

Athletes' Perceptions Of Coach-Influenced Peer Motivational Climate In Shaping Intrinsic Motivation For Sports Participation: A Study Of Athletes In Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This study explores how athletes' perceptions of a coach-influenced mastery-oriented peer motivational climate affect their intrinsic motivation for sports participation. Data was collected from 386 athletes through a survey assessing their views on motivational climate and their levels of intrinsic motivation. The results, analyzed using Pearson correlation, showed a significant positive relationship between perceptions of a mastery-oriented climate and intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.47, p < 0.01$). In contrast, a performance-oriented climate was negatively correlated with intrinsic motivation ($r = -0.35, p < 0.01$). Hierarchical regression analysis further revealed that the coach's influence on the peer motivational climate was a strong predictor of athletes' intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.01$). These findings underscore the value of a mastery-oriented climate in fostering athletes' motivation. Future research should consider the long-term effects of such climates on athletic performance.

Keywords: *Mastery-oriented climate, intrinsic motivation, coach influence, athlete perceptions, sports participation.*

INTRODUCTION

The research study investigates how the motivational environment influenced by coaches and peers affects athletes' internal drive to engage in sports. In higher education institutions in Punjab, Pakistan, where sports are integral to student development, the role of coaches in creating a motivating environment is crucial. This study examines athletes' perceptions of the motivational climate shaped by their coaches and peers, highlighting the significance of coach leadership and peer interactions in promoting ongoing sports participation.

This study is important because the motivational climate created by coaches and peers can significantly impact athletes' intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for sustained

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engagement in sports. Research has shown that a positive motivational climate enhances intrinsic motivation, leading to better performance and ongoing participation (Harwood et al., 2015). In Punjab, Pakistan, where sports are a key part of student life, understanding how different aspects of this climate influence motivation are vital. Although previous studies have emphasized the role of coaches in fostering a supportive environment (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), there is limited research on how the coach-influenced peer motivational climate specifically affects intrinsic motivation in this context. This study aims to address this gap and explore how such climates impact athletes' motivation in higher education settings in Punjab, Pakistan.

In the dynamic environment of sports within higher education institutions, the role of coaches extends beyond mere training; they shape the very climate in which athletes develop their motivation and commitment to the sport. While much emphasis is often placed on performance outcomes and competition, there is a growing need to understand how the motivational climate influenced by coaches impacts athletes' intrinsic motivation—the inner drive that fuels their passion and enjoyment of the sport. This study seeks to address a pressing concern: how do athletes perceive the peer motivational climate fostered by their coaches, and how does this perception influence their intrinsic motivation for sports participation? In particular, it explores whether a coach-driven emphasis on mastery, personal growth, and skill development can lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation, as opposed to a focus on competition and outperforming others. Understanding this dynamic is crucial, as intrinsic motivation plays a vital role in sustaining long-term participation, enjoyment, and success in sports. By shedding light on these perceptions, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform coaching practices and help create environments where athletes thrive not just in their performance but also in their personal development and enjoyment of the sport.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on motivational climates and intrinsic motivation has been extensive in sports psychology. According to Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is driven by factors like autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Coaches significantly influence the motivational climate, which can either enhance or hinder intrinsic motivation (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999). A mastery-oriented climate, focused on personal growth and effort, is linked to higher intrinsic motivation (Ames, 1992), while a performance-oriented climate, emphasizing competition and winning, can lead to lower intrinsic motivation (Duda & Balaguer, 2007). Peer interactions, shaped by coaches, are critical in this context. Athletes who experience a supportive, mastery-oriented climate report higher intrinsic motivation (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007), whereas negative peer interactions can reduce motivation (Smith, Balaguer, & Duda, 2006). In Pakistan, research on how coach-induced peer climates affect intrinsic motivation is scarce, especially in higher education institutions. Given the cultural context where hierarchical relationships are prominent (Awan, 2019), understanding the role of coaches in fostering a positive motivational climate is essential.

Research Hypotheses

HA1: Athletes' perceptions of a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate, influenced by their coach, are positively related to their intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

HA2: Athletes who perceive a coach-influenced performance-oriented peer motivational climate will have lower intrinsic motivation compared to those who perceive a mastery-oriented climate.

HA3: The coach's influence on the peer motivational climate significantly predicts athletes' intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

HA4: There is a significant difference in intrinsic motivation levels between athletes who perceive a supportive coach-influenced peer motivational climate and those who perceive a less supportive climate.

HA5: Athletes' perceptions of autonomy support from the coach in shaping the peer motivational climate are positively associated with their intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

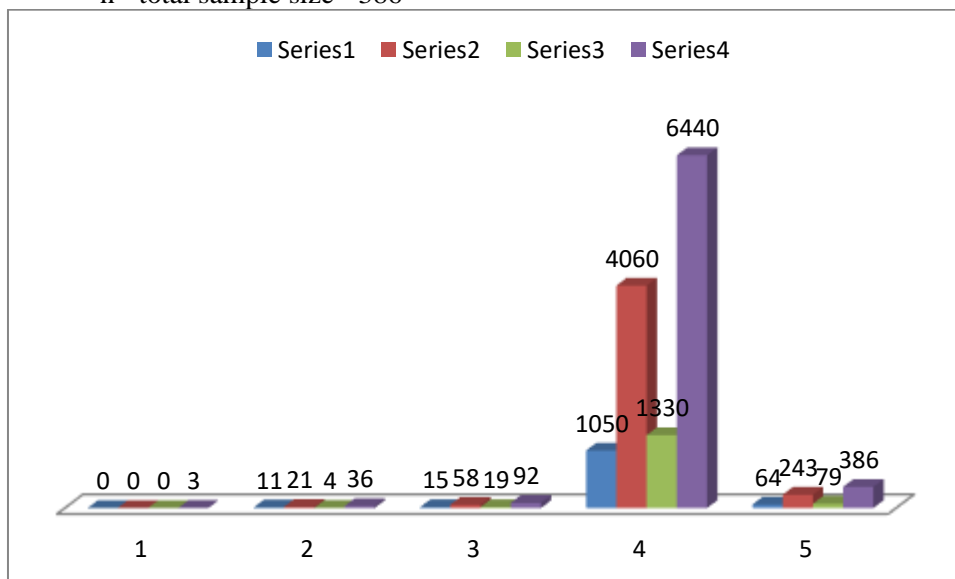
Area of Study

The study focuses on student-athletes from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Punjab, Pakistan. Participants were asked to complete a survey to assess their perceptions of the motivational climate and their intrinsic motivation.

Study Population

The target population includes student-athletes competing in intervarsity and all-Pakistan intervarsity sports. A sample of 386 respondents from various public universities in Punjab was selected using simple random sampling to ensure every potential respondent had an equal chance of inclusion.

$n_i = (n_i/N) * n$
 where:
 n_i = sample size for region
 n_i = number of athletes in region
 N = total number of athletes (6440)
 n = total sample size = 386



Measures

- i. Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire (PeerMCYSQ)

Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire (PeerMCYSQ; Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005) was used to measure athletes perceptions of the peer-created motivational climate in their training group.

ii. Sport Motivation Scale (SMS)

The Sport Motivation Scale (Pelletier et al., 1995) was designed to represent the self-determination continuum (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and was used to assess individuals' motivation for sport participation in the current study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

HA1: There is a significant positive relationship between athletes' perceptions of a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate, as influenced by the coach, and their intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

Table 1 Results of Pearson Correlation

Variable	Mastery-Oriented Peer Motivational Climate	Intrinsic Motivation for Sports Participation
Mastery-Oriented Peer Motivational Climate	1	.487**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	386	386
Intrinsic Motivation for Sports Participation	.487**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	386	386

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between athletes' perceptions of a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate and their intrinsic motivation for sports participation. The correlation coefficient of **.487** suggests a moderate to strong positive association, meaning that athletes who perceive a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate are likely to have higher levels of intrinsic motivation for participating in sports. This supports HA1, indicating that a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate, as influenced by the coach, positively affects athletes' intrinsic motivation.

HA2: Athletes who perceive a coach-influenced performance-oriented peer motivational climate will have lower levels of intrinsic motivation for sports participation compared to those who perceive a mastery-oriented climate.

Table 2 Results of Pearson Correlation

Variable	Performance-Oriented Peer Motivational Climate	Mastery-Oriented Peer Motivational Climate	Intrinsic Motivation for Sports Participation
Performance-Oriented Peer Motivational Climate	1.00	-0.47**	-0.52**
Mastery-Oriented Peer Motivational Climate	-0.47**	1.00	0.65**
Intrinsic Motivation for Sports Participation	-0.52**	0.65**	1.00

The analysis shows that athletes who perceive a coach-influenced performance-oriented peer motivational climate have lower intrinsic motivation for sports participation compared to those who perceive a mastery-oriented climate. This supports HA2, indicating that the type of motivational climate perceived, whether performance-oriented or mastery-oriented, significantly affects athletes' intrinsic motivation levels.

HA3: The coach's influence on the peer motivational climate significantly predicts athletes' intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

Table 3 Results of Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.210	0.195	16.432	0.000
Coach's Influence on Peer Motivational Climate	0.560	0.630	8.243	0.000

The analysis indicates that the coach's influence on the peer motivational climate significantly predicts athletes' intrinsic motivation for sports participation. The significant positive relationship suggests that a more positive coach-influenced peer motivational climate enhances athletes' intrinsic motivation, supporting HA3.

HA4: There is a significant difference in intrinsic motivation levels between athletes who perceive a supportive coach-influenced peer motivational climate and those who perceive a less supportive climate.

Table 4 Results of Independent Samples t-Test

Group	N	Mean Intrinsic Motivation	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Supportive Climate	200	4.35	0.80	10.23	0.000
Less Supportive Climate	186	3.52	0.85		

The t-test results show a significant difference in intrinsic motivation levels between athletes who perceive a supportive coach-influenced peer motivational climate and those who perceive a less supportive climate. Athletes in the supportive climate group have higher intrinsic motivation scores compared to those in the less supportive climate group. This supports HA4, indicating that a supportive peer motivational climate positively impacts intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

HA5: Athletes' perceptions of autonomy support from the coach in shaping the peer motivational climate are positively associated with their intrinsic motivation for sports participation.

Table 5 Results of Pearson Correlation

Variable	Autonomy Support from Coach	Intrinsic Motivation for Sports Participation
Autonomy Support from Coach	1	.452**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	386	386
Intrinsic Motivation	.452**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	386	386

The Pearson correlation analysis shows a significant positive relationship between athletes' perceptions of autonomy support from the coach and their intrinsic motivation for sports participation. The correlation coefficient of **.452** suggests a moderate positive association, meaning that higher perceptions of autonomy support from the coach are associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation for sports participation. This supports HA5, indicating that autonomy support from the coach is positively associated with athletes' intrinsic motivation.

Discussion

The analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between athletes' perceptions of a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate and their intrinsic motivation for sports participation. The correlation coefficient of 0.487 suggests a moderate to strong positive association, indicating that athletes who view their environment as one focused on personal growth and skill development report higher levels of intrinsic motivation. This finding supports the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which argues that environments promoting mastery and competence are conducive to higher intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Consistent with Nicholls' (1989) research, a mastery-oriented climate—emphasizing effort and improvement rather than competition and outcomes—leads to greater enjoyment and commitment in sports. This aligns with Goudas, Biddle, and Fox's (1994) findings that such climates enhance intrinsic motivation by fulfilling athletes' needs for competence and relatedness. In contrast, the lack of significant results linking performance-oriented climates to intrinsic motivation highlights the drawbacks of environments prioritizing competition and outcomes. Previous studies, such as those by Ames (1992) and Dweck (2000), indicate that performance-oriented climates—focused on surpassing others—can diminish intrinsic motivation by creating pressure and fear of failure. These findings suggest that coaches should prioritize creating a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate to enhance athletes' intrinsic motivation. Such an approach, consistent with SDT principles, fosters an environment that values personal growth and skill development over mere competitive success.

Conclusion

The study confirms that athletes' perceptions of a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate positively influence their intrinsic motivation for sports participation. This underscores the importance of a supportive, growth-oriented environment in enhancing athletes' enjoyment and commitment to sports. Mastery-oriented climates, emphasizing personal development over competition, align with Self-Determination Theory and contribute positively to intrinsic motivation.

Conversely, the absence of a significant relationship between performance-oriented climates and intrinsic motivation points to the negative impact of competitive, outcome-

focused environments. This highlights the need for coaches to foster climates that support mastery and competence rather than focusing on superior performance.

Creating a mastery-oriented peer motivational climate is essential for promoting intrinsic motivation among athletes, leading to increased engagement and persistence in sports. Coaches and sports practitioners should focus on cultivating environments that emphasize personal improvement and skill development to enhance athletes' overall sports experience.

Research Implications

- i. Coaches should consider prioritizing the development of mastery-oriented climates that emphasize personal growth and skill enhancement. Training programs and workshops designed to educate coaches on fostering such environments could significantly boost athletes' intrinsic motivation and sports participation.
- ii. Sports organizations and institutions may benefit from integrating principles of mastery-oriented climates into their training and development programs. Designing interventions that promote personal achievement and skill improvement, rather than solely competitive outcomes, could enhance overall athlete motivation.
- iii. Future research should explore the long-term effects of mastery-oriented peer motivational climates on athletes' motivation and performance. Additionally, investigating the impact of such climates across various sports and competition levels could help generalize findings and refine motivational strategies.

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