
RESEARCH NOTES

JOURNAL OF SPORT & EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY, 1997, 19, 302-311

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Relationship Between Achievement Goals and the Perceived Purposes of Soccer for Semiprofessional and Amateur Players

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A growing body of research on sport achievement motivation supports the application of Nicholls's (1989) achievement orientation theory (see Duda, 1993, for a review). Much of this research has focused on Nicholls's propositions regarding personal goal perspectives and their influence on cognitive, affective, and behavioral indices in achievement situations. Limited research has addressed Nicholls's propositions regarding the relationship between personal goal orientations and individuals' views about the purposes of sport (Duda, 1993). This limited research has focused primarily on American sports participants and the perceived purposes of sport in general, as opposed to a specific activity. Also, few studies have examined the relationship between level of involvement, goal orientations, and the perceived purposes of sport. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between goal perspectives and the perceived purposes of soccer for English soccer players and to explore differences in the perceived purposes of soccer as a function of competitive level.

Central to Nicholls's (1989) theory is that (a) in achievement settings individuals strive to demonstrate ability, and (b) two conceptions of ability predominate. These conceptions underpin two independent goal orientations (task and ego) that act as personal action plans to determine motivated behavior. Task-oriented individuals utilize an undifferentiated conception of ability, and the demonstration of ability is focused on developing skills, exerting effort, and self-improvement. Ego-oriented individuals use a differentiated conception of ability and focus on beating others with minimal effort in order to enhance their social status. Nicholls (1989) also argued that individuals' goal perspectives are related to their views regarding the purposes of an activity. Ego-oriented individuals see activities as a means to an end, whereas task-oriented individuals see the activity as an end in itself. Congruent with these propositions, Nicholls, Patashnick, and Nolen, (1985) found that the goal perspectives of students corresponded to their perceptions of the purposes of education. Task-oriented students saw education as an end in itself and existed to enhance both understanding and the desire to learn and make indi-

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viduals responsible members of the community. Ego-oriented students viewed education as a means to an end, namely, enhanced social status and wealth.

Limited research exists on the relationship between goal perspectives and the perceived purposes of sport or physical education. Duda (1989) reported that task-oriented male and female high school athletes felt that the purpose of sport was to enhance self-esteem, teach people to try their best, cooperate, and be good citizens. Ego-oriented athletes felt that the purpose of sport was to enhance self-esteem and social status. Walling and Duda (1995) found that, except for low task- and low ego-oriented high school students, the purposes of physical education were to promote mastery and cooperation, develop an active lifestyle, promote competitiveness, enhance self-esteem, teach health and fitness, develop motor skills, learn rules, and provide fun. Roberts, Hall, Jackson, Kimiecik, and Tonymon (1995) determined that for college students participating in physical activity classes, a task orientation was related to the view that the purpose of sport was to promote social responsibility and lifetime health, and an ego orientation to achieving status through sport. In assessing goal perspectives and sportspersonship¹ attitudes and the perceived legitimacy of aggression, Duda, Olson, and Templin (1991) concluded that male and female high school basketball players with a low task and high ego orientation endorsed cheating behaviors and unsportspersonlike play. Also, a high ego orientation was positively related to perceiving acts of aggression as more legitimate.

In the only study, to our knowledge, on competitive level and goal orientations, White and Duda (1994) reported that ego-oriented athletes had motives emphasizing competition and status, whereas task-oriented athletes emphasized skill development, fitness, affiliation, team membership, and competition. They found an interaction between gender and competitive level in differences in goal orientations. Specifically, male high school and recreational sport participants were lower in task orientation than female high school and recreational athletes and male youth sport and intercollegiate participants. However, the relationship between competitive level and the perceived purposes of sport was not assessed. White (1995) examined this relationship (but not goal orientation) and reported that intercollegiate athletes felt that the purpose of sport was to make them competitive and provide a high-status career. Recreational athletes saw sport as promoting an active lifestyle and making them good citizens.

To date, the research on goal perspectives and the perceived purposes of sport has not examined non-American participants or assessed the purposes of a specific activity, and little research has focused on level of involvement. Duda (1993; Duda & Allison, 1990) argued that cross-cultural studies of achievement orientation theory are needed if sport psychologists are to maximize motivation among diverse sports participants. The rationale for assessing the perceived purposes of soccer and for examining differences in the perceived purposes of soccer as a function of competitive level was based on recent changes in English soccer. The sport has become a commercial activity with teams now quoted on the stock exchange, lucrative television contracts, higher player salaries, and merchandising deals worth millions of pounds (Fynn & Guest, 1994; Williams, 1994; Williams &

¹Following guidelines on nonsexist language, the term *sportspersonship* will be used instead of *sportsmanship*.

Wagg, 1991). Some commentators (Fynn & Guest, 1994; Otway, 1996) have suggested, particularly for the more elite players, that this has led to a greater acceptance of aggressive play, a decline in sportspersonship, and more importance placed on financial rewards. Although research (Duda, 1989; White, 1995; White & Duda, 1994) on the perceived purposes of sport has addressed aggression and sportspersonship, financial remuneration has not been examined.

Further, although Duda et al. (1991) have assessed the relationship between goal perspectives and the perceived legitimacy of aggression and sportspersonship for high school basketball players and although White (1995) has compared the perceived purposes of sport for intercollegiate and recreational athletes, no research exists comparing elite and nonelite athletes in the same sport. Reinforcing the need to address competitive level is research indicating that as the competitive level increases, aggression and rule violation are perceived as more legitimate (Silva, 1983) and moral reasoning (Bredemeier & Shields, 1993) and sportspersonship (Blair, 1985) decline.

Drawing on Nicholls's theory and research on the relationship between goal perspectives, the perceived purposes of sport (e.g., Duda, 1989), and level of involvement (White & Duda, 1994), several hypotheses were tested. First, ego-oriented players would perceive that the purposes of soccer were financial remuneration, status, and aggression, and task-oriented players would perceive the purposes as fitness and sportspersonship. Second, the semiprofessionals, compared to the amateurs, would be higher on ego orientation and on the perceived purposes of soccer related to financial remuneration, status, and aggression and lower on sportspersonship and fitness.

Method

Participants and Procedures

The participants were 132 semiprofessional ($n = 66$) and amateur ($n = 66$) male soccer players. The semiprofessionals played in a feeder league to the professional soccer leagues, received financial payment for playing (£15–60/week), and trained at least twice a week. The amateur players played in a competitive local league, received no payment for playing, and had no scheduled training. The players were primarily (98%) White. Sixty-four percent were 21–25 years of age, 22% were 15–20, 8% were 26–30, and 6% were 31–35. Most of the players had extensive soccer experience: 39% had played for 11–15 years, 31% for 6–10 years, 20% for 1–5 years, 8% for 16–20 years, and 2% for 21–25 years.

Permission to survey the players was obtained from each team's head coach/manager. The semiprofessional players completed the surveys at a practice session, and the amateur players completed them prior to a match. Following established human subjects protection procedures, the players were told their rights and the purpose of the research, and they were asked to sign a consent form.

Measures

Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ). Using this instrument, developed by Duda and Nicholls (1992), participants think of when they feel most successful in their sport and respond to 13 items on 5-point Likert scales with

anchors of *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Minor modifications were made to some of the items to make them appropriate for English soccer players (e.g., the item "I score the most points or goals" was modified to read "I score, save, or prevent the most goals" so as to be applicable for attackers, defenders, and goalkeepers).

Perceived Purposes of Soccer Questionnaire (PPSQ). Previous research (e.g., Duda, 1989) has identified six major perceived purposes of sport: mastery, health/fitness, social responsibility, competitiveness/aggression, status, and self-esteem. This study focused on the perceived purposes of soccer, with particular emphasis on financial remuneration, sportspersonship, and aggression. Thus, purposes related to competitiveness/aggression and social responsibility (sportspersonship) were retained, and a purpose related to financial remuneration was developed. The perceived purposes of fitness and status were also included because of their relevance to soccer and because these have been identified as important in past research (e.g., Duda, 1989). The PPSQ consisted of 21 items taken from past research on the perceived purposes of sport (Duda, 1989) and attitudes toward rule violation and aggression (Duda et al., 1991). The players were asked "A very important thing that soccer should do is . . ." and to respond using 5-point Likert scales with anchors of *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The inventory comprised five subscales, each with four items except Aggression, which had five: financial remuneration (e.g., pay players for their services), fitness (e.g., to demonstrate high levels of fitness), sportspersonship (e.g., teach us how to be a good sport), status (e.g., give us status among our peers), and aggression (e.g., teach us to be aggressive).

Results

Reliability of Measures

TEOSQ. Extensive psychometric evaluation has demonstrated the validity and reliability of this instrument across a range of settings, competitive levels, ethnicities, and ages (see Duda, 1993, for a review). As the modifications made to the scale were minor, reliability was assessed using alpha coefficient. Adopting Nunnally's (1978) >0.7 criterion level, reliable scales were found for task ($\alpha = .86$) and ego orientation ($\alpha = .83$).

PPSQ. Although the PPSQ used scales previously found to be reliable, the inventory had been extensively modified to reflect the specific purpose of this study. It was therefore felt appropriate to examine the factor structure using principal axis factor analysis with an oblique rotation. One of the original 21 items was dropped due to conceptual confusion as it reflected both status, the original intention, and money ("Give us a chance to be rich and famous"). Two items were dropped because some players felt they were irrelevant ("Help us move to a team with more pay," and "Teach us how to exercise").

Five factors with eigenvalues > 1.0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) were extracted, accounting for 68.7% of the variance (see Table 1). Adopting a criterion of > 0.4 to reflect a significant loading, Factor 1 was primarily concerned with payment for playing and was labeled Financial Remuneration. Two items on this factor had been hypothesized to reflect other factors: Status ("Prepare us to reach the top in soccer") and Aggression ("To condone the injuring of an opponent"). The former item was retained as it is consistent with financial remuneration in that more money is paid to players in the higher leagues. The latter item was dropped

Table 1 Principal Axis Factor Analysis With Oblique Rotation for the Perceived Purposes of Soccer Questionnaire

Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Pay players for their services	.899	.055	-.047	-.006	-.061
Pay more money for better performances	.790	-.260	.074	-.128	.126
Financially reward those who play	.717	-.008	-.136	-.203	-.059
Prepare us to reach the top in soccer	.695	.222	-.052	.112	-.035
Condone injuring an opponent	.527	-.002	-.056	-.037	.133
Keep players fit	-.010	.760	-.026	-.096	-.092
To demonstrate high levels of fitness	.034	.731	-.032	.092	.217
Teach us how to keep our bodies healthy	.041	.482	.250	-.212	-.224
Teach us to follow rules	-.052	.015	.726	.071	.158
Teach us to be a good sport	-.045	-.029	.683	-.078	.044
Teach us to respect the officials	-.131	.027	.666	-.195	-.355
Make us responsible, law-abiding players	.031	.024	.585	.158	-.106
Give us the chance to feel like a champion	.124	.031	-.122	-.706	.008
Give us status among our peers	.203	.122	.135	-.504	.167
Teach us to be aggressive	.246	.138	.092	.053	.693
Teach us how to bend the rules	.290	.012	.009	-.207	.556
Show how to do what's necessary to win	-.116	.019	-.142	-.362	.526
Be a place where one can release aggression	.166	-.151	-.090	.030	.400
Eigenvalue	5.83	2.71	1.47	1.24	1.11
% variance	32.4	15.0	8.1	6.9	6.2
Cronbach alpha	0.88	0.71	0.79	0.67	0.76

Note. F1 = Financial Remuneration; F2 = Fitness; F3 = Sportspersonship; F4 = Status; F5 = Aggression.

as it did not reflect the main theme of this factor (it also had the lowest loading). Factor 2, Fitness, consisted of the items reflecting the demonstration of fitness and keeping fit. Factor 3, labeled Sportspersonship, reflecting items related to respecting the officials, being a good sport, and following the rules of the game. Factor 4, Status, comprised items related to status with peers and the chance to feel like a champion. The last factor was labeled Aggression and included items addressing the release of aggression, teaching aggression, bending the rules when necessary, and doing what is necessary to win. Alpha coefficients were calculated for each of the scales and, with the exception of Status ($\alpha = 0.67$), exceeded Nunnally's (1978)

0.7 criterion level (see Table 1). The Status scale was retained because its alpha level was only marginally below accepted levels and because prior work (e.g., Duda, 1989) has found status to be an important purpose of sport.

Relationship Between Orientations and Perceived Purposes

A canonical correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between goal orientations and the perceived purposes of soccer (see Table 2). Two significant canonical functions emerged, Wilks's $\Lambda = .70$, $F(10, 250) = 4.92$, $p = .00$, $r_{c1} = .47$, $r_{c2} = .33$. Function 1 had a high positive loading for task orientation and a low negative loading for ego orientation, indicative of a task orientation. Using a criterion of 0.3 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) to reflect a significant loading, this goal perspective was negatively related to the perceived purposes of soccer of financial remuneration and aggression, and positively related to the perceived purpose of sportpersonship. Examination of the redundancy statistics revealed that this function explained 32% of the variance in the perceived purposes of soccer. For Function 2, a high loading was found for ego orientation and a low loading for task orientation, reflecting an ego orientation. This goal perspective was related to the perceived purposes of soccer of financial remuneration and fitness. Redundancy statistics indicated that this function explained 17% of the variance in the perceived purposes of soccer.

Status Differences

Multivariate techniques were used to examine differences in goal perspectives and the perceived purposes of soccer between the semiprofessional and amateur players. A MANOVA revealed a significant effect for status, Wilks's $\Lambda = .40$, $F(7, 124) = 26.42$, $p = .00$. Follow-up univariate analysis indicated that the semiprofessional players scored higher ($p < .001$) on the perceived purposes of soccer related to financial remuneration, status, and aggression, and lower on sportpersonship and task orientation (see Table 2 for univariate F s and means). To determine whether playing status could be distinguished with respect to goal perspectives and the perceived purposes of soccer, a discriminant function analyses was performed. One significant function emerged, Wilks's $\Lambda = .40$, $\chi^2(7) = 115.47$, $p = .00$ and correctly classified 94% of the semiprofessional and 86% of the amateurs players. Examination of the standardized discriminant coefficients (loadings > 0.3) indicated that the perceived purposes of soccer related to money, sportpersonship, and aggression best distinguished the two groups.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine the perceived purposes of soccer for English semiprofessional and amateur players. The relationship between personal goal perspectives and the perceived purposes of soccer for these players were congruent with Nicholls's (1989) theoretical propositions and with research on both American sport participants (Duda, 1989; Duda et al., 1991; White & Duda, 1994) and physical education students (Walling & Duda, 1995). For the most part, the results lend support to the cross-cultural applicability of goal orientation theory (Duda, 1993; Duda & Allison, 1990). Canonical correlation analysis identified distinct task

Table 2 Statistics for Goal Perspectives and the Perceived Purposes of Soccer

	Can. coeff.		Total (<i>N</i> = 132)		Semipro (<i>n</i> = 66)		Amateurs (<i>n</i> = 66)		Univ. <i>F</i>	Disc. coeff.
	F1	F2	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Goal orientations										
Task orientation	1.00	.03	3.53	0.77	3.26	0.65	3.81	0.78	19.54*	-.19
Ego orientation	-.22	.98	2.68	0.91	2.74	0.94	2.61	0.88	0.72	-.25
Perceived purposes										
Financial remuneration	-.59	.71	2.91	1.03	3.61	0.68	2.20	0.83	113.33*	.70
Fitness	-.12	.51	3.62	0.73	3.71	0.78	3.56	0.67	1.83	.23
Sportspersonship	.53	.03	3.57	0.76	3.24	0.52	3.91	0.82	31.65*	-.36
Status	-.27	.29	3.38	0.76	3.67	0.52	3.05	0.84	25.16*	.03
Aggression	-.94	-.07	2.72	0.82	3.23	0.64	2.20	0.64	85.18*	.35

**p* < .001.

and ego orientations. As hypothesized, a task orientation was negatively related to the perceived purposes of soccer focused on financial remuneration and aggression and positively related to sportspersonship. Overall, a task orientation was related to perceived purposes of soccer focused on prosocial sport behaviors.

An ego orientation was positively related to the perceived purposes of financial remuneration and fitness. The strong relationship between ego orientation and financial remuneration is consistent with a priori hypotheses and lends support to the belief that financial rewards are an important aspect of English soccer (Fynn & Guest, 1994; Otway, 1996). The relationship between ego orientation and fitness was counter to a priori hypotheses and past research (Duda, 1989; Duda et al., 1991; White & Duda, 1994), which has shown fitness to be positively related to a task orientation. It is not clear why this was the case, but it may be related to the fact that fitness, as reflected in a high work rate, is a highly valued attribute in English soccer. As such, demonstrating fitness enhances players' status among their peers and with the coach, which is indicative of an ego orientation. Consistent with this argument, demonstrating fitness and enhancing status were positively correlated ($r = .23, p < .007$). Status, as predicted, also was weakly related to an ego orientation (canonical loading = .29). The findings for ego orientation suggest that it may behoove researchers to focus on the perceived purposes of a specific activity and examine cultural differences in goal orientations and the perceived purposes of sport (Duda & Allison, 1990).

A second purpose of this study was to examine whether, as suggested by several commentators (e.g., Fynn & Guest, 1994), recent changes in English soccer related to increased commercialization and professionalization have brought about changes in players' attitudes to soccer. Specifically, it has been argued that, particularly for the more elite soccer players, financial considerations have become more important, sportspersonship has declined, and the acceptability of aggressive play and rule violation has increased. Multivariate analyses of variance provided support for a priori hypotheses related to playing status and differences in the perceived purposes of soccer. Compared to the amateurs, the semiprofessionals scored higher on financial remuneration, status, and aggression, and lower on sportspersonship. These results are also consistent with White's (1995) research on competitive level and the perceived purposes of sport. It was also hypothesized that there would be differences in goal orientation as a function of competitive level. Consistent with a priori hypotheses, the amateurs were more task oriented than the semiprofessionals. However, counter to a priori hypotheses and past research (White & Duda, 1994), there was no significant difference in ego orientation, although the semiprofessionals' scores were higher as predicted. As this is, to our knowledge, only the second study to directly compare elite and nonelite athletes, it is too early to draw any definitive conclusions on this issue. The difference in ego orientation may be more pronounced when comparing players competing in the Premier League (the highest professional soccer league) with those in the lower professional and amateur leagues.

The findings on competitive level are also consistent with sport research on aggression (Silva, 1983), sportspersonship (Blair, 1985), and moral reasoning (Bredemeier & Shields, 1993), which suggests that as the competitive level increases, the perceived legitimacy of aggression increases and the level of sportspersonship and moral reasoning declines. The findings were also consistent with McIntosh's (1979) study of professional and amateur soccer players, which found that 70% of the professionals, compared to 54% of the amateurs, agreed that

committing a professional foul² was acceptable. Reinforcing these differences in the perceived purposes of soccer for amateur versus semiprofessional players, discriminant function results indicated that financial remuneration, sportspersonship, and aggression best distinguished the two groups.

Overall, these results have potential implications for the value of competitive sport in promoting prosocial behaviors. This may be especially true with respect to the potential impact of the increasing commercialization of soccer on youth participants. The structure of the game at the youth level often mirrors the prevailing professional model (Gilroy, 1993), and youth sport players often model the behavior of professional players (Smith, 1988). With the high profile professional soccer now has in terms of the degree and extent of television coverage (Williams, 1994), indiscretions on the field of play and off it are replayed to impressionable youth. The semiprofessionals, compared to the amateur players, perceived that the purposes of soccer were to financially reward players, enhance their status, and teach aggression. Further, these players felt that sportspersonship was not an important purpose of soccer. If these less desirable purposes and their associated negative motivational patterns are to be avoided, then, as suggested by some researchers (e.g., Duda, 1989; Roberts et al., 1995), a task climate needs to be promoted. As the results of this study have highlighted, such an orientation is positively associated to prosocial behaviors such as sportspersonship.

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²A professional foul is deliberate foul committed to prevent an opposing player from gaining an advantage.

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Acknowledgments

This article is based on an Honors Thesis submitted by the second author as part of the requirements for a B.Sc. (Hons.) degree in Sports Studies at De Montfort University. Appreciation is extended to Drs. Howard Hall and Daniel Weigand for their thoughtful comments and suggestions during the preparation of this manuscript. Appreciation is also extended to Robert Brustad and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.

Manuscript submitted: March 6, 1996

Revision received: October 11, 1996