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ARTICLE

The Integration of Practical and Theoretical Strategies to Enhance Workers' Motivation for Sports Participation

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ABSTRACT: This research was conducted with the aim of integrating practical and theoretical strategies to enhance the motivation for sports participation among workers. The design of this research was cross-sectional and correlational. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all employees of Iranol Oil Company in Tehran in 2020, totaling 890 individuals. Among them, 261 were selected based on the Krejcie and Morgan table using the available sampling method. In this study, the tools used were the Sports Participation Motivation Scale (Gill et al., 1984), the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Garnefski and Kraaij, 2006), and the Subjective Vitality Scale (Ryan and Frederick, 1997). Additionally, structural equation modeling was used to test the research hypotheses. The research findings indicated that the model had a good fit. Accordingly, the findings showed that in the final model, the standardized path coefficients for adaptive and maladaptive emotion regulation on sports participation motivation were 0.17 and -0.40, respectively. Therefore, the skill of emotion regulation (practical strategy) was significant in the relationship between the feeling of vitality (theoretical strategy) and sports participation motivation.
Using the results obtained from the developed model of sports participation motivation, a foundation is laid for creating practical programs to improve the inclination towards sports participation among various segments of the population. Additionally, implementing interventions to educate individuals on learning emotion regulation strategies through changes in cognition and behavior to achieve greater self-regulation provides a practical basis for increasing sports participation. Ultimately, focusing on enhancing community vitality serves as a theoretical approach to reducing maladaptive emotion regulation, thereby fostering the growth of sports participation motivation.

KEYWORDS: practical solution, motivation for sports participation, theoretical solution.

1 Introduction

Physical and sports activities hold a central and special place in human health, as they both enhance metabolic activity and cardiovascular functions and improve psychological well-being (Para, Aaron, Amadori, and Miosi, 2020). Recent studies have shown that there is a reciprocal relationship between participation in sports activities and psychological well-being (Riegel, Vidra, and Gill, 2014). Aminnejad, Zeidabadi, Hamboushi, and Khajasteh (2020) conducted a study titled "Examining the Structural Relationships between Sports Mindfulness and Cognitive Emotion Regulation with Athletes' Competitive Anxiety." The

research findings indicated a significant inverse relationship between sports mindfulness and athletes' competitive anxiety. Additionally, the findings of Maghsoudi's (2018) research also showed that among cognitive emotion regulation strategies, only the strategy of reappraisal planning had a positive predictive ability for sports success. Meanwhile, the findings of the present thesis showed that adaptive cognitive emotion regulation skills positively and maladaptive skills negatively influenced participation in sports activities.

In the study by McCormick et al. (2019), there is also a positive relationship between emotional regulation and motivation for sports participation. Additionally, the perspective obtained in the study by Hemmati and Landani (2012) showed that cognitive strategies for emotional regulation not only influence the formation of sports identity but also affect the motivation for sports participation among non-athletes and workers. The research by An et al. (2020), Jang et al. (2018), and Kim and James (2019) also addressed the relationship between physical activity, participation in sports activities, and vitality.

Given what has been said, one can only speak of the benefits of participating in sports activities when we understand how practical and theoretical strategies relate to the motivation for sports participation. Based on this, educational programs can be proposed to enhance sports participation. Athletes, whether at a professional or amateur level, are one of the essential pillars of sports. Therefore, numerous studies have focused on the factors influencing the creation of favorable conditions for better performance and the enhancement of their motivation (Nicholas, 2021). This attention would be fruitless without considering their theoretical aspects (Kerr and Sterling, 2019).

In other words, psychological components are considered one of the central concerns in this field, as they are important both in predicting individuals' performance and participation in sports activities and in designing programs to enhance their performance and participation (Istanbulova and Samuel, 2020). On the other hand, how individuals express themselves, show joy, and release emotions, feelings, and sentiments is one of the country's daily concerns. This issue has now manifested itself as a psychological and sociological reality. Individuals are in a situation where if they do not positively release their emotions and interact with their community, they will face psychological problems and ultimately depression (Saraji, 2016). Therefore, the best and healthiest way to release emotions and maintain health, which is recommended as a theoretical solution for all segments of society, especially employees and workers, is to participate in sports activities; because the relationship between participation in sports activities and the quality of life of Iranian employees and workers has been reported (Mokhfi Diba, Amirpour, and Mehri, 2018). This issue is of greater importance to workers because approximately 10 million people in our country's population are workers (Mardpour, 2018). Moreover, this community can play a significant role in the cultural, social, political, and economic development of the country and in helping the government achieve its lofty goals. The role of sports and physical activities is considered essential and undeniable as one of the ideal strategies to achieve this goal, optimize workers' self-belief and responsibility, and enhance their public participation in social activities. Therefore, the present research aims to examine the promotion of oil workers' participation in sports activities at Iranol Company based on the integration of practical and theoretical strategies and their components. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive perspective and propose coherent policy packages in this area to the relevant authorities and organizations.

2 Methods

2.1 Participants

The present study was of a descriptive and correlational design, and the statistical population of the study included all employees of Iranol Oil Company in Tehran in the year 1399, totaling 890 individuals. Among them, 261 were selected based on the Krejcie and Morgan table using the convenience sampling method. In this study, the tools used were the Sports Participation Motivation Scale (Gill et al., 1984), the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006), and the Feeling of Vitality Scale (Argyle & Lu, 1990). Additionally, structural equation modeling was used to test the research hypotheses.

In order to adhere to research ethics, a consent form was prepared in which the general purpose of the research was explained. Participants first read the consent form and, if they agreed, completed the research consent form. One of the points explained to the participants was that they were assured there would be no personal misuse in this research. Additionally, some participants wanted to know the results of their questionnaire responses, and a report interpreting the questionnaires in simple language was provided to them. Explanations were also given to the subjects regarding the confidentiality of the questionnaires and their results. It is worth mentioning that due to the limitations and crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, the questionnaires were distributed through the Press Line software. Following discussions with the managers of Iranol Oil Company, these questionnaires were sent to them online, and then the managers forwarded them to the workers, who voluntarily responded to the questionnaires.

2.2 Measurement and Tools

The Sports Participation Motivation Questionnaire by Gill et al. (1984): The aim of this questionnaire is to identify the motivational factors for individuals to participate in educational and sports environments, developed by Gill, Gross, and Huddleston (1984), consisting of 30 items and 8 subscales. Responses to the items are coded based on a 5-point Likert scale (completely important 5 points to completely unimportant 1 point). The prioritization of individuals' motivations is determined based on the average obtained from the subscales. Shafizadeh in 2007 examined the construct validity and internal consistency of this questionnaire. The results confirmed the questionnaire's validity; additionally, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculation showed that the internal consistency of the questionnaire was 0.83. In examining the consistency of each subscale of the questionnaire, the results indicated that the lowest alpha value was 0.37, related to the friendship subscale, and the highest alpha value was 0.75, related to the readiness subscale. The alpha coefficients for the success subscale were 0.46, energy depletion 0.57, group orientation 0.67, skill improvement 0.42, situational factors 0.43, and recreation and entertainment 0.49. The Frederick and Ryan (1993) Physical Activity Motivation Questionnaire was also used for the criterion validity of this questionnaire, with a resulting validity coefficient of 0.66.

Argyle and Lu's Feeling of Vitality (1990): This questionnaire was developed by Argyle and Lu (1990) and consists of 29 items. Each item includes 4 statements, with the first statement scoring zero, the second statement scoring one, the third statement scoring two, and the fourth statement scoring three. Ultimately, an individual scores between 0 and 87, with a higher score indicating a greater feeling of vitality. To examine the validity and reliability of the Oxford Happiness Inventory, Argyle (2001) completed the inventory with a sample of 142 Iranian men and 227 women, aged 18 to 53 with an average age of 25. They also completed the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and the Beck Depression Inventory. The internal consistency analysis of the Oxford Happiness Inventory showed that all 29 items had a high correlation with the total score. The Cronbach's alpha for the entire inventory was 0.91. The research findings indicated that the Oxford Happiness Inventory is a valid and reliable measure of happiness in the Iranian community. The validity of this scale has been confirmed in various studies, including Alipour and Noorbal (2008), although some studies mistakenly cited the year 2005. This research was published in 2008 in the Journal of Thought

and Behavior. Argyle and Lu (1998) reported a 90% alpha coefficient with 347 participants, Farnham and Bronnick (1999) reported an 87% alpha coefficient with 101 participants, and Noor (2002) reported an 84% Cronbach's alpha with 180 participants. In Iran, Alipour and Noorbal (2008) reported a 93% alpha coefficient with 101 participants.

Cognitive emotion regulation by Garnefski and Kraaij (2006)

The Garnefski and Kraaij (2006) Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire is an 18-item tool that measures cognitive regulation strategies in response to threatening and stressful life events on a five-point scale from one (never) to five (always). The score for adaptive strategies is obtained from the sum of the scores of the less important subscales, positive refocusing, acceptance, and refocusing on planning divided by 10 (number of items), and the score for maladaptive strategies is obtained from the sum of the scores of the self-blame, other-blame, rumination, and catastrophizing subscales divided by 8 (number of items). The alpha coefficient for the subscales of this questionnaire ranges from 0.71 to 0.81, and the reliability coefficient of its subscales by retest method over a 14-day interval ranges from 0.48 to 0.61 (Abdollahi et al., 2013). Self-regulation strategies can be considered along a single dimension (cognitive coping) or divided into two types of more adaptive (positive/effective) and less adaptive (negative/ineffective) coping strategies (Wolk, Wang, and Boller, 2011). In Iran, the alpha coefficient for the subscales of this test ranges from 0.62 to 0.91, and the reliability coefficient of these factors by retest method over a one-week interval ranges from 0.75 to 0.88 (Abdollahi et al., 2013). The validity and reliability of this tool with nine sub-factors have also been confirmed in the Iranian culture (Cronbach's alpha for subscales = 0.76 to 0.89; Basharat and Bazazian, 2014).

3 Results

In statistical analysis, examining the overall status of the collected data is essential. For this purpose, central indicators such as the mean and dispersion indicators such as the standard deviation have been used.

Table 1. Description of research variables based on descriptive indices

Standard deviation	***Average***	***Variable***
33.18	101.98	***Motivation for sports participation***
26.82	93.86	***Feeling of vitality***
9.85	25.01	***Adaptive emotion regulation***
8.55	14.81	***Dysregulated emotion regulation***

In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the research variables under study, including sports participation motivation, sense of vitality, adaptive emotion regulation, and maladaptive emotion regulation, are presented.

After describing the sample under study based on demographic variables and describing the research variables, the research hypotheses have been tested based on structural equation modeling.

Table 2. Normality test of data distribution

Distribution	***Kurtosis***	***Skewness***	***Variable***

normal	-1.27	-0.47	***Motivation for sports participation***
normal	-1.22	-0.21	***Feeling of vitality***
normal	-1.04	-0.48	***Adaptive emotion regulation***
normal	-1.09	0.55	***Dysregulated emotion regulation***

The findings related to the normality test of the data based on skewness and kurtosis can be observed in Table 2. Klein (2015) suggests that in causal modeling, the distribution of variables should be normal. He proposes that the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis of the variables should not exceed absolute values of 3 and 10, respectively. According to Table 4-6, the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis of all variables and their components are less than the values proposed by Klein (2015); therefore, the assumption of univariate normality in causal modeling is upheld. Additionally, the results of the Mahalanobis test at the 0.001 level indicated that the assumption of multivariate normality is also upheld. However, the violation of the assumption of normality in the distribution of variables in samples larger than 200 individuals is considered negligible without a significant impact on the research results (Pettus and Schmelkin, 2013).

Table 3. Correlation Matrix of Research Variables

4	3	2	1	***Variable***
			1	***Adaptive emotion regulation***
		1	-0.76*	***Dysregulated emotion regulation***
	1	-0.78*	0.69*	***Feeling of vitality***
1	0.81*	-0.84*	0.79*	***Motivation for sports participation***

Since the basis for model analysis is the correlation matrix, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between variables before modeling the research model (Table 3). As seen in the above table, the motivation for sports participation has a positive correlation with emotional regulation (0.79) and a positive correlation with a sense of vitality (0.82), and a significant negative correlation with maladaptive emotional regulation (-0.84).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results obtained from the present study, it was observed that the relationship between cognitive emotion regulation and participation motivation is significant; meaning that the direction of this effect was in line with the direction of the correlation coefficient. The results of this finding indicate that an increase in the use of positive strategies in cognitive emotion regulation leads to an increase in participation motivation. Conversely, the use of negative strategies in cognitive emotion regulation leads to a decrease in participation motivation. The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of Padilla and Andres (2021), Torpekar and Rebro Suriano (2020), Maqsudi (2018), Hemmati and Landani (2012), Pritchard et al. (2019), and McCormick et al. (2019) regarding the relationship between emotion regulation components and sports participation motivation. They also showed that individuals with higher emotional self-regulation and emotional stability participated more in physical activities. Since these characteristics are similar to the cognitive skills of adaptive emotion regulation, and the present findings showed a positive

relationship between adaptive cognitive emotion regulation skills and sports participation motivation, the findings of these two studies are implicitly aligned.

The findings of Moghaddasi's (2018) research also indicated that among the cognitive emotion regulation strategies, only the strategy of reappraisal had a positive predictive ability for sports success. However, the findings of the present dissertation showed that adaptive cognitive emotion regulation skills positively and maladaptive skills negatively affected participation in sports activities. From this perspective, the findings of Moghaddasi (2018) were expanded, demonstrating that not only reappraisal but all adaptive and maladaptive strategies have various effects. Thus, the results of these two studies are inconsistent.

The findings of this research are also in line with the findings of McCormick et al. (2019), which showed that there is a positive relationship between emotional regulation and sports participation motivation. Additionally, it expands on the perspective obtained in the study by Hemmati Volandani (2012) and demonstrates that cognitive strategies for emotional regulation not only influence the formation of sports identity but also affect the motivation for sports participation among non-athletes and workers.

Based on other research results, it was observed that the relationship between the feeling of vitality and the motivation to participate is significant; the results of this finding mean that an increase in the feeling of vitality leads to an increase in the motivation to participate. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Mohammadi et al. (2015), An et al. (2020), Jang et al. (2018), and Kim and James (2019). In this section, the findings of the present study included a novel aspect that had not been much considered in previous research. Previous studies had mainly focused on the relationship between physical activity, participation in sports activities, and vitality, and the causal role of vitality in participation in sports activities had not been considered; in this regard, Kim and James (2019) showed that individuals who engaged in light, moderate, or vigorous physical activities during their leisure time reported less stress, depression, and anxiety, as well as a greater feeling of vitality compared to those who led a sedentary and inactive lifestyle.

Jang et al. (2018) also reported that individuals with motivations of pleasure and vitality, higher physical health, and social interaction participated more in sports activities. However, the present thesis showed that vitality itself can also increase workers' motivation to participate in sports, making these findings noteworthy. This is because it is usually assumed that engaging in sports activities and participating in physical activities invigorate individuals, whereas vitality itself can also sustain continued participation. The present thesis findings indicated that vitality reproduced a greater motivation for participation in these sports activities among workers.

Considering what has been said, the limitations of the present research are that it is confined to the sample of workers from Iranol Oil Company, which cannot be a good and sufficient representative of the community. Therefore, generalizing the results only to the intended community is logical and feasible, and for other levels, this should be done with caution. The researcher faced limitations in distributing questionnaires and conducting educational processes due to the coincidence of the sampling process with the COVID-19 pandemic. To apply the findings of this research, it is suggested that organizational managers use sports programs as a strategy for organizational success. Incorporate sports programs as part of employees' working hours into their work schedules. Utilize sports competitions with other organizations for recreation and to experience the enjoyment of participating in sports. If these matters are viewed comprehensively, it can be observed how much social characteristics at work can enhance employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, leading to organizational commitment and job success in sports organizations.

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