LIAM EVANS 2404985

# MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITY



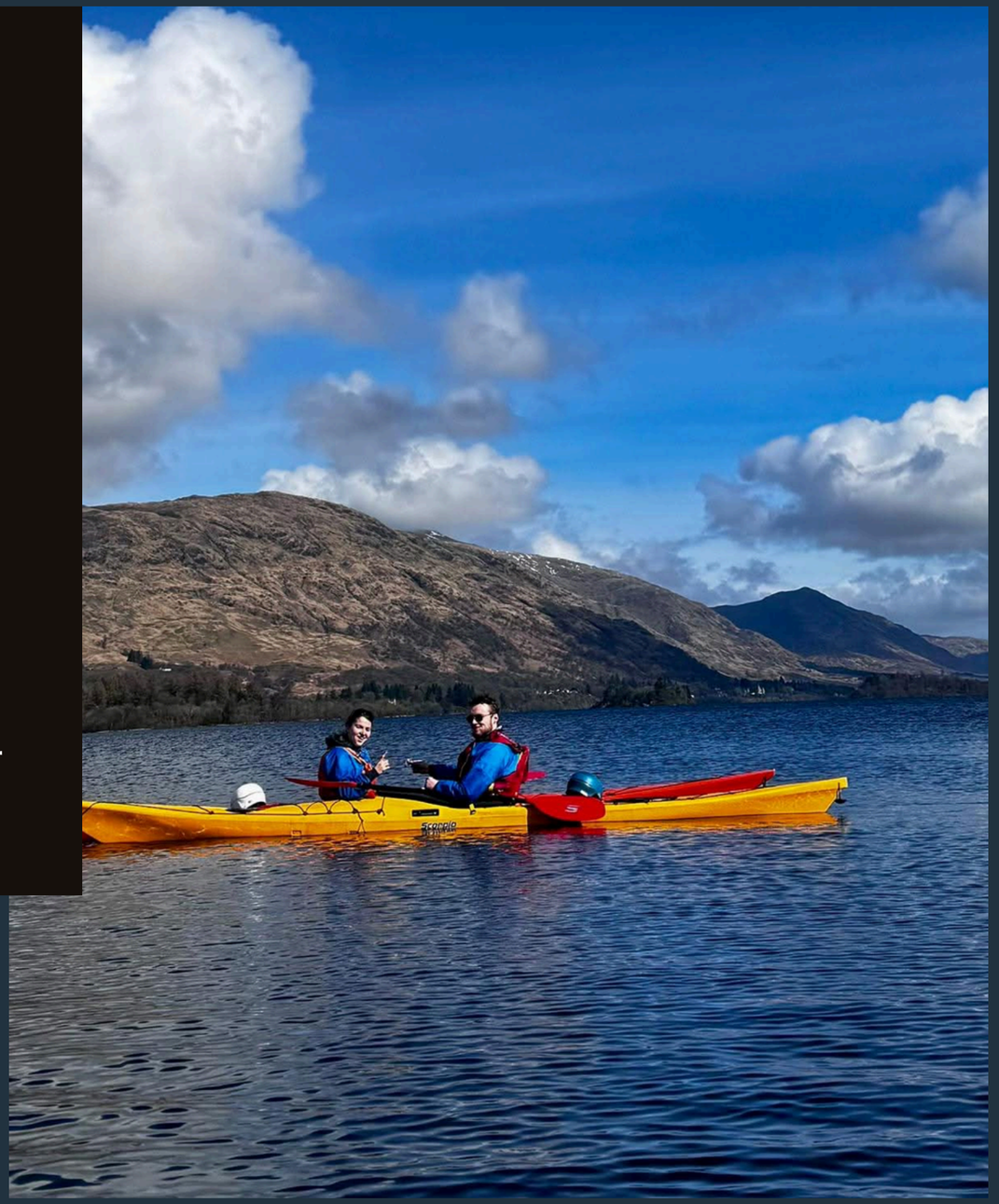
PSYCHOLOGY OF
PERSONAL ADVENTURE

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# INTRODUCTION

- Outdoor adventurous activities are widely associated with physical and psychological benefits
- Understanding motivation helps explain participation and long-term adherence
- This study explores individual motives for participation

**MY AIM:** To identify and evaluate motivations for participation in an outdoor activity



- **Motivation is key to understanding participation (Ryan and Deci, 2000)**
- **Outdoor activity linked to wellbeing (Pretty et al., 2005)**





# METHODOLOGY

- Semi-structured interview 15 minutes
- One participant (18+)
- Conducted in person with transcript recorded
- Questions focused on motivation, experience, and perceptions

**Ethics:**

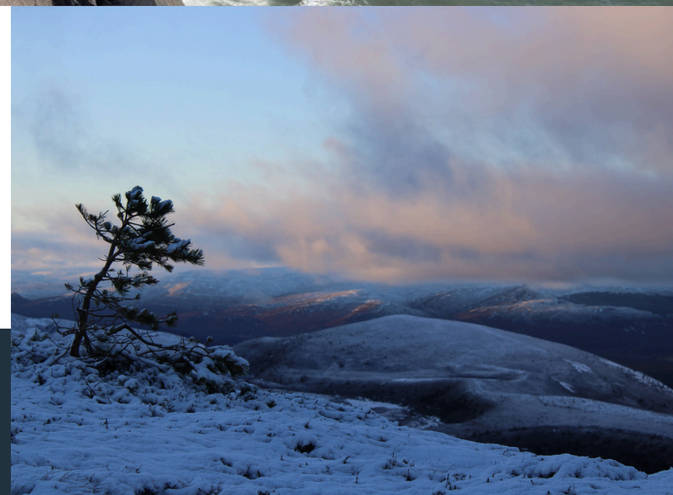
- Informed consent obtained
- Interview recorded and securely stored

# PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

- Age: 21
- Favoured Activity: Sea-Kayaking
- Experience level outdoors : Intermediate
- Frequency: 3 times a week (strong family influence)
- Initial involvement in outdoors: Lifelong exposure to outdoor activity

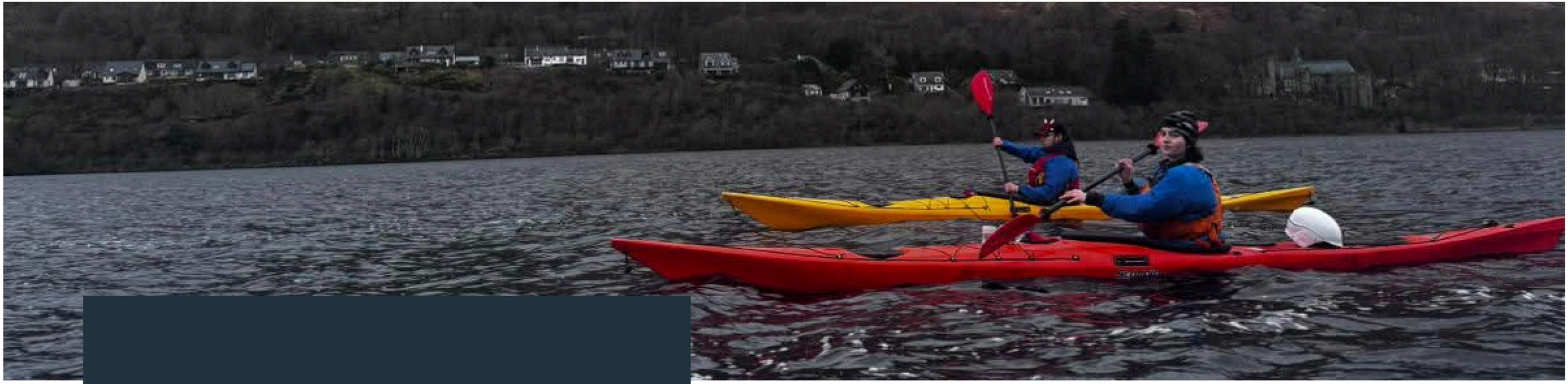




**“SINCE I WAS BORN… I’VE ALWAYS HAD TO GO AND DO SOMETHING ADVENTUROUS.”**

**Early exposure → long-term behaviour patterns (participation pathways research)**



# INTERVIEW KEY FINDINGS OVERVIEW

Main themes identified:

- Intrinsic motivation
- Extrinsic motivation
- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness
- Mental wellbeing
- Risk & challenge





# INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- Participation driven by enjoyment and personal satisfaction
- Motivation appears internally driven rather than outcome-based
- “It naturally brings me happiness.”
- “I do it mainly because I enjoy it.”
- “I don’t do it to be fit ever.”
- Self-Determination Theory ➔ Intrinsic motivation
- Also supports flow theory (enjoyment in activity itself)

**Intrinsic motivation drives enjoyment-based behaviour (Ryan and Deci, 2000)**

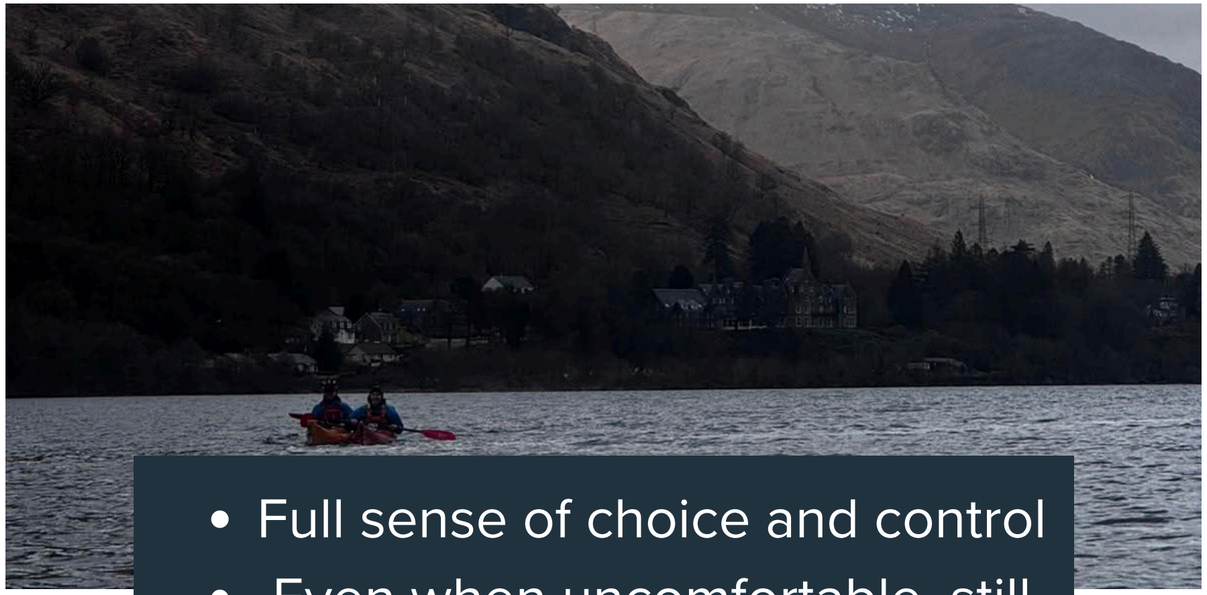
# EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- Minimal extrinsic motivation
- Slight competitive element later in interview

- “I like to climb higher to get a nice view or try to be better than someone else sometimes.”

- Mix of intrinsic + mild extrinsic (competition)
- Shows motivation is not purely one-dimensional







# AUTONOMY

- Full sense of choice and control
- Even when uncomfortable, still self-driven

- “I could have said no… but I did try and challenge myself.”

- Autonomy clearly satisfied

- Self-driven challenge = high internal regulation

**Psychological needs: autonomy, competence, relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000)**

# COMPETENCE



- Skill development present but not main driver
- Growth happens naturally rather than goal-focused

- “A lot of trusting myself is a recent development.”
- “I don’t really set goals… I just go out and have the best time I can.”

- Competence present but informal
- Contrasts with traditional achievement-based motivation

# RELATEDNESS

- Social connection enhances experience
- Community identity formed

- “That’s how we met.”
- “I feel now I’m a part of this community.”

:

- Relatedness clearly satisfied
- Social bonding in outdoor recreation







# MENTAL WELLBEING

- Outdoor activity = essential for mental health
- Acts as stress relief + escape

- “It relieves stress.”
- “You just feel free all around.”
- “It’s a necessity.”

- Nature exposure ➜ wellbeing (e.g. attention restoration theory)
- Strong alignment with mental health literature

- **Nature improves mental wellbeing (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989)**
- **Green exercise enhances mood (Pretty et al., 2005)**



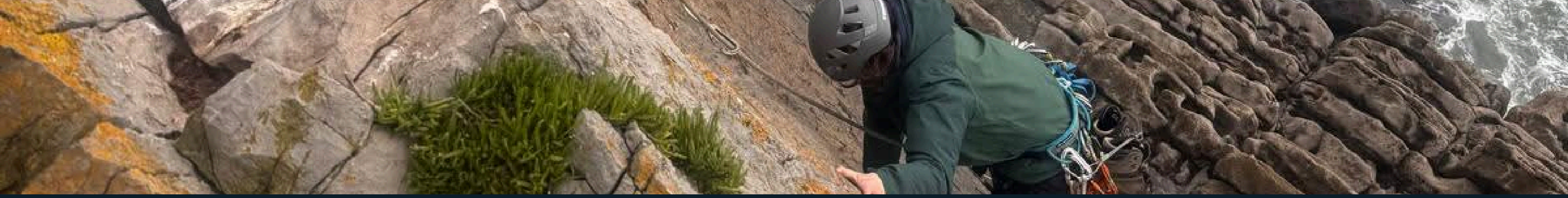
# Risk & Challenge

- *Fear + adrenaline are key motivators*
- *Achievement amplified by difficulty*

- *“It’s absolutely terrifying… the adrenaline… it’s insane.”*
- *“If I’ve done something I thought I couldn’t… best feeling in the world.”*
- *“Because of those risks… it feels 10 times better.”*

- *Sensation seeking theory*
- *Edgework (voluntary risk-taking)*
- *Challenge-skill balance (flow theory)*

- **Risk-taking linked to sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1994)**
- **Adventure involves voluntary risk (Lyng, 1990)**



# EVALUATION

Findings align with Self-Determination Theory:

- Autonomy: Strong
- Competence: Present but not structured
- Relatedness: Strong

Supporting quote:

- “My main happiness comes from being outside.”

Argument:

- Motivation is predominantly intrinsic
- All three SDT needs are satisfied ➜ explains consistent participation

- **Findings align with intrinsic motivation theory by Ryan and Deci, 2000)**
- **Outdoor experiences linked to personal development (Brymer and Gray, 2010)**



# CONCLUSION

- Motivation whilst mostly is intrinsic (some competition present)
- Lack of goal-setting contrasts with some literature
- Strong emotional reliance on activity

- “I don’t know what I would do if I couldn’t physically do the things I love.”

Critical points:

- Potential dependency on activity for wellbeing
- Environmental barriers (London vs outdoors)
- Outdoor activity plays a central role in lifestyle
- Strong links to wellbeing and identity

closing quote: “It’s a necessity.”



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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