

# Relationship of intrinsic motivation towards sport, with variables related to a healthy lifestyle

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## ABSTRACT

This study's objective was to determine which lifestyle variables have a direct relationship with motivation towards the practice of physical activity. There was a sample of 858 subjects, aged between 18 and 77 years ( $41.62 \pm 13.30$ ), from different parts of Spain. The instruments used for data collection were the Behavioural Regulation Exercise Questionnaire, for Intrinsic Motivation measurement; the Intentionality to be Physically Active Measurement Scale, for the intention of future practice measurement; and the Healthy Lifestyles Questionnaire, for tobacco consumption, rest, balanced diet and respect for meal schedule variables measurement. The results determined that the Intention to be Physically Active variable was significant as a predictor of Intrinsic Motivation towards sport whereas the variables Rest Habits, Tobacco Consumption, Balanced Diet and Respect for Meals Schedule were not significant. The importance of promoting strategies for increasing intrinsic motivation is emphasized. **Keywords:** Motivation; Physical activity; Healthy lifestyles; Balanced diet; Tobacco; Rest habits.



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## **INTRODUCTION**

It has become valid to study the importance of motivation towards the practice of physical activity throughout different population groups, from teenagers (López-Castedo et al., 2018) to adults and seniors (Leyton et al., 2017). The goal of any sport professional is to achieve practice adherence. Intrinsic motivation, defined as being "related to the pleasure that is experienced when performing an activity" (Moreno and Martínez, 2006), plays a very important role for participants, as demonstrated in many studies (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Deci and Ryan, 2012; Granero-Gallegos, et al., 2014). There is a universal consensus that everything related to proper nutrition, the practice of PA, good rest habits and personal hygiene encourages healthy behaviours. On the other hand, stress, lack of rest, smoking, a sedentary lifestyle and alcohol/or psychoactive substances abuse represent a risk to health (Casado-Pérez et al., 2015). Therefore, the objective of this study was to determine which lifestyle variables have a direct relationship with motivation towards the practice of physical activity.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### ***Participants***

The study sample was formed by 858 subjects, aged between 18 and 77 years ( $41.62 \pm 13.30$ ), coming from different areas of Spain. 455 subjects were female and 403 males. The whole sample performs physical activity of mild or moderate intensity.

### ***Measures***

- Intrinsic motivation. The Behavioural Regulation Exercise Questionnaire (BREQ-3) (Wilson, et al., 2006) in its Spanish version (González-Cutre, et al., 2010) was used. It is composed of 23 items, of which only the Intrinsic Motivation factor was used (e.g. "Because I find it enjoyable and satisfying to exercise"). In this study a Cronbach's alpha value of = .93 was obtained.
- Intention to be physically active: The Measurement Scale of Intentionality to be Physically Active (Hein, et al., 2004), validity to Spanish by Moreno, et al. (2007) was used. It consists of five items that are grouped in the same factor or variable, so they measure the same aspect (e.g., "I am interested in my physical form development"). In this study a Cronbach's alpha value of = .87 was obtained.
- Healthy lifestyles: For healthy lifestyles measurement, the Healthy Lifestyles Questionnaire (VHS) designed by Wold (1995), translated and validated by Leyton, et al. (2018) was used. It consists of 12 items divided into the following factors: Rest Habits (Cronbach's Alpha = .85) composed of 3 items (e.g. "I usually sleep 7 or 8 hours a day", Tobacco Consumption (Cronbach's Alpha = .88) composed of 3 items (e.g. "I feel good when I smoke"), Balanced Diet (Cronbach's alpha = .71) composed of 3 items (e.g. "Normally, I eat vegetables and fruits every day") and Respect for Meals Schedule (Cronbach's Alpha = .70) composed of 3 items (e.g. "Always have breakfast").

### ***Procedures***

Firstly, the online questionnaire was produced using the Google Form platform. Later we administered the questionnaires through different channels (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter).

### ***Analysis***

Factorial analysis and reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) were carried out. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and variances homogeneity using the Levene test were carried out. The results showed a normal data distribution. Next, the descriptive analyses were carried out, and finally, the Regression analysis by steps.

The program used to analyse the data obtained in the different questionnaires is the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the regression analysis by steps. It indicates that the Intention to be Physically Active variable was significant as a predictor of Intrinsic Motivation towards sport whereas the variables Rest Habits, Tobacco Consumption, Balanced Diet and Respect for meals schedule were not significant. Collinearity indices (VIF, Tolerance, Condition Index, Durbin-Watson) were observed, and do not exist. In relation to the variance explained, the intrinsic motivation explains a variance of 73%.

Table 1. Coefficients of regression analysis by successive steps, considering as a dependent variable Intrinsic Motivation towards the practice of sports

VARIABLES	$\beta$	$R^2$	$t$	$p$
Intention to be Physically Active	.73	.53	31.64	.00
EXCLUDED VARIABLES				
Rest Habits	.01	-	.52	.60
Tobacco Consumption	.01	-	.46	.64
Balanced Diet	.03	-	1.06	.29
Respect for Meals Schedule	.04	-	1.57	.12

## DISCUSSION

The variable that correlates directly with intrinsic motivation towards practice is the intention to be physically active. Although it is demonstrated that the practice of physical activity involves habits related to a healthy lifestyle (Langille and Rodgers, 2010), no relationship has been found between variables of healthy lifestyles. However, there are several studies that support a direct relationship between intrinsic motivation and the intention of future practice (García, et al., 2012; Moreno, et al., 2012), as confirmed by our results.

## CONCLUSIONS

There is a direct relationship between intrinsic motivation towards the practice of physical activity and the intention to be physically active. It is necessary to continue investigating the relationships between lifestyle variables and motivation towards the practice of physical activity.

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