

Examining Changes in Psychological Needs and Self-Determined Motivation among Adult Dragon Boat Participants

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Sport contexts that support participants' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are expected to contribute to more self-determined forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991). General support for this proposition has been found, but few studies have examined the efficacy of interventions aimed at enhancing need fulfillment in an adult sport context. Furthermore, no known work in this area has considered the effect of within-team clustering of social and motivational variables on the needs-motivation relationship. Therefore, the aims of this study were to (1) examine whether cooperative and individualistic learning structure interventions differentially facilitate psychological need fulfillment and self-determination among adult dragon boaters; and (2) examine whether changes in psychological need fulfillment over time predict changes in motivation when accounting for within-team clustering effects. 12 dragon boat teams with a total of 210 participating paddlers were randomly assigned to an 8-week cooperative or individualistic learning intervention condition. Coaches were trained, and conducted the intervention with their teams. Paddlers completed questionnaires at the beginning and end of the intervention period. Psychological need fulfillment increased over the course of the 8 weeks similarly in both conditions. The only intervention effect was that autonomy was facilitated by the individualistic intervention. Mixed effects modeling analyses demonstrated a substantial within-team clustering effect, and found that changes in relatedness perceptions predicted changes in self-determined motivation. Results suggest that there may be some potential for the interventions to positively impact motivational processes, but that further development and study is needed. Furthermore, within-team clustering on social and motivational variables should be considered in research conducted with teams.