

Predictors and outcomes of relatedness among adult dragon boat paddlers: examining age and gender as moderators

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Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; 1991) suggests that physical activity contexts that meet people's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness promote self-determined motivation. Much of the research using SDT has focused on autonomy and competence, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the role of relatedness. The purpose of this study was to examine whether friendship, peer acceptance, and social support among adult dragon boat paddlers predicted relatedness, and whether the relative contribution of relatedness, competence, and autonomy in predicting motivation was moderated by age and gender. 558 participants (M age = 45.09 \pm 14.74; 72% female) completed questionnaires assessing peer acceptance, social support, friendship quality, psychological needs, and motivation. Hypotheses were tested using regression and Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines for testing moderation. Social support network size ($\beta = .13$), amount of support ($\beta = .16$), peer acceptance ($\beta = .44$), and conflict ($\beta = -.09$) predicted 30% of the variance in relatedness, $F(9, 381) = 19.80$, $p < .001$. Age did not moderate these relationships, but gender was a moderator for social support network size, amount of support, self-esteem enhancement and supportiveness, and conflict resolution. This analysis was limited, however, by substantial missing data on the friendship and social support variables. Relatedness ($\beta = .31$) and competence ($\beta = .29$) but not autonomy ($\beta = .07$) predicted 29% of the variance in self-determined motivation, $F(3, 532) = 74.59$, $p < .001$. Age did not moderate these relationships. Gender moderated the relationship between relatedness and

motivation, with males ($\beta = .41$) exhibiting a larger effect than females ($\beta = .25$). These results suggest that relatedness plays an important function in motivation among adults in recreational group sport settings, and have potential implications for intervention strategies aimed at improving social interactions and relatedness perceptions in this population.

Presented at NASPSPA 2006