

## **Sources of Enjoyment and Goal Orientation among Youth Swimmers**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The first objective of this study was to examine whether there are achievement goal orientation profile differences regarding enjoyment of swimming. The second objective was to assess which sources of enjoyment differentiate swimmers of different achievement goal orientation profiles. Female (N=128) and male (N=174) swimmers aged 10 to 18 years completed questionnaires of swimming enjoyment, sources of enjoyment in sport (SEYSQ), and achievement goal orientation (TEOSQ). ANOVA revealed that those with high task/high ego, high task/moderate ego and moderate task/low ego profiles have significantly higher levels of enjoyment of swimming as compared to those with low task/moderate ego profiles. Discriminant analysis showed that four groups of swimmers could be described by two discriminant functions. High task/high ego group is placed on the positive side of the function "achievement with intrinsic motivation". This group

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showed greatest enjoyment of swimming in other-referenced competency and recognition, effort expenditure, self-referenced competency, positive parental involvement and competitive excitement. Low task/moderate ego group significantly stands out on the positive side of the “achievement without effort” function and showed greatest enjoyment only in other-referenced competency and recognition. This research serves as a step towards a better understanding of a conceptual link between goal orientation and sources of enjoyment in young swimmers.

*Keywords: Achievement goal orientation; sources of enjoyment; swimming; enjoyment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional experience is a central part of youth sport. Although youth sport research has emphasized negatively-valenced emotions, such as anxiety, stress and anger, it appears that positive emotions are necessary for successful performance [1]. In addition, a large number of children cited enjoyment as a key predictor for initiating and maintaining sport involvement and as a main motivator of participation in sports competitions [2,3,4].

### 1.1 Enjoyment in Sport

Different theoretical models have been developed to explain and understand the concept of enjoyment. In this study, enjoyment is defined as a positive affective response to a sport experience that reflects generalized feelings, such as pleasure, liking and fun [5]. Enjoyment is more differentiated than global positive affect, but more general than a specific emotion, such as happiness or joy [6,7].

The perception of competence/ability [8,9], effort and mastery [5,10] extrinsic rewards [11], involvement in challenging tasks [12], friendship quality and peer acceptance [13,14], positive parental involvement [15] and a mastery-focused sport environment [16] are all factors associated with sport enjoyment. In addition, enjoyment in sport is linked to the individual's number of years of active sport participation [15,17].

Scanlan and Lewthwaite [18] proposed a two-dimensional model of sport enjoyment. These two dimensions – intrinsic/extrinsic and achievement/non-achievement – are divided into four quadrants. The intrinsic-achievement quadrant is defined by sources that are related to personal perception of competence and control, such as mastery of goals and perceived ability. Enjoyment may also be derived through winning, demonstrating superior ability over others, and being rewarded [7]. By contrast, in the extrinsic-achievement quadrant, enjoyment stems from

personal perceptions of competence and control derived from other people, such as positive social evaluation and recognition of sports achievements [18]. The intrinsic-non-achievement quadrant consists of sources associated with physical activity (e.g., exerting effort, movement sensation) and the excitement of competition. Finally, extrinsic-non-achievement sources are derived through affiliation with peers and positive social interaction with adults, which have all been associated with the quality of young people's sport experience [19,20]. To summarize, this model shows that young people's enjoyment in sport can derive from one or more sources that may or may not be associated with achievement. Based on the Scanlan and Lewthwaite [18] model, Wiersma [21] has developed a Sources of Enjoyment in Youth Sport Questionnaire (SEYSQ) to investigate these various sources of enjoyment in youth sport, represented by the four quadrants, among 896 youth athletes, 12-16 years of age. This investigation identified self-referenced competency and competitive excitement as the most important sources of enjoyment, and other-referenced competency and recognition as the least important source of enjoyment. The important role of sport enjoyment may also be seen in some motivational theories (e.g., achievement goal theory, the sport commitment model) in which enjoyment is cited as one of the primary elements for continued sport involvement [17].

### 1.2 Achievement Goal Orientations

Achievement goal theory [22,23] is one of the most important approaches to the study of motivational processes in sport. This social-cognitive theory is based on the assumption that the individual is an intentional, rational and goal-directed organism, motivated to demonstrate their own competence in an achievement context [24]. An athlete adopts the goal that represents his/her purposes of striving for achievement. Therefore, goal orientation represents various adaptation strategies, which include cognitive,

affective and motivational self-regulation. Individual, based on his previous experience, selects a particular strategy that he considers to be an appropriate response to the challenges posed by the situation or task [25]. Nicholls [22] identifies two basic dispositions that individuals can adopt to various degrees – namely, task and ego goal orientation. For task-oriented people, the goal of action is to focus on learning, mastering and developing skills, and the demonstration of ability is self-referenced. The goal of action for ego-oriented people is winning and outperforming others, so demonstration of one's high ability and the avoidance of demonstrating comparative low ability are of major concern. Previous studies have reported that task and ego goal orientations are independent or orthogonal to one another [23,26,27,28]. This means that a person may have equally high, moderate or low levels of both goal orientations at the same time.

### **1.3 Achievement Goal Orientations – Enjoyment in Sport Relationships**

Contemporary views of achievement motivation suggest that goal orientations play an important role in understanding enjoyment in youth sport [24,29]. Nicholls [23] argued that, when endorsing a task goal, an athlete's perception of success tends to be based on self-referenced standards, so the individual is focused on the task demands and works hard to overcome challenges. Consequently, sustained effort that results in mastery, learning or improvement will provide positive information about competence and, thus, greater levels of enjoyment will accrue [30].

A number of studies on sport enjoyment have shown positive effects of self-referenced perspectives [e.g., 31,32,33]. In Biddle et al.'s [34] systematic review of 48 studies and 47 independent samples (N=12,275), it was found that self-reported positive affects (such as enjoyment and satisfaction) had a moderate-to-large positive association with task orientation, but no relationship with ego orientation. The athletes scoring high on task orientation more frequently reported self-referenced sources of enjoyment (e.g., health and fitness, psychological benefits), while the athletes scoring high on ego orientation more frequently identified social recognition and rewards as their enjoyment sources [35]. In brief, high task orientation, either alone or in combination with high ego orientation, leads to higher levels of enjoyment in sport.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Although the notion that task goals are related to enjoyment in sport is not new, there have been few empirical investigations into the relationship between goal orientation and sources of enjoyment in sport. Using different sources of enjoyment, we can determine how differences in understanding ability and effort affect enjoyment in sport. Previous researchers [35,36] have used mean or median split procedures to create four groups of task and ego orientations. A problem with this procedure is that it results in inaccurate dichotomizing – that scores close to the median or mean are classified as either high or low when they actually represent average scores on task or ego orientations. The present study used cluster analysis to determine goal orientation profiles, which provides the opportunity to examine different solutions and more realistically group objects in comparison to the sometimes artificial groups obtained by mean or median split procedures.

This study has, therefore, three objectives: 1. to determine whether the achievement goal orientation profiles obtained from this sample are consistent with those reported in the literature; 2. to examine whether there are achievement goal orientation profile differences regarding enjoyment of swimming; 3. to assess which sources of enjoyment differentiate swimmers of different achievement goal orientation profiles.

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1 Participants**

The sample (N=302) consisted of both female (N=128) and male (N=174) swimmers, between 10 and 18 years of age (M=12.7; sd=2.25). The criteria for participation in this study were that the participants had been practicing swimming for at least two years and had been receiving training in their clubs between four and six times per week. Participants were members of eight swimming clubs in the Republic of Croatia, from four cities: Zagreb, Split, Zadar and Sibenik. All the parents gave consent for their children to participate in the study.

### **2.2 Questionnaires**

#### **2.2.1 Swimming enjoyment**

Two questions were used to assess children's enjoyment in sport: "How fun is taking part in

swimming for you?” and “How much do you like swimming?” These questions were adjusted by McCarthy et al. [15] and are based on instruments measuring enjoyment in sports from other studies [7,18,37]. The participants responded on a Likert scale, ranging from “not at all” (1) to “very much” (5).

### 2.2.2 Sources of enjoyment in sport

Sources of enjoyment were estimated using the SEYSQ [21], which was translated and adapted to the Croatian language for the purposes of this study. This 28-item measure consists of six subscales: self-referenced competency (four items; e.g., improvement of performance based on how I’ve done in the past); other-referenced competency and recognition (six items; e.g., being better in my sport than other athletes my age or in my league); effort expenditure (five items; e.g., working hard in practice); competitive excitement (four items; e.g., participating in close game, meet or competition); affiliation with peers (five items; e.g., getting support and encouragement from teammates); and positive parental involvement (four items; e.g., getting support from my parent(s) for playing my sport). Each statement is preceded by the stem “During the times when I most enjoy swimming, I usually experience that enjoyment from...”. Participants responded using a five-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The six subscale structure of this questionnaire was validated by Wiersma [21] with a sample of 896 young athletes, and alpha reliability ranged from 0.65 to 0.85. The pilot study of the Croatian version of SEYSQ with three different sample (N=181, N=192 and N=302) of young athletes confirmed the six-factor structure of the questionnaire and the reliability coefficients ( $\alpha$ ) ranging from 0.73 to 0.84.

### 2.2.3 Achievement goal orientations

Individual differences in goal orientation were assessed using a Croatian version of the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire [38,39]. The questionnaire consists of 13 items (seven task and six ego) using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The task subscale is composed of seven items (e.g., “*I feel most successful in swimming when I learn a new skill and it makes me want to practice more*”), while the ego subscale is composed of six items (e.g., “*I feel most successful in swimming when I am the best*”). The stem “I feel most successful in

swimming...” precedes each item. In previous investigations, the task and ego subscales exhibited satisfactory reliability, ranging from  $\alpha=0.70$  to  $\alpha=0.90$  [34,38].

## 2.3 Procedure

Data were collected from swimming clubs across the Republic of Croatia. Before the research began, swimming clubs were contacted regarding participation in the study. The measurement procedure was implemented either before or after a training session, usually on the club premises, depending on work conditions. The size of each group was adjusted to the size of the available room and did not exceed 15 swimmers per group. The students who agreed to participate were given instructions about the purpose of the research and all other information related to participation in the study. It was emphasized that the participants should read the general instructions before commencing their questionnaires. Each participant was encouraged to answer the questionnaire items honestly and to express their own attitudes, and was advised that there were no right or wrong answers. Any questions that came up during the procedure were addressed immediately. Participation was voluntary and athletes were advised that they could withdraw at any moment without consequence. The whole procedure lasted approximately 20 minutes.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation and minimal and maximal values, were computed for all variables (i.e., goal orientations, sources of enjoyment, and enjoyment of swimming). Cluster analysis was conducted in an effort to classify the participants into goal profile groups. Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in order to test the differences between swimmers of different goal orientation profiles regarding a dependent variable (enjoyment of swimming). The differences between four groups of swimmers in sources of enjoyment variables were analyzed by use of canonical discriminant analysis.

## 3. RESULTS

Examination of the means reveals that these young swimmers rated themselves relatively highly on task orientation, self-referenced competency, effort expenditure, affiliation with peers, positive parental involvement and

enjoyment of swimming, while reporting moderate-to-high ratings on ego orientation, other-referenced competency and recognition, and competitive excitement (Table 1).

Some studies [14,40] have proposed the use of cluster analysis to identify subgroups of participants based on goal orientations. A k-means or non-hierarchical method cluster analysis with a simple Euclidean distance was conducted using STATISTICA 12 (Statsoft Inc., Tulsa, OK). Based on existing goal profiling literature, a four-cluster solution was determined as the most suitable representation of the data structure [14]. Solutions specifying three, five and six clusters were examined and it was found that a four-cluster solution was the cleanest and most robust. Additionally, in order to check the stability of a four-cluster solution, two thirds of the participants in the sample, randomly selected, were subject to the new cluster analysis. Approximately 95% of participants maintained their original cluster membership. Using the z-score value of  $\pm 0.5$  as the criterion for interpreting profile groups as high, medium or low on achievement goal orientation, the groups were classified and interpreted accordingly. Cluster one (N=86) consisted of swimmers with a high task/high ego profile, cluster two (N=44) consisted of swimmers with a moderate task/low ego profile, cluster three (N=114) consisted of swimmers with a high task/moderate ego profile, and cluster four (N=58) consisted of swimmers with a low task/moderate ego profile.

ANOVA revealed profile differences regarding dependent variable enjoyment in sport. Follow-up Scheffe post hoc comparison of profile groups was conducted to assess the nature of these differences. Those with high task/high ego, high task/moderate ego and moderate task/low ego profiles have significantly higher levels of enjoyment of swimming as compared to those with low task/moderate ego profiles ( $p = .00$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $p = .00$ ).

The differences between the four groups of swimmers (high task/high ego, moderate task/low ego, high task/moderate ego and low task/moderate ego) regarding sources of enjoyment variables were examined by the use of canonical discriminant analysis.

Two statistically significant discriminant functions emerged from the discriminant analysis (Wilks  $\Lambda_1 = .47$ ,  $\chi^2 = 220.87$ ,  $p < .000$ ; Wilks  $\Lambda_2 = .73$ ,  $\chi^2 = 92.01$ ,  $p < .000$ ), of which the first explained

53% and the second explained 27% of variance of the differences between the four groups of swimmers. The obtained eigenvalue and canonical correlation coefficient ( $\lambda_1 = .59$ ,  $r = .54$ ) indicated that the first discriminant function relatively strongly differentiated among the groups of swimmers. The eigenvalue and canonical correlation coefficient for the second discriminant function ( $\lambda_2 = .35$ ,  $r = .50$ ) indicated that this discriminant function only moderately differentiated among the groups of swimmers.

In Table 2, the standardized coefficients of the discriminant functions, structure matrix coefficients (correlation coefficients of the variables with the discriminant functions) and the group centroids are shown.

The first discriminant function is defined using the following variables: other-referenced competency and recognition, effort expenditure, self-referenced competency, positive parental involvement and competitive excitement. Thus, the structure of the first discriminant function is related to the achievement aspects, representing possibilities that feelings of positive affect will increase as an individual perceives him or herself to be successful at mastery attempts or through winning, receiving rewards and demonstrating ability. The structure of this discriminant function is also related to intrinsic-non-achievement and social aspects, in turn related to parental involvement in the form of encouragement, support, acceptance and game attendance. These swimmers strive for achievement and invest effort in improving and mastering skills, but also require social support, especially from parents. Therefore, this discriminant function was named "achievement with intrinsic motivation."

The second discriminant function is defined with variable other-referenced competency and recognition on the positive pole of the function, and with affiliation with peers, effort expenditure and self-referenced competency on the negative pole. The structure of the second discriminant function is related to the enjoyment of positive social assessment, winning, receiving rewards and demonstrating superior ability over others. These swimmers are also characterized by an orientation toward achievement, but are less oriented toward sources of enjoyment arising from effort investment and the social aspects of enjoyment, such as affiliation with peers and parents' involvement in their sport. Therefore, this discriminant function was interpreted as "achievement without effort".

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the subscales**

	Mean	Standard deviation	Range
Task orientation	4.26	0.65	1.85-5.00
Ego orientation	3.55	0.89	1.00-5.00
Self-referenced competency	4.53	0.51	2.00-5.00
Other-referenced competency and recognition	3.93	0.74	1.83-5.00
Effort expenditure	4.02	0.76	1.20-5.00
Competitive excitement	3.94	0.86	1.00-5.00
Affiliation with peers	4.37	0.70	1.00-5.00
Positive parental involvement	3.98	0.89	1.50-5.00
Enjoyment	4.31	0.63	1.00-5.00

**Table 2. Standardized coefficients of discriminant functions (c), correlation with the discriminant function (r) and group centroids**

	F1		F2	
	c	r	c	r
Self-referenced competency	0.172	0.588	-0.400	-0.384
Other-referenced competency and recognition	0.693	0.887	0.819	0.310
Effort expenditure	0.258	0.600	-0.500	-0.535
Competitive excitement	0.014	0.474	-0.034	-0.414
Affiliation with peers	-0.184	0.255	-0.520	-0.543
Positive parental involvement	0.318	0.529	-0.079	-0.329
<b>Group centroids</b>				
High task/high ego	0.960		0.093	
Moderate task/low ego	-1.137		-0.724	
High task/moderate ego	0.054		-0.340	
Low task/moderate ego	-0.668		1.080	

Fig. 1 displays the positions of the groups' centroids in the space of the two discriminant variables. Analysis of the placement of the groups' centroids in the space of the two discriminant functions, we notice that the high task/high ego group is distinct in "achievement with intrinsic motivation" and the centroid of that group is placed on the positive side of the function, while the moderate task/low ego and low task/moderate ego groups are on the negative side of this discriminant function. We see that the low task/moderate ego group significantly stands out on the positive side of the "achievement without effort" function, while other groups are either close to zero or on the negative side of this function. The centroid for the high task/moderate ego group is closer to zero in both discriminant functions, which indicates a variation in sources of enjoyment for these swimmers (i.e., sources of enjoyment may be variously defined, which means that their enjoyment comes from different sources).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that swimmers with a moderate or high task orientation have a

higher level of enjoyment regardless of their ego orientation, and their sources of enjoyment are mainly intrinsic or socially extrinsic in nature. Those swimmers characterized as possessing low task orientation have a lower level of enjoyment, and that enjoyment is derived from sources that are extrinsic. They emphasize social comparison with others. The use of cluster analysis proved to be justified in the creation of groups that differ according to their goal-oriented profiles [14,40,41,42]. The findings of the cluster analysis in this research substantially coincide with those of Eisenbarth and Petlichoff's [43] investigation of 18-25 year male and female students, mainly recreational athletes. Three of four goal profile groups match using the  $\pm 0.5$  z-score criterion. However, the ratio of members differs in some clusters. The majority of participants in our research were assigned high task orientation profiles, along with a high, or at least moderate, ego orientation (high task/high ego and high task/moderate ego), while in the Eisenbarth and Petlichoff [43] study, the majority of participants were determined to belong to the moderate task/low ego profile. In our research the least number of participants were assigned to the moderate task/low ego

profile. This divergence of results is most likely due to the age difference of the participants and competitive status in the sport of our sample. Eisenbarth and Petlichkoff's [43] research was conducted on university students who were recreational athletes, while our research was conducted on young, competitive athletes. In contrast to our findings, some other investigations of youth athletes [14,40] showed somewhat different profiles. In Hodge and Petlichkoff [40], only one out of four clusters were confirmed, while in Smith et al. [14], only one was confirmed using the z-value criterion of  $\pm 0.5$ . Interestingly, clusters characterized by relatively moderate goal orientation emerged in our research, which was not the case in previous studies. This could be explained by reference to the sample of participants. The present investigation included both male and female individual sport athletes, while Hodge and Petlichkoff [40] and Smith et al. [14] included only male team sports athletes.

Swimmers in the profile characterized by low task orientation coupled with moderate ego

orientation (low task/moderate ego) reported significantly lower enjoyment than those in the other three profiles. This finding is consistent with numerous studies [8,14,15,44,45,46,47] which confirmed that those who are predominantly ego oriented and low task oriented are characterized by maladaptive motivational patterns and experience less enjoyment in sport. In the goal-oriented profiles that were determined by the cluster analysis, adaptive motivational patterns and higher enjoyment are mostly displayed by participants in the profile characterized by high task orientation coupled with high or moderate ego orientation. An interesting finding in this research was the appearance of a higher level of enjoyment in the profile characterized by moderate task orientation coupled with low ego orientation. A possible explanation for these results might be found in the fact that being highly or moderately task oriented seems to be especially important in swimming, since this sport is associated with enjoyment regardless of one's level of ego orientation. It seems that being task oriented fosters positive affect in swimming.

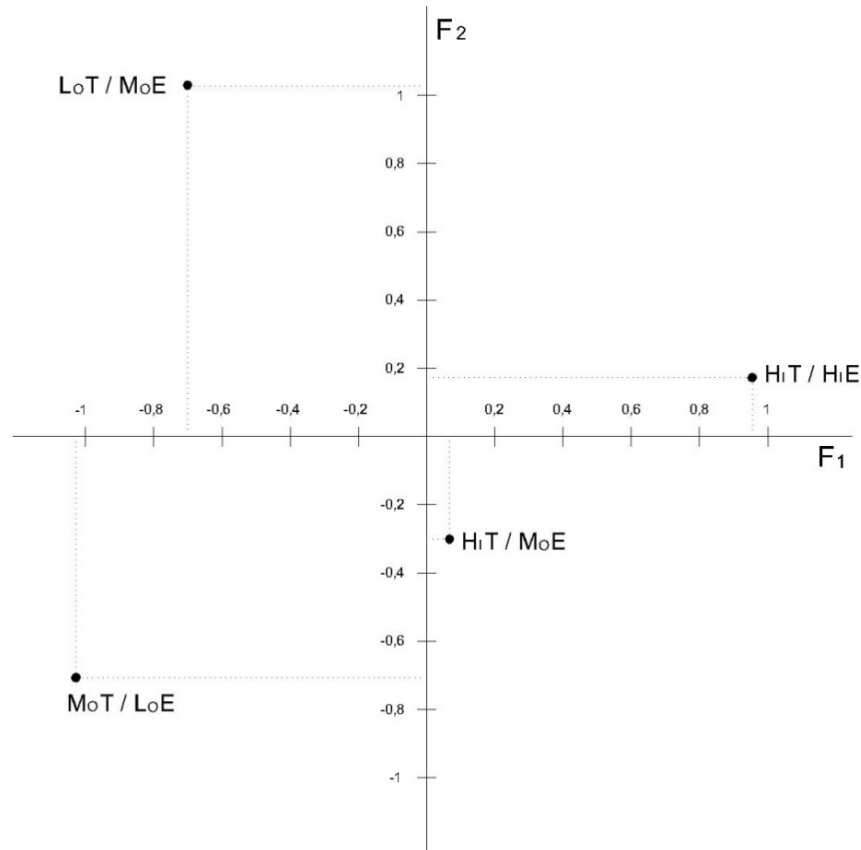


Fig. 1. A display of group centroids in the space of discriminant functions

The results revealed two statistically significant discriminant functions by which these four groups of swimmers could be differentiated. Those swimmers with a high task/high ego profile experienced the greatest enjoyment of swimming in situations in which they confirm their own swimming competence. They gain recognition from others for success in their sport, hard work during training and competitions, and self-referenced competency regarding mastering and improving their own skills. Also, these swimmers experienced enjoyment through positive parental involvement in their sport and through the excitement of going to and participating in competitions. In contrast, those swimmers with either a moderate task/low ego or a low task/moderate ego profile experienced lower levels of enjoyment via these sources.

Previous studies on this topic have generally concluded that high task-oriented athletes often show some intrinsic and social extrinsic sources of enjoyment, while high ego-oriented athletes have emphasized extrinsic sources of enjoyment [35,36,46]. Athletes with high task orientation refer to learning and team cooperation as the most important sources of enjoyment, and those athletes with high ego orientation refer to their own perception of competence and winning as the most important sources of enjoyment [36]. Gould et al. [46] similarly suggested that swimmers who had high task goal orientation found hard work, fitness, a team atmosphere and parental support as more enjoyable, while swimmers with ego goal orientation had higher ratings for enjoying awards, medals and winning. Furthermore, Yoo and Kim [35] reported that athletes scoring high on task orientation more frequently reported self-referenced sources of enjoyment (e.g., health and fitness, psychological benefits), while athletes scoring high on ego orientation more frequently identified social recognition and rewards as their enjoyment sources. However, these studies did not make use of two-dimensional goal orientation profiles, according to which one orientation does not necessarily dominate over the other and in which the simultaneous combination of task and ego orientations is possible.

In the present investigation, those swimmers reporting high task orientation coupled with high ego orientation are predominately characterized by other-referenced competency and recognition. This source of enjoyment usually correlated with the high ego orientation. Other referenced competency and recognition as an extrinsic-

achievement source of enjoyment, while this was the least important of all sources of enjoyment according to Wiersma [21] and McCarthy et al. [15]. This is because the emphasis on social comparison over other aspects of participation in youth sport programs likely results in lower levels of enjoyment. Lower levels of enjoyment may have significant consequences for the level of motivation of young participants. In this case, high ego orientation is not maladaptive when coupled with high task orientation. In the goal orientation research, effort expenditure as an intrinsic-non-achievement source of sport enjoyment was usually related to task orientation [48]. High task orientation in this profile (high task/high ego) probably ensures that the hard work on training and competition is considered to be highly enjoyable, by contrast to the profiles with lower task orientation (moderate task/low ego and low task/moderate ego). Activities directed towards commitment and hard work during practice and competition in swimming usually have a positive outcome for the athletes and are related to higher levels of perceived competence. In the present investigation, those swimmers reporting high task orientation coupled with high ego orientation scored higher in self-derived perceptions of competence than those individuals reporting moderate task/low ego and low task/moderate ego orientations. This is consistent with the perceived competence findings of Hodge and Petlichkoff [40] and Smith et al. [14], and may represent a distinction between a profile generally characterized by low motivation and one generally characterized by high motivation. A higher level of self-referenced competency for those in the high task/high ego profile may rest on achievement of specific task-related or ego-related goals. Furthermore, positive parental involvement, in the form of encouragement, support, acceptance and attendance, is also a source of enjoyment for swimmers in the latter profile. Extrinsic, though essentially more socially oriented, this source of enjoyment was associated more with task orientation in past research [36]. The present results suggest that achievement-directed swimmers view parental involvement in their sport quite positively, regardless of ego orientation. Competitive excitement in the form of challenge, the uncertainty of competition and the related emotional reactions experienced are more important to those swimmers with a high task/high ego orientation than to those with a moderate task/low ego or a low task/moderate ego orientation. Excitement and challenge emerged as an important source of enjoyment in



sports environments among older children in McCarthy and Jones [49]. McCarthy et al. [15] also found that older children reported significantly greater competitive excitement as compared with younger children. That could be attributed to their cognitive-developmental difference, i.e., older children's more mature understanding of the competitive process. These results indicate that the competitive situation may be enjoyable for young swimmers when the process of competition is emphasized, rather than the outcome, which is probably more associated with the high task orientation in this research.

Participants in the low task/moderate ego orientation profile are predominately characterized by other-referenced competency and recognition. On the other hand, those swimmers reporting moderate task orientation coupled with low ego orientation identified non-achievement sources, such as peers, effort expenditure and competitive excitement, as important sources of enjoyment. Our results are consistent with those of Kim [36] and Yoo and Kim [35] who found that high ego-oriented athletes reported that winning, getting rewards and social recognition, and displaying superiority were associated with enjoyment in sport.

The results show that other-referenced competency and recognition as a source of enjoyment also dominate in the case of moderate ego orientation coupled with low task orientation. Low task orientation in this profile is most likely the cause of the absence of other sources of enjoyment in this sample of young swimmers. The source of enjoyment that emphasizes social comparison and rewards was the least important of all sources of enjoyment in previous studies [15,21], while the absence of other sources is most likely the cause of the lower level of overall enjoyment reported by those with a low task/moderate ego profile as compared with other profiles. Participants in the profile characterized by moderate task orientation coupled with low ego orientation reported greater enjoyment of affiliation with peers, which means that these athletes establish and maintain friendships through swimming, and they perceive their relationships with peers in their sport as an important component of their enjoyment. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research that links positive peer relationships to motivation-related variables [14,50]. This shows that peer relationships in sport will grow when young swimmers focus their achievement

strivings on mastering new skills, improving existing skills and exerting effort, i.e., when they display at least moderate task orientation. Effort expenditure as a source of enjoyment manifested through commitment and hard work during training and competition characterizes the swimmers in this profile. Investing effort in activities is one of the most important features that characterizes higher task orientation in young athletes [51]. It is important to emphasize that, in this case, moderate-to-high task orientation is determined by the enjoyment one gets through investing effort during practice and competition, which usually leads to a positive outcome for a young swimmer. Participants in the profile characterized by moderate task orientation coupled with low ego orientation reported greater enjoyment of competitive excitement than those in the profile characterized by low task orientation coupled with moderate ego orientation. This source of enjoyment, which emphasizes the process of competition itself rather than the outcome, probably dominates in cases in which swimmers attribute their own success in sports to learning, developing and mastering their swimming skills, and less on motivation to demonstrate their own competence in relation to other swimmers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

On this basis, it can be concluded that highly (or at least moderately) task-oriented swimmers have a higher level of enjoyment regardless of their level of ego orientation. Their sources of enjoyment are diverse and mainly intrinsic or socially extrinsic oriented. By contrast, low task-oriented swimmers have a lower level of enjoyment, and that enjoyment is derived from extrinsic sources, oriented towards social comparison with others. More importantly, participants displaying high task and high ego goal orientation consistently report responses that are more desirable on the variables under analysis. Thus, it is important to consider the combination of task and ego orientations, rather than focusing on whether the individual is exclusively task or ego oriented. This research serves as a step towards a better understanding of a conceptual link between goal orientation and sources of enjoyment in young swimmers. Some goal orientation profiles that were found in other studies were not determined in this case (e.g., moderate task/high ego, low task/high ego), and it would be interesting to research the sources of enjoyment for those profiles. Additionally, one of the limitations of this investigation lies in the fact

that there are probably others sources of swimming enjoyment which we did not investigated in this research. The sources of enjoyment measured by the SEYSQ instrument should not be regarded as a definitive or exhaustive list of the sources of enjoyment that can be found in young athletes. As different sports have different characteristics, the influence of goal orientation on the sources of enjoyment could be explored in future studies, not just for individual sports, but for team sports as well.

## CONSENT

All the parents gave consent for their children to participate in the study.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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