Communication and Motivation with Football Players

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COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION WITH FOOTBALL PLAYERS

By
Jonathan May

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
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COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION WITH FOOTBALL PLAYERS

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This study investigated the perceived locus of causality of motivation in high school football players. The Sports Motivation Scale (SMS) was used to study seven motivation subscales (IM to know, IM to accomplish, IM stimulation, EM identified, EM introjected, EM external and Amotivation) with respect to motivation among high school football players. This indicated that IM to know, IM to accomplish, EM identified and EM introjected were the best predictors of the participants’ perceived locus of causality of motivation. The results indicate that when using perceived locus of causality for motivation, position played could be predicted 62 percent of the time. The study also speculates on ways in which communication could be used to affect motivation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the hard work, time and effort put in by the thesis committee which included Chairman Dr. Thomas Steinfatt, Dr. Diane Millette and Dr. John Andrew Gillentine. Their guidance and wisdom were instrumental in the completion of this project.

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CHAPTER 1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communication behaviors of leaders can affect the motivation of workers and thus their performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Football is no exception. One reason the phrase “Any Given Sunday” is used to describe the NFL is that many coaches believe motivations alone can change the outcome of a game. Nick Saban, the coach of the LSU 2003 collegiate national championship team, wrote that that being a motivator is the most directly related role of a head coach to a team’s success (Saban & Curtis, 2005). He suggested that coaches have to find a spark to keep their players from becoming complacent.

Motivation is a pressure that is present in all facets of life. Whether one wants a great job, to learn a unique skill, or to maintain a loving relationship, motivation is important in maximizing potential. Motivation can be described as a driving force that enables success through hard work and sacrifice. One criterion for being a successful coach, teacher, or employer is that they need to be able to motivate their subordinates. Athletes, students, employees and goal driven individuals require motivation to achieve their highest potential. Motivation can be influenced within one’s self (internal perceived locus of causality) and also by other factors in one’s environment (external perceived locus of causality), which can include the communication of coaches and players. This motivation occurs in several forms, from the initial intrinsic motivation to play and the benefits that may drive that motivation, to the form of motivation that may arise during a game to bring a team from behind when hope for a victory seems lost. The goal of this
research is to understand the former, the reasons and motivations of players for playing
American football, and then to speculate into ways this knowledge may further recruiting
through the communication behavior of coaches.

Football is a relatively unique sport because it is very physical and highly team
oriented. Football is team oriented because it has 11 players on the field that must
coordinate their actions. There are 22 positions on offense and defense combined plus
the addition of numerous special teams groups. Each position often has very unique
responsibilities and job requirements. There is a great difference in division of labor
among positions in football and the desired physique created by football’s division of
labor. These positional differences that are inherent in football imply that the players may
have more varied motivations that drive them to play and succeed in football.

The history of motivation theory is broad. According to Deci and Ryan (1985),
motivational theory begins by recognizing that humans attempt to master the
environment through drives and emotions in themselves. Motivation theory concerns the
exploration of the energy and direction of behavior. This is evident in all aspects of life.
Energy in motivation may be created by needs. These needs can be innate or acquired
through interaction with the environment and action can then be directed at the
satisfaction of needs. Thus, motivation research is an examination into the why of
behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Motivation theories may be seen as a set of assumptions about the nature of
people and the factors that result in action. These assumptions can be viewed as a
continuum ranging from mechanistic to organismic. Mechanistic theories assume that
people are controlled by the interaction of physiological drives and environmental
stimuli. However, organismic theories view humans as volitionally active. Organismic theories assume that people have intrinsic needs and physiological drives. These intrinsic needs provide energy for people to act on the environment while managing aspects of their drives and emotions (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Motivational assumptions can be described by the “perceived locus of causality”. An internal perceived locus of causality suggest that one’s interests and desires initiate action whereas an external perceived locus of causality suggests that an external event initiated action (McMillan & Forsyth, 1991). Thus, mechanistic theories and organismic theories are opposite by nature but entail the general assumptions that make up motivational theory.

These assumptions and theories apply to sports including football. Pelletier et al. (2005) has done extensive research in sports and created the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS). The SMS investigates perceived locus of causality for participates in sports. According to McMillan and Forsyth (1991), sport motivation is the process that initiates and sustains behavior. Motivation in sports includes the players’ drive to have greater involvement and higher achievement. Motivation in athletics concerns three fundamental questions. What initiates athletes activity? What drives an athlete toward a goal? What drives an athlete to persist in striving towards a goal? Internal perceived locus of causality might be a fear of failure, anxiety or the strong need to achieve at a high level. External perceived locus of causality might include the manner in which athletes are taught, the environment that they are taught in or the rapport the coach establishes with athletes. The current study will concentrate on the perceived locus of causality that motivates athletes’ activities.
Self-Determination Theory.

This study will investigate motivation through the lens of self-determination theory (SDT). An important theory within SDT is cognitive evaluative theory (CET). Cognitive evaluative theory looks at autonomy, competence and relatedness and how they shift perceived locus of causality. According to Gagne and Deci (2005), external factors, such as tangible rewards, deadlines, surveillance, and evaluations, tend to diminish feelings of autonomy. This may create a shift in perceived locus of causality from internal to external, thus lowering autonomy. An autonomous decision is a decision that is made independently by the actor. Autonomy is a key component in CET and SDT because the greater the autonomy a situation creates, the more internal the motivation becomes. However, less autonomy leads to greater external motivation. External motivation controls behavior and involves a sense of pressure that one has to engage in the action. Still, some external factors, such as providing choices of task engagement, will enhance autonomy and create a shift from external to internal perceived locus of causality.

In addition, feelings of competence also can create a shift in feelings of autonomy (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Competence can be described as the need to achieve satisfaction from behavior. Competence feelings are dependent upon the belief that one will succeed in a challenge. Highly challenging activities and positive feedback are more intrinsically motivating as they can give feelings of competence. Kuvass (2006) states that one will engage in behaviors that are likely to lead to valued outcomes, as long as that person can successfully produce such behaviors. Communication in the form of negative feedback
decreases perceived competence and may decrease both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This may leave people in a lessened state of motivation, or amotivated.

Amotivation is similar to the idea of learned helplessness. It occurs when people have feelings of incompetence and a lack of control in their environment. It may occur when they do not reach the desired results from an action or behavior, and then they are neither intrinsically motivated nor extrinsically motivated. They may lose desire and cease activity as a result of disinterest (Pelletier et al., 2005).

Cognitive evaluative theory states that people strive for relatedness, which is integration and cohesion of new ideas and interests both within themselves and with others. Deci and Ryan (1991) define relatedness as the need to have satisfying and coherent relationships with others. Thus, CET describes how autonomy, competence and relatedness all can be variables that affect perceived locus of causality.

However, the difference between SDT and CET is that SDT involves internalized external motivation whereas CET does not recognize internalized extrinsic motivation. SDT divides types of motivation into eight subgroups that are classified as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation or amotivation.

*Intrinsic Motivation*

Intrinsic motivation (IM) may be divided into three subcategories including knowledge, accomplishments, and experience (Pelletier et al., 2005). Intrinsic motivation has many applications to sports. Athletes go to practice because they find it interesting and satisfying to learn more about their sport and to improve their body. Athletes practice for the passion of trying to better their skills (Pelletier et al., 2005). Intrinsic motivation to gain knowledge relates to explorations, curiosity, learning goals, and the
epistemic need to understand. It is defined as performing an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction that one experiences while learning, exploring or trying to understand something new. Thus, athletes are intrinsically motivated for knowledge when they try to discover new skills just for the pleasure they experience when they learn a new skill (Pelletier et al., 2005).

The intrinsic motivation to accomplish occurs when individuals interact with the environment in order to feel competent and to create unique accomplishments. It involves engaging in an activity in order to feel the pleasure of accomplishment. An example might be trying to master difficult skills in a sport in order to experience the personal satisfaction that occurs when the goal is accomplished (Pelletier et al., 2005).

Intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation occurs when one engages in an activity in order to experience stimulating sensations. Examples might include sensory pleasure, aesthetic experience, fun in general, and excitement (Pelletier et al., 2005).

_Extrinsic Motivation_

Extrinsic motivation (EM) pertains to a situation in which an outside force motivates a person to perform an action. These behaviors occur as a means to an end and not for their own pleasure (Blocker & Edwards, 1982, Gagne & Deci, 2005). Extrinsic motivation may be divided into four subcategories including external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation (Gagne & Deci, 2005). The least autonomous motivation is external regulation. It refers to behavior that is motivated by external sources such as material rewards or constraints imposed by others. An example may be of athletes who participate in a sport in order to receive praise from their coach or parents. Thus, a sport is not performed for fun but to receive
rewards or to avoid criticism (Pelletier et al., 2005). Blocker and Edwards (1982) stated that social rewards are seen as less undermining than monetary rewards because social rewards are viewed as less controlling and more informational. Also, verbal rewards will increase autonomy compared to nonverbal or tangible rewards.

Introjected regulation is more autonomous than external regulation. Introjected regulation occurs when the external source of motivation has been internalized so that the presence of the controlled source is no longer needed to initiate behavior. These behaviors are brought out through internal pressures such as guilt or anxiety. Thus, an example may be of an athlete who participates in sports because they feel pressure to be in good shape for aesthetic reasons. The athlete may feel embarrassed or ashamed when he or she is not in the best form (Pelletier et al., 2005).

Identified regulation is more autonomous than introjected regulation. It occurs when the individual deems the behavior important and performs the behavior by choice. The activity is still performed for extrinsic reasons but the activity is internally regulated. This could pertain to an athlete who feels that involvement with the team will help contribute to his or her growth and development (Pelletier et al., 2005). Integrated regulation occurs when people have a full sense that the behavior is an internal part of who they are, that it emanates from their sense of self and is thus self-determined. Integrated regulation is considered extrinsic motivation because the motivation is characterized not by the person being interested in the activity but rather by the activity being instrumentally important for the person’s goals. Thus, if an athlete plays a sport because it a healthy activity, then that athlete is more likely to play sports to exercise in his or her spare time (Gagne & Deci, 2005).
However, people do not move through these stages in any type of order. Thus, at any time people could integrate a new regulation and change between regulations. Perceived locus of causality involves an individual’s outlook on an activity. That outlook can change at any moment in time depending on the person’s view of the activity at that specific time.

Little prior research is available on motivation in football. The purpose of this study is to study why people play football, linking their reasons to different levels of autonomy, and to the ways communication might affect this motivation. The motivation theory employed is largely based on two assumptions: the mechanistic assumption that external stimuli create motivation, and the organismic assumption that motivation is created autonomously.

**Research Questions**

This study will concentrate on self determination theory, that motivation is determined by autonomy, competence and relatedness. The research will focus on the motivations that drive people to participate in football, serving as a beginning inquiry into the basic motivations in football. It will attempt to gain an understanding of the reasons that motivate athletes to participate in football.

RQ1. What are the factors that players believe drive them to play football?

RQ2. Do these football motivation factors differ across position types?

RQ3. Are motivational factors that relate to communication more prominent in certain position types?

RQ4. How might communication be used in increasing motivation to play.
These questions were investigated through use of the SMS with Miami area high school football players. Chapter 2 will describe the participants, the materials used and the administrations of this study.
CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Participants

The SMS was administered to 39 male Miami area high school football players who were participating in football at the time of the study.

Materials

A 33 item questionnaire was administered including Pelletier, et al. (1995) 28-item Sports Motivation Scale (See Appendix A). Estimates of coefficient alpha are .70 or above for the 28-items. The additional items included a request for additional reasons why the respondent plays football that are not mentioned in the 28 items, and demographic items on position played and current string at that position. The respondent was asked to circle one position (defensive back, linebacker, defensive lineman, quarterback and running back, receiver and tight end, and offensive line) and which string they play on ( , or ). An open ended question requested other reasons why the individual played football that were not covered in the SMS. The questionnaire also included items 1 and 2, which were originally added to the questionnaire, but were unnecessary for the data compilation so the data figures start with item 3. The SMS items used the 5 point scale employed by Reimer, Fink and Fitzgerald (2002). The 28-point Sport Motivation Scale (SMS) of Pelletier, et al. (1995) contains seven subscales each measured by four items. Three of these subscales relate to intrinsic motivation (knowledge, accomplish and experience), three to extrinsic motivation (external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation), and the remaining subscale concerns amotivation. Respondents replied to each SMS item on a 5 point scale using
anchors from does not correspond at all (1) to corresponds exactly (5), with the midpoint anchored at corresponds moderately (3). There are four items that correspond to each subcategory including IM know (4,6,25,29), IM accomplish (10,14,17, 22), IM stimulation (3,15, 20, 27), EM identified (9,13,19,26), EM introjected (11,16, 23, 28), EM external regulation (8,12, 18, 24) and amotivation (5,7,21,30).

Administration

Participants were asked to fill out the SMS including basic demographic information. The subjects were informed that we are interested in better understanding reasons why people participate in football. They were told that they do not have to complete the questionnaire if they do not want to, but their input would be greatly appreciated and that the results would serve only as a research tool and would remain strictly confidential.

Data Analysis

Date were entered into Number Cruncher Statistical System (NCSS) and analyzed using factor analysis, multiple regression analysis, and multiple discriminant analysis in order to answer the research questions.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

Responses

Responding to the demographic question of which string the athletes plays on, 25 answered first string, 13 answered second string and one answered third string. When asked what position the athlete plays, seven responded that they play defensive backfield, six play linebacker, four play defensive front, six play quarterback and running back, five play receiver and 11 play offensive line.

The sum of the means of the 4 questions for IM knowledge was 16.8 with a SD of 2.3, IM accomplishment was 17.0 with a SD of 2.9, IM for stimulation was 17.5 with an SD of 2.3, EM identified was 16.3 with an SD of 2.7, EM introjected was 12.9 with an SD of 3.6, and EM external regulation was 13.3 with a SD of 3.8.

Pelletier et al. (2005) suggests that the 28 items of the SMS constitute seven subscales of four items each. To check this assumption the data were factor analyzed using a varimax rotation with 1.0 for a minimum eigenvalue as the cut off criterion. The Scree plot suggests a three-to-five factor solution for these data, but a seven factor solution was used as a check on the Pelletier assumptions as applicable to these data.

The seven-factor rotated varimax solution accounts for 69% of the variance. To check the Pelletier assumptions, items that loaded .5 or greater on a factor were used to name the factor (see Table 1). The three highest loading items on Factor 1 were items 14, 22, and 17 loading .870, .754, and .72 respectively on the factor. These items each occur
on Pelletier’s IM accomplishment subscale. Four additional items loaded above .5 on Factor 1, with loadings between .605 and .560. Two of these occurred on the Pelletier IM stimulation subscale with one or both IM know and EM identified.

Factor 2 had its two highest loadings on IM stimulation, with .83 for item 3 and .814 on item 15. Two items from the IM know subscale also loaded above .5 on Factor 2, item 4 at .75 and item 6 at .659.

Factor 3 had loadings above .5 on four items, two of which are on the EM introjected subscale with item 23 at .737 and item 16 at .593. Two additional items loaded above .5 on Factor 3, with loadings of .783 for item 26 and .598 for item 10. These items are on the identified and accomplishment subgroups.

All four items loading above .5 on Factor 4 were the subgroup items for amotivation, with loadings ranging from .829 to .676.

Factors 5 to 7 were more difficult to identify with no more than two items loading over .5 on each factor. Factor 5 loaded on EM introjected and amotivation, Factor 6 had its single loading over .5 on EM identified at .829, and Factor 7 loading on EM introjected and EM identified. Each item with a loading of .5 or greater on any factor had its highest loading on that factor.

These results were taken as general confirmation that the structure of data obtained for this study, with an N of only 33, generally followed the subscales proposed by Pelletier et al. (2005), particularly in the cases of IM accomplishment, IM stimulation, EM introjected, and amotivation. A list of items and question wordings may be found in Appendix A.
Table 3.1
*Rotated Component Matrix for Twenty-eight items of Sport Motivation Scale* $^a$

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RQ1. *What are the factors that players believe drive them to play football?*

Motivation to play football was operationalized as negative amotivation, and used as the predicted variable in a Multiple Regression Analysis (using the six remaining subfactors as predictors. Four predictors, IM know, IM accomplishment, EM identified, and EM introjected, yielded an $R^2 = .632$ ($F = 5.90, p < 0.001$) accounting for 40% of the variance (see Table 3.2). The remaining two subfactors together accounted for an additional 1.6%.

Table 3.2

*Stepwise Multiple Regression of Amotivation on the Six Subfactors of the Sport Motivation Scale*

<table>
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<th>Subfactor</th>
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<th>Add</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p &lt;$</th>
<th>%RMSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IM Know</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>0.453</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>0.0026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Accomplishment</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>0.1070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Identified</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.0845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Introjected</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspection of the bivariate correlations indicates that while item IM Stimulation correlates .34 with Amotivation, it adds negligible variance (0.5%) when the four predictors of Table 2 are in the equation, and thus can be ignored in these data. Alternately, though EM identification correlates only -0.04 with Amotivation, it adds 5.5% to the variance accounted for when entered into the equation. This suggests that EM identification may serve as a form of suppressor, correlating with and accounting for error, thus providing a smaller non-error variance for the remaining three predictors which can then account for a higher proportion of that variance. Thus IM know, IM accomplishment, EM identified, and EM introjected are the best predictors of what drives these players to play football.
Possible Additional Factors Driving Players to Play Football

Item 31 contained an open ended question requesting additional reasons for playing football that may not have been covered by the Pelletier et al. (2005) questions. There were 22 responses in total on item 31, from 19 different participants. Three of these responses involved IM to accomplish. These included “to get better”, “to help the team” and “to succeed.” Three additional responses were IM for stimulation, including “the best sport ever”, “I just love the sport” and “I love football”. Twelve responses were EM for external regulation. These responses included six that related to “girls,” two responded “to play in college,” and one responded “to be popular,” “to get a scholarship,” “to play in the NFL,” “to make my family proud,” and ” to get my grandmother out of the hood.” Four of the responses were EM for Identified regulation. These included “A lot of people know me because of football,” “to stay out of the streets,” “to get out of the hood” and “I want to make friends,” The SMS scale does not contain items pertaining to EM for integrated regulation, but two responses related to integrated regulation. These were “It is what I do and live for” and “Football is my life.” There was also one response that was too ambiguous to classify, it was “my heart.” We excluded “my heart” because the context of the meaning could be misinterpreted.

RQ2. Do these football motivation factors differ across position types?

A Multiple Discriminate Analysis (MDA) was used to answer this question, with position played as the group’s variable and the seven subfactors of the SMS as predictors (Table 3.3). The seven subfactors provide a reasonable basis for distinguishing between the six football positions represented, with Wilk's Lambda lowered to 0.3785 accounting for 62% of the variance, and classification error reduced by 38.5% from random
assignment. By this analysis, motivation factors did differ between positions in this data set since we can predict football position played from knowledge of a player’s SMS responses. Most of the variance in the Table 4 analysis is accounted for by amotivation (32.1%), raising the question of how the remaining six subfactors act without a consideration of Amotivation.

Table 3.3

*Seven Factor Multiple Discriminant Analysis of Position-Played on Sport Motivation Scale Subfactors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subfactor</th>
<th>Add</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>p &lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amotivation</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.0517</td>
<td>0.4248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Know</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8472</td>
<td>0.6568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Accomplishment</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6627</td>
<td>0.5429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Stimulation</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7572</td>
<td>0.6505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Identified</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8090</td>
<td>0.6005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Introjected</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8872</td>
<td>0.4171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM External Regulation</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.4924</td>
<td>0.2413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second MDA employing only those six factors was used to explore this question, with the results in Tables 3.4 and 3.5. Table 3.4 indicates that a six factor solution reduces classification error by 32.3% and accounts for 44.3% of the variance, with two of the predictors, IM accomplishment and EM introjection, each accounting for less than 4% of the variance. Table 3.5 provides the results of the four factor solution...
with these two predictors removed. It accounts for 41.3% of the variance and also reduces classification error by 32.3%. Thus, the four factor solution of Table 3.5 employing IM knowledge, IM stimulation, EM identification, and EM external regulations appears to provide the best solution in this data set.

Table 3.5

Four Factor Multiple Discriminant Analysis of Position-Played on Sport Motivation Scale Subfactors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subfactor</th>
<th>Add</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IM Know</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.4686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Accomplishment</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Stimulation</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Identified</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM External Regulation</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ3. Are motivational factors that relate to communication more prominent in certain position types?

Six items on the SMS were identified as communication oriented items based on their emphasis on information presumed to be transmitted to or from others through
participation in football. These six are each of the *External Regulation* subscale items (items 8, 12, 18, 24) for their emphasis on social interaction, together with items 9 and 26 from the *Identification* subscale. The wording of these items is listed below.

8- “Football allows me to be respected by people I know”
9- “Football is one of the best ways to meet people.”
12- “I play football because of the prestige of being an athlete.”
18- “I play football because people around me think it is important to be in shape.”
24- “I play football to show others how good I am at it.”
26- “I play football because it is one of the best ways to maintain good relationships with my friends.”

A Multiple Discriminate Analysis using position-played as the groups variable, and the six communication oriented items of the SMS as predictors, was used to determine the extent to which the motivational factors relating to communication predict which position the respondent played. The communication oriented items provide a six predictor solution accounting for 40% of the variance in distinguishing between the six football positions represented (Wilk's Lambda = 0.5977). They reduced classification error by 26.2% from random assignment. Two of the communication oriented items of the six each accounted for less than 5% of the variance. These were “Football allows me to be respected by people I know,” and “I play football because it is one of the best ways to maintain good relationships with my friend” (see Table 3.6). Removing these two
predictors provided a four factor solution accounting for 35.3% of the variance, while still reducing classification error by 26.2% (Table 3.7). Though motivational factors relating to communication appear to be more prominent among some position types than others, this is not a strong effect.

Table 3.7

Four Factor Multiple Discriminant Analysis of Position-Played on Communication Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Item</th>
<th>Add</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p &lt;$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C18</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C24</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ4. How might communication be used in increasing motivation to play?

It was speculated that there could be multiple ways in which communication may be used to increase motivation to play football. According to Pelletier, et al. (2007), many studies show that one way to increase motivation would be to increase one’s self determined motivation. Greater self-determined motivation is positively associated with greater behavioral persistence, better performance and better psychological functioning in sport. However, certain subcategories seem more likely or easier to influence through
communication. There are ways in which communication could affect motivation, not relating to results found in this study. There are subcategories that can be directly or indirectly related to communication. Indirect subcategories may include EM identified, EM introjections and IM to accomplish. Intrinsic motivation to accomplish is indirectly related to communication because physical actions must take place to experience accomplishments in football rather than psychological beliefs. Still, IM to accomplish can be influenced by using communication to help achieve accomplishments through teaching. With EM identification and EM introjections communication could be used to persuade an individual that a behavior is important thus internalize the motivation. Furthermore, communication can be used to create guilt or anxiety. Chapter 4 will discuss these findings, consider limitations of the study and propose future research opportunities.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

The first research question concerns the factors that players believe drive them to play football. Intrinsic motivation to know, IM to accomplish, EM identification, and EM introjected are the factors that account for the variance and predict what drove these players to participate football. This shows that the participants in this study play football to learn more about the sport, to accomplish success, and because they have internalized the importance of participating in football. This is interesting considering that EM external regulation accounted for the most responses in the open response question. This may be an indication that the SMS has a weakness of not accounting for all of the different reasons that may motivate an athlete to participate in football.

Comparing the survey and the open ended question together, the survey showed that people responded to IM to know, IM to accomplish, EM identified regulation and EM introjected regulation. The open ended question pertained to responses IM to accomplish, IM stimulation, EM external regulation, EM identified regulation and EM integrated regulation. The most overlap occurs in the areas of IM to accomplish and EM identified regulation. There are several possibilities for why this may occur. It could be because the survey does not cover these areas as well, and so they have more responses in the open ended question. It could also be that these two areas are more descriptive of the athlete’s locus of causality. However, EM external regulation had more than half of the responses to question 31 which would be more than IM accomplish and EM identified combined. Question 31 showed a great response towards external regulation in comparison to the other types of motivation.
There was a response which was not included in any category. The response “My heart” was labeled as ambiguous. It seemed to either be IM stimulation which would mean that the participant plays football for the love of the game, or IM identified regulation which would mean that the participant plays football in order to improve their cardiac health. Still, the response did have important meaning even if the context of the missing sentence was unknown. Looking at the inherent values according to SDT (Gagne & Deci, 2005), one would assume that more players would attribute participation to IM subcategories since they are more autonomous. However, EM identification and EM introjected were shown to account for a greater amount of variance than IM stimulation.

The second research question asks if these football motivation factors differ across position types. The MDA suggests that motivation may differ between positions from 38.5% to 32.8% of random classification error accounted for by differences in motivation between position types. This may show that the different roles in football may involve different types of motivation with athletes. Football is an interesting sport because the difference in positions played and the requirements of these positions are unique compared to the other games. Interestingly, football teams have their own economy in which positions are based on a supply and demand scale. For example, many players may want to be the quarterback which may create a supply-demand problem. Many players may want to be the quarterback because they often get the most EM external regulation. Perceptions of others, and the feeling that one is vital and important to the team, can be very rewarding feelings. However, only one athlete can play quarterback on the field at a time. Thus, the best athletes in high school football
generally play quarterback and running back because they get to handle the ball. Following SDT (Gagne & Deci, 2005), if one is more competent and experiences success, then the person is more likely to be more intrinsically motivated. Still, not every athlete wants to be the quarterback, many wish to play whatever position they may desire which may best fit their skill set.

The third research question concerns whether motivational factors that relate to communication are more prominent in certain position types. A Multiple Discriminate Analysis using position-played as the groups variable, and the six communication oriented items of the SMS as predictors, indicates that responses to communication oriented items provide a 26% better chance of predicting position types than does random assignment. The communication related items are “Football allows me to be respected by people I know,” “I play football because of the prestige of being an athlete,” “I play football because people around me think it is important to be in shape,” and “I play football to show others how good I am at it.” Many of these items deal with others’ perceptions of the athletes. Athletes may have different motivations based on different perceptions that they are trying to obtain. An offensive lineman may want to be perceived as tough, so he may play the offensive line instead of playing quarterback. A defensive player may want to be perceived as vicious or aggressive so they may play a position that garners that perception. Some players may just want the perception of playing football, or being on the team. These players would have less motivation generally and may be drawn towards a less combative position like kicker or punter if they want to avoid contact. However, although it is not certain why, it seems clear that different positions can relate to different motivations that can be influenced by
communication. These results give more strength to mechanistic theory since the athletes' motivations are different based on communication and stimuli from the environment.

The fourth and final research question concerns how communication might be used to increase motivation to play. Although this research did not directly study how communication can be used to increase motivation to play, studies using SMS have shown that persuasion and motivation tactics that increase self-determined motivation can lead to more success. Thus, messages that increase knowledge of the game should increase IM to know. Messages that show excitement and fun in the task can lead to more IM to experience stimulation. Messages that support accomplishment and success can lead to IM to accomplish. Money, time, praise, punishments or attention can lead to more EM for external regulation. One way that teams may use communication to increase motivation is to have a popular leader speak or to show the team inspirational movies. For instance, a coach may take the entire team to see a film such as *Remember the Titans* (2000) in order to inspire feelings of success involved with IM to accomplish, the knowledge of football history with IM to know, and the excitement of the game involving IM for stimulation. A tactic used by Nick Saban to increase motivation is to allow a group of leaders on the team to set the rules for the team and distribute punishments (Saban & Curtis, 2005). This is a way of internalizing motivation to the players because when they misbehave, based on their own rules, essentially they are punishing themselves instead of being punished by an authority figure.

We speculate that communication might have a direct relationship with the subcategories IM to know, EM external regulation and IM stimulation. In addition, we believe that IM to know might have the strongest relationship to communication. The
participant is gathering information from a coach, parent, or other source. The coach can provide details and explanations that can lead to greater IM to know. One can communicate a positive attitude and outlook both verbally and nonverbally to influence IM to experience stimulation, leading to a greater motivation to play. Extrinsic motivation external regulation is another subcategory that could be highly influence by communication. Communication from others can offer material rewards, praise, constraints or punishment.

Thus, data from this small group of high school football players suggests that the SMS is useful in studying motivation in football. This study has provided an introduction into what motivates athletes to participate in football and how communication could be used to affect motivation. The results of this research showed the perceived locus of causality of 39 participants in football and that position types could be predicted from perceived locus of causality. It also explored how communication could affect motivation research and suggested ways in which research could be extended in the area of football.

Limitations

There are several areas in which this study might be improved. First, this study had 39 participants. The study would be more reliable if there were a larger sample size. Furthermore, using a more diverse demographic should help harness different opinions that were not possible with the participants used.

A criticism by Mallet, Kawabata, Newcombe, Otero-Forero and Jackson (2007) questioned the construct validity of the three types of intrinsic motivation measured by the SMS. This is interesting considering that Gagne and Deci (2005) did not distinguish
between the different subcategories of IM to know, IM to accomplish, and IM for stimulation. They only have IM with no subcategories. Another criticism is that the SMS did not measure the most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, which is integrated regulation. To counter balance this issue, we added the open ended question *Are there any other reasons that you play football?* The results show that 2 out of 19 participants responded with an integrated regulation answer. This implies that while the SMS may not be a perfect scale, it clearly provides useful information. Another way to add reliability would be to add more questions in the survey to each subcategory. This would increase reliability but would make the survey longer for the participants.

Other areas of weakness may be that the participants thought the survey would reach their authorities and negatively affect their ability to succeed if politically correct answers were not given. This could potentially happen despite assurances that this was not a possibility.

*Future Research*

This research was intended to be an introductory exploration into motivation and communication in football. This research is intended to increase our understanding of why athletes choose to play football. Future research might explore factors that drive athletes to succeed, and how communication can play a role in that motivation. These questions include the reasons that certain athletes are able to expend more energy than their opponent when behind towards the end of a game, and why favored teams sometimes play worse against lesser competition. Answers to these questions could influence the success of professional, collegiate and high school teams. Communication is an important component in the difference between a successful program and an
unsuccessful program. Salaries of coaches continue to climb as coaches have shown that leadership and communication can be the most important part of a successful program. Research in this area might explore the effect of a specific message on an athlete. Does the message “there is no I in team” initiate intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation, and then which subcategory? How does communication relate to different personality types of athletes? Every message a leader transmits, verbal and nonverbal, may have an effect on an athlete. An understanding of the potential and likely consequences occurring from a given message would be invaluable.

This research studied seven subcategories of motivation. Future studies could go into more detail to determine additional subcategories of external regulation, and see at what frequency people are offered rewards and punishments. One could do research into what is the most likely communication path in order to produce an internalized message rather than an externally regulated message. A meta-analysis could be performed to see if studies across sports show a difference between other sports, all sports and football.

Future research could also look into the coaches and administrations perceived locus of causality for their job, and what coaches’ view as the best motivation to get their desired results.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: SPORT MOTIVATION SCALE

3. ___ I play football because of the pleasure I feel in living exciting experiences.
4. ___ I play football because of the pleasure it gives me to know more about football.
5. ___ I used to have good reasons for playing football, but now I am asking myself if I should continue playing.
6. ___ I play football because I like learning new training techniques.
7. ___ I don’t know anymore. I may not be capable of succeeding at football.
8. ___ Because football allows me to be respected by people I know.
9. ___ Because football is one of the best ways to meet people.
10. ___ Because I feel a lot of personal satisfaction in mastering difficult training techniques.
11. ___ Because it is absolutely necessary to play sports if you want to be in shape.
12. ___ I play football because of the prestige of being an athlete.
13. ___ I play football because it is one of the best ways to develop other aspects of myself
14. ___ I play football for the pleasure I feel by improving some of my weak points.
15. ___ I play football because of the excitement I feel when I am involved in playing the game.
16. ___ I have to play football to feel good about myself.
17. ___ I play football for the satisfaction I feel while perfecting my abilities.
18. ___ I play football because it is important because people around me think it is important to be in shape.
19. ___ I play football because it is a good way to learn lots of things that could be useful to me in other areas of my life.
20. ___ I play football for the intense emotions I feel while I am playing a sport that I like.
21. ___ It is not clear to me anymore. I don’t really think my place is in sport.
22. ___ I play football for the pleasure I feel while executing difficult movements.
23. ___ I play football because I would feel bad if I was not doing it.
24. ___ I play football to show others how good I am at it.
25. ___ I play football for the pleasure I feel while learning training techniques I have never tried before.
26. ____ I play football because it is one of the best ways to maintain good relationships with my friends.

27. ____ I play football because I like the feeling of being totally immersed in the activity.

28. ____ I play football because I just have to play sports regularly.

29. ____ I play football for the pleasure of discovering new performance strategies.

30. ____ I often ask myself why I play football. I can’t achieve many of the goals I set for myself.