially on different ethnics. Furthermore, research comparing different ethnic athletes directly is very limited. Comparing motives of different races on taking part in sports, especially on football players, can bring a lot of new knowledge for cultural studies. Furthermore, most studies on motives in sport done generally on sports without focusing on particular sports like football. The present research will evaluate the motives that encourage different background ethnics of football players to participate in sports. Three major ethnics in Malaysia took part in this study; they are Malays, Chinese and Indians. Motives for taking part in sports include the following motives: mastery or cooperation, physically active lifestyle, good citizen, competitiveness, high-status career, enhance self-esteem and social status or getting ahead.

There is a need to plan and attract people to participate in football, but this will depend on their sport participation motives. Understanding the motives of those

who are already involved as football players can help coaches, teachers and individuals to improve coaching, maintain motivation, prevent burn out and lower dropout rates in football. Lindner and Kerr [10] argued that the motivation to participate in a sport was both complex and multifaceted. Different motives could determine participation decisions at various times and in desperate circumstances.

Knowing motives of different ethnics for participating in sports will help sports psychologists to develop an appropriate football sport programme for those ethnics. In addition, identifying the range of motives given by different ethnic participants will help sports psychologists provide adequate and variety of football programmes to maintain interest among those ethnics. This is because understandings of why particular ethnic choose to take part in sports while others do not could be of great practical value. In particular, government officials and sports psychologists in Malaysia need to conduct sports programmes to encourage different ethnics in Malaysia to take part in football could use the research findings.

Malaysia consists of many ethnic groups with different cultural background, namely Malays, Chinese and Indians, to maintain separate cultural identities [11]. In [12] there are two ways to classify races biologically: (a) a scheme based on observable physical characteristics (e.g., skin colour, hair texture, eye shape, lip thickness) called phenotypes and (b) a scheme based on unobservable genetic features (e.g., blood type) called genotypes.

In Malaysia, Malay is the largest ethnic, comprised 50.4 %, followed by Chinese 23.7 %, indigenous 11 %, Indians 7.1 % and others 7.8 % (East Malaysia, especially Iban and Kadazan) [13]. Sometimes, it is hard to believe that they remain in the same country, but their way of living differs dramatically from the other.

2 Objectives

The aim of this study was to find the motives of taking part in football among Malay, Chinese and Indians. This research focuses of football players, since football is considered as the most preferred sport among Malaysians. One of the most influential variables that involved of taking part in sports is culture and belief. Thus, there is also a need for research to be carried out on the motives of different ethnic group of Malaysians for taking part in sport, especially in football.

3 Methodology

The sample consisted of 130 football players, with Malay ethnic athletes ($N = 54$), Chinese ethnic athletes ($N = 45$) and Indian ethnic athletes ($N = 31$). Based on the gender, there are 69 males and 61 females. The mean age for overall respondents was 22.08 years old. The age of male varied from 18 to 27 years, where the mean age was 21.31 years old. The age of females ranged from the

minimum of 18 to the maximum of 26 years old. The mean age for female respondents was 21.29 years old.

The sample was chosen from the Malaysian Sports Council, athletes who took part in Malaysian Inter-Schools Sports Competition. The questionnaires were distributed to student-athletes during the sport event. Participants identify their racial group as 'Malay', 'Chinese' or 'Indians' in the demographic questionnaire.

A 46-item questionnaire called Purpose of Sport Questionnaire designed by Duda's [14] was used. Students will indicate their responses to Duda's [14] questionnaire on a Likert-typed scale ranging from strongly agree (5) and strongly disagree (1). Seven factors were derived from the questionnaire. They are mastery or cooperation, physically active lifestyle, good citizen, competitiveness, high-status career, enhance self-esteem, and social status or getting ahead.

4 Results

4.1 Cronbach Reliability Coefficients

In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found ranging from 0.64 to 0.82. In a similar study conducted by Duda, it was found that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were relatively high, ranging from 0.75 to 0.83. Even though some of the reliability was found to be lower than that in Duda's study, [14] in the present study, they were still considered acceptable for analysis. In this study, coefficients of 0.70 and above were considered reliable, while those around 0.60 required some caution when the results were interpreted (Table 1).

4.2 Motives of Malay Ethnic Football Players Equations

The results showed that the motives of Malay ethnic respondents participated in sports were highest in mastery or cooperation (mean = 4.44), followed by physically active lifestyle (mean = 3.96), competitiveness (mean = 3.77), enhance self-esteem (mean = 3.06), good citizen (mean = 2.89) and high-status career (mean = 2.78). The Malay respondents indicated social status as the lowest motive (Table 2).

4.3 Motives of Chinese Ethnic Football Players

The results showed that the motives of Chinese ethnic respondents participated in sports were highest in physically active lifestyle (mean = 4.87), followed by mastery or cooperation (mean = 4.47), competitiveness (mean = 3.51),

Table 1 Cronbach reliability coefficients

| Sport participation motives | Cronbach's alpha (<i>n</i> = 130) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mastery or cooperation | 0.8211 |
| Physical active lifestyle | 0.7810 |
| Good citizen | 0.7771 |
| Competitiveness | 0.7537 |
| High-status career | 0.7311 |
| Enhance self-esteem | 0.7121 |
| Social status or getting ahead | 0.6428 |

Table 2 Motives of Malay ethnic football players participate in sport (*n* = 54)

| Motives | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Mastery or cooperation | 4.44 | 0.49 |
| Physically active lifestyle | 3.96 | 0.55 |
| Competitiveness | 3.77 | 0.59 |
| Enhance self-esteem | 3.06 | 0.57 |
| Good citizen | 2.89 | 0.65 |
| High-status career | 2.78 | 0.68 |
| Social status or getting ahead | 2.61 | 0.69 |

high-status career (mean = 3.31), social status or getting ahead (mean = 2.57) and enhance self-esteem (mean = 2.26). The Chinese respondents indicated good citizen as the lowest motive (Table 3).

4.4 Motives of Indian Ethnic Football Players

The results showed that the motive of Indian ethnic respondents participated in sports was highest in social status or getting ahead (mean = 4.41), followed by physically active lifestyle (mean = 4.27), mastery or cooperation (mean = 4.07), enhance self-esteem (mean = 3.92), good citizen (mean = 3.71) and high-status career (mean = 3.13). The respondents indicated competitiveness as the lowest motive (Table 4).

4.5 Comparison of Ethnics

Table 5 shows the F scores for the motives of taking part in football sport among the athletes of different ethnicity:

1. Mastery or cooperation, $F(2, 130) = 4.001, p = 0.05$.
2. Physically active, $F(2, 130) = 4.017, p = 0.05$.

Table 3 Motives of Chinese ethnic football players participate in sport ($n = 45$)

| Motives | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Physically active lifestyle | 4.87 | 0.47 |
| Mastery or cooperation | 4.47 | 0.44 |
| Competitiveness | 3.51 | 0.51 |
| High-status career | 3.31 | 0.52 |
| Social status or getting ahead | 2.57 | 0.57 |
| Enhance self-esteem | 2.26 | 0.54 |
| Good citizen | 2.13 | 0.58 |

Table 4 Motives of Indian ethnic football players participate in sport ($n = 31$)

| Motives | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Social status or getting ahead | 4.41 | 0.35 |
| Physically active lifestyle | 4.27 | 0.34 |
| Mastery of cooperation | 4.07 | 0.36 |
| Enhance self-esteem | 3.92 | 0.41 |
| Good citizen | 3.71 | 0.39 |
| High-status career | 3.13 | 0.44 |
| Competitiveness | 2.07 | 0.54 |

Table 5 Comparison of motives of ethnic ($n = 130$)

| Motives | Ethnic | Mean | F value |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|---------|
| Mastery or cooperation | Malay | 4.44 | 4.001* |
| | Chinese | 4.47 | |
| | Indian | 4.07 | |
| Physically active | Malay | 3.96 | 4.017* |
| | Chinese | 4.87 | |
| | Indian | 4.27 | |
| Competitiveness | Malay | 3.77 | 3.179* |
| | Chinese | 3.51 | |
| | Indian | 2.07 | |
| High-status career | Malay | 2.78 | 3.181* |
| | Chinese | 3.31 | |
| | Indian | 3.13 | |
| Social status or getting ahead | Malay | 2.61 | 4.003* |
| | Chinese | 2.57 | |
| | Indian | 4.41 | |
| Enhance self-esteem | Malay | 3.06 | 3.799* |
| | Chinese | 2.26 | |
| | Indian | 3.92 | |
| Good citizen | Malay | 2.89 | 3.332* |
| | Chinese | 2.13 | |
| | Indian | 3.71 | |

* $p < 0.05$

3. Competitiveness, $F(2, 130) = 3.179, p = 0.05$.
4. High-status career, $F(2, 130) = 3.181, p = 0.05$.
5. Social status or getting ahead, $F(2, 130) = 4.003, p = 0.05$.
6. Enhance self-esteem, $F(2, 130) = 3.799, p = 0.05$.
7. Good citizen, $F(2, 130) = 3.332, p = 0.05$.

5 Discussions

5.1 Motives of Malay Ethnic Football Players

The results showed that the motive of Malay ethnic respondents participated in football was highest in mastery or cooperation. According to the competence motivation theory, people engage in sports as a means of mastering their surroundings [15]. This is achieved through the learning of sports skills [16]. The successful mastery of sport skills results in the experiencing of pleasant emotions and increased self-confidence. Furthermore, successful attempts for Malays at mastery promote self-efficacy and feeling of personal competence, which in turn fosters high competence motivation. Cooperation in football teams involves Malays to fulfil their desire to raise the performance of all as a team experience; cares for others, empathizes, congratulates others; and looks forward to the next contest as an opportunity to partake in a competition.

According to the competence motivation theory, people engage in sports as a means of mastering their surroundings [15]. This is achieved through the learning of sports skills [16, 17]. The successful mastery of sport skills results in the experiencing of pleasant emotions and increased self-confidence [17]. Furthermore, these pleasant feelings will serve Malay athletes as an incentive to continue to take part in sports. In other words, successful attempts at mastery promote self-efficacy and feeling of personal competence, which in turn fosters high competence motivation for Malay athletes. As competence motivation increases, the Malay athletes are encouraged to make further mastery attempts [15].

5.2 Motives of Chinese Ethnic Football Players

The results showed that the motive of Chinese ethnic respondents participated in football was highest in Physically Active Lifestyle. Physically active lifestyle is the motive to take part in sports for physical reasons, notably health, weight or keeping fit [2, 18]. Taking part in physical activity is important to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, cancers, obesity and many other health-related problems [19, 20]. Taking part in football can increase the level of physical activity, as an ideal way to reduce health problems. Taking part in football as a physically active lifestyle enhances the fitness level; improves the immune system, mental health,

maintaining healthy bones, reducing health problems; and increases the effective functioning of the body organ.

Study done by [21] showed that body shape satisfaction was significantly higher in Chinese ethnic compared to Korean. In Malaysia, Chinese look much fitter in their body shape compared to other races.

5.3 Motives of Indian Ethnic Football Players

The results showed that the motive of Indian ethnic respondents participated in football was highest in social status or getting ahead. A social motive is an interest in people and the ways a person prefers to relate to other people [2]. Study of [22, 23] found that the interaction among their colleagues encourages people to participate in sports. Indian, as a minority ethnic in Malaysia has a strong desire to be with others and to function as members of a team. For Indians, the social aspects of football are an important reason for their participation. Indians found that their motivation to take part in football was derived from something relating to a social motive, like to enjoy camaraderie and to mix socially with others who enjoy the same activity as a team. Social reasons for taking part in football range from meeting new people to deal with loneliness and social isolation. Research of [24] showed that social support was the most important motives of African-American and American Indian women choosing to be active in sport.

6 Conclusion

This research showed that the motive of taking part in sport among different ethnic groups is various. A Malay ethnic group takes part in sport for mastery or cooperation, Chinese for physically active lifestyle, while Indians for social status or getting ahead.

Sports psychologists, coach or sport officers can use this research to develop appropriate football environment for Malays, Chinese and Indians, to maintain their interest in football. In addition, identifying the range of motives given by Malays, Chinese and Indians will help sports psychologists provide adequate and variety of football programmes regarding their motives in football.

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