

## EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES IN RECREATIONAL AND COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES REGARDING MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATIONS

Ivana Duvnjak

Faculty of Kinesiology Osijek, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia  
Drinska 16A, 31 000 Osijek, Croatia

### Abstract

Hedonic and eudaimonic pursuits are two main approaches to a full life. Hedonic activities are pursued for pleasure and comfort, while eudaimonic activities are pursued to use or develop one's strengths. These two perspectives can be studied as orientations, which refer to motives, values, and goals. Leisure activities are important for quality of life because they allow people to meet their needs and values. This research aimed to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how experience preferences fit into the framework of motivational orientation. In this study, we examined how these orientations might apply within recreational and competitive activities in leisure time. A total of 241 adult anglers between 18 and 70 years participated in the research. Respondents gave their estimates about experience preferences, motivational orientations, and life satisfaction. A theoretical model was established on the relationship between hedonic and eudaimonic motivational orientation, experience preferences, and life satisfaction. Then, the adequacy of the model fit was examined. Results show a strong effect of motive for achievement on eudaimonic orientation. Significant effect was found for environment and escaping stressors motive on both hedonic and eudaimonic orientation. Also, the type of activity has a moderate effect on the motive for achievement. Only eudaimonic orientation has an effect on life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** motives for activities, motivational orientations, competitive and recreational activities

### INTRODUCTION

People seek fulfilment and a good life through two main approaches – hedonia and eudaimonia. Some people strive for pleasure and satisfaction, while others strive for excellence and growth (Huta & Waterman, 2014). The hedonic approach is oriented to pleasure, satisfaction, positive emotions, and avoiding negative emotions and discomfort. Pursuit of growth, purpose, and meaning are the characteristics of the eudaimonic approach that dates back to Aristotle. The concepts of hedonia and eudaimonia can be assessed through four categories – orientations, behaviours, experiences, and functioning (Huta, 2015). Orientations refer to personal reasons, motives, and goals behind behaviour, such as the desire for personal development or the pursuit of pleasure (Huta, 2016). Behaviours include concrete actions and thoughts, such as planning goals. Experiences include subjective feelings and emotional experiences, such as a sense of purpose or positive emotions. Functioning refers to abilities and achievements that develop through long-term hedonic or eudaimonic orientations and behaviours. Categories of orientation and behaviour signify ways of living. When assessed as orientation rather than experiences, hedonia and eudaimonia are more distinct. They represent concepts over which people have some control. Orientations toward hedonia and eudaimonia are being explored in different life domains (Huta, Pelletier, Baxter, & Thompson, 2012). The self-determination theory supports the category of orientation and describes eudaimonia as motivational orientation towards activities that support autonomy, competence and

connectedness (Ryan, Cullen, & Deci, 2013). People differ in choosing personal goals and in the needs they want to satisfy. They can have the same level of well-being, but the reasons that led to it can be completely different (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Some people may be satisfied with life because they have fulfilled their need for pleasure and enjoyment. Others may be motivated by helping others and engaging in prosocial activities. Motivational orientations guide an individual's actions.

The purpose of recreational activities is to achieve desired psychological and physical goals. When the current state is not congruent with the desired state, people engage in recreation. When overload occurs, an individual may go angling to relieve stress. Therefore, recreational experience represents the psychological outcomes that an individual wants to achieve through recreation (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarrant, 1996). This concept explains why people are involved in recreation, what they strive for and how it can benefit them. Activities in leisure time are one of the life domains and have an impact on overall life satisfaction (Ardahan & Turgut, 2013).

Experience preferences are the motivation that gives meaning to activities in which people voluntarily participate. There are two types of experience preferences (Sutton & Ditton, 2001). First are general and refer to a wide range of activities, such as relaxation, enjoying the environment and socialisation. The second relates to specific experience preferences to an activity, such as involvement in the activity itself or achievement. Long-term participation in recreational activities is characterised by specialisation that refers to a change from general to specific preferences and behaviours

(Bryan, 2000). This process encompasses behavioural (experience, equipment), cognitive (knowledge, skills), and affective components (place in lifestyle). The study aims to explore the structural relations between experience preferences, motivational orientations, and life satisfaction in the context of competitive and recreational activities. Also, we wanted to examine the factor structure of the Experience preferences scale.

## METHODS

### Participants and procedure

The sample consists of 241 adults between 18 and 70 years ( $M = 41.31$ ,  $SD = 13.46$ ). Most of them are male (95.4%). Respondents are members of anglers' associations in Croatia. Some of them engage in competitive angling (35.3%), and some in recreational angling (64.7%). All of them practice freshwater angling in their leisure time. Participants have an average of about 28 years of angling experience ( $M = 27.96$ ,  $SD = 14.83$ ), with a minimum of two years. The research was conducted by reaching out to the anglers' associations in parts of the country where members engage in freshwater angling. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

### Instruments

The main sociodemographic data regarding age and gender were collected in the study. Also, participants gave information about the type and duration of the activity in which they are involved. The type of leisure activity that participants engage in refers to recreational and competitive activities.

### Experience preferences

Data on experience preferences in the context of involvement in recreational activities were collected using a scale developed by Driver and Knopf (1976) and modified by Hunt and Ditton (2001). This scale is used to assess motives for participating in leisure activities. It contains 15 items and consists of four scales: interaction, achievement, escaping individual stressors and being in a natural environment. The interaction and achievement subscales refer to specific experiences related to an activity. The other two subscales represent general factors. The translation of the scale was carried out using the standard translation procedure from English to Croatian, with a back-translation to check accuracy. Participants assess the importance of the motives in the context of the chosen leisure activity (angling) on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 – not at all important, 5 – extremely important). The reliability of the factors of the Experience preferences scale in previous research ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and Cronbach alpha values range from 0.7 to 0.9 (Hunt &

Ditton, 2001; Manfredo et al., 1996; Oh, Sutton, & Sorice, 2013). The reliability of the scale also shows stability across different leisure contexts (fishing, hiking, and camping). In the majority of previous research, the multifactor structure of the scale is shown (Hunt & Ditton, 2001; Oh et al., 2013). However, there is no consistent, unique factor structure. Most often, three to five factors were extracted that represent the underlying motives for experiences in leisure activities. For this reason, the factor structure was examined in the conducted research.

### The hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities

The Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities questionnaire (HEMA) was used to inquire about the type of motivational orientations. This questionnaire allows for the examination of two approaches – hedonic and eudaimonic (Huta & Ryan, 2010). In this way, both types of motives can be studied separately and operationalised as orientations. The HEMA consists of two scales with a total of 9 items. Five items relate to hedonic orientation and four to eudaimonic orientation. Hedonic orientation represents the concepts of pleasure and comfort, whereas eudaimonic orientation represents the concept of excellence, growth, and authenticity. The item "Seeking pleasure" reflects hedonic motives, and the item "Seeking to use the best in yourself" reflects eudaimonic motives. Participants rated the items on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). In order to test the assumption that items had no cross-loadings, principal axis factor analysis was performed. Following Oblimin rotation, two factors explained a total of 72.04% of the variance. The HEMA shows good internal reliability with a Cronbach alpha above .80 in previous research (Anić, 2014; Ewert, Zwart, & Davidson, 2020). The reliability of these subscales was also high ( $\alpha = .93$  for hedonic and  $\alpha = .88$  for the eudaimonic subscale).

### Satisfaction with life

The five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to measure life satisfaction. The purpose of this scale is to assess an individual's global life satisfaction. All items are positively worded, so their scores can be averaged to obtain the total scale score. The items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 - strongly disagree, 7 - strongly agree). Previous findings show high internal consistency (Pavot & Diener, 2008). High reliability was also confirmed in this research ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

### Statistical Analysis

All analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0, IBM Corp.,

Released 2017) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS). Factor analysis was used to verify the structure of the Experience preferences scale. The relationship between experience preferences, motivational orientation and life satisfaction of recreational and competitive anglers was examined via structural equation modelling.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Factor structure of the Experience preferences scale

The Experience preferences scale explores the reasons for engaging in certain activities, more precisely, what motives are important to them. Individuals seek different types of experiences in their leisure time. Some motives are directly related to the activity, while others are more general. Previous findings reveal a different factor structure of the Experience preferences scale grouped into domains. The main characteristic of this scale is its validity in specific situations where there is overlap or a different item distribution across factors. Therefore, the factor structure of the Experience preferences scale was examined on our sample, and an exploratory factor analysis was performed. First, the criteria for conducting factor analysis were verified. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test sampling adequacy measure is 0.84, which meets the recommended value of  $KMO \geq 0.5$ . The second criterion is also met. Bartlett's test of sphericity is statistically significant ( $\chi^2(190) = 1388.61$ ;  $df = 105$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Since the criteria for factor analysis were met, factors were extracted using principal axis factoring to identify underlying latent constructs. The defined domains and factors of this scale have confirmation in existing findings, as well as high reliability within

domains (Manfredo et al., 1996). However, the correlation between the factors is low. Therefore, orthogonal rotation was chosen. A factor analysis of all 15 items yielded a three-factor solution, with eigenvalues greater than 1. Cattell's scree test also confirms the existence of three factors explaining 48.33% of the variance. Table 1 shows the factor loadings across three factors.

The first factor, *Interaction*, includes items that relate to the satisfaction and enjoyment that result from the activity itself. It contains four items and explains 20.02% of the variance. The second factor is *Achievement* and contains four items that explain 16.28% of the variance. The third factor encompasses seven items that relate to escaping stressors and being in a natural environment. This factor was labelled as *Environment and escaping stressors* and explains 12.03% of the variance. The factors are labelled in accordance with the contents of the items and the names of factors from previous research. The distribution of items among the three extracted factors maintained consistency with theoretical assumptions and earlier empirical evidence. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients range from acceptable to very good (Table 1). The internal consistency of the factors is also confirmed by the average intercorrelations between items, which indicate satisfactory homogeneity of each subscale (Clark & Watson, 1995).

Since the obtained factor structure differed somewhat from previous findings, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to verify the new distribution of items. The fit indices for the three-factor model demonstrated a good fit with the data:  $\chi^2(334) = 587.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CMIN/df = 1.76$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ;  $CFI = 0.93$ ;  $TLI = 0.92$ .

**Table 1.** Factor loadings of the Experience preferences scale items

Item number	Scale items	Factor		
		1	2	3
3	... For the fun of catching fish.	0.73		
1	... For the experience of the catch.	0.70		
4	... To experience adventure and excitement.	0.69		
8	... To obtain a "trophy" fish.	0.51		
2	... For the challenge or sport.		0.55	
7	... To develop my skills.		0.53	
5	... To test equipment.		0.53	
6	... To win a trophy or prize.		0.47	
11	... To be outdoors.			0.74
14	... To be close to the water (river, lake, sea).			0.67
9	... For relaxation.			0.63
13	... To experience new and different things.			0.63
15	... To experience unpolluted natural surroundings.			0.60
10	... To get away from the regular routine.			0.60
12	... For family recreation.			0.57

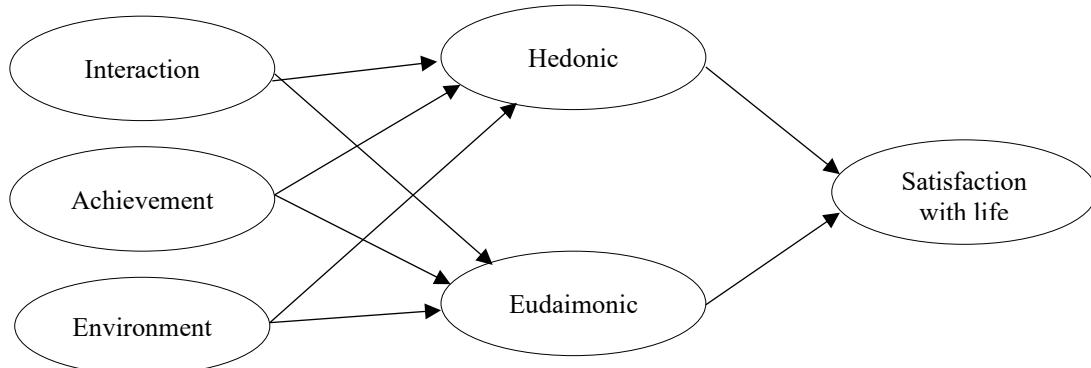
Average correlation among items	0.52	0.41	0.41
Cronbach alpha	0.81	0.72	0.82

**The relation between experience preferences, motivational orientations and satisfaction with life**

Structural equation modelling was used to analyse the relationship between experience preferences, motivational orientations and satisfaction with life. Figure 1 summarises the concepts in which hedonic

and eudaimonic orientations, along with life satisfaction, are explained through the motives for interaction, achievement, environment and escaping stressors. The type of activity, defined as competitive or recreational, was introduced as a control variable in the analysis of the structural model.

**Figure 1.** A conceptual model of motivational orientations, experience preferences and life satisfaction



*Note.* The type of activity was used as a control variable (competitive and recreational activity)

To test the causal relationship (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010), structural equation modelling with the maximum likelihood method was performed. The proposed theoretical model was compared with the data to assess its fit. The model fit was estimated using several fit indices, including Chi-square statistics (CMIN), Comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The measurement model demonstrates a good fit with the data, as indicated by an acceptable values CMIN/DF ratio of 1.70,  $df = 329$ ,  $p < .001$ . The CFI (0.94) and TLI (0.93) indices indicate a good fit with the data, with values greater than 0.90. The value of 0.05 of RMSEA shows an excellent fit of the model to the data.

Results show a strong positive effect of experience preference for the environment and escaping stressors on the latent variable of hedonic orientation. Interestingly, the effect of experience preference on eudaimonic orientation was moderate. The standardised regression coefficient indicates the relative importance of the achievement on eudaimonic orientation, with a strong positive effect (Table 2). These findings are in accordance with Huta's (2016) determination of hedonic and eudaimonic orientation. Hedonic orientation is the pursuit of pleasure and comfort. However, hedonia and eudaimonia can complement each other and exist simultaneously (Heintzelman, 2018). In our study, this confirms the relation of the general factor of experience preference for environment and

escaping stressors on both hedonic and eudaimonic orientation. The content of the items of environment and escaping stressors motive is more in accordance with the hedonic approach. Elements of eudaimonic orientation are excellence, growth, authenticity, and meaning. The same was found in conducted research, where the achievement motive has a significant effect only on eudaimonic orientation. This is a confirmation of eudaimonic orientation that denotes striving for high standards and performance (Huta, 2016). Experience preference for interaction has no significant effect on either hedonic or eudaimonic orientation. The findings confirm to some extent Waterman's determination of three types of experiences: events in which eudaimonia and hedonia are present, events in which only hedonia is present, and events in which neither is present (Huta & Waterman, 2014). For our participants, motives for engaging in angling are driven by both hedonic and eudaimonic orientation, or neither. Also, for some of them, motives are dominantly eudaimonic-oriented. The results show that the type of activity has a moderate negative effect on the motive for achievement. Participants who engage in competitive angling are more motivated by achievement. Eudaimonia creates a sense of purpose and gives value to life events, leading to learning, achievement, progress, and skill development (Huta, 2016). Motive for achievement, for which skill development is a prerequisite, fits more in the eudaimonic approach. In our research, only eudaimonic orientation has a

significant positive effect on satisfaction with life. Previous findings confirm that both hedonic and eudaimonic orientations are beneficial for well-being (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005). However, some findings show that eudaimonic orientation has positive effects on life satisfaction (Jia, Zhang, & Kong,

2021), which is also the case in conducted research. Data from the study conducted by Ardahan and Turgut (2013) shows that participating in angling can contribute to increased life satisfaction. There is no mediation effect, since there are no effects of the type of activity on hedonic or eudaimonic orientation.

**Table 2. Structural relationship between experience preferences, motivational orientations, and life satisfaction**

Relationship between variables	RW			SRW
	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Estimate
Interaction ← Type	0.11	0.12	0.93	0.06
Achievement ← Type	-0.46	0.11	-4.38	-0.31**
Environment ← Type	0.08	0.08	1.00	0.07
Hedonic ← Type	-0.08	0.15	-0.51	-0.04
Eudaimonic ← Type	-0.01	0.22	-0.03	-0.01
Hedonic ← Interaction	-0.03	0.17	-0.18	-0.03
Hedonic ← Achievement	0.02	0.20	0.10	0.02
Hedonic ← Environment	0.85	0.17	5.00	0.53**
Eudaimonic ← Interaction	-0.33	0.26	-1.28	-0.26
Eudaimonic ← Achievement	0.88	0.33	2.63	0.61**
Eudaimonic ← Environment	0.59	0.16	3.61	0.31**
Satisfaction ← Hedonic	-0.05	0.20	-0.24	-0.03
Satisfaction ← Eudaimonic	0.53	0.18	3.01	0.44**

Note. RW - Regression weights; SRW - Standardised regression weights; S.E. – Estimation of error; C.R. – Critical ratio; \*\*  $p < .001$

## CONCLUSION

The study provided support for the effects of eudaimonic and hedonic orientation, experience preferences and life satisfaction. The present study found a significant effect of the general factor of

experience preferences on both hedonic and eudaimonic orientation. Only one specific factor of experience preferences had an effect on eudaimonic orientation. Eudaimonic orientation had an effect on life satisfaction.

## REFERENCES

- Anić, P. (2014). Hedonic and eudaimonic motives for favourite leisure activities. *Primenjena Psihologija*, 7, 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.19090/pp.2014.1.5-21>
- Ardahan, F., & Turgut, T. (2013). Motivational factors for recreational fishing, the profile and life satisfaction level of recreational fishers and nonparticipants of fishing in Turkey. *Turkish Journal of Sport and Exercise*, 15(1), 58-72.
- Bryan, H. (2000). Recreation specialization revisited. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32(1), 18-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2000.11949879>
- Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7(3), 309–319. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.7.3.309>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01)
- Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13)
- Driver, B. L., & Knopf, R. C. (1976). Temporary escape: One product of sport fisheries management. *Fisheries*, 1(2), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.1577/1548-8446-1-2>
- Ewert, A., Zwart, R., & Davidson, C. (2020). Underlying motives for selected adventure recreation activities: The case for eudaimonics and hedonics. *Behavioral Sciences*, 10(12), 185. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs10120185>
- Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J., & Anderson, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. 7th Edition, Pearson, New York.

- Heintzelman, S. J. (2018). Eudaimonia in the contemporary science of subjective well-being: Psychological well-being, self-determination, and meaning in life. In E. Diener, S. Oishi, and L. Tay (Eds.), *Handbook of well-being* (pp. 145-159). DEF Publishers. nobascholar.com
- Hunt, K. M., & Ditton, R. B. (2001). Perceived benefits of recreational fishing to Hispanic-American and Anglo anglers. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 6, 153-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/108712001753461266>
- Huta, V. (2015). The complementary roles of eudaimonia and hedonia and how they can be pursued in practice. *Positive psychology in practice: Promoting human flourishing in work, health, education, and everyday life*, 159-182. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118996874.ch10>
- Huta, V. (2016). Eudaimonic and hedonic orientations: Theoretical considerations and research findings. In *Handbook of eudaimonic well-being* (pp. 215-231). Cham: Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42445-3\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42445-3_15)
- Huta, V., & Ryan, R. M. (2010). Pursuing pleasure or virtue: The differential and overlapping well-being benefits of hedonic and eudaimonic motives. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 11, 735-762. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-009-9171-4>
- Huta, V., Pelletier, L. G., Baxter, D., & Thompson, A. (2012). How eudaimonic and hedonic motives relate to the well-being of close others. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 7(5), 399-404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2012.705318>
- Huta, V., & Waterman, A. S. (2014). Eudaimonia and its distinction from hedonia: Developing a classification and terminology for understanding conceptual and operational definitions. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15(6), 1425-1456. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-013-9485-0>
- IBM Corp. Released 2017. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 25.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.
- Jia, N., Li, W., Zhang, L., & Kong, F. (2021). Beneficial effects of hedonic and eudaimonic motivations on subjective well-being in adolescents: a two-wave cross-lagged analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 17(5), 701-707. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2021.1913641>
- Manfredo, M. J., Driver, B. L., & Tarrant, M. A. (1996). Measuring leisure motivation: A meta-analysis of the recreation experience preference scales. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 28(3), 188-213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1996.11949770>
- Oh, C. O., Sutton, S. G., & Sorice, M. G. (2013). Assessing the role of recreation specialization in fishing site substitution. *Leisure Sciences*, 35(3), 256-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2013.780534>
- Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (2008). The satisfaction with life scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3(2), 137-152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760701756946>
- Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6(1), 25-41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-004-1278-z>
- Ryan, R. M., Curren, R. R., & Deci, E. L. (2013). What humans need: Flourishing in Aristotelian philosophy and self-determination theory. In A. S. Waterman (Ed.), *The best within us: Positive psychology perspectives on eudaimonic functioning* (pp. 57-75). Washington DC: American Psychological Association Books. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14092-004>
- Sutton, S. G., & Ditton, R. B. (2001). Understanding catch-and-release behavior among U.S. Atlantic Bluefin tuna anglers. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 6, 49-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10871200152668698>

*Correspondence to:*

E-mail: iduvnjak@kifos.hr