

Motivation to Participate in State Senior Games

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Sport provides many benefits to all who participate, from being socially mobile to challenging one's physical abilities. It offers opportunities for individual improvement in quality of life, self-confidence, and socialization. The National Senior Games Association (NSGA) exists to assist seniors (50+) in achieving a greater quality of life through activity and positive lifestyle opportunities. As interest in the area of sport motivation for senior adults continues to expand, there is still little information specific to the National Senior Games participants. This research contributes to the sport management literature by providing the basis of generalized information about regional NSGA participant demographic backgrounds and how they are motivated to participate in the individual state games held each year. Gaining pertinent information concerning the motivations of senior games participants, this study sought to identify specific motivation levels based on gender and the state of participation that may assist local and state organizations in the development and growth of similar events. Using the Sport Motivation Scale-6, demographic, and psychographic information results indicated that participants in different states are motivated differently and that participation is more personally important to women. Both genders were involved for the opportunity to challenge their abilities, improve or maintain their current health, and have social connections to others.

Introduction

There are many opinions of what constitutes a senior adult according to age. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of the

USA defines a senior adult as an individual who is 55 years of age and older (YMCA, 2000). The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is a nonprofit organization that assists indi-

viduals starting at age 50 to live a better quality of life (Koppen, 2010). United States Professional Golf Association of America (PGA), Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) and National Senior Games Association (NSGA) host events for seniors who are described as athletes age 50 and older (Miller & Washington, 2011).

Seniors are more active, self-reliant, and prefer to take longer vacations to a wide variety of destinations (Dionigi, 2006). This lifestyle allows organizations to offer numerous physical and leisure activities that encourage enhancing one's physical fitness and ability to live independently longer. As a demographic, seniors are expected to continue growing in numbers as a direct result of better eating and lifestyle choices along with medical advancements (Dionigi, 2006). Additionally, today's "baby boomers" are more active than their parents, plan to work longer, and have a strong desire to maintain their overall health and independence longer (Ferrell & Hartline, 2011).

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the motivating factors affecting participants competing in the NSGA state games within the five designated regions. The information gained through this study has been shared with games organizers per their request to contribute to the continued development of event management and marketing strategies to positively impact growth within the autonomous organizations. Individual research questions addressed by this study include 1) What are the

motivating factors for seniors competing in the National Senior Games Association state games? 2) Are there different levels of motivation between competitors participating in the National Senior Games Association state games? 3) What is the age, education level, and marital status of the National Senior Games Association state games participants?

Competing or participating in sport may be motivated by physical, social, or emotional desires or needs of the individual (McLean & Hurd, 2012; Pederson, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2011). Individuals participate in sport in an effort to quench a need or gain a benefit. Identified as a community sport organization, one of the NSGA's primary management concerns is to provide events that will keep their present participants and members involved, but to also attract new participants (Pederson & Thibault, 2014).

Researching different motivating factors (i.e. socialization, health, recognitions, or skill development) associated with attitudes and behaviors of participants of the National Senior Games state games, is the first step to gaining a full understanding of this demographic and their involvement in competitive sport. Additional information on the socialization and commitment can add to the overall picture in the future of participant retention in the future.

How individuals engage in sport is influenced by motivation, which has an effect on the quality and outcomes of their efforts (Ngien-Siong, Khoo, & Wah-Yun, 2012). Reasons for sport participation

have been grouped into three motivation categories that include: (a) social motivations, where individuals may participate because they want to meet people, (b) achievement motivations where individuals want to be recognized for their abilities, and (c) mastery motivations where individuals want to develop their physical skills and abilities (Mullen, Hardy, & Sutton, 2014b). Pero et al. (2009) refer to these same categories within the self-determination theory as amotivation (AM), extrinsic motivation (EM), and intrinsic motivation (IM). These categories may be delineated more deeply to account for the multiple reasons or motivators individuals employ when deciding to participate in sport.

People become involved in sport for many different reasons and at different stages in their lives. Once involved in the sport(s) of their choice, it is important to find ways to retain them and increase their involvement through the different avenues that meet both the individual and organizational needs (Green, 2005). Part of understanding how to retain participants involves investigating the motivation of the individuals and processes involved in their decision to stay in sport (Lim et al., 2011). If no value is perceived by the participant, then the motivation to continue participating is diminished (Green, 2005).

Review of Literature

Sudbury and Simcock (2009) stated that the world's older population is anticipated to reach an unprecedented

milestone by 2050; there will be more people living that are over the age of 50 than those under the age of 50. For the purpose of this study a senior is defined as someone aged 50 years and older. Additionally, the terms "senior" and "older adult" may be used interchangeably when referring to this population. By definitions used in this research everyone born during or before 1964 is a senior. That term is divided further into "traditional" and "baby boomer" generations. Those born before 1946 are considered "traditionals" and "baby boomers" include people born between 1946 and 1964 (Comfort, 2015; Milner, 2014).

Seniors are more involved and active than their parents' generation (Ferrell & Hartline, 2011). They enjoy extended vacations, plan on remaining in the workforce longer, and intend to live independently longer because of better overall health and advances in medicine (Dionigi, 2006; Ferrell & Hartline, 2011). Sudbury and Simcock (2009) concluded that there is little homogeneity within the senior population relative to lifestyle and consumer habits.

General declines in physical activity have been noted to begin in individuals as early as 55 years of age and may be attributed to a variety of factors from physical limitations, to family obligations, major life events, and activity preferences (Koeneman et al., 2012). Their study was done to examine the impact that major life events (retirement and widowhood) had on the physical activity levels of older adults. The strength of this study was the

use of the longitudinal data which showed that no influence on physical activity was found relative to widowhood (Koeneman et al, 2012). The increase in physical activity by retirees was expected, especially when the individual was younger when they retired (Koeneman et al., 2012).

Activity and Sport Participation

Maintaining a healthy and moderately active lifestyle as people age has been found to be a vital link to cognitive and physical longevity in older adults (Stathokostas, Theou, Little, Vandervoort, & Raina, 2013). Older adults participating in sports (competitive or recreational) and/or other forms of physical activity brings with it opportunities for social interaction and accountability that assists with maintaining the individual's participation longer (Cozijnsen, Stevens, & Van Tilburg, 2013; Siegenthaler & O'Dell, 2003).

Dionigi, Horton, and Baker (2013) reported that by participating in sports individuals were better able to accept the processes of aging. Participating in sports has shown positive levels of "self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, recreation, or renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belongingness, and lasting physical products of the activity" (Heo, Culp, Yamada, & Won, 2013, p. 106).

Although perceptions of gender differences and sport participation have changed over the last two decades, women are still perceived as being less com-

petitive, involved, and inferior than men (Barber & Havitz, 2001). For example, occurrences of gender inequity are based on total amount of time spent immersed in leisure or sport, and the type of activity in which the individual participates (Barber & Havitz, 2001; Dixon, 2009; Henderson, Hodges, & Kivel, 2002; Shaw, 2001). Typically, men participate more frequently and in more types of sport than women in all life stages. Motivations for sport participation also vary by gender. Kilpatrick, Hebert, and Bartholomew (2005) found that when compared with women, men focused more on challenge, competition, social recognition, and strength and endurance.

Older adults participating in sports do so either through extrinsic or intrinsic motivating factors. Those motivated intrinsically are engaged because they derive pleasure and satisfaction through their personal efforts. Extrinsically motivated individuals are in it for the recognition, and rewards gained from their participation (Shaw, Ostrow, & Beckstead, 2005). Individuals active in sport as older adults have had a history of participating at an earlier age with women tending to stay involved longer as they age (Smith & Storandt, 1997).

The National Senior Games Association (NSGA) assists seniors (50+) in achieving greater value and quality of life through activity and healthy lifestyle opportunities (NSGA, 2018a). As a recognized multi-sport organization of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), "the NSGA is comprised of 51

Member Organizations and two Associate Member Organizations who conduct local and/or state multi-sport competitions, which serve as qualifiers for the National Senior Games” (NSG) which are held biannually (NSGA, 2018b, para 1; USOC, 2015, p. 7). Multi-sport organizations “provide more opportunities for international, national, and grassroots participation and competition” (Pederson & Thibault, 2014, p. 151). Every year more than 250,000 seniors compete in 26 sport and recreation events throughout the country.

Today the NSGA hosts the largest multi-sport event in the world for men and women age 50 years and older. The mission of the organization is to “motivate active adults to lead a healthy lifestyle through the senior games movement” (NSGA, 2018a, para 5). Since 1997 the average number of participants for the National Senior Games has been 10,420 with games in Florida (1997), and Kentucky (2007) both boasting 12,000. Since 2007, participation at the NSG has fluctuated between 10,000 – 11,000 participants (NSGA, 2018b). This year marks the 17th National Senior Games, and it is estimated that 11,000 competitors will travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico for 12 days of events and activities (NSGA, 2018a).

State and associate members within the NSGA host regional and/or state games each year. Most events are multi-day and include individual, dual, and team sports. Nationally the organization has five paid employees. Local, regional, and state organizations are led and

managed by volunteers and community partners such as parks and recreation departments, senior citizen organizations, Jewish Community Centers and Young Men’s and Women’s Christian Associations (YMCA and YWCA).

Traveling to regional and state games is only part of the reason some athletes compete. Many enjoy the camaraderie and social aspect of the events as much as competing against others and challenging themselves. When individuals of any age travel with the intent of participating in a sporting event they are taking part in sport tourism (Heo, 2007; Wright, 2019). Local, state, and national events held by the NSGA and its autonomous membership play a big role in the sport tourism industry within the United States. Differentiation of events based on organizational and environmental factors play a role in influencing a participant’s motivation for attending and/or competing (Newland, 2016). Many state games are open to nonresidents, meaning that anyone from outside that state may compete in the competition. NSGA games committees have the responsibility and opportunity to share with the 50+ consumers the benefits of staying active, social, and involved in their communities through the promotion of the state, regional, and/or local events offered.

The challenge facing the NSGA at these events is the decline in community and corporate partners. Some states boast six or more local/regional games while others are only hosting the state games (NSGA, 2018c). Competition

is divided into age divisions based on 5-year increments. Participants may qualify for the NSG that is held biannually in any of the 20 sports offered only at a state competition (NSGA, 2018c).

Motivation

Studying motivation and its effect on achievement is actually an investigation of the energy, direction, and regulation of an individual's behavior (Roberts, 2001; Fernandez-Rio, Cecchini, & Mendez-Gimenez, 2017). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is one of the top theories that dominate motivation research associated with cognitive, affective, and value-related variables used to explain how and why people behave (Domuschieva-Rogleva, 2015). Three psychological needs associated with SDT that must be met in order to facilitate motivation are competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hodge, 2017).

How individuals engage in sport is influenced by motivation, which has an effect on the quality and outcomes of their efforts (Ngien-Siong, Khoo, and Wah-Yun, 2012). Reasons for participation have been grouped into three motivation categories that include: social motivations, where individuals may participate because they want to meet people, achievement motivations where individuals want to be recognized for their abilities, and mastery motivations where individuals want to develop their physical skills and abilities (Mullen, Hardy, & Sutton, 2014a). Pero et al. (2009) refer to these same categories within the self-determination theory as

“amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation” (p. 61). These categories may be delineated more deeply to account for the multiple reasons or motivators individuals employ when deciding to participate.

Self Determination Theory

Athletes of all ages participate in sport for a variety of reasons. These may include earning accolades or rewards, mastering a specific skill or movement, to socialize with friends and/or maintain good physical and mental health. Pelletier, Rocchi, Vallerand, Deci, & Ryan (2012) assert, “SDT is a theory of motivation that is built on the organismic assumption that humans have innate tendencies to move in directions of greater self-regulation, competence, and integration in action” (p. 329). Competence, autonomy, and relatedness are necessary for motivation to be present.

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), motivation is either amotivation (no intention to behave or participate at all, extrinsic (behavior based on reinforcers), or intrinsic (actions based on satisfaction of the behavior alone). Reed and Cox (2007) reported, “competence, autonomy, and relatedness predict motivation (amotivation, extrinsic, and intrinsic), which in turn predicts the consequences of motivation” (p. 310). Their study examined, in part, that reasons to participate in a senior games event should be predicated by internally regulated motivation. Results showed that women were more intrinsically motivated for physical activity and men were more

socially motivated overall. Results also provided evidence to support that “motives to participate are more closely associated with autonomous forms of internal regulation” (Reed & Cox, 2007, p. 326).

Self Determination Theory views an individual’s behavior progressing from AM, to EM, to IM on a “continuum leading from a lack of self-determination to complete self-determination” (Reed & Cox, 2007, p. 310). If an individual puts no value on an activity or has feelings of incompetence they are identified as being amotivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Within the levels of EM an individual may move from being less to more self-determined. External regulation is evident when an individual is behaving to please someone else, earn an award or avoid punishment. It is the least autonomous of all EM levels (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Introjected

regulation involves someone desiring the prestige of being recognized as an athlete, avoiding feelings of guilt and is more ego-centered (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Levels of external regulation considered as more autonomous and self-determined include identified regulation when the behavior or action is personally important and accepted as valuable and introjected regulation, where the individual internally accepts the responsibility for the behavior and values it (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation, which is the most autonomous and self-regulated of the levels of motivation means that the individual takes part in the activity or behavior for the enjoyment of it or the satisfaction of just participating (Ngien-Siong, Khoo & Wah-Yun, 2012). Presented in Figure 1 is a Self-determination Continuum adapted from Ryan & Deci (2000). It depicts how an individu-

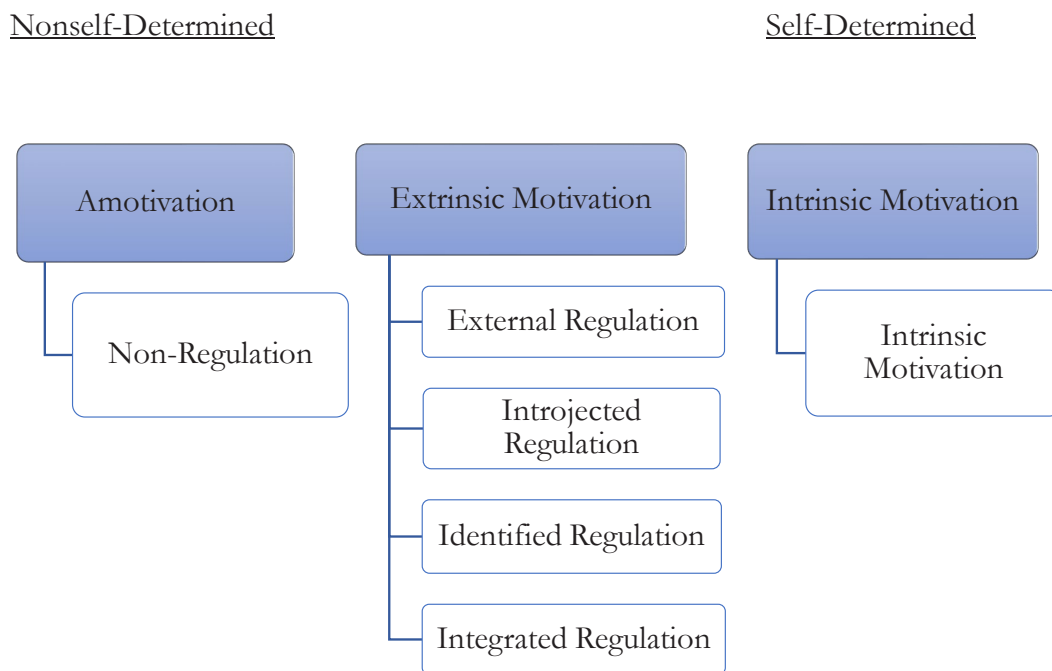


Figure 1. Self-Determination Continuum adapted from Deci & Ryan, 2000

al may move from being amotivated to intrinsically motivated over their lifespan. Positive and self-determined individuals are shown to be more intrinsically motivated and autonomous as a whole (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In the current research motivating factors present for individuals competing at the state level of the National Senior Games Association were analyzed. Additionally, the researcher looked for similarities and differences between gender and the selected five states in motivation for competing at the state games. Due to the limited amount of information available outside of single state or local events, this study strives to bring a wider view of overall motivation for participation. Results from the five participating states allows for a larger, more robust sampling of individual participants within the national organization.

Method

Participants

Working with the NSGA and state games directors for Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, and Nebraska a total of 393 individuals representing each of the five regions within the NSGA participated in the research. Selected states were scheduled to host their games between May and August, allowing access to potential project participants prior to data collection. Each state director was personally contacted to discuss the best way to reach the athletes that had competed at any senior games event in the past year. Those on the individual state electronic

mailing list then received an online survey link from the state director to complete anonymously by a set deadline. Using convenience sampling to recruit participants, anyone that was registered to any or all of the NSGA state games sites selected could be a part of the study. Each participant included in the analysis of the results met the following criteria: be a competitor at one of the five NSGA state games and be 50 years of age or older.

Research Design

Each of the five states included held their annual NSGA state games during the late summer to early fall of 2015, with the majority (i.e., Idaho, Maine, Michigan) hosting individual events over multiple weeks. Nebraska and Kentucky held their games in a consecutive day format not exceeding 5 days. States had a 21-day window for individual participants to complete the survey online. Follow-up emails were sent to all registered athletes 7, 14, and 19 days after the 21-day time-frame began. Prior to the start of the online survey the researcher attended one full day of both the Idaho and Nebraska games in an effort to promote the study and encourage athlete participation. Individual contact and personal information were not collected as part of the research process to protect the anonymity of the participants. Survey Monkey® was the online platform used for the research project which included the collection of demographic information, psychographic information, and the completion of the Sport Motivation Scale -6 (SMS-6). The

SMS-6 uses a 7-point Likert scale (1 = does not correspond at all, 7 = corresponds exactly) to measure an individual's motivation and propensity for sport participation.

Survey tools included (a) a demographic section collecting information on age, education, gender, marital status, income, and state of residence, (b) a psychographic section to identify past sport experience, reasons for competing through the NSGA, and (c) The Sport Motivation Scale-6 (SMS-6) which measures an individual's motivation, and propensity for sport participation. Mallett, Kawabata, Newcombe, Otero-Forero, & Jackson (2007) found that the revised SMS-6 was a model more suited to use with SDT. Using the dispositional flow scale-2, concurrent validity of the six-factor 24-items scale was achieved (Kawabata, & Mallett, 2013; Mallet et al., 2007).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations, were used to report on demographic and psychographic information. Since the SMS-6 was used to measure reasons individuals participated in the NSGA state games separate one-way ANOVAs were used to determine differences in the types of motivation (AM, EM, or IM).

Results

The demographic and psychographic analysis gave an overall picture of the seniors that competed at the five NSGA state games selected. Shown in Table 1

initial participants included 266 males (68%) and 127 females (32%), ranging in age from 50 – 94 with 41% in the 60 - 69 age category, 72% identified as married, 74% holding a bachelors or higher college degree, 59% of respondents have an annual household income of \$65,000 or more. Reporting the descriptive statistics in mean scores it was noted that the higher the mean score the more aligned the individual was with the specific level of motivation based on the 7-point Likert scale of the SMS-6. Top reasons the sample population compete in NSGA state games was to challenge their abilities, because they enjoyed the individual activities, to improve and/or maintain their health, and to be social (see figure 2).

Upon performance of an in-depth examination of all participant answers relative to individual participation in one of the five designated state games for this study a number of individuals were identified as either a non-competitor or a competitor at a state game not designated. Individuals not meeting the research criteria (actual participants in selected state games) were removed prior to specific statistical analysis based on the stated purpose of the study of analyzing motivation by state (n = 307). Participants included in the reporting of results met all assumptions and competed in one of five selected state venues (i.e., Kentucky, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, and Nebraska) in 2015. To provide an accurate representation of results to the stated research questions, all outliers included

Table 1

Demographic Sample Information

Demographic Category		n	%
Highest Level of Education n = 393	High School Diploma	33	8.40
	GED	3	0.76
	Some College	36	9.16
	Associated Degree	31	7.88
	Bachelor's Degree	136	34.60
	Master's Degree	106	26.97
	Doctoral Degree	48	12.21
Present Annual Household Income n = 373	<\$15,000	3	0.80
	\$15,001-\$25,000	24	6.43
	\$25,001-\$35,000	27	7.23
	\$35,001-\$45,000	25	6.70
	\$45,001-\$55,000	38	10.18
	\$55,001-\$65,000	36	9.65
	\$65,001-\$75,000	42	11.26
	\$75,001-\$85,000	34	9.11
	\$85,001-\$95,000	25	6.70
>\$95,001	119	31.90	
Marital Status n = 393	Single	28	7.12
	Married	281	71.50
	Divorced	50	12.72
	Widowed	18	4.58
	Cohabiting	16	4.07
Age Category n = 392	50-54	43	10.97
	55-59	64	16.32
	60-64	77	19.64
	65-69	83	21.17
	70-74	63	16.07
	75-79	45	11.48
	80-84	8	2.04
	85-89	8	2.04
Gender n = 393	90-94	1	0.25
	Male	266	67.68
	Female	127	32.31

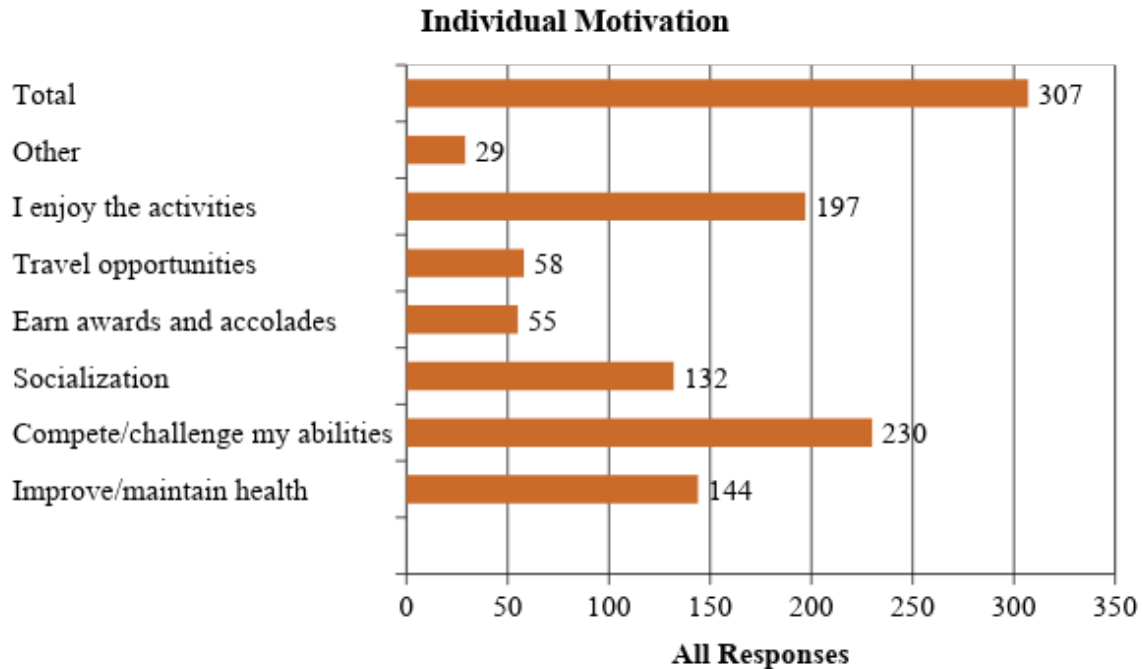


Figure 2. Why Individuals Compete in the NSGA State Games

in the reporting of demographic information were removed. After adjusting for outliers, results showed that Idaho had the highest participation rate with 143 individuals for 46.8% of surveys collected. Maine accounted for 20% of returned

surveys followed by Kentucky (17.7%), Nebraska (12.5%), and Michigan (2%). Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the breakdown of survey participation by state included in the statistical analysis for this study.

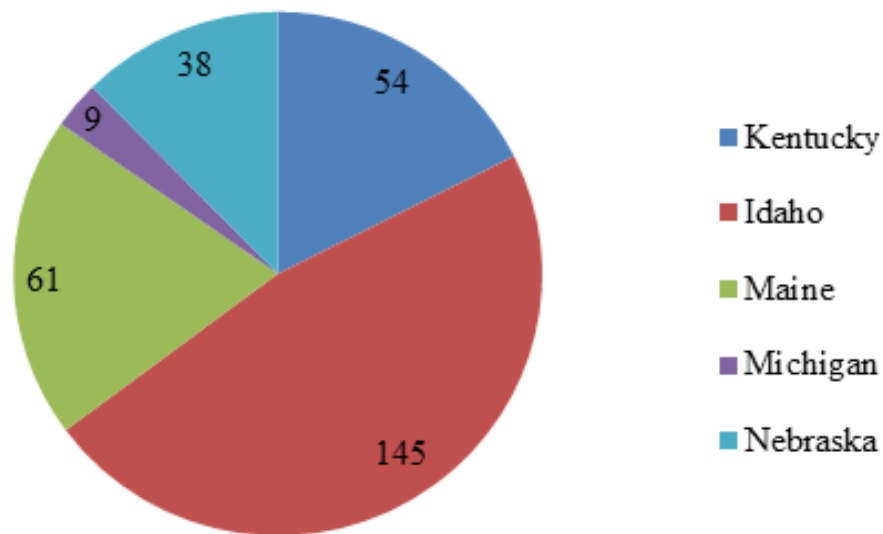


Figure 3. 2015 NSGA State Games Event Participation by State

*researcher attended Idaho & Nebraska games

Motivation and Gender

Using a one-way ANOVA, the highest level of motivation identified for both genders was IM (males, $M = 17.6$; females, $M = 17.8$) as represented in Table 2. This result agrees with the psychographic information gained pertaining to the participant's enjoyment of the activities and desire to challenge their own abilities. The only significant difference found between genders was for identified regulation (males, $M = 13.4$; females, $F = 15.4$) meaning that women placed more personal importance on participating than men.

Table 3 identifies statistical information relative to the SMS-6 survey showing that males presented a higher mean score (although not significant) for AM

than females ($F = 1.24, p = .27$). The only significant main effect of gender on motivation was in identified regulation [$F = 7.10, p = .008$], which coincides with an individual's ability to personally identify and value the reasons for the behavior as important to them. Women are more inclined to accept the actions necessary to participate than men in events offered through the NSGA.

Motivation and States

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore if levels of motivation differ between states. Utilizing the SMS -6, factors of AM, IM, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation, were measured. Participants self-selected which state they

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of 6 levels of Sport Motivation of State Senior Games Participants by Gender.

	Males		Females	
	M	SD	M	SD
Amotivation	5.29	3.41	4.83	3.29
External Regulation	11.34	6.03	11.98	6.38
Introjected Regulation	12.99	6.43	13.04	7.12
Identified Regulation	13.36	6.11	15.38	6.41
Integrated Regulation	16.15	6.70	17.16	7.19
Intrinsic Motivation	17.62	6.50	17.82	7.30

*Significance by gender $p = .008$

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Motivation by Gender

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Amotivation	Between Groups	14.087	1	14.087	1.236	.267
	Within Groups	3452.130	303	11.393		
Intrinsic	Between Groups	10.780	1	10.780	.235	.628
	Within Groups	13914.682	303	45.923		
External Regulation	Between Groups	27.405	1	27.405	.724	.396
	Within Groups	11472.058	303	37.862		
Introjected Regulation	Between Groups	.166	1	.166	.004	.951
	Within Groups	13455.820	303	44.409		
Identified Regulation	Between Groups	2743.992	1	273.992	7.104	.008
	Within Groups	11686.848	303	38.570		
Integrated Regulation	Between Groups	69.062	1	69.062	1.463	.227
	Within Groups	14299.050	303	47.192		

represented based on where they competed in 2015 (Kentucky (n = 54); Idaho (n = 145); Maine (n = 61); Michigan (n = 9); or Nebraska (n = 38)). There was a significant statistical effect found between the state of participation and level of motivation for external regulation ($F = 3.52, p = .008$), introjected regulation ($F = 3.21, p = .013$), and integrated regulation ($F = 3.00, p = .019$), as represented in Table

4. These results infer that participation for external rewards, being recognized as an athlete, and participating because it is personally important to the individual differences between states. The effect of the state of participation on AM, IM, and identified regulation was not significant ($p > .05$).

Investigation of motivation levels using descriptive statistics of means and

standard deviations for each of the 6 levels of motivation based on state of participation by the SMS-6. Mean differences for 3 of the 6 levels are evident between the state of Idaho and Maine as identified in Table 4.

Discussion

Including a representation of the five regions served by the NSGA expands on the previously limited information provided in earlier studies. Although the present study only includes five of the 51 NSGA state events the results may

Table 4

Analysis of Variance Motivation by State

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Amotivation	Between Groups	102.486	4	25.621	2.265	.062
	Within Groups	3416.179	302	11.312		
Intrinsic	Between Groups	410.658	4	102.665	2.214	.067
	Within Groups	14003.309	302	46.369		
External Regulation	Between Groups	519.921	4	129.980	3.526	.008
	Within Groups	11132.828	302	36.864		
Introjected Regulation	Between Groups	564.000	4	141.000	3.219	.013
	Within Groups	13228.124	302	43.802		
Identified Regulation	Between Groups	345.172	4	86.293	2.205	.068
	Within Groups	111820.502	302	39.141		
Integrated Regulation	Between Groups	562.006	4	140.502	3.003	.019
	Within Groups	14131.714	302	46.794		

be generalized to the senior population within the NSGA as a whole. Understanding the reasons for participating or not participating in NSGA events is a stepping stone to assist both organizations and communities in serving this ever-growing population. As individuals age maintaining physical activity is a contributor to better overall health and socialization. As Stathokostas et al. (2013) found it is also a vital link to cognitive and physical longevity. Sport participation allows individuals to learn new skills, express themselves, be socially active, and gain a sense of belonging (Heo et al., 2013).

Demographic and psychographic information shared gave an overall picture of the seniors that compete at the NSGA state games within the 5 different regions (i.e., Pacific (Idaho), West (Nebraska), Great Lakes (Michigan), Northeast (Maine), and Southeast (Kentucky)). This representation allows for a more robust generalization of overall participants within the NSGA than previously examined. Initial participants included 266 males and 125 females, with 160 of those in the 60-69 age categories, 282 married, 119 have an annual household income of \$95,000 per year or more and 292 individuals hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

Each of the five states included in this study held their annual NSGA state games during the late summer to early fall of 2015. With the majority (i.e., Idaho, Maine, Michigan) hosting individual events over multiple weeks. Ne-

braska and Kentucky held their games in a consecutive day format not exceeding five days. Participation numbers varied between the states with Idaho having the highest number of surveys returned, (n = 145). Total number of participants from Michigan was considerably low compared to the other states. Inference by the researcher was that the low number was due in part because the state director was also in charge of all electronic communications to the participants, whereas other states had volunteers designated for that responsibility.

As an overall demographic, the top reasons this sample population (n = 307) compete in NSGA state games are similar to what Mullen et al. (2014b) explained. They want to challenge their abilities, because they enjoyed the individual activities, to improve and/or maintain their health, and to be social. When participants personal motivation to be active and participate in organized sport activities varies between men and women and is affected by life events, physical abilities, and socio-economic status (Koeneman et al., 2012; Lera-Lopez & Rapun-Garate, 2011). Hirvensalo & Lintunen (2011) found individuals that participated in competitive sports as a teen, maintained participation in physical activities & recreational sports as an older adult.

Participating in a specific state games provides individuals additional opportunities to be recognized as an athlete and to compete for external rewards. This gives athletes an opportunity to challenge

their abilities against others they may not normally compete against, as well as allowing them to continue doing physical activity that they deem personally important. These findings fall in line with Self Determination Theory as it asserts individuals behave based on cognitive, affective and value related variables. Both genders presented high for intrinsic motivation which is the highest level of motivation based on SDT. Additionally males in this study were found to not place as much importance on performance as the women.

This could be attributed to opportunities they had to learn and compete growing up in a variety of sports. They are confident in their skills for their preferred sport(s) and do not normally compete in a sport that they have little to no experience in. Males from a very young age have been encouraged to engage in physical activity and organized sports whereas young girls were not afforded similar opportunities until the late 1960's and early 1970's with the passage of Title IX.

In understanding why females value participation in NSGA state games more than the males in this study one possibility to consider is that participants in the 65 – 74 age categories were born between 1941 and 1950. Growing up during the post- World War II era females were taught and expected to be the care takers, staying home to rear children and maintain the household. Schools did not offer the same physical education or recreational opportunities

for them as they did males. Females were expected to be ladylike; learning sports was not a priority for their education.

Schools and community organizations did not offer many organized sports or physical activities for females until the mid to late 1960's which includes those participants in the 60-64 age category. Even then they were considered clubs and any competitions held were usually between local schools, through sponsoring organizations such as the Girls Athletic Association or the Young Women's Christian Association. . It wasn't until the passage of Title IX in 1972 that public schools and colleges began offering competitive sports for females. Even after the passage of Title IX it took time for communities and schools to regularly offer competitive sporting opportunities to females. By this time females in the 65 - 74 age categories were more than likely rearing young families and didn't have the time or possibly the approval of their husbands to participate in these types of activities.

For many of the females in this study when they began to participate in organized sports and physical activities as an adult, or older adult they may have begun to see themselves as more than one dimensional due to changing social gender roles. They realized they could still be the mother, the caretaker, the lady but they also began seeing themselves as athlete and role model for younger women; someone with skills and abilities they found while learning it was not too late to learn something new and compete.

These women value the opportunity to train and compete now because they are part of a social group or they find they feel better, have more stamina, better balance, more agility, and are able to do things physically that others their age can't because they are not as physically active.

Through this study information gained strengthens the previous research done by supporting results from prior studies. It also shows that although women are still not participating at the same rate as men, they do value and feel participating is important for their health, mental well-being, and socialization.

Many seniors are still actively competing in sports through the NSGA. Understanding what the senior's motivation was for getting and staying involved will allow the autonomous organizations to better market their product and subsequently positively impact more lives. The findings presented may be the initial stepping stone for states to review present practices and consider new or different avenues to introduce more seniors to the NSGA. Upon review of the overall findings, individual event organizers may be able to work closer with medical professionals, membership organizations, retirement villages, and various other entities that serve this population to help seniors become aware of the benefits of regular physical activity and participation in recreational activities and sports.

Information compiled is beneficial to local, as well as, state organizations as they work to continue providing quali-

ty events to the selected demographic. Review of demographic information may be used when developing events, securing facilities and potential local public speakers for the individual state organization. Utilization of select marketing materials and platforms may be adjusted based on how messages are presented (electronic versus traditional), where messages are placed (recreation centers, retirement facilities, and businesses), and the physical recruitment of participants. Differences in advertising can be a stark contrast when comparing televised spots targeted at males and females. Generally advertisements for males show them as physically active, strong and virile, whereas an advertisement designed for the female audience shows women engaged in walking, yoga or something more gentle.

Understanding what motivates an individual to behave in a certain way or take part in an activity can be used in the development of educational information, marketing campaigns, and opportunities to learn new skills. With the results of the demographic and psychographic information individual states may have better insight into how to present information, what platforms to use, and where it can be placed for a higher viewership.

Future Research

As more studies are being conducted within this niche sport it will be beneficial to look at more than motivation of participation. Women who grew up prior to the passage of Title IX didn't have the same opportunities to be ac-

tively engaged and compete in sport as those presently entering the age brackets to compete in NSGA games. Looking at the differences in competitive sport experience between the age groups could help with sport offerings and potential new events being offered. Life events affect parents and grandparents starting in the lower ranges of the designated age groups for participation at NSGA games. Identifying differences in the number of participants based on marital status and education could allow for targeted social events or training opportunities.

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