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Social Motivation in Youth Sport

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Youth sport participants frequently report social reasons for their involvement in sport such as wanting to be part of a team or to be with friends, and social sources of positive and negative affect such as social recognition and parental pressure. Although a social view of sport has been recognized, youth sport motivation researchers have emphasized approaches centered on constructs related to physical ability and have not examined the social aspect of motivation in detail. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the contribution that social goal orientations and perceptions of belonging make toward understanding youth sport motivation. Specifically, female adolescents' ($N = 100$) social motivational orientations, achievement goal orientations, perceived belonging, perceived physical ability, and interest in sport were assessed. Results from multiple regression analyses indicated that social motivational constructs added to the explanation of adolescents' interest in sport.

Key Words: social goals, goal orientations, perceived belonging, relatedness, measurement

When given the choice, few individuals elect to participate in sport on their own. Whether it is tennis at the local courts with friends, a Little League team with teammates, or a high school championship soccer match with a stand full of spectators, inherent in these physical activities are social settings and interpersonal interactions. The social context of sport is salient to participants' motivation. Participants report social reasons for engaging in physical activities including affiliation, being part of a team, and social status (McCullagh, Matzkanin, Shaw, & **Maldonado**, 1993; Passer, 1982). Researchers have also indicated that positive and negative affect comes from social sources such as friendship opportunities, social recognition, and parental pressure (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel, & Simons, 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). Further, social interactions with parents, coaches, and peers have all been associated with the quality of young people's sport experience (e.g., Brustad, 1993; Duncan, 1993; Wylleman, 2000).

Sport clearly has meaning to participants because it provides opportunities for interpersonal interaction and the development of social bonds with significant others. Despite the salience of numerous social aspects of sport to participants, researchers examining youth sport motivation have tended to emphasize constructs related to physical ability such as perceived physical ability and task and ego goal

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orientations as a means for understanding young people's motivation (for reviews, see Duda, 2001; Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). Thus the purpose of this study was to examine the contribution that social motivational orientations and perceptions of belonging make toward understanding youth sport motivation.

Current dominant motivation theories employed in youth sport research, such as competence motivation theory (Harter, 1978, 1981) and achievement goal theory (Duda & Nicholls, 1992; Nicholls, 1984, 1989), have made a significant contribution toward our understanding of the psychological processes that underpin motivation (for reviews, see Duda, 2001; Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). Researchers adopting these approaches have emphasized the desire to develop and demonstrate physical competence as the energizer of behavior in sport settings. Such approaches largely ignore the desire for social connections as a goal of action underpinning behavior in sport, however, and also provide an incomplete picture of youth sport motivation.

Education researchers have argued that approaches to motivation which focus solely on the motivational orientations of increasing or proving the adequacy of one's academic ability are limited. Specifically, Eccles, Wigfield, and Schiefele (1998) suggested that "categorizing children's goals as ego or task involved oversimplifies the complexity of motivation" (p. 1032). In addition, Maehr (1984) argued that although acquiring and demonstrating academic competence may be of concern to all individuals some of the time, it is not necessarily the central concern in any given setting or time. He argued that "other goals, other intentions, other attractions, continually intrude" (p. 116).

Just as children have different agendas for school, evidence from research on participation motivation and sources of affect (Passer, 1982; Scanlan et al., 1993) demonstrates that youth sport participants have concerns other than physical competence. That is, individuals' motivation in sport may not always be related to or explained by a desire to demonstrate or develop physical ability. Rather, social concerns such as developing and demonstrating social connections may also be important to understanding young people's sport motivation.

A social view of motivation is not new to motivation research (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; McClelland, 1987; Ryan & Powleson, 1991). However, it has received less empirical attention than other aspects of motivation such as competence or achievement motivation (Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996). The potential that the desire for social connections with significant others has as a central energizer of behavior in social contexts is only now being recognized. For example, Ryan and colleagues (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995; Ryan & Powleson, 1991) recently suggested that social bonds are necessary for optimal psychological functioning and that the need for these connections provides the energizer for social interactions. Baumeister and Leary echoed this sentiment, arguing further that as "a fundamental motivation, the need to belong should stimulate goal-directed activity designed to satisfy it" (p. 500). As a consequence of the need to belong, individuals should show tendencies to seek out interpersonal contacts and cultivate relationships. Their thoughts should reflect a pervasive concern with forming and maintaining relationships. Further, they should experience positive affect from forming and solidifying social bonds, and negative affect when relationships are broken, threatened, or refused (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Sport, like school, is both an achievement and a social domain. The social opportunities inherent in most sports provide opportunities for individuals to de-

velop social relationships and to feel they are part of a group. Further, as evidenced through participation motives and sources of affect, these social opportunities are salient to participants' sport experience and motivation. The implications that the desire for social connections, the goal directed behavior it may stimulate, and the perceptions of belonging have for explaining motivation in sport, however, are not well understood.

Several researchers have identified social aspects of motivation in youth sport. Klint and Weiss (1987) found that gymnasts who were higher, versus those who were lower, in perceptions of social competence rated friends and team atmosphere as more important motives for participation. Ewing (1981) and Whitehead (1995) both described a social-approval goal orientation and demonstrated a relationship with participation motivation. Lewthwaite and Piparo (1993) described the relative importance of social acceptance and positive social experience orientations to the sport experience of gymnasts. Hayashi (1996), although not focusing on youth sport participants, found that adult Hawaiian exercisers defined positive activity experiences in terms of demonstrating pride and within-group harmony. Examining the sport experiences of high school athletes, Schilling and Hayashi (2001) found that they defined positive and negative experiences through socially oriented perspectives such as contributing to the team, social support and approval, pleasing others, and affiliation.

This research demonstrates the salience of social motivational constructs in youth sport. However, these researchers did not set out to examine social motivation specifically, and perhaps because of this, a clear picture of how social goal orientations and perceptions of social connections contributes to our understanding of sport motivation has not been fully developed.

One aspect that may be limiting the examination of social explanations of motivation in sport is a notion of social motivation that includes a consistent conceptualization and measurement of social goal orientations and perceptions of belonging. With regard to social goal orientations, researchers have used a variety of terms and definitions. Yet despite this, it appears there are at least two general types of social goal orientations reported. Furthermore, there is evidence from education research that they are differentially related to indices of motivation.

One type of social goal orientation that has emerged emphasizes affiliation experiences and has been associated with seeking help when needed and positive affect at school (Anderman, 1999; Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley, 1997). The focus of this orientation is on the development and maintenance of mutually satisfying relationships. Relationship goals (Anderman, 1999; Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Patrick, Hicks, & Ryan, 1997; Ryan et al., 1997) and positive social experience (Lewthwaite & Piparo, 1993) are examples of this affiliation orientation. Such individuals are oriented toward engaging in sport for the opportunity to socialize and develop/maintain relationships with other like-minded individuals. For them, it is a social as well as a physical activity. They are likely to feel good about their involvement in sport when it provides opportunities for social activities and for personal relationships.

The second social goal orientation emphasizes social validation of oneself through recognition from others and social standing; it has been associated with perceived threat related to seeking help and greater negative affect at school (Anderman, 1999; Ryan et al., 1997). Goal orientations such as social approval (Ewing, 1981; Whitehead, 1995), social acceptance (Lewthwaite & Piparo, 1993),

and social status (Anderman, 1999; Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Ryan et al., 1997) are examples of this social validation orientation. Such individuals are oriented toward the potential gains provided by sport involvement such as social status, approval from significant others, and social recognition. The meaning of sport participation lies in what it can do for their social relations and what it says about them as individuals. They are likely to feel good about their involvement in sport only when they are part of the popular group or feel they have gained the approval of others.

Whether participants view sport as an opportunity to develop mutual close social relationships or as an opportunity to validate their sense of self by gaining social status and recognition is likely to have an impact on their feelings and actions in sport. Therefore the concept of social motivational orientations may give researchers a better understanding of the psychological processes that lead to differences in the quality of sport participants' motivation.

In addition to social goal orientations, researchers have demonstrated relationships between perceptions of school belonging and students' thoughts and actions at school. Goodenow (1993) found that urban middle school students who had chosen to transfer to another school the following year reported significantly lower belonging than students who stayed in the same school. Students who reported a greater sense of belonging were also less likely to be absent or tardy, and more likely to hold higher expectations of school success. Roeser, Midgley, and Urdan (1996) found that 8th grade students with higher perceived belonging also reported a greater sense of academic self-efficacy and positive affect toward school. Similarly, Anderman (1999) also found that 5th and 6th graders reporting higher school belonging also had greater positive affect and lower negative affect toward school. Whether a similar relationship exists in the sport context has yet to be explored, and the extent to which this may contribute to the perception of belonging as part of a social view of motivation for sport remains to be determined.

The growing interest in the role of physical activity in health, and the recognition that adolescents may be at risk due to a decline in physical activity (Armstrong & Van Mechelen, 1998; Sallis & Patrick, 1994), suggests that more research is needed on the factors associated with adolescents' participation motivation. Furthermore, compared to boys, fewer girls participate in physical activities and, particularly in adolescence, girls are less physically active than boys of the same age (Armstrong & Van Mechelen, 1998; U.S. Dept. Health and Human Services, 1996). Research is needed to help us understand female adolescents' goal orientations, self-perceptions, and interest in sport.

In summary, despite recognition of the salience of social opportunities in sport, researchers have largely ignored the contribution that social goal orientations and perceptions of belonging may make toward providing a more complete picture of young people's motives for participating in sport. One reason for this may be due to the lack of a conceptual approach that includes clear conceptualization and measurement of social goal orientations and perceptions of belonging. Thus the purpose of this work was to examine the contribution that social goal orientations and perceptions of belonging make toward understanding female adolescents' sport motivation. It was hypothesized that female adolescents would endorse social goal orientations for sport, specifically affiliation and social validation, and second, that social goal orientation and perceptions of belonging would add to a physical-ability-related explanation of adolescents' interest in sport.

Method

Participants

Students ($N = 100$) from an all-girls high school in the Midlands region of the U.K. volunteered to participate in the study. They ranged in age from 14 to 17 years ($M = 14.67$, $SD = .67$). The school served students of middle to high socioeconomic backgrounds. So that the sample would be roughly representative of all students in this age range, students were not specifically selected for their involvement in sport. Length of participation in organized sport, defined generally as a sport with scheduled competitions and practices, ranged from never having participated to 11 years ($M = 5.07 \pm 2.70$). Of the sample, 88% had participated in at least one organized sport for one year or more. Approximately one quarter (27%) of the girls had participated in three or more sports for at least one year. Only 7% reported never having participated in an organized sport, and 4% did not report their participation. However, all participants engaged in regularly scheduled school physical education classes and therefore had some experience of sport.

Measures

Background information. Participants were asked to indicate their age, year at school, the sports in which they had participated, and how long they participated in each sport.

Social motivational orientations scale for sport (SMOSS). Based on a review of the research, a pool of 50 items reflecting two social motivational orientations was generated. One orientation reflected an emphasis on affiliation with items describing a focus on developing reciprocal relationships and positive social experiences. The second orientation reflected an emphasis on social validation with items focusing on recognition from others and social status. The pool of items were reviewed by a panel of five sport psychology experts for consistency with conceptual definitions, clarity of wording, and suitability for assessing each orientation and discriminating between them. Panelists were also encouraged to add any items they felt reflected the orientations. Based on these evaluations, some items were modified, and ambiguous and redundant items were deleted; a pool of 20 items was established. For example, "I receive recognition or prestige from others" could have been interpreted differently due to the two different adjectives being included in one statement. Furthermore it raises the question, for what does one receive recognition? To make the item more specific, it was changed to "I receive recognition from others for my accomplishments."

An initial version of the SMOSS was developed in which respondents were asked to think about when they felt things had gone well for them in their sport. The word "successful," common in physical achievement motivation-orientation scales, was deliberately avoided to get them to think broadly about their experiences in sport and not solely their physical achievements. Participants indicated their degree of agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree." Further, in order to assess general motivational orientations, respondents were asked to think about sport in general rather than specific levels (school, regional) or types (individual, team). The 20-item version of the SMOSS was then pilot tested with a group of 12 adolescents. They were also asked to comment on any aspects of the questionnaire they found difficult or

confusing. Based on their responses and comments, the questionnaire was reduced to 15 items and several items were reworded for clarity. The 15-item SMOSS assessed participants' degree of social affiliation orientation (7 items) and social validation orientation (8 items) toward sport. The items are presented in the Appendix.

Perceived belonging scale (PBS). Participants' sense of belonging in sport were assessed using a modified version of Goodenow's (1993) psychological sense of school membership scale (PSSM). The original 18-item PSSM scale was designed to measure adolescents' sense of belonging or psychological membership in the school environment. Evidence of the scale's validity and reliability in education settings has been provided through previous research (see Goodenow, 1993). Modified and shortened versions of this scale have been used in subsequent education research and these adapted scales have also demonstrated acceptable reliability (i.e., coefficient alphas $> .70$) (Anderman, 1999; Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Roeser et al., 1996). Due to these modifications, there are now several versions of the original scale.

For the present investigation it was decided to adopt the original scale. However, examination of the items revealed several that had potential overlap with goal orientation items (e.g., "people notice when I'm good at something"). These were removed, resulting in the 11-item scale adopted for this study which was employed to assess adolescents' perceptions of belonging in a sport context. Example items included "I feel like a part of my team" and "Other players in my team take my opinions seriously" (see Appendix for complete list).

In completing the perceived-belonging scale, participants were asked to think about everyone involved in their sport such as their teammates, training group, coach, officials, supporters, and even fellow competitors. Drawing their attention to the wider social connections in sport was believed to be important for two reasons: It meant the measure was applicable to all sport participants, not just those involved in team sports, and second, it enabled assessment of a general view of sport belonging, rather than just assessing a sense of team membership. To the question, How do you feel about being in your sport? participants indicated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "not at all true for me" to 5 = "completely true for me" the extent to which each item was true for them

Task and ego orientations in sport questionnaire (TEOSQ). Task and ego orientations in sport were assessed through the TEOSQ (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). In response to the stem "I feel most successful in sport when....", participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the 13 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree." The task subscale consists of 7 items that focus on success defined through task mastery, learning, and effort, for example, "I learn a new skill by trying hard." The ego orientation subscale contains 6 items that reflect success defined by outperforming others and demonstrating superior ability, for example, "I can do better than my friends." This scale has been used extensively in sport research, and evidence of its validity and reliability has been provided through numerous empirical studies (for a review, see Duda & Whitehead, 1998).

Perceived physical ability. Participants' perception of their physical ability was assessed using a 4-item scale based on the work of Eccles and Harold (1991). Participants rated their sports ability in general, compared to all other players

they know in their sport, how their teacher or coach would rate their ability, and how friends would rate their sports ability. Evidence of validity and reliability of this scale has been provided through research (Hall & Kerr, 1997; Smith, Duda, Allen, & Hall, 2002). Responses to all items were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "extremely weak" to 7 = "extremely strong."

Interest/enjoyment. As a preliminary examination of the predictive validity of the social motivation approach, the extent to which adolescents genuinely engaged in and enjoyed activities during their sport involvement was assessed with 4 items from Duda and Nicholls' (1992) intrinsic interest scale. Participants responded to all items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree." The interest/enjoyment scale reflected the sense of how time flies while participating, and that participation is enjoyable. Evidence of validity and reliability have been provided in research in sport and education settings (Duda & Nicholls, 1992).

Procedure

Physical education teachers were invited to participate in the study after permission was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities. The teachers were then contacted, the purpose of the study was explained, and their involvement was gained. Parental consent for their child's participation was gained as well as each child's own assent to participate. The questionnaire was administered in class settings and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The participants' responses were anonymous.

Design and Data Analysis

A cross-sectional multivariate correlational design was employed to assess the relationships among motivational orientations, perceptions of belonging, perceptions of physical ability, and interest/enjoyment in sport. The predictor variables were social motivational orientations, physical achievement goal orientations, perceptions of belonging, and perceptions of physical ability. The independent variable was sport interest/enjoyment.

Preliminary analyses. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's product-moment correlations) were calculated for all variables. Reliability estimates were calculated for all variables using Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient. Exploratory principal-axis factor analysis was used to determine the factor structures of the SMOSS and PBS. In both cases a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 was used to extract the initial factors, which were then rotated to give orthogonal (varimax) and oblique (promax) factor structures. Subscales comprised items with a factor loading greater than .40. Subscale scores were calculated for each participant using the mean score of the items comprising each factor, and these scores were used in subsequent analyses.

Main analyses. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to assess the extent to which the social motivation helped explain adolescents' sport interest/enjoyment beyond that explained by physical ability motivation variables. In this analysis the physical ability motivation variables were entered on the first step and the social motivation variables were entered on the second step.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Social and Physical Achievement Motivation and Sport Interest/Enjoyment Variables

	Affil- ation	Social status	Social recog- nition	Task	Ego	Percvd. belong- ing	Percvd. ability	Sport interest/ enjoymt.
Affiliation	.87							
Social status	.35*	.86						
Social recogn.	.21*	.34*	.77					
Task	.32*	-.10	.15	.80				
Ego	-.02	.40*	.51*	-.13	.85			
Perceived belonging	.33*	.12	.20*	.44*	-.03	.84		
Perceived physical ability	.23*	.08	.17	.23*	-.13	.45*	.94	
Sport interest/ enjoyment	.43*	.20*	.18	.40*	-.16	.47*	.61*	.86
<i>Mean</i>	3.73	2.65	3.51	3.79	2.83	3.56	4.28	3.64
<i>SD</i>	.64	.95	.82	.55	.82	.73	1.34	.80

Note: Correlations among variables are reported below the diagonal ($*p < .05$). Alpha coefficients are reported on the diagonal. Perceived physical ability means are on a 7-point scale. All other are on a 5-point scale.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Acceptable internal reliability for each measure employed was set a priori at .70 (Nunnally, 1978). All variables demonstrated acceptable reliability. The means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlations among all variables were calculated and are listed in Table 1. These adolescents felt their sport participation had gone well when they felt affiliated to the group, mastered tasks, received recognition from others for their accomplishments, and to a lesser extent when they were popular or outperformed others. They felt that they belonged in sport and that they had a moderate level of physical ability, and they were moderately interested in sport participation. With regard to the relationships among the motivation variables and sport interest/enjoyment, affiliation orientation, task orientation, perceived belonging, and perceived physical ability were all associated with greater interest/enjoyment of sport. On the other hand, the social status orientation demonstrated a weaker relationship and social recognition and ego orientations were not significantly related to interest/enjoyment.

Factor analysis of social-motivational-orientation scale. Exploratory factor analysis was employed to assess whether the 15 social motivation items could be represented by the hypothesized two social motivational orientations of affiliation and social validation. The results of the orthogonal and oblique rotations were

Table 2 Factor Analysis Results for Social Motivation Orientation Scale

SMOSS item	Factor loadings		
	1	2	3
Make friends	.65	.12	.23
Laugh together	.61	.16	-.06
Socialize outside sport	.52	.09	.25
Fun with others	.84	.07	.17
Enjoy time with others	.79	.09	.01
Friends with others	.71	.05	.15
Hanging out is fun	.74	.23	-.17
Belong to popular group	.31	.76	.13
Center of attention	.00	.70	.13
Part of "in" crowd	.15	.83	.06
One of popular players	.14	.77	.22
Others tell me I performed well	.39	-.05	.43
Kids think I'm really good	.05	.17	.76
Receive recognition from others	.03	.09	.70
Ability impresses others	.12	.29	.78
Eigenvalues	4.80	2.16	1.50
Percent of variance	32	14	10

Note: A minimum loading of .40 was the criterion value for interpreting individual factors.

compared and found to be very similar; consequently the orthogonal structure was used to guide subscale development. Contrary to the hypothesized 2-factor solution, the analysis resulted in a 3-factor solution (see Table 2). As hypothesized, the 7 items representing making friends on the team and having fun with others factored together.¹ This factor was labeled affiliation orientation. The remaining 8 items reflecting the hypothesized social validation orientation, however, formed two separate factors. The first social validation factor was composed of 4 items representing being part of the "in" crowd and was labeled social status orientation. The second such factor was labeled social recognition and was composed of 4 items representing receiving recognition from others and impressing others by one's ability. Examination of the resulting factors revealed that the 3 factors accounted for 57% of the common variance in the original data. Each item loaded on only one factor (see Table 2).

¹ It has been suggested that making friends is an outcome and thus not consistent with the development/process focus of the affiliation orientation. The items emphasize "making" rather than "having" friends and could be paralleled with items representing a task orientation such as "I learn something that is fun to do" or "A skill I learn feels really right," in which a skill is learned (an outcome) but the process of learning is the focus. In addition, the factor analysis and the strong inter-item correlations within this factor suggest that having fun with others and making friends are closely related.

Table 3 Factor Analysis Results for Perceived Belonging in Sport Scale

PBS item	Factor loadings	
	1	2
I feel like a part of my team	.71	-.30
Other players in my team take my opinions seriously	.66	-.28
The coach respects me	.13	-.22
I am included in lots of the team activities	.50	-.11
I can really be myself on this team	.54	.00
Other players here like me the way I am	.71	-.11
People in my team are friendly to me	.69	-.17
Sometimes I feel like I don't belong	-.23	.71
I wish I were on a different team	-.19	.64
The coach is not interested in people like me	.00	.66
I feel very different from most of the others	-.28	.55
Eigenvalues	3.93	1.09
Percent of variance	36	10

Note: A minimum loading of .40 was the criterion value for interpreting individual factors.

Factor analysis of the perceived-belonging-in-sport scale. Exploratory factor analysis was used to assess whether the 11 perceived-belonging items modified for the sport context were representative of the unidimensional construct proposed by Goodenow (1993). The results of the orthogonal and oblique rotations were compared and found to be very similar; consequently the orthogonal structure was interpreted. Rather than the single factor solution that was expected, the analysis resulted in a 2-factor solution (see Table 3). Closer examination of the pattern of loadings, however, revealed that the distinction between the factors was related to whether the items were worded positively (“I feel like part of the team”) or negatively (“I feel very different from most of the others”). There was no conceptual reason to suggest that the scale comprised two distinct constructs such as positive and negative belonging. Rather the distinction appeared to be related to the method of measurement; thus one composite variable was created and used in subsequent analyses. One item reflecting respect from the coach failed to load on either factor and was excluded from the composite perceived belonging score.

Social motivation, physical ability motivation, and sport interest/enjoyment. To determine how much social motivation variables would add to the prediction of adolescent sport interest/enjoyment beyond that explained by the physical ability motivation variables, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4. In the first step the physical ability motivation variables were entered. In the second step the social motivation variables were added. There was a significant increase in the amount of variance in interest/enjoyment that was accounted for by the motivation variables, F change = 4.09, $p < .01$. Examination of the beta weights, however, indicated that task orientation and perceived physical ability remained the strongest

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analyses for Sport Interest/Enjoyment and Social and Physical Achievement Motivation Variables

Variable	Multiple <i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Beta	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>
Step 1	.67	.44			24.89**	(3, 94)
Task			.27	.00		
Perceived physical ability			.54	.00		
Ego			-.05	.51		
Step 2						
Task			.19	.03		
Perceived physical ability			.44	.00		
Ego			-.16	.10		
Affiliation			.16	.07		
Social status			.17	.06		
Social recognition			.04	.63		
Perceived belonging			.10	.28		
	.73	.53			14.41**	(7, 90)

** $p \leq .01$

predictors of interest/enjoyment. Affiliation orientation, $p = .07$, and status orientation, $p = .06$, both approached significance, indicating that they helped explain these adolescents' interest/enjoyment in sport.

Discussion

Sport provides participants with social opportunities such as being with friends, developing close relationships, and gaining recognition and social status. However, there has been little research on the potential implications that these social opportunities inherent in sport have for explaining youth sport motivation. The purpose of the present study was to examine a social view of motivation, specifically the contribution of social goal orientations and perceptions of belonging toward understanding female adolescents' interest/enjoyment in sport. The results indicated that female adolescents do endorse social goal orientations for sport, and that social motivation constructs provide an additional explanation of their interest/enjoyment in sport.

Based on a review of literature in sport and education, it was hypothesized that participants would endorse two social motivational orientations. This hypothesis was partially supported. Examination of the factor analysis revealed three interpretable factors rather than the proposed two. These three factors, however, did reflect the two proposed motivational orientations. As proposed, the affiliation orientation emerged reflecting the development of close social relationships and having fun with others. The remaining two factors both reflected social validation, but in two different forms: social status reflecting popularity among peers, and social recognition emphasizing recognition from others. Support therefore was provided for the proposed social validation orientation, but a differentiation be-

tween types of social validation seemed appropriate. Further, each social goal was at least moderately important to the participants, suggesting that sport participation had a social meaning for them, and that meaning was associated with affiliation and social validation opportunities. These findings support not only the salience of social opportunities in sport to adolescent females but also that social meaning can take different forms (cf. Ewing, 1981; Whitehead, 1995).

Not only were social goal orientations endorsed by the participants, but along with perceptions of belonging, they were also related to interest/enjoyment in sport. Affiliation orientation and perceptions of belonging were moderately and positively correlated with interest/enjoyment, while social status orientation demonstrated a weaker but significant relationship. When these social motivation variables were added to the physical ability motivation variables in the hierarchical regression analysis, however, none of the social variables individually reached significance. There was a significant increase in the variance accounted for in adolescents' sport interest/enjoyment, and social status and affiliation orientations approached significance. Given the relatively small sample size and exploratory nature of this study, it was felt that these findings provided evidence to support the social motivation approach, and that researchers should continue to explore the contribution that social motivation variables make toward an understanding of participants' motivation in sport.

An unexpected finding was that although perceptions of belonging were moderately related to interest/enjoyment, this variable was not a significant predictor of interest/enjoyment in the hierarchical regression analysis. This may be due to the moderate relationship found between perceived belonging and perceived physical ability. The nature and direction of this relationship requires further empirical examination. One possibility is that in order to feel they belong in sport, participants feel they need at least a moderate amount of physical ability. Researchers examining peer acceptance and friendships in sport have provided evidence to suggest that being physically competent, particularly for boys, leads to greater acceptance, social status, and popularity (Chase & Dummer, 1992; Evans & Roberts, 1987).

It could be argued, therefore, that perceptions of physical competence lead to perceptions of belonging in sport. That is, in order to belong in sport, it helps to be good at sport. The opposite view has also been argued, however, using an extension of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979). That is, a sense of secure attachments with significant others—a perception of belonging—may give children the confidence to face challenges and develop their physical competence (Ryan et al., 1995). In this case perceived belonging would lead to perceptions of physical competence.

Future research might also examine the role of perceived belonging in the social motivation process. Rather than simply suggesting that perceived belonging is related in a consistent and predictable manner to young people's feelings and actions in sport, the role it plays in a social motivation approach requires further theoretical and empirical examination. A probable role is that perceived belonging acts as a moderator of the relationship between social motivational orientations and motivational outcomes. The moderating role may be related to the way in which individuals with different social orientations construe belonging and the criteria employed to evaluate belonging. For example, because individuals holding a social validation orientation are seeking approval, acceptance, or recognition

from others, they may see belonging as contingent on gaining this approval or some level of social standing, which in turn may be contingent on what they do. In contrast, because individuals holding an affiliation orientation focus on the development of reciprocal close relationships, they are likely to view belonging in terms of the process of developing friendships and focus on being in social interactions and meeting like-minded people rather than the outcome of that interaction.

Another aspect of the social motivation approach that researchers might explore is the stability of social motivational orientations and the influence of situational factors on social motivation. Social motivational orientations were conceptualized as relatively stable dispositions. Whether these orientations exhibit cross-domain stability similar to that demonstrated for task and ego goal orientations (Duda & Nicholls, 1992) remains to be explored. However, evidence demonstrating cross-domain stability would support the notion that social motivational orientations are dispositional constructs rather than discrete goals.

Besides examining the stability of social motivational orientations, researchers might also explore the influence of situational factors such as the psychological climate, friendship quality, group dynamics, and parental or coaching behaviors on the social motivation process. For example, do states of social goal involvement exist in specific sport contexts? Under what conditions (e.g., first time at a new club?) do otherwise highly affiliation oriented individuals activate a greater validation involved goal? Situations that emphasize evaluation such as trying out for a team may lead otherwise affiliation oriented individuals to become more validation focused. Further, what behaviors of significant others or cues from the psychological climate facilitate perceptions of belonging and lead to different goal states? For example, how individuals perceive that belonging is construed in a given sport context may influence how they feel they should behave in order to be accepted, respected, and included in the sporting group.

Not only will the examination of the influence of situational factors on social motivation further our understanding of social motivation and its consequences, this research will also have implications for practitioners with regard to fostering positive sport experiences for young people.

Finally, the social motivation approach presented here provides a snapshot of individuals' social motivation. The approach could be extended to incorporate a developmental perspective, perhaps by examining the processes that shape individuals' social motivational orientations. Discovering how these orientations develop and what factors lead some individuals to be more affiliation oriented or more validation oriented has implications for both researchers and practitioners. Researchers will gain a clearer understanding of psychosocial development through sport participation, while practitioners will gain informed guidelines to facilitate positive psychological growth and development for sport participants.

In conclusion, this research provides support for a social view of motivation in youth sport. Participants endorsed two types of social motivational orientations, and there was support for the social motivation approach as an additional explanation of female adolescents' sport interest and enjoyment. It is encouraging that adolescent females, for which a decline in sport participation has frequently been reported (Armstrong & Van Mechelen, 1998; U.S. Dept. of HHS, 1996), are interested in and enjoy their sport involvement. Although further research is needed to clarify the relationships among social and physical ability motivation variables, this study sheds some light on the contribution that a social motivation approach

makes toward understanding the views of adolescents which may influence their motivation to participate in sport.

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Appendix

15-item Social Motivational Orientations Scale for Sport (SMOSS)

I feel things have gone well in my sport when...

1. Others tell me I have performed well
2. I make some good friends on the team
3. I belong to the popular group in the team
4. My teammates and I have a laugh together
5. I am the center of attention
6. I make new friends who I socialize with outside sport
7. I have fun with the others on my team
8. I am part of the “in” crowd
9. Other kids think I’m really good at sport
10. I receive recognition from others for my accomplishments
11. Spending time with the other players is enjoyable
12. I become friends with some of the others in my sport
13. Others are impressed by my sporting ability
14. I am one of the more popular players
15. Just hanging out with the others is fun

Note: Affiliation items are 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, & 15; Social status items are 3, 5, 8, & 14; Social recognition items are 1, 9, 10, & 13.

11-item Perceived Belonging in Sport Scale (PBS)

1. I feel like a part of my team
 2. Other players in my team take my opinions seriously
 3. Sometimes I feel like I don’t belong
 4. The coach respects me
 5. I am included in lots of the team activities
 6. I wish I were on a different team
 7. The coach is not interested in people like me
 8. I can really be myself on this team
 9. Other players here like me the way I am
 10. I feel very different from most of the others
 11. People in my team are friendly to me
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