



# Sports Value and Orientation Awareness for Masters' Athletes

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## Abstract

**Background:** Masters' athletes are evaluated to maintain adequate health in mind and body. This study was to investigate sports value and orientation awareness.

**Subjects and Methods:** Applicants were 90 masters' athletes and methods include a questionnaire requesting survey response and calculation by group division (< 64 and 65< years).

**Results:** Both groups considered important record/victory, health maintenance rather than friends or leisure factors. As to sports value, the recreation and abstinence types were common rather than leisure and Agôn types.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** These results suggest that athlete perspective would show enthusiasm, skills and pleasure for daily sports life.

**Keywords:** Sports value; Orientation awareness; Masters' athletes; International Masters Athletic Federation (IMAF); Abstinence type; Recreation type

## Introduction

For decades, the importance of sports in our lives has been advocated [1]. A variety of values are included in sports, and some aspects are present for doing, watching and supporting. Sports players range from young to elderly, and among them, there are Masters athletes who have been involved in track and field for years. These activities are held annually not only at domestic masters' competitions, but also at world masters' international competitions associated with fully attracting attention [2]. For the background, there is probably a growing interest in maintaining health, a revival behavior once again similar to previous days, or a desire to have a new trial action in challenging area [3].

Furthermore, athletic of track and field is the basic exercise of all sports [4]. Unlike other sports competitions, large numbers of people, equipments, and facilities are not required. Anyone can do it easily, at their own time, place, occasion (TPO) and also pace. This characteristic is to support the convenient factor of athletic

sports. Recently, local marathons have been very popular and held frequently all over Japan [5]. This is one of the phenomena that many people are interested in athletic competition such as masters' athletics.

Various studies have been conducted on masters' sports [6]. The focus was on how competition-oriented sports affect people's minds, bodies and behaviors, and on what kind of factors motivate people to continue sports activities [7]. Among many athletes who participate in Masters competitions, some seem to be simply competitive-oriented, and others seem to be comfort-oriented [8]. Some differences may be present due to the age factor of master's athletes. Therefore, the authors conducted a detail study using questionnaire for Masters athletes. What kind of sports orientation and what kind of sports value awareness do they have? Further, we investigated the age factor separately for non-elderly and elderly groups. The results and discussion would be described in this article.

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## Subjects and Methods

The subjects enrolled in this article were 90 participants with average age of  $62.6 \pm 12.9$  years old. They took part in the International Gold Masters Athletics Championships held in Kyoto in October 2013. Questionnaires were distributed to the participants of the competition, and they were asked to fill in and collect them on the spot.

The contents of the survey were concerning the basic attributes, sports orientation and sports value awareness in the Masters athletics. As to the competitive orientation in the Masters, we asked them to select one of the five options for the direction that they always aim for the sports. They are i) record and victory, ii) health maintenance and progress, iii) leisure/fun/vacation, iv) friends and colleagues, and v) others. When they selected others, the reason or its details were asked to describe.

As regards to sports value awareness, we have referred to the previous analytical framework [9]. There were five types in the following.

- Recreation type: it seeks to achieve some common purpose through the sports desire satisfaction,
- Leisure type: it tries to satisfy the desire for performing sports itself immediately,
- Abstinence type: it attempts to achieve some purpose through the process of ascetic training;
- Agôn type: it tries to satisfy the sports desire itself through ascetic, unpleasant hard training,
- other type: the cases for none of a)-d)

They are asked to choose one of them, which was close to their values. When selected the time e) other, they are asked to provide the details.

## Statistics and Ethical Consideration

For statistical investigation, the participants were divided into a non-elderly group aged 64 and under and an elderly group aged 65 and over. In both groups, statistical method of cross tabulation was performed. Concerning the statistical processing, SPSS Statistics 27.0 was applied [10].

This research was reviewed and implemented by an ethics committee that was established in the International Masters Athletics Federation (IMAF) in Wakayama, Japan. The discussion was based on the Declaration of Helsinki and the Personal Information Protection Act, which would be standard ethical consideration. After explaining to the subjects both verbally and in writing the specific purpose of the survey, the informed consent was obtained by both of verbal and writing manner. The results will be statistically processed in a way that does not identify individuals.

## Results

### Respondent attributes

The subjects enrolled in this study were 42 non-elderly athletes under the age of 64 (M/F=34/8), and 48 athletes of 65 and more than the age of 65 (M/F=43/5). The ratio of non-elderly and elderly group was 47% and 53%, respectively. The average years of continuous playing in the Masters athlete were  $8.86 \pm 8.96$  years for the non-elderly and  $18.62 \pm 11.33$  years for the elderly (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation).

### Sports competitive orientation

The results obtained from the collected data for sports competitive orientation are as follows. In both age groups, the majority of respondents were oriented toward “record and victory,” followed by “health maintenance and progress.” In both age groups, the intention of “leisure/fun/vacation” was the least (Figure 1).

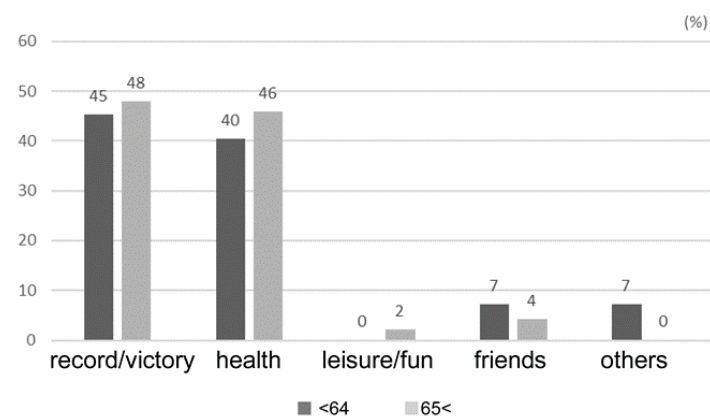


Figure 1: The results of sports competitive orientation.

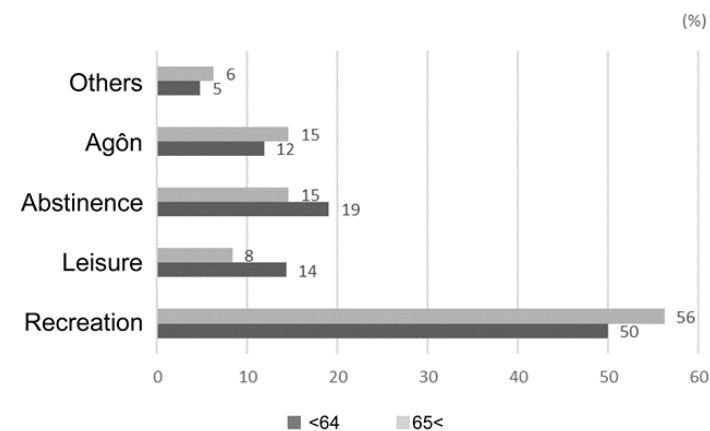


Figure 2: The results of sports value for 2 age groups.

Among non-elderly respondents (<64 years old), “others” included a variety of replies. They are i) competitive-oriented content, such as “I have no intention,” “Improved motivation and health,” “Participation in all events,” and “Challenging,” ii) confirmation of

the current state of health and physical strength, and iii) socially oriented content such as "participation in society".

### Sports value awareness

The results for both age groups were studied for 5 types including recreation, leisure, abstinence, agôn, and others (Figure 2). In both groups, recreational type was most frequent, which occupied 50-56% of them. Successively, abstinence type was followed as 15-19%. Among the responses to other types, some replies were included. They were "lifelong active athlete" from elderly group, and "maintaining health while competing" and "strengthening physical strength" from non-elderly group.

### Discussion

In this study, we attempted to examine what kind of sports competitive orientation and sports value awareness are present for Masters' track and field athletes [11]. The study was divided for elderly and non-elderly groups [12]. As a result, in both age groups, the most common preference for sports was clarified as "better record and victory". In terms of sports value awareness, the majority of respondents in both age groups have selected for "recreation type."

The result for sports competitive orientation showed that "better record and victory" were the most common. It suggests that masters' athletics would have the purpose as challenging records and competing with others for win or lose [13]. Consequently, lots of participants seem to recognize athletics as intentional or game-oriented. It was apparent from the fact that the leisure orientation of leisure/fun/vacation was the least prevalence [14].

The International Masters Athletic Federation (IMAF) was established to advance the lifelong sports ideals for the Masters sports [15]. The aim is to emphasize fitness and wellness to invite large numbers of participants to the competition, and to give the pursuit of excellence and excitement with friendship [16-406](Takenaka). The characteristic point would be that anyone who is healthy can easily start participating IMAF competition [17-408](Konoike). For reflecting this philosophy, the participants would have sports competitive orientation associated with pursuing excellence. At the same time, they can have health consciousness of "fitness and health" [18].

On the other hand, current study showed the impressive results that many athletes estimated sports as recreational matter. It may be reflected by the philosophy of lifelong sports [19]. Unlike other recreational sports, Masters' sports activity can pursue the improvement of skills through daily practice and training [20]. Currently obtained results, however, showed that their daily continuous workout is not a training, but it can be regarded as careful preparation period to get the pleasant moment of competition [21]. From mentioned above, participation in Masters' athletics may bring various psychological beneficial outcomes,

including life satisfaction, competition, socialization, self-esteem, self-confidence, personal empowerment and resilience to some negative events of aging [22].

### Conclusion

The impressive results were obtained in this article. Masters' athletes have pursued the orientation of the competition itself such as aiming for record and victory. However, the purpose for masters' sports was found for achievement of other matters. This attitude and direction may be recognized for some mature athletes in recent years. In other words, masters' athletes tend to develop their motivation, skills and the way of enjoying sports associated with gradual maturation with age, regardless of the past or present level.

Recently, a new elderly generation called "baby boomers" has emerged, and then previous traditional image of the elderly has been changing. During this period, it is expected that more people will increase who are interested in Masters Sports. Various approaches will be developed to bring about the evolution for Masters Sports in the future.

### Conflicts of Interest

Author declares no COI.

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