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The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons for athletic participation by high school male athletes. A pilot inquiry using high school students was undertaken to first identify some of the motivational influences for sport involvement. Reasons were also suggested by related literature. After the trial, a final form of the rank order instrument was refined. Within the 15 item rating list, five broad motivational categories were identified. Each category was represented by three items. In addition, information about subjects' age and class was collected.

The rating scale was administered to 207 high school male varsity athletes enrolled in the seven public high schools in Rockingham County, North Carolina. The male athletes were asked to rank nine items which they felt influenced their sport participation. A space was also provided at the bottom for writing in items not listed. In ranking the items 1 to 9, 1 represented the most important reason for participation and 9 the least. Scores were generated by reversing the values and assigning nine points to each first choice, eight to each second choice, and so forth. Data were tabulated from scores according to individual items and broad motivational categories.

The results showed that athletes participated in interscholastic sports for "enjoyment" first, "love of competition" second and "to be a part of the team" third. "To follow my brother's footsteps" and to "escape reality" ranked last among the fifteen items. According to the broad motivational categories, "task appeal" offered the best explanation

for athletes' motivation; "affiliation" was a close second. "Achievement" and "social acceptance" fell in the middle and "fitness" ranked last as an influence.

The study compared the results with those reported in the literature to determine differences or similarities. For the most part, the data obtained in this study is consistent with current research. The finding, however, that "enjoyment" was the most popular reason for high school boys' athletic participation is not totally in accord with some notions held about achievement motivation.

THE MOTIVATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL
MALE ATHLETES

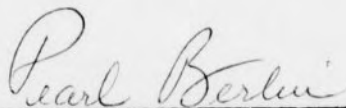
by

Ernest Conrad Holcomb

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Approved by



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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with some of the motivational factors which purportedly influence athletic participation by high school boys. As a participant and coach of athletics for the last decade, the researcher's curiosity was raised about possible changes in motivations of athletes. Many young men respond to similar incentives but seem to camouflage their interests with fads of "coolness" and remote desire. In an effort to gain more understanding of the reasons behind their participation, the writer asked high school varsity athletes to identify and rank some of the factors they associate with their sport motivation.

The research focuses on male varsity high school athletes because this level is of personal interest to the researcher and is compatible with his present professional employment. Although it might be said that high school athletes are still in their formative or developmental stage, it is believed that they have matured sufficiently and experienced enough competitive sport to realize their own motivations. Furthermore, there are few known facts, that have been systematically gathered, about the high school athletes' motivations. Yet, explanations of why high school youths pursue sport is important in the understanding and development of those who are athletically inclined.

There has been a great enthusiasm for sports in our country. This suggests that one of the characteristics of Americans is their love of athletics. For example, in World War II, the attacking Japanese troops

charged American platoons with weapons and shouts of "to hell with Babe Ruth." These cries were meant to demoralize the soldiers by attacking what the people of the United States supposedly held in great esteem. The enemy did not choose to defame religion, the economic system, or motherhood; rather, a sports hero served to represent to the Japanese, what Americans highly valued (Beisser, 1967).

Unlike the generous rewards and salaries influencing the play of professional athletes, the high school youth's participation reflects a different spectrum of motivation. The athlete's involvement is marked with hard work, long practices and sweaty, smelly locker rooms. Only the student whose interest is genuine perseveres. In order to gain insight into this commitment, this inquiry was undertaken.

Statement of the Problem

This study is concerned with motivations of high school male athletes in Rockingham County, North Carolina, to engage in interscholastic competition. It seeks to identify athletes' reasons for their sport involvement utilizing a researcher - developed rating list. More specifically, the inquiry attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What reasons do high school athletes give for their sport participation? What do their responses suggest are more influential: satisfaction of the need for achievement, affiliation, social acceptance, physiological benefits or task-related accomplishment?
2. How do the reasons explaining participation compare?

3. Do the reasons expressed by the high school athletes complement those of sport and motivation theorists as their views are expressed in the literature?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of interpretation in this study the following meanings are assigned:

Achievement Motivation--"...the instigating force to undertake a particular activity in order to achieve success..." (Atkinson and Birch, 1970, pp. 184-185).

High School Male Athlete-- a high school male competitor who participated as a squad member of an organized interscholastic team that engaged in a full season of scheduled competition under the direction of a designated coach.

Motivation--"...the process of arousing action, sustaining the activity in process, and regulating the pattern of activity (Young, 1961, p. 24)."

Assumptions Underlying the Research

The meaningfulness of this research is based upon the following assumptions:

- A. The Holcomb Sport Motivation Rating List is a valid indication of factors influencing participation in varsity sports.
- B. Subjects participating in the present study are an unbiased sample of male high school athletes.
- C. Responses to the Holcomb Sport Motivation Rating List are honestly given.

Scope of the Study

The data involves only responses to the sport motivation rating list devised for this study. Two hundred and seven high school male athletes who were members of baseball, basketball, and golf teams during the 1974-1975 academic year participated in the inquiry. They were students in Rockingham County, North Carolina, and attended one of the seven high schools in the area.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study should be of value in understanding why high school males engage in competitive athletics. To all sport leaders, motivation is accepted as a major factor for success in athletics. However, it has never been fully explored, particularly with high school competitors. Limited understanding of this personality factor in athletes suggest investigation of the topic by people who are in positions of leadership and have the potential to contribute to young athletes' development. Coaches must continuously seek the facts behind athletic motivation to enhance their effectiveness. The researcher believes that this study can contribute to better understanding of athletes. Also, the focus of the work is directed at the high school level, a relatively neglected area of inquiry among sport scientists.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature concerned with motivation and its psychological implications was first examined. Although numerous theories about motivation have been set forth, most of them have questionable meanings for the competitive sport situation. Only those theories which have application for explaining athletic involvement, e.g., achievement motivation, need for affiliation, self-actualization, were more carefully studied.

It is essential to note that inquiries similar to the present investigation could not be found in the literature. Studies dealing with athletic motivations of collegiate level and other athletes were included in the following review.

Early Theories

Hull's early theory of Drive Motivation (Weiner, 1972), posits that learning occurs when a reduction in stimuli is the result of a response to that stimuli. Hull's development of the theory grew from the firm roots of ideas such as Darwin's survival theory, Watson's measurement of behavioral tendencies, Thorndike's intelligence investigations, and Pavlov's studies of instincts and conditioning. Hull was also guided by the physiological evidence and conceptions of Whitehead and Russell, Hull developed his postulate system for making the predictions of psychology.

Hull explains that the attainment of one's goal eliminates the needs of the individual and removes the extensive pressures induced by the stimuli. This famous psychological theorist clarifies this by stating that although the offsetting of the stimuli is rewarding, this same response will reappear on subsequent occasions when the stimuli repeats itself (Weiner, 1972).

Rotter in 1954 and Tolman in 1955 (Cofer & Appley, 1964) studied human motivation and each one recognized the role of expectation and subjective probability. Rotter points out that the potential of occurrence is a function of both the expectancy that reinforcement will follow and the value it has. Tolman argues that performance of a function will depend on the need involved and if the need is not great, the motivation will be less than may be expected.

McClelland (1961) explains that certain needs of man must be met in order to deactivate his danger signals. The theory is based on the simple activity of hunger and food gathering. In the same sense, McClelland says that as a man needs to achieve and does achieve, the more he will be motivated to continue achieving. McClelland points out that achievement is highly complex and is controlled by such forces as desire for social approval, power, knowledge, and ability. He clarifies the "inner concerns" of achievement motivation by focusing on the fantasies experienced by one who is achieving. Murray (Cofer & Appley, 1964) in 1938 held that motivation may have effects on fantasy. Murray's idea was responsible for McClelland's strategy for measuring achievement motivation. When one tries to attain a goal he has some aroused motivation. This influence may be the desire to achieve for

social approval or to get out of a situation as fast as possible and do something else. From this point of view, McClelland speculates that when a number of people with high achievement motivations happen to be present in a given culture at a given time, things will prosper.

More Recent Explanations

Atkinson and Feather (1966) indicate two problems connected with motivation which they believe are difficult to reduce. The first problem is to account for an individual's selection of one path of action, and the second is to account for the amplitude of vigor of the action tendency once it is initiated. Atkinson's work dealt with the concepts suggested by research in the differences in strength of achievement motivation. The studies searched for a theoretical principle which would explain the relationship of strength of motive to goal-directed performance.

Atkinson's contribution to the status of knowledge about achievement motivation is the idea that the strength of "aroused" motivation to achieve is believed to be a function of both the strength of motive and the expectancy of goal-attainment.

Three variables are associated with achievement motivation, "motive," "expectancy," and "incentive." An expectancy is a cognitive anticipation that one act results in a particular consequence. The incentive variable represents the pertinent attractiveness of a goal that is offered in a situation. The motive variable is defined as a disposition to strive for a certain kind of satisfaction.

Motive is further categorized according to three narrower frames of reference: (a) achievement, (b) affiliation, and (c) power. The products yielded from these are actually incentives which produce a similar kind of affect as does satisfaction.

Atkinson points out another dimension of motive. He identifies aversions, or avoidant tendencies. They represent an individual's capacity to experience pain in connection with negative consequences of acts. The motive to avoid failure is likened to a capacity for experiencing shame and humiliation.

Still another type of motive exists. This is referred to as appetites or approach tendencies. The motive is considered a disposition to approach success, the feeling of success, and the avoidance of failure.

Buhler (1968) distinguishes between life aspects of goals and needs. Most people define need as that which results from a deficiency of the organism. It becomes a goal only if, by action, an individual strives for satisfaction of the need as an end; that is, he has an intent. Goals, on the other hand, vary in their position in life. In the psychoanalytic framework, goals appear on the ego level. They may be viewed as being certain definite ends which an organism sets out to accomplish. Thus, two individuals may be motivated to achieve the goal of success in physical activity. In one case it involves the goal of inner satisfaction gained from achievement which relates to self-realization. This achievement may be supported by outer approval, but it is not dependent upon it. In the other case, the individual is motivated by the need to satisfy parents, or parental images, rather

than by the need for self-realization. Such goals become important in the development of an internal self-stimulating basis for action, a self-reliant attitude toward accomplishment, and a sound foundation for desirable self-esteem.

According to Barry and Wolf (1965), motivational theory must lie at the core of any sound approach to personality and counseling whether the psychological theory is expressed in terms of psychic energy, drive for power, mechanistic response to stimuli, or fulfillment of need. These authors further state that regardless of geographical location or social group, there are five strivings in which human beings engage. These include: (a) to live; (b) to internalize a culture; (c) to perpetuate internalized learnings; (d) to express themselves within a culture; (e) to achieve positive experiences.

Barry and Wolf consider the aspect of value as a replacement for the need involved in motivation. According to their ideas, good is equated with the elimination of a lack of something. Essentially, a person struggles to fill a void. Actually, a value is a learned belief internalized to such a degree that it shades the actions and thoughts of the individual and produces a healthy emotional-intellectual response when any other thing runs in opposition to it.

Maslow (1970) examines personality and motivation and connects the two with psychopathogenesis. He feels that the conscious motivational content of everyday life has been conceived as important or unimportant as it is related to an individual's basic goals. Symptoms or surface indicators are what Maslow believes everyday

conscious desires to be. If our superficial desires were taken at their face value we would be in a state of complete confusion. Such a conflict is not necessarily pathogenic, but it becomes so when it threatens our basic needs.

According to Maslow, one is doomed to disappointment when the neglect of higher needs and the neglect of the differences between lower and higher needs persists over time. After a temporary period of contentment, even a healthy person starts desiring higher goals, thus producing greater frustration and resulting in familiar levels of restlessness and dissatisfaction.

There are many considerations one must be aware of to understand motivation. Maslow states that among these things are: (a) the appearance of the drive or desire; (b) the actions that it arouses; (c) the satisfactions that come from attaining the goal or object.

Maslow (1970) disagrees with analyzing individual segments of one's personality. He believes the complete being must be studied because all of the organism is motivated and not just part of it. If one receives satisfaction, his whole self feels it; that is, motivation and satisfaction work hand in hand. Usually the will to obtain or accomplish a thing is merely a mean to some satisfying end. Maslow illustrates as follows "... we want money so that we may have an automobile. In turn we want an automobile because the neighbors have one..." The reasons behind conscious desire may be cumulative or tied together.

In examining the reasons for desire, Maslow believes that satisfying desires is directly connected with one's culture. In an example,

a good hunter may gain self-esteem in one society while in another society being a great medicine man would be the ultimate goal. Human beings often strive for the same goal, but the roads taken to reach this end may differ greatly. According to Maslow, these roads or means are greatly influenced by the specific culture.

In a study by Atkinson and Birch (1970), three interrelated dynamic processes which account for changes in the strength of tendencies are pointed out. These processes, "instigation," "resistance," and "consummation," occur simultaneously to control the strength of resultant action tendencies. This control, in turn, regulates an individual's behavior.

The interrelatedness of the three dynamic processes of motivation is obvious in the treatment of the consummatory force of the activity in progress. The consummatory force depends on the intensity of the involvement in the activity in progress. This is assumed to be a function of the strength of the resultant action tendency being expressed. Thus, the resultant action tendency depends on the strength of the action tendency relative to the strength of the negaction tendency. The strength of the resultant action tendency cannot be stable until the strength of the negaction tendency is solid.

Motivation is viewed from still another perspective by Mischel (1969). He states that in the realm of human motivation much is made nowadays of various forms of intrinsic motivation. This includes the tendency to explore, master things, and search of novelty. Attention is also drawn to the concept that some things are done or indulged in for what there are in them. This, he alleges, is very different from

things done out of habit or for some extrinsic reason. It is the belief of Mischel that often various forms of extrinsic motivation, such as grades or approval, may well be used to interest people in an area or activity. These extrinsic motivations usually need to be supplemented with some intrinsic motivation (appeal) to develop a healthy goal.

Korman (1974) attempted to study the psychology behind motivation. He sought to understand the arousal, direction, and persistence of behavior, given the characteristics of the behavior subject and the environment. Human beings are motivated to achieve the outcomes of which they are believed to be capable. These beliefs are formulated in the various worlds in which humans exist and changes in these worlds result in adjustments in achievement, creativity, and aggression.

Individuals, then, are motivated, according to Korman, to achieve an optimal activation level. The level is consistent with the world as it is known to an individual; thus, human beings are motivated to learn about themselves and others in the society. The only real way for a person to establish a system of evaluative beliefs is to interact with others, both overtly and symbolically.

With respect to achievement motivation, Korman connects this phenomenon with that of expectancy-value. Very often, a person is motivated to achieve because of the value he or she expects to obtain. There is often a controlling influence. Even in our athletic world, we have controlling forces such as administrators, rule committees, and arbitration organizations which decide the direction of the goal-defining rewards of the individual, coach, and school. These controls influence athletes and their respective organizations to develop a

wholesome performance level since they believe these rewards are attainable on the basis of their efforts.

Korman further explains motivation by discussing the factors of achievement, aggression, and creativity. He points out that high achievement motivation is usually congruent with high self-esteem. High creativity motivation is consistent with high tolerance for changes. Low aggression motivation is formulated from a high esteem for others.

The motivational concept as it concerns the needs of an individual is explained by Buhler and Massarik (1968). They suggest that need is merely the result of deficiencies in an organism. The aim of need is to relieve the pressures and bring about satisfaction; it becomes a goal only if the need satisfaction is an end in itself.

Hartman (Buhler, 1968) extends the ideas set forth in this theory by pointing out that all goal direction is determined by perceptions and activity and all children are drawn by such. Hartman states in his psychoanalytic theory that goal directed ego action replaces satisfaction with a blind drive.

Heckhausen (McClelland, 1961) discusses achievement motivation by injecting an interesting point of view. He believes a goal-directed organism is affected by the time interval involved. For example, when a group of children are instructed to study for a test they can recall more answers after several days of study instead of the day after the assignment is given. Heckhausen feels that in achievement motivation, goals worked toward in a serious manner can better be reached because anticipations and preparations can be conducted prior to the test

(or game). People with high achievement motives concentrate on long range goals and are ready for upcoming situations. People with low achievement motives think more about short range goals and even though they usually can capitalize on a short range goal they have trouble preparing for goals over a long period of time.

Sport Motivation

The review of the literature directly concerning athletic motivation called attention to the fact that there are several different ideas on the subject. Many reasons are given which purport to express sport participation. The following discussion attempts to explain some of the current points of view.

When one is deprived of the opportunity to be associated with anything of personal value, such as an activity, he likely becomes frustrated and seeks means of counteracting the frustration. Atkinson (Mischel 1969) believes the need to be associated with the activity provides one source of sport motivation. When deprived of the opportunity to engage in an activity of personal value and/or when able to do so, one has a higher level of tendency. Atkinson cites the example of an athlete being deprived of friendly interaction with other members of a team. This lack of team association results in the curtailment of affiliation.

Whether participation in athletics is fostered by extrinsic or intrinsic reasons is debatable. Peters (Mischel 1969) points out that the motive to, "... explore, master, and search...", are the main influences behind activity. He expresses a belief that athletes play

sports for the intrinsic reasons which emerge. Extrinsic motivations may stimulate interest in youngsters (grades, approval). However, such influences do little to get them mentally committed to activities so that they will continue with them in life.

Lawther (1972) discusses the aggression tendency in sport. He cites Buss (Lawther, 1972) who points out that according to the "Cathartic Theory", "... reduction or easing of aggressive tendencies occurs from such activities only when anger is present... (p.29)." This idea is supported by Stone (Lawther, 1972) who reports that athletes show less aggressive attitudes out of season than do non-athletes.

Lawther (1972) explains that sports are a kind of play and are motivated in part by the joy of the experience itself. Bouet (Lawther, 1972) agrees and states that sports bring pleasure or they would cease to be of interest.

"Sport is an open window to the enjoyment of muscular movement, activated respiration and circulation,... (p.24)"

Bouet explains that sport is practiced also for the physical pleasure derived from it, such as satisfying the needs for physical exertion and movement. He concludes by saying that sport participation produces a perceptual, sensuous thrill alive in one's person.

With the aspect of pleasure, Lawther identifies what he calls the "Emotional Overtones." Not only does sport produce a highly enjoyable state of emotion through its surmounting difficulties, it yields many risks and dangers. These types of situations are well understood by

an athlete, The renowned physician, Menninger (Lawther, 1972), explains:

"... healthy personality is one who...takes his play with a degree of seriousness."
"... the inability and unwillingness to play reveals an insecure and disordered aspect of personality (p.24)."

Lawther (1972) believes one needs to achieve to be satisfied in life. Enjoyment in educational and recreational endeavors help to foster good mental health. Enjoyment achieved through athletics assists one in depleting or "psyching away" her/his tensions and worries. Enjoyment comes from improving and noticing one's own self-improvement. Bouet (Lawther, 1972) states that the greatest moment in sports is not defeating an opponent but exceeding one's self. Sport allows one to realize his own potentials and limitations in life and this promotes a healthy mental awareness.

Competition provides one of the major areas for athletic participation. Lawther (1972, p.29) lists many reasons for considering competition as a motivating factor for athletes. These include competition: (a) with his own record; (b) with others, earlier records; (c) of striving to improve; (d) to prove oneself superior; (e) for award; (f) for praise; (g) for honor in excelling.

Thompson (Lawther, 1972) notes that competition can border on aggression. Whether it does or not, competition and rivalry play a part in satisfying an individuals needs; furthermore in the reality of the world, people compete for everything in life. Competing is also thought to be a means of satisfying the urge for zest and meaning

to life as well as building morale and ego.

Sports (Lawther, 1972) provide a means of expressing harmless competitive urges, improve self-confidence and self-respect. Morale can be a mental and/or emotional condition of zeal, hope, and enthusiasm. In working toward goals, competition and rivalry foster aspects of team unity, shared feelings and, "a common cause."

An individual wants success, popularity, and admiration from his peers. Sports permit friendly rivalries and joyous interplay within his own family group. In society, many an athlete may be driven further by social acclaim and awards for improvement than by the mere love for the game. In an effort to obtain these tangible things, an athlete may work harder than an individual who more easily comes to possess some of these assets in life. Lepre (Lawther, 1972) offered an opinion which is normally understood in today's life but is not supported by scientific research or published data. Lepre explains that the majority of highly skilled athletes come from lower socio-economic classes and from families where the male parent engages in physical labor. There exists a stronger motivational factor when one is deprived outlets for success and enjoyment. Lepre (Lawther, 1972) notes many factors for one's motivation. He believes: (a) an athlete may come from any background; (b) an athlete's male parent's background is a factor; (c) luxury, ease and money does not lead to needed work for higher-goals; (d) extensive experience in work and activity during childhood contributes to sport success.

An athlete who has the opportunity to receive awards for his ability also benefits from his peers' awareness of his success. These

tangible items cultivate feelings of self-confidence, self-reliance, and greater enthusiasm for more recognition.

Another reward, although not monetary, is the satisfaction an athlete gains from playing under a particular coach. Discipline is a strong element of many athletic teams and this concern starts with the coach. Lawther (1972) notes that athletes desire squad discipline and because of this they have more respect for the tutor who enforces the best learning and performance situations. It would be reasonable to suggest here that some athletes enjoy the sport's discipline and are, therefore, motivated to participate to some extent by the coach.

Lawther (1972, p.31) concludes his discussion about athletic motivation by listing ten reasons for participation. These are: (a) for self-expression; (b) for self-test (physical potentials); (c) for risks and thrills; (d) for recognition; (e) for approval; (f) for prestige; (g) to escape boredom; (h) to relieve anxieties and drab routines; (i) to relieve aggressions and irritations; (j) to combat inferior feelings by competition with people of similar ability.

Sport also offers individuals a superb occasion for the development of perfection. Many athletes are awed by authoritative figures and sense the possibility of instant glamor and fame. Even if these fortunes do not appear, some athletes continue to perform in hopes of becoming champions. If the level of champion is never attained, there are still other reasons why young men are motivated to participate in sports.

Weiss (1969) points out several factors linked with athletic motivation. He, too, cites the experience of pleasure and excitement

as two definite reasons for participation. Once athletes realize the joy that comes from their own superior performance, they find it difficult to return to the anonymous world of everyday. Through their athletic activity, athletes experience self-awareness whether they win or lose. The ability to express their energy in such a way welcomes training, practice, and games. These young men benefit from the hard work, gain from the discipline of being pushed to the limit, and learn to live with tension and crisis.

Weiss (1969) sees athletics as a training base for people to become socially acceptable beings. The philosophical aspects of sport lend itself to the development and pre-planned preparation of social existence. A person likes to be self-complete, directly through his own action and independent of others. Sport promotes this in the life of those who participate in it because one becomes physically and mentally stronger and are better able to cope with stress and obstacles. Not only do the philosophical and mental attributes developed through sport participation carry over into later life, but job connections stemming from "friends" made from the playing years often prove to be beneficial. Scholarships are also a big object motivating many young athletes to train and develop. Grant-in-aids mean more than just educational fees, it also may provide social benefits and a feeling of success.

Weiss (1969) discusses many aspects which motivate one to perform in sports. Athletics give individuals the chance to exhibit and test themselves against standards of excellence by putting all of their energies at the service of their bodies. Weiss states that sports

motivate an individual to participate because of several reasons. These include: (a) athletics allow extension of self; (b) provides opportunity for testing; (c) promotes philosophic attention; (d) provides achievement of excellence; (e) one can see man using his body; (f) provides outlet for aggression; (g) promotes the use of rules, self-discipline and cooperation; (h) provides help biologically, economically, and socially.

Research About the Motivations of Male Athletes

Because of the relatively limited available research which focuses on high school male athletes and their motivations, the following literature deals more with college athletes and other research which seeks to explain the "why" of competitive sport involvement.

Nix (1971) identified some of the motivational reasons that influenced a boy not to sustain participation in interscholastic athletics. Questionnaires were filled out by 621 senior boys. The results revealed the reasons were: (a) they preferred to study to maintain their grades; (b) they believe they lacked the skill to make their team; and (c) they did not like the coaches. The reasons why the boys did persist in their participation were: (a) they liked the sport in which they were competing; (b) they had the desire to compete and win; and (c) they had the desire for physical conditioning and development. The most prevalent reasons why the boys did not complete the full sports season were: (a) they preferred to work after school; (b) an injury made them stop; (c) practice conflicted with maintaining their school grades; (d) they did not like the coaches; (e) they were removed from the team; and (f) they lacked the skill to make the team.

Plummer (1969) conducted a Q-sort study to determine the achievement motivations of two athletic teams. In studying a gymnastics team and a baseball team, he tried to compare an individually oriented sport (gymnastics) and a team oriented sport (baseball). The social responses of both groups were quite similar and no substantial conclusions could be drawn. The mean achievement scores of both groups lead to the rejection of the hypothesis that college gymnasts are more highly motivated to achieve than are college baseball participants.

Mortier (1972) set out to measure the effects of praise and punishment motivation among college football athletes. The data were based on the performance times in individual competition. Varsity football athletes were studied in two categories: those who functioned well and those who did not function well under competition. One group received a praise motivation treatment and the other group received punishments. The results revealed that the praise motivation and punishment motivation had little effect upon performance on a gross motor task. Competition, however, was effective as a motivating agent and did enhance performance.

Martens (1970) studied the effect of affiliation and task motivation on the success and satisfaction of college intramural basketball teams. The measuring device consisted of a pre- and post-season questionnaire which assessed affiliation and task motivation as well as satisfaction. The teams were categorized into low, moderate, and high levels for both affiliation and task motivation. The number of games won was used as an index of success. Findings revealed that high affiliation motivated teams in contrast to moderate and low teams

were less successful but more satisfied. On the other hand, high task-motivated teams were more successful and more satisfied than moderate or low task-motivated teams.

In a recent study, Gruber and Gray (1976) measured motivation across several levels of basketball competition. The research was undertaken to investigate the nature of relationships between items measuring dimensions of motivation and team success. Subjects ranged from children through college level leagues. It was concluded from the research that as an athlete moves into the higher levels of competition, he becomes less concerned with team affiliation and more task motivated. The athletes having success as regulars also seek to maintain their status so as to receive the approval of coach and audience.

Summary

The chapter reviewed the older and more recent theories concerning motivation. Early motivation theorists seem to set the stage for their followers since much of the more recent explanations are extensions of the concepts first identified in the mid 1900's.

The literature also reveals a limited amount of reported research about sport motivation in comparison to more general considerations of motivation. With respect to sports, such motivational influences as recognition, competition and rivalry are cited as influences on a person to participate. However, it is pointed out that without the proper environment these reasons may have little affect on an individual. The current growth in high school athletic programs has

caused coaches and physical educators to become concerned with the underlying influences prompting participation.

Few studies dealing directly with high school athletes were found in the literature. This points out the need for studying high school athletes. Hopefully, the present investigation can make a contribution to knowledge about these developing young persons.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Following the specification of the problem and more thorough review of the literature, the procedures pursued in data collection and analysis were identified. This chapter describes, in chronological order, the steps taken in carrying out the research.

Preparation of the Data-Collection Tool

The instrument used in this study was developed by the author. It identified reasons generally believed to be motivational factors which explain participation in competitive sport. Most of the items were derived from the literature. They were developed so as to be compatible with generally accepted motivation theory. Subjects were asked to assign a rank, from most influential to least, to nine of the fifteen motivational items. Space was provided for write-in responses.

A trial administration was conducted on a group of male high school non-varsity athletes. An indication that some items needed revising prompted several corrections prior to the development of the final form. See the Appendix for a sample copy of the instrument.

To facilitate interpretation of the results, information was collected about the subjects' varsity experience. A short table was constructed and placed at the bottom right corner of the form. Responses were given relative to the number of years the responding athlete had participated at the varsity level and the sport in which

he took part. The inquiry form as it was used in the study is presented in the Appendix.

Selection of Subjects

Subjects were selected from the universal population of high schools in Rockingham County, North Carolina. The seven schools included were Bethany, Madison-Mayodan, Morehead, Reidsville, Ruffin, Stoneville, and Wentworth High Schools. They represent three different conferences within the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. They also represent three different size institutions. Athletes who play on the basketball, baseball, and varsity golf teams were included in the study. Programs of interscholastic competition were comparable in all seven of the participating high schools. Only varsity members were used because of their maturity and experience in comparison to non-varsity athletes. In all, 207 Rockingham County High School athletes served as subjects in the study.

Data Gathering

The researcher contacted the seven high school principals in the Rockingham County schools. After receiving approval to administer the inquiry form, dates for obtaining the responses were arranged by telephone.

Upon arrival at each high school, the investigator met school personnel and then explained the ranking task to subjects at their place of meeting. Subjects were provided with an inquiry form and a soft lead pencil. Written instructions were supplemented by verbal directions. After questions were answered, subjects proceeded to rank

the items and fill in the varsity experience chart. The time required by each subject to complete the inquiry was less than thirty minutes. Forms were returned immediately to the researcher. Each response was submitted anonymously.

Preparation of Materials for Analysis

In spite of precautions taken to assure accuracy in responding to the rank-ordering, several forms were incorrectly completed. The first step in preparing data for analysis was the scanning of forms and the elimination of those that seemed invalid. In all, eight forms were eliminated.

Scoring and Tabulation

The first step in analyzing the responses was to assign a point value to each rank designated by the subject. The first ranked item was awarded nine points; second rank receive eight points, third rank was assigned seven points and so forth. The ninth ranked item was assigned one point. This system was used to maximize differences among items and generate a high "score" for first-ranked items.

Secondly, a "master" chart was constructed for the tabulation of scores for each item according to school. Thereafter, the summaries of scores per item for each school and for all seven schools involved in the research were determined.

The third step included the tabulation of the varsity experience information. The number of years an athlete had participated in each of the sports was added and a total number of years of participation was determined for each sport.

Analysis

After reviewing possible alternatives for statistical treatments, it was decided that raw data be used for analysis. This decision was based on the following: (a) the forced-choice nature of the instrument, (b) the arbitrariness of the scoring technique used, and (c) the investigators' limited competence as a statistician. Moreover, as a descriptive study with broad framing questions, obtained responses, it was felt would satisfy the purpose of the inquiry. The non-generalizability of the data as a result of this decision was acknowledged.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Summaries of obtained data are presented in this chapter in table form. The analysis of these responses are organized according to the questions set forth in Chapter I.

Data

Table 1 describes the sample. Subjects who participated in the study were members of one of three varsity teams: basketball, baseball or golf. The respective grade in school is indicated. It is interesting that in all three activities, there is a considerable "drop out" from ninth and twelfth grade. The discrepancy between numbers reported in the table and the number of responses analyzed is due to the fact that several of the athletes participated on more than one varsity team. Only one response form per athlete was used in the study.

Table 2 identifies the fifteen motivational items as they were ranked and quantified by the athletes according to school. Each number represents the total value assigned to the various motivational items obtained by adding the point value for the rank order designated by the respondent as described in the previous chapter. The items are listed in the same order they were presented to subjects on the response form. It should be noted that within schools, totals are quite consistent with those of the entire sample. This was especially evident among extreme items--those most frequently chosen by subjects as their reasons for participating in sport and those least often acknowledged.

Table 1
Team and Class Affiliation of Subjects

	Basketball	Baseball	Golf	Total N
9th Freshmen 1st yr.	40	51	22	113
10th Sophomores 2nd yr.	35	38	15	88
11th Juniors 3rd yr.	12	15	13	40
12th Seniors 4th yr.	2	9	3	14

N = 255

Table 2
Reasons for Participation in Athletics
According to Schools

	Bethany	Madison- Mayodan	Morehead	Reidsville	Ruffin	Stoneville	Wentworth	Total Value
To be successful	104	138	116	228	126	144	126	982
Belonging	23	52	31	68	51	30	34	289
For health	83	50	47	94	60	86	83	503
Enjoyment	154	204	216	276	195	152	201	1398
To "escape" reality	10	12	9	3	10	9	13	66
Please parents	8	24	3	27	11	28	9	110
To follow in brother's footsteps	0	12	1	33	16	13	10	85
Love of competition and rivalry	178	183	214	275	179	115	211	1355
Respect of coach(es)	28	44	53	67	22	79	49	342
Recognition	52	73	96	131	68	76	91	587
Feeling of superiority	38	50	39	32	48	46	43	296
To be part of the team	120	151	150	216	134	124	162	1057
To represent my school	97	129	162	148	116	143	158	953
For mental fitness	52	31	45	70	46	64	76	384
To keep in shape	81	73	109	133	72	90	96	654
Total Points =	1028	1226	1291	1801	1154	1199	1362	9061

N = 207

Table 3 presents the athletes' years of experience and the scores obtained from ranking each of the fifteen items. The data is categorized to show responses of those varsity athletes with one or two years of play and those athletes with three or four years of playing experience.

Although the option was given for writing in their reasons for participation, the eight responses that were received were appropriate to items already appearing on the forms. Therefore, these were included in the appropriate tabulation by the investigator.

Analysis

Reasons for participation according to individual items. Following is a listing of the fifteen separate items on the inquiry form as they were ranked from most to least. The total number of points designated for each item is also presented:

Enjoyment	= 1398
Love of competition and rivalry in sports	= 1355
To be a part of the team	= 1057
To be successful	= 982
To represent my school	= 953
To keep in shape	= 654
Recognition	= 587
For health	= 503
For mental fitness	= 384
Earn respect from the coach(es)	= 342
Feeling of superiority	= 296
Belonging	= 289
To please and be accepted by parents	= 110
To follow my brother's footsteps	= 85
To "escape" reality	= 66

The highest ranked item, enjoyment, was twenty-one times more popular than the lowest item, to "escape" reality.

Table 3
Reasons for Participating in Athletics
According to Years Experience

	1 & 2 YEARS N=159	3 & 4 YEARS N=48
To be successful	739	258
Belonging	195	64
For health	334	105
Enjoyment	983	301
To "escape" reality	58	17
Please parents	76	36
To follow in brother's footsteps	70	19
Love of competition and rivalry	1105	358
Respect of coach(es)	258	90
Recognition	415	150
Feeling of superiority	256	53
To be part of the team	860	255
To represent my school	801	192
For mental fitness	287	89
To keep in shape	537	117

N = 207

Reasons for participation according to years experience. The ranked items were divided into two experience groups to better recognize any differences that might relate to the amount of years of varsity experience and how these might affect the athletes' motivations. Direct comparison of the groups was not possible because of the difference in size. This finding alone, namely that there are approximately three times more freshman and sophomores participating in varsity basketball, baseball and golf was itself revealing.

According to the findings, there is great similarity in reasons for sport participation among lower and upper class male high school athletes. Both groups identified identical first and second ranked items--"love of rivalry and competition" and "enjoyment." "To be successful" was more valued by those with more varsity experience; "to be part of the team" ranked third among first and second year athletes. The three lowest ranked items for the total sample, "to escape reality," "to follow in my brother's footsteps," and "to please and be accepted by my parents" were ranked in the same order by the two sub-groups.

Reasons for participation according to broad motivational categories. Each of the fifteen items were arbitrarily considered to be representative of a larger category. Ideas for grouping individual items were obtained from the literature and were established when the response form was originally developed. For example, psychologists subscribe to the idea that motivations are complex phenomena that defy simple explanation. Among the more common ideas associated with sport motivation are: achievement, affiliation, social acceptance, physiological benefits, and task appeal. Therefore, obtained responses

were considered within each of these categories. Table 4 presents these five broad categories, the individual items contained in each, and the total point value obtained from the responses.

Summary

The reasons ranked by the 207 Rockingham County, North Carolina, male high school athletes for their participation in competitive sports were quantified. These responses were examined individually and in groupings of broader motivational categories. The range of "scores" assigned to the items was from 66, lowest, (to "escape" reality) to 1398, highest (enjoyment). Task appeal was the broad motivational category that most often explained subjects' athletic participation.

Table 4
Broad Motivation Categories

Category	Items	Total N by Group
Achievement	To be successful	982
	Recognition	587
	Feeling of superiority	296
		1865
Affiliation	Belonging	289
	To be a part of the team	1057
	To represent my school	953
		2299
Fitness	For health	503
	For mental fitness	384
	To keep in shape	654
		1541
Social Acceptance	To please parents	110
	Follow brother's footsteps	85
	Earn respect from coach(es)	342
		537
Task Appeal	Enjoyment	1398
	To "escape" reality	66
	Love of competition and rivalry	1355
		2819

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings obtained in asking high school male athletes to rank order the reasons for their sport participation warrant comment. From the perspective of a coach who experiences day-to-day interaction with these young competitors and also considering his role as a beginning researcher, the following discussion was developed. The summary of the project and conclusions are also presented in this chapter.

Discussion

In searching the data for clues about athletes' participation in sport, several speculations are suggested by considering the differences between rankings of individual categories. It seems clearly evident that many boys participate in varsity sports for the enjoyment they receive. Although enjoyment is acknowledged to be a factor of motivation in the literature, one of the major theoretical explanations of sport is based on achievement. Few authorities consider the doing of something for the pure fun of it. It seems appropriate to state that since achievement, self-actualization, and competitiveness are among the variables most often mentioned by the motivation theorists, the data obtained in the present study adds a new dimension to understanding motivations of young male adults.

It was expected by the investigator that competition would be ranked high on the list of motivational influences. Since man

understood the simplest abilities of his body, he has promoted rivalry between his friends and foes to test his strengths and potentials. Weiss (1969) stated that sport allows an extension of self and a testing between competitors. Lawther (1972) points out that one reason an athlete competes is to prove himself superior. Yet according to the obtained data, the item, "feeling of superiority," is ranked nine places below, "love of competition and rivalry." The researcher feels it is possible that many of today's high school athletes truly participate in order to experience controlled competition. For such persons, proving oneself to be superior is not the primary influence behind participation but, rather, a secondary reason.

In recent years, the researcher in his role as coach has noted a trend toward increased valuing of team affiliation. Because of this observation, it was not surprising to see "to be a part of the team" ranked number three which was higher than the variable entitled "to be successful." One probable reason for the popularity of the team membership item is the growth of intra and extramural programs in the schools. The idea of belonging or affiliating regardless of one's abilities and record may have influenced the thinking of many high school athletic team participants. This idea is also fostered by such recreational groups as the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and city recreation departments who encourage membership and fellowship. One other fact which may explain the relatively high ranking of "to be part of the team" lies in the selection of subjects for the investigation. Freshmen made up the largest class taking part in the inquiry. At the ninth grade level, those participants who are capable of making the team

usually experience little actual competitive play. Yet, in most cases, the youngster is content with being a team member and engaging in limited action. It is almost as if he knows his time will come. According to Gruber and Gray (1976), as an athlete moves up in school grade he becomes more task motivated and less team oriented. The crude attempt to check this out in the present study was somewhat supported by the more experienced athletes' higher ranking of the item "to be successful."

After careful consideration of how the separate items fell in the broad categories of achievement, affiliation, social acceptance, fitness and task appeal several conjectures could be made. It should be noted that the items included in the achievement reasons totaled the third largest amount of points. Each of the three, (a) to be successful, (b) for a feeling of superiority, and (c) for recognition, is directly concerned with the self. It does not necessarily account for any teammate or some other person. That is to say, the achievement reasons are highly personal to the athlete.

The task appeal items included what is regarded by some persons to be the two most important influences behind an athlete's participation. Menninger (Lawther, 1972) points out that a true athlete is one who takes his task with a bit of seriousness. Competition promotes feelings of aggression and according to Thompson (Lawther, 1972) competition and rivalry play a part in satisfying an individual's needs. This need to compete evidently is recognized or felt by those athletes who took part in this inquiry.

The reasons for sport participation referred to as "enjoyment" ranked first in the task appeal category. This suggests that there is pleasure, delight, happiness within the sport experience itself. Bouet (Lawther, 1972) confirms this idea by stating that unless one enjoyed what he was doing it would cease to be of interest. Several examples of perseverance or non-perseverance can be observed in school athletic programs. Players often talk themselves into quitting a team because of a variety of exaggerated reasons. Some of these may be minimized or even disappear with the passing of time.

The author offers the opinion that the primary reasons for the physiological and social acceptance categories ranking low also pertains to the subjects constituting the sample of the research. Boys of high school age who are athletes do not normally think very much about their health in the sense of "keeping in shape" or being mentally fit. As young athletes these participants realize they must stay in condition in the off season, but their commitment is to the sport itself--first and foremost. Conditioning is a factor preceding any season and is accepted with little remorse. Older athletes, it is suggested, think more about their physical fitness.

Items comprising the social acceptance category ranked low. The writer is of the opinion that most of the high school athletes do not realize this underlying reason for participation. As several of the theorists pointed out, people need to be accepted socially. Although athletes usually want to please their parents and wish to prove their ability in comparison with an older brother or sister, they tend to be unaware of such needs and, therefore, do not acknowledge them.

Also, the idea of keeping up with a sibling's reputation may be related to the fear of losing one's individuality.

Summary

The inquiry formulated in this study utilized a rank-order format and presented fifteen motivational items to subjects. The author asked a "pilot pool" of high school students to list some of their reasons for participating in school-related tasks. Motivational influences noted in the researched literature were also chosen for inclusion on the form. A trial test was given to discover if any revisions were necessary. After several minor changes we made, the final form was constructed and an experience chart was added to help determine the age and grade of the subjects. Within the 15-item inquiry form, five broad motivational categories were identified among the choices. For each category, e.g., achievement, affiliation, fitness, social acceptance, and task appeal, there were three individual items. Both individual and broad motivational categories were used in the analysis chapter and elaborated on in the discussion.

The inquiry was administered to 215 high school male varsity athletes enrolled in the seven public high schools in Rockingham County, North Carolina. Eight of these forms were incorrectly completed and eliminated. The subjects were asked to rank the nine items which they felt influenced their participation. A space was provided for those who wanted to write in a response. The write-in items, however, were similar to those already listed and were, therefore, tabulated in the appropriate item. In ranking the items 1 to 9, 1 represented the

most important reason. Scores were determined by reversing the values and giving nine points to each first choice, eight to each second choice, etc.... Tables were constructed to make differences between individual items and dimensions easier to recognize. Tables showing player experience, scores of individual items by schools, and scores of items by broad motive category were prepared.

Reasons for sport participation given by the subjects were examined to determine most and least popular items as well as raw differences among items. Findings were compared to those given by the motivational theorists in the literature.

Contrary to most of the theorists, competition and achievement were not the two most prevalent reasons expressed by the subjects. The top ranked item amassing 1398 points was "enjoyment," "competition and rivalry" placed second with 1355 points. Both of these items were included in the "Task Appeal" category and contributed to that category ranking first among the five groups. "To escape reality" was also in the task appeal category but ranked last (66) among all 15 items. "Affiliation" ranked second among the broad categories and "achievement" ranked third. "Social acceptance" was fourth and "fitness" ranked last among the broad explanations of why high school males pursue competitive sport.

Conclusions

This attempt to systematically study the reasons why a select group of male high school athletes engage in competitive sport was undertaken with three framing questions in mind. From the raw data obtained, the

following responses are offered to these questions.

1. What reasons do high school athletes give for their sport participation?

In rank order, athletes explain their sport participation by these motivations: (a) enjoyment, (b) love of competition and rivalry, (c) to be part of the team, (d) to be successful, (e) to represent my school, (f) to keep in shape, (g) recognition, (h) for health, (i) for mental fitness, (j) earn respect from the coach(es), (k) feeling of superiority, (l) belonging, (m) to please and be accepted by parents, (n) to follow my brother's footsteps, (o) to "escape" reality.

Their responses suggest that the following broad motivational categories are influential: (a) task appeal, (b) affiliation, (c) achievement, (d) social acceptance, (e) fitness. Task appeal is most influential, followed by affiliation, then achievement. Social acceptance and fitness ranked considerably lower as motivational factors.

2. How do the reasons explaining participation compare?

Five of the individual motivational items were clearly more highly ranked than all of the others. Enjoyment and love of competition and rivalry in sports are the most popular reasons given by subjects. Somewhat separated from these in rank value were (a) to be a part of the team, (b) to be successful and (c) to represent my school.

Among the least endorsed reasons were: (a) to escape reality, (b) to follow my brother's footsteps, and (c) to please my parents. In between these two groups were items which ranked in order to form a middle range: (a) to keep in shape, (b) recognition, (c) for health, (d) for mental fitness, (e) to earn respect from coach(es), (f) feeling of superiority, (g) belonging. It should be noted that in general the range of differences was relatively consistent in each school as well as for the total sample.

The reasons for sport participation of more experienced athletes (three and four years of varsity sport) and those of less experiences (one and two years) are almost identical. One slight but possibly important finding was the third ranked position of "to be successful" by more experienced subjects. This same item ranked fifth among the younger athletes.

3. Do the reasons expressed by the high school athletes complement those of the sport and motivation theorists as their views are expressed in the literature?

For the most part, the data obtained in this study is consistent with explanations of sport motivation that have been documented to date. One finding, however, is not totally in accord with achievement motivation theory and its related dimensions as it has been applied to sport. In the present study, the most popular reason for participating, as experienced by the high school subjects, was enjoyment. Whether this relates to the younger age of these subjects as

compared to collegiate athletes who are more often involved in sport motivation research is unknown. Gruber and Gray's (1976) recent work does give some credence to such an idea. If the complex entanglement of sport motivation could be more precisely studied, age and experience may assist in our better understanding of the phenomenon.

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APPENDIX

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME

SPORT MOTIVATION RATING LIST

DIRECTIONS: Please DO NOT write your name on this paper. Study the 15 items listed below. Eliminate six (6) which do not explain why you go out for sports. Then rank the remaining nine (9) according to the reasons why you participate in your school sport program. If there is some other reason you wish to identify, add it at the bottom of the list and rank the item. Rank only nine (9) choices, number one (1) being of most importance and number nine (9) being of least importance. When finished with the ranking, notice the chart at the bottom right hand corner of your paper. Place the number of years of varsity experience beside the sport or sports in which you have participated.

- _____ To be successful
- _____ Belonging
- _____ For health
- _____ Enjoyment
- _____ To "escape" reality
- _____ To please and be accepted by parents
- _____ To follow my brother's footsteps
- _____ Love of competition and rivalry in sports
- _____ Earn respect from the coach(es)
- _____ Recognition
- _____ Feeling of superiority
- _____ To be a part of the team
- _____ To represent my school

_____ For mental fitness

_____ To keep in shape

One (1) other reason you wish to add

Varsity Experience

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Number of years</u>
BASKETBALL	
BASEBALL	
GOLF	