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The motivation of America's best professional competition rock climber: a qualitative case study

Joshua J. Lifrak
Ithaca College

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THE MOTIVATION OF AMERICA'S BEST
PROFESSIONAL COMPETITION ROCK CLIMBER:
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate Program
In Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

By

Joshua J. Lifrak

May 2005

Ithaca College
Graduate Program in Exercise and Sport Sciences
Ithaca, New York

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

This is to certify that the Master of Science Thesis of
Joshua Lifrak

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca
College has been approved.

Thesis Advisor:

Committee Member:

Candidate:

Chair, Graduate
Program in Exercise
and Sport Sciences:

Dean of Graduate
Studies:

Date:

May 6, 2005

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the motivations of America's best professional competition rock climber, Vadim Vinokur. Previous research has indicated that motivating factors for the recreational rock climber include a desire for sensation seeking (i.e., to engage in activities that produce complex sensations and experiences), acquisition and mastery of skill, a forum for creativity, enjoyment of the outdoors, recognition from peers, a chance to engage in and thrive in challenging situations, control (i.e., control over decision making, reactions, and personal space), and an escape from daily life. The literature, however, is currently void of motivational data for the professional competition rock climber.

A qualitative phenomenological research design was followed to obtain raw data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Vadim Vinokur and his climbing partner/manager, and from competition journals kept during the 2003 World Cup season. Inductive content analyses generated 79 meaning units which were categorized into 30 lower-order themes. The lower-order themes were further categorized and combined to produce a total of 13 higher-order themes. The number of higher-order themes totaled 6 for the interview with Vadim Vinokur, 3 for his climbing partner/manager, and 4 following analysis of Vadim Vinokur's competition journal. A total of three exhaustive higher-order themes emerged after comparing and contrasting higher-order themes across each of the three data sources. The results indicate that Vadim Vinokur's motivation to compete in the sport of rock climbing stems from three sources:

1. Vadim Vinokur was motivated to master the skill set required for competition rock climbing. Included in that skill set were physical, mental, and problem

solving skills. Vadim was motivated by the pursuit of perfection. He was also motivated by completing a challenge. In addition, rock climbing allowed Vadim a forum to physically work hard, which gave him a sense of success. Finally, Vadim was motivated by the belief that he had talent in the sport of rock climbing and thus, should continue to make an active effort to be a competition climber.

2. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by being a part of the society of elite professional rock climbers. This society was where the participant could work and connect with others like himself. In addition, the respect and admiration of others were motivating factors. Vadim was also motivated by his ability to connect and communicate with nature and the outdoors.
3. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by the quest to get to the top of both the climb in front of him and the world cup competitions. Included in the motivation of accomplishing his climbs was the process of "finding his way" and the challenge of figuring out what the route setter wanted from him.

This study was the first investigation of a professional competition rock climber's motivation. As such, it is expanding the existing knowledge about motivations of rock climbers as a whole. In addition, this study provided evidence of important similarities and differences between the motivations of professional rock climbers and recreational rock climbers. Finally, the information presented can be used by coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists to better understand the motivations of professional competition rock climbers and, therefore, aid in the counseling of these athletes.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Warning: Climbing is a sport where you may be seriously injured or die” (Hörst, 1997, p.vi). This is a disclaimer found in any rock climbing gym or in any rock climbing book. Regardless, hundreds of thousands of people rock climb each year (Feher, Meyers, & Skelly, 1998). According to Goddard and Neumann (1993), to be a successful rock climber one must address each of the following six factors:

1. Physical Fitness—Strength, endurance, flexibility,
2. External Conditions—Rock type, protection, equipment,
3. Coordination and Technique—Coordinated abilities, technical skills,
4. Psychological Aspects—Arousal, fear, concentration, motivation,
5. Background Conditions—Talent, health, access to cliffs, time available, and
6. Tactical Aspects—Experience, knowledge, intellectual approach.

It is uncommon to discover an individual with strength in, or the ability to master, all of the above aspects. Therefore, success at the elite level of climbing and over a long period of time is extremely rare. In the United States, for example, there is only one rock climber who has been able to maintain success as a professional competition rock climber over the last 10 years. That climber is Vadim Vinokur.

Rock climbing is unique because climbers are risking their lives each time they participate in this complex, difficult sport. The following quote is evidence of the contrasting elements impacting a successful high level rock climber: “Climbing is a sport of complexity and contrasts. Using strength tempered by technique, trying to ensure safety in an environment of potential danger, and balancing precariously between anxiety

and determination, the climber finds pathways through the impossible" (Goddard & Neumann, 1993, p. 12).

Professional competition climbers must also deal with the pressure to complete his/her climb in one attempt, perform well in order to make enough money to support himself/herself, and perform in front of thousands of spectators. Rock climbing has extreme pressures, numerous variables potentially preventing success, the possibility of sustaining a debilitating injury or death, and a lack of rewards that would typically accompany other professional athletic endeavors. As a result, the question arises: Why does the professional competition rock climber climb? This question has yet to be investigated. One reason for the absence of this research may be the lack of available professional competition rock climbers. Although the number of professional climbers world wide is growing, in the United States only Vadim Vinokur has been consistently competing at an elite professional level in International World Cup events for the past 10 years. Vadim is the subject of this examination.

By contrast, what motivates recreational and non-competition rock climbers has been studied. Several explanations have been posited for why these groups rock climb. Some authors postulate that rock climbers have a need to seek sensation (Feher, Meyers, & Skelly, 1998; Freixanet, 1991; Horvath & Zuckerman, 1993; Mangni, Rupolo, Simini, De Leo, & Rampazzo, 1985; Robinson, 1985; Zuckerman, 1982). Studies supporting a need to seek sensation are based on quantitative analyses using the Zuckerman Sensation Seeking Scale (Zuckerman, 1982). Sensation seekers are defined as those who have "the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences" (Zuckerman, 1982, p.

285). Research conducted using this scale categorizes groups of individuals as 1) sensation seekers, or 2) non-sensation seekers, and posits that sensation seeking individuals engage in sensation seeking activities to experience new and novel sensations.

Other researchers have asserted that rock climbers engage in rock climbing because it gives them a sense of control, choice, and competence that their current occupation or normal daily life does not provide (Iso-Ahola, La Verde, & Graefe, 1988; Kiewa, 2001; Lyng, 1990; McIntyre, 1991; Slanger & Rudestam, 1997). Still at least one other researcher, rather than searching for specific personality traits, has focused on the rationale and motivation of rock climbers as reported by the rock climbers themselves (McIntyre, 1991). Finally, investigating the need for control and the activity of edgework, defined as an engagement in challenging activities where death or debilitating injury will be the result of failure, has led some researchers to examine the prominence of these factors in the motivation of rock climbers (Kiewa, 2001; Lyng, 1990). Collectively, investigations into the motivation to engage in rock climbing has used either questionnaires or quantitative methods (Iso-Ahola et al., 1988; McIntyre, 1991), or by using interviews and qualitative methodologies (Kiewa 2001; Slanger & Rudestam, 1997).

To date, researchers have primarily focused on recreational rock climbers. The term "recreational" refers to rock climbers who rock climb as a hobby, not as their primary source of income.

The professional competition rock climber has not been previously studied. This is an area that warrants examination as the number of national and international participants at this level is growing. With the increase in popularity of extreme sports, a

career as a professional rock climber has become more viable. Professional rock climbers earn their living by competing in lead climbing and bouldering competitions. In both competitions, prize money is earned for high placement in the competition. Money is also made through sponsorship by equipment and clothing manufactures. Additionally, professional rock climbers can earn money by making and selling movies of their accomplishments in the international rock climbing community.

In studying the professional rock climber, it is important to investigate the motivation of the professional competition rock climber. Although there have been no formal investigations of professional competition rock climbers, the journal writings by “one of the greatest rock climbers ever [Chris Sharma]” (Thesenga, 2003, p. 49) have been published in *Climbing Magazine*. The journals of Chris Sharma seem to indicate that the professional climber may engage in rock climbing for intrinsic factors such as a love for the outdoors, a desire to be challenged, a need to enhance mastery, a chance to be creative, and a sense of purpose. Still, more information is needed to better understand the professional rock climber.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the motivation of America’s finest and most consistent professional competition rock climber, Vadim Vinokur.

Scope of the Study

At the time of this writing, Vadim Vinokur, the participant of this study ($n=1$) was the most consistent high level professional competition rock climber from the United States (Rothschild, 2002). He had been competing professionally since 1993 and was

ranked as the number one competition climber in the United States; in addition he was ranked 13th in the world. Rock climbing was his primary source of income.

Benefits

The present study is beneficial to the participant, sport psychology consultants, rock climbing coaches, as well as recreational rock climbers. By gaining an understanding of his own motivations, the participant is better able to understand his efficacy and need for competition climbing. For sport psychology consultants, this information is useful for working with rock climbers and other athletes who confront death as a part of their chosen sport. The results can help sport psychology consultants and coaches become increasingly empathic to the needs and motives of the rock climbing athlete.

This research also provides a unique perspective for the rock climbing community, which is dominated by amateur and recreational athletes. The results provide a greater understanding of how one of the top professionals views and approaches the sport of rock climbing. In the end, rock climbing coaches should be able to use the information gained for better understanding of and communication with the climbers they coach.

Finally, use of a qualitative phenomenological case study approach allowed for a unique perspective into the perceptions of one of the world's finest professional climbers. Such an approach should promote further research using similar methodologies across gender and sport, especially in those sports where death and severe injury is a possible outcome of failure.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were noted:

1. Only 1 male professional rock climber from the east coast of the United States was interviewed.
2. The professional athlete interviewed was in the sport of rock climbing.

Limitations

The following limitations were noted:

1. The results are limited to the truthfulness of the participant's responses to the interview questions.
2. The results are limited to this specific rock climber.
3. The results are limited to the qualitative phenomenological methodologies used in this study.

Definition of Terms

1. Belayer- the person who takes up the safety rope as a climber climbs to prevent the climber from hitting the ground during a fall.
2. Bouldering- rock climbing that occurs below 25 feet and is often very technical and intense. A fall while bouldering will typically not result in death or severe injury.
3. Common Theme- a description of an emerging common motivating factor for the participant.
4. Edgework- the phenomenon of engaging in a challenge where failure will result in death or a debilitating injury and there is a clearly observable threat to one's physical or mental well-being (Lyng, 1990).
5. Elite Level Recreational Rock Climber- a climber who can consistently and successfully accomplish climbing above the grade of 5.10 (see scale definitions on p. 10).
6. Extrinsic Motivation- participation in sport for external rewards, such as money, prestige or power. The external rewards will usually be social or material (Duda & Treasure, 2001).
7. First Ascent- completing a climb and being the first person in the world to complete that climb from bottom to top without falling or using aid. The ascent must be done as a lead climb (see definition of lead climbing on p. 8).
8. Flash- a successful first time attempt of a climb in which technical information was provided.

9. Flow- a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else enters their consciousness; this is the basis of intrinsically motivated experiences or self-rewarding activities (Csikszemihalyi, 1990).
10. Intrinsic Motivation- participation in sport for the love of the sport and for the love of participation (Duda & Treasure, 2001).
11. Lead Climbing- when the climber is not top roping (see top roping definition p.9). The safety rope is attached to a belayer and then to the climber. In lead climbing, the anchoring equipment is placed along the climb by the climber as he/she ascends the climb. As the climber climbs he/she will place the rope through these safety devices. A fall can be arrested within 5 to 30 feet.
12. Motivation- that which moves the athlete to participate in the athlete's sport of choice. Motivation can be any factor cited as a reason to participate or as a purpose for sport participation.
13. Novice Level Rock Climber-a climber who cannot consistently and successfully accomplish climbing over the grade of 5.8 (see scale definitions on p. 10).
14. Onsite- when the climber has never seen, attempted to climb, or received information about a previously established climb before he or she attempts the climb. The climber must redpoint the climb on his/her first attempt for the climb to be classified as an onsite (see redpoint definition on p. 9).
15. Phenomenology- The study of "lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990).
16. Professional rock climber- a climber who enters climbing competitions to earn money. Payment from competitions and endorsements is the primary source of income for that climber.

17. Qualitative Research- research involving an attempt to describe or interpret some human phenomenon, often using the words of the selected individuals (Patton, 1987).
18. Redpoint- when a climber starts at the bottom of a climb and completes the climb without falling and without aid.
19. Rigor- deals with one's development, adherence, and accuracy in identifying the problem, designing the research, and analyzing the data. This requires objectivity and conciseness on the part of the researcher (Shelley, 1999).
20. Rock Climber- an athlete who climbs a rock face or wall. The result of a fall without safety equipment (ropes, harness, securing devices) could result in death or severe injury.
21. Significant Statements- a response by the subject that pertains directly to the research questions and phenomena being studied (Shelley, 1999).
22. State Anxiety- refers to an individual's anxiety at a particular moment in time (Landers & Arent, 2001).
23. Trait Anxiety- a general predisposition to respond across many situations with high levels of anxiety (Landers & Arent, 2001).
24. Top roping- the climbing rope is attached to a belayer and then is brought to the top of the climb. At the top of the climb there are anchoring devices. The climbing rope feeds through this safety equipment and then down to the climber. Top roping is a very safe method of climbing where a fall can be arrested within 1 to 3 feet by the belayer and safety equipment.

25. Trustworthiness- the degree to which the participant's responses to the interview questions are determined to be believable.
26. Yosemite Scale-This scale is used as an index of difficulty for rock climbs. The scale ranges from 5.0, which is the easiest level, and then increases by decimals to the most extreme level of 5.15a. There have been only two successful climbs at the level of 5.15a. At 5.10 the climbs are further classified as a, b, c, or d climbs. For example, a climb rated a 5.11c is harder than a 5.11b, but not as difficult as a 5.11d. At 5.0 climbing requires safety equipment to prevent death in the case of a fall. A ladder going straight up a rock face could be considered a 5.0 climb.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on rock climbers has progressed to a point where there exists a clearer understanding of the motivations of recreational rock climbers. To gain a better comprehension of this research, a historical analysis is helpful. Recreational rock climbers have generally been studied by way of quantitative methodologies, specifically scales and surveys (Feher, Meyers, & Skelly, 1998; Freixanet, 1991; Horvath & Zuckerman, 1993; Mangni, Rupolo, Simini, De Leo, & Rampazzo, 1985; Robinson, 1985; Zuckerman, 1982). In addition, researchers have also investigated the motivations of recreational rock climbers through various qualitative methodologies (Iso-Ahola, La Verde, & Graefe, 1988; Kiewa, 2001; Lyng, 1990; McIntyre, 1991; Slinger & Rudestam, 1997). However, little is known about the motivations of professional competition rock climbers.

The Sensation Seeking Scale and Rock Climbing: Initial Investigations

Zuckerman (1982) described sensation seeking individuals as those who have “the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences” (Zuckerman, 1982, p. 285). As mentioned, rock climbing is an inherently dangerous sport. As a result, studies have focused on recreational rock climbers from the sensation seeking perspective (Feher, Meyers, & Skelly, 1998; Freixanet, 1991; Horvath & Zuckerman, 1993; Mangni, Rupolo, Simini, De Leo, & Rampazzo, 1985; Robinson, 1985; Zuckerman, 1982). In order to examine whether or not rock climbers are sensation seekers, researchers have used the Zuckerman Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS) (Zuckerman, 1979). The use of this

tool marked some of the first attempts by researchers to understand the motivations of rock climbers.

The SSS is comprised of four components: The first component is Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS). An item in the TAS section of the scale may read, "I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening" (Zuckerman, 1979). Scoring high on this component indicates that the individual has a desire to engage in risky and adventurous activities that provide a unique and unusual sensation. The second component is Experience Seeking (ES). An individual who scores high in this category will likely seek stimulation through the mind and senses. This individual will typically seek out music, travel, art, and even psychedelic drugs. The third component is Disinhibition (Dis). An individual who scores high on this category might engage in heavy drinking, partying, and gambling. The fourth component is Boredom Susceptibility (BS). An individual who scores high on this component will tend to have an aversion to repetitive experience, and will likely become restless and bored when a repetitive experience is unavoidable. The cumulative score of the individual indicates the level of his or her sensation seeking need. The higher the score, the more sensation seeking the individual will be. For example, Hymbaugh and Garrent (1974) administered the SSS to 21 sky-divers and 21 non-sky-divers. Results indicated that the sky-divers had much higher cumulative SSS scores than did the non-sky-divers. The higher scores of the sky-divers led researchers to categorize sky-divers as sensation seekers. Thus, according to the SSS, one factor contributing to the motivation of sky-divers is a need for complex sensations and experiences that they may be able to achieve through sky diving.

Robinson (1985) subsequently investigated elite level recreational rock climbers to establish if they could be categorized as sensation seekers. By using the SSS, Robinson attempted to determine whether or not those who participated in rock climbing were more likely to seek out novel experiences and sensations than those who did not engage in rock climbing. Robinson investigated 30 male subjects with a mean age of 27.26 years who could consistently climb at a level of 5.8 on the Yosemite grading scale. The participants in this study were administered three inventories; the Sensation Seeking Scale (Zuckerman, 1979), the Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970), and the Sports Behavior Scale (Howe, 1977). Analysis of the data revealed that in the TAS and ES categories, (i.e., on the SSS), the rock climbers scored significantly higher in comparison to normative data for American undergraduate males. Consequently, the mean scores on the SSS were higher for rock climbers ($M=24.31$) than the normative male data ($M= 21.20$), meaning rock climbers were more likely to seek sensation and novel experiences. Hence, this research helped explain why rock climbers are motivated to participate in a life threatening sport.

Interestingly, Robinson (1985) also found that rock climbers had low trait anxiety. That is, they reported modest anxiety in daily life, as well as when they were rock climbing. This attribute has been posited as a potential reason why elite level rock climbers maintain a high level of performance in stressful situations. Robinson (1985) defined the act of rock climbing as a highly stressful situation.

Rock climbers' low trait anxiety was confirmed by Feher et al. (1998) in a study of the state and trait attributes of rock climbers. Feher et al. (1998) found that rock climbers ($n = 57$), when tested using the Profile of Mood States (POMS) had lower levels

of tension, depression, confusion, and total mood disturbances when compared to athletes in the sports of rugby, football, and rodeo. In other words, rock climbers tended not to allow negative emotional states to affect them as much as other athletes; they tended to be “cooler” under pressure.

Freixanet (1991) used the SSS scale to test athletes who engaged in high physical risk activities. Freixanet tested 27 alpinists who participated in climbs over 8000m, 72 mountaineering-related sportsmen (mountain climbers and alpine skiers), 221 other sportsmen (scuba divers, water skiers, parachuters, power-boat racers, white-water canoers, aviators, motor sports racers and balloonists), and 54 subjects not engaged in any risky activity. The participants were administered the SSS by mail. Results indicated that those athletes engaging in high physical risk activities scored higher on the SSS. In other words, alpinists and mountaineering-related sportsmen such as rock climbers, according to the SSS, could be categorized as sensation seekers. Freixanet also determined that sensation seekers were likely to be extraverted, emotionally stable, conform to social norms, and seek thrill and experiences through socialized means.

Another important finding in the literature indicates that sensation seekers often take risks in order to receive a reward. Research has shown that one such reward is the novelty of the experience itself (Heyman & Rose, 1980). The above investigations indicated that rock climbers have a need to seek the novel and unique experiences and sensations gained in rock climbing. As a result, these experiences and sensations may be categorized as motivating factors influencing their participation in rock climbing.

Self-Efficacy as a Motivating Factor

Slanger and Rudestam (1997) investigated the roles of sensation seeking and self-efficacy in explaining high physical risk taking behavior. These authors administered the SSS, the Templer's Death Anxiety Scale, the Byrne Repression-Sensitization Scale, and the Sheerer Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale to rock climbers ($n=5$) who did not use safety equipment (thus a fall would result in death), as well as to other risk taking ($n=15$) and non-risk taking athletes ($n=20$). However, the authors determined that the SSS did not answer questions of relevance. For example, they stated, "An attempt to use this scale containing such items to identify motivation of the participants in these very activities is tautological" (Slanger & Rudestam, 1997, p.369). Specifically, these authors questioned the validity of the SSS because the scale assesses physically challenging activities rather than risk taking activities. As a result, these authors have concluded, "The only statement we can make of a high TAS score for athletes involved in high-risk activities is that they are willing to do the sorts of things they are doing" (Slanger & Rudestam, 1997, p.368).

Slanger and Rudestam (1997) also determined that trained athletes as a whole scored higher than the general population on the SSS because of the types of questions asked in the TAS section of the scale and, therefore, could be categorized as sensation seekers. These same authors found that high-risk activity athletes scored higher on the scales of sensation seeking, extraversion, and socialization than non-high-risk activity athletes. However, it was also found that high-risk taking athletes did not score significantly higher than non-high-risk taking athletes on a scale measuring impulsivity. Slanger and Rudestam concluded, "There appears to be little, if any, relationship between

sensation seeking and the choice of an activity carrying a high degree of risk” (Slanger & Rudestam, 1997, p. 371).

Slanger and Rudestam (1997) concluded that self-efficacy was a primary factor responsible for determining whether or not an athlete engages in a physically risky activity. According to these researchers, if athletes have high self-efficacy they may not view the activities they are engaged in as risky. Self-efficacy thus fosters a repression of negative thoughts allowing athletes to take even more risks (Bandura, 1977). Instead, athletes likely see such risky activities as challenging and consequently more rewarding. As a result, Slanger and Rudestam (1997) determined that challenge and achievement were important factors in the motivation of the high physical-risk athlete. These authors indicated that many participants in their study cited the thrill of accomplishing a challenging task as a motivating factor. In addition, the participants cited acquisition and mastery of skill as motivating factors. For example, “85% of the participants in the higher risk groups (rock climbers who climb without safety equipment) identified a desire for mastery” (Slanger & Rudestam 1997, p. 366) as an important element impacting motivation. These authors concluded, “When asked specifically, all but three members of the high risk group ($n=20$) acknowledged that desire for mastery was a motivating factor” (Slanger & Rudestam 1997, p. 366).

Finally, these same authors reported that many of the investigated rock climbers enjoyed the simple and flowing movement of their bodies over the rock. These rock climbers described this movement to be “like an art” and “aesthetically beautiful” (Slanger & Rudestam, 1997, p. 366). Accordingly, rock climbers likely climbed because

they seek rewards from challenge which will enhance their sense of skill mastery, as well as provide an opportunity to engage in a fluid dance-like motion.

Why Climbers Climb

McIntyre (1991) investigated Australian recreational rock climbers ranging in ability from novice to elite. McIntyre endeavored to answer the question: Why do people rock climb? Rock climbers ($n=148$) were administered a questionnaire, developed by the author, at 3 different climbing sites in Australia: Kangaroo Point Cliffs, Frog Buttress, and Mt. Arapiles. Analysis of the results revealed six factors impacting why people rock climb. The six factors were: 1) Physical Setting, 2) Problem Solving, 3) Competence, 4) Recognition, 5) Escape, and 6) Leadership.

The first factor, "physical setting", was described as the rock climber's enjoyment of the outdoor natural settings, wilderness, and being close to nature. "Problem solving" and "competence" were also important reasons the climbers climbed. "Problem solving" was described as using the mind, making important decisions, and being creative. "Competence" was described as developing skills, accomplishing tasks, and experiencing excitement. "Recognition" was influenced by peer adulation given to the climber as a result of the difficulty of the climb and the perceived skill and finesse with which the climb was accomplished. "Escape", was defined as a desire to relieve stress and let the mind slow down. Finally, "leadership" was defined as the ability to take control of a situation and the desire to help others. McIntyre (1991) summarized his results in the following quote:

'Why do people rock climb?' is answered by the observation that they climb mainly for the attraction of being in natural surroundings and to

experience situations which allow for the exercise of skills, both physical and mental, resulting in feelings of accomplishment and excitement” (McIntyre, 1991, p.36).

Edgework and Locus of Control

Lyng (1990) defined “edgework” as the phenomenon of engaging in a challenge where failure might result in death or debilitating injury, and where there is a clear and observable threat to one’s physical or mental well-being. The concept is borrowed from journalist Hunter S. Thompson (1971), whose experimentation in drugs and alcohol was an example of edgework. It is a reference to the participant’s willingness to get close to the edge of death. Lyng (1990) argued that escaping into an abnormal world, where there can be personal control, is often motivating for people who participate in edgework activities. In many ways, rock climbing can be considered an edgework activity (Lyng, 1990). Based on observation, interviews, and analysis of prior data, Lyng wrote that by engaging in edgework, participants gain feelings of “self-realization, self-actualization, and self-determination” (Lyng, 1990, p.860). The exercising of skill in the face of a difficult and life threatening challenge, resulting in a heightened sense of self and a feeling of omnipotence, is the likely rationale for engagement in edgework activities.

Lyng (1990) wrote that the edgeworker is creative and spontaneous by nature. This creates conflict, as the edgeworker’s daily life is often anathema to spontaneity. The edgeworker often feels trapped and controlled by the daily routine of his or her life. In addition, Lyng (1990) wrote that edgeworkers believe there is a direct link between survival capacities and survival outcomes. In other words, edgeworkers believe that if

death occurs it more than likely could have been avoided had the proper skill and/or preparation been applied.

In the case of the rock climber, climbing allows the participant a forum where success can be determined by individual skill and choice. In order to be successful in rock climbing one needs to carefully plan, be purposive in action, flexible, and incredibly focused. In order to incorporate all of these aspects into one activity, there must be a formidable test. The challenge, in the case of the edgeworker, is to engage in a test that could result in death or debilitating injury if he/she fails to successfully navigate that activity.

Lyng (1990) reported that a common feature for edgeworkers is that they tend to feel denied the opportunity in everyday life to be creative, skillful, and make decisions of consequence. As stated earlier, this is the foremost motivating force, as edgework itself often promotes feelings of omnipotence, self-determination, hypereality, and/or ineffability. For those engaged in edgework, the closer to the edge, the more the "sense of mastery" that is gained (Lyng, 1990). As the situation becomes more perilous, and as the edgeworker emerges from that situation unscathed, the greater the feeling of mastery that is achieved. Lyng (1990) stated, "The same society that offers so much in the way of material 'quality of life' also propels many of us to the limits of our mortal existence in search of ourselves and our humanity" (Lyng, 1990, p. 883). It is this search that may motivate the rock climber.

Lyng's (1990) hypothesis is supported by Kiewa (2001), who interviewed 31 Australian recreational rock climbers varying in ability from novice to elite. She found that rock climbers engaged in rock climbing in order to gain control and success in

stressful situations. Climbers liked to perform while “fearful”, which gave them a sense of competence, which in turn led to feelings of exhilaration and control. The climbers described wanting to be associated with the qualities of decisiveness, competence, and independence, which would lead to a sense of control over their own fates. These feelings were not what they typically experienced in their everyday lives. The rock climbers described their everyday lives as “regimented and run by the bells” (Kiewa, 2001, p. 369) and thus, constraining. The climbers also mentioned that their everyday experiences, in which they felt dominated by others, led them to feelings of anger, frustration, fear, and a loss of the opportunity to exercise competence. Kiewa (2001) determined that control was a recurring motivational theme for recreational rock climbers. Control was defined as control over decision making, over having competent reactions, and personal space. This control could only occur, however, when the individual deliberately and willingly embraced an activity of personal choice. According to the author, for the rock climber, these feelings of control typically did not occur outside the forum of rock climbing. As a result, the desired feelings of competence and exhilaration did not typically occur away from rock climbing.

Personality Differences Between Novice and Expert Rock Climbers

According to Feher et al. (1998), the only significant difference in personality between the novice and expert climbers was that the expert climbers tended to exhibit higher levels of depression, anger, confusion, tension, and total mood disturbance on a POMS test. Yet, no explanation was given by Feher et al. (1998) for the difference between the two groups. The authors concluded that the small study sample may have hindered the results, but as the results stand, rock climbers are a heterogeneous

population with regard to state and trait personality attributes. However, little research exists examining the differences among novice, expert, and professional competition rock climbers.

The Professional

Insight into a non-competition professional climber's view of rock climbing has been published in *Climbing Magazine* in the form of the personal journals of Chris Sharma (May 1, 2003, v. 221). Chris Sharma is considered to be "one of the greatest rock climbers ever" (Thesenga, 2003, p. 49). Sharma (2003) wrote that climbing "Definitely gives some kind of purpose to things. Whether the purpose is good or bad is uncertain, but I think to climb for the sake of climbing is good enough" (p. 52). Sharma also explained his reasons for starting to climb. "The reason why I started climbing was because I could be free of myself" (p. 51). This feeling of escape is congruent with the results of the studies of recreational rock climbers investigated in the aforementioned research of Lyng (1990), McIntyre (1991), and Kiewa (2001). Sharma (2003) also wrote about a climbing experience that was challenging and demanding. He stated, "It was nice to have a brief taste of the oneness of subject and object, and see how everything melts away to exist and function perfectly" (p. 52). Sharma summed up what the climbing experience meant to him. "This activity of 'rock climbing' is merely one of many ways to exist, pass the time, and evolve and grow from one moment to the next. That's all" (p. 55). For Chris Sharma, the motivation to rock climb seems to rest in his need for purpose, escape, personal growth, and learning.

Summary

In summary, the literature on the recreational rock climber indicates that recreational rock climbers are motivated by sensation seeking (a desire to engage in activities that produce complex sensations and experiences), acquisition and mastery of skill, a forum for creativity, enjoyment of the outdoors, recognition from peers, a chance to engage and thrive in challenging situations, a desire for control (control over decision making, reactions, and personal space), and an escape from daily life. Although little is known about the motivations of professional climbers, preliminary evidence seems to indicate that professional climbers have a need for purpose, escape, personal growth, and learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

A qualitative case study of America's most accomplished professional competition rock climber ($n=1$) was conducted to describe the motivation for this professional climber. A description of the research design, data collection, primary participant, recruitment of the participants, data analysis, and trustworthiness follows.

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological methodology was followed in this case study. Qualitative research is concerned with how people live their lives and make sense of what they do (Nuetens & Rubinson, 1997). As a result, qualitative analysis can produce findings outside of that which is quantifiable. Phenomenological research methods are most concerned with understanding the "lived experience" of the subject. This method is used to gain a deep understanding of the nature and meaning of the everyday experiences of the subjects. Thus, by using phenomenological approaches, a better understanding of human existence can occur (Van Manen, 1997). In this investigation, the focus was on what motivated the most accomplished professional competition climber in the United States.

A case study was appropriate for this investigation due to the uniqueness and specialized nature of the subject. At the time of this writing, the subject was the most accomplished professional competition rock climber in the United States. As Stake (1995) indicated, a case study is not an actual methodological choice, but rather, a choice of object to be studied. In addition, a case study can be helpful in suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping establish some limits of generalization (Stake,

1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that a case study methodology be employed to render, describe, or provide a vicarious experience. As mentioned, professional rock climbing has not yet been thoroughly investigated either quantitatively or qualitatively. As such, this initial inquiry was an opportunity to expose various psychological and motivational factors that influenced the climbing of a highly distinguished professional competition rock climber.

Data Collection

Data was collected by conducting one semi-structured interview of the participant (see Appendix A for Vadim Vinokur's interview guide) and one semi-structured interview of his climbing partner/manager (see Appendix B for climbing partner/manager interview guide) and by reviewing the participant's journal kept during training and competition. The one-on-one interviews took place prior to the beginning of the 2004 World Cup season and were conducted in the New York City office of the researcher. They consisted of broad, open-ended questions (i.e., following the interview guide) that allowed the climber and his climbing partner/manager to explain themselves in their own words. Also, these semi-structured interviews allowed for deviation from the interview guide as deemed necessary by the researcher. This flexibility in design allowed the participants to explain and discuss any aspect of rock climbing that was desired. This permitted the researcher to gain an understanding of those areas that the researcher did not anticipate being discussed. This semi-structured format also allowed for an open discussion of information. In addition, review of Vadim's 2003-2004 journal of the World Cup season allowed the researcher to obtain data from both the end of a

competitive season (i.e., via his journal) and the beginning of the next competitive season (i.e., via the interview).

Primary Participant

Vadim Vinokur has been “America’s most consistent World Cup competitor” (Rothschild, 2002, p. 30). In addition, he is the only American professional climber to consistently compete internationally. He has been competing on the world stage for the past 12 years and is one of the most accomplished professional climbers in U.S. history. The following is a list of his most recent accomplishments.

- 1993-Present—Member of the United States World Cup Team (World Cup teams can be comprised of only 3 climbers per country)
- 1998—3rd place at the X-games, San Diego, CA
- 2000—Highlighted in both *Rock & Ice* and *Climbing Magazines*; the most popular climbing magazines in the United States
- 2000—Ranked No. 1 competitive climber in the United States by the International Council for Competition Climbing
- One of 5 climbers in the world to climb the *Biographie* 5.14c, Ceuse, France
- Climbed *Full Scrutiny* 5.14a, Rumney, New Hampshire
- First ascent of *Reverse Polarity* 5.14b Las Vegas, Nevada
- Climbed *Encore* 5.13c, Ceuse, France
- December 2002—Ranked 16th in the world by the International Council for Competition Climbing (the next American is ranked 37th)
- December 2002—Ranked No. 1 climber in the United States by the International Council for Competition Climbing

- April 2002—5th place and top American climber in the International Climbing Event in Puurs, Belgium
- August 2002—6th place and top American climber in World Cup event in Singapore, Thailand
- December 2002—5th place and top American climber in International Climbing Event in Schengzheng, China
- September 2004—4th Climber to Climb *Underground 5.14d*, Ceuse, France
- December 2004—1st place North American Championships. Event held in Mexico City, Mexico

Recruitment of the Participants

The participant and his climbing partner/manager were contacted through mutual acquaintances and then recruited to be participants in this study (see Appendices C and D for participant and climbing partner/manager recruitment statements). Agreement to participate occurred when the participant and his climbing partner/manager signed the informed consent forms (see Appendices E and F for participant and climbing partner/manager informed consent forms). Expectations and requirements for the participants were explicitly detailed. Specifically, Vadim Vinokur and his climbing partner/manager were asked to answer all interview questions truthfully and honestly, to the best of their ability. In addition, they were asked to be available for at least two hours for their respective interview. Each interview was conducted separately, audio taped, and took place in the New York City office of the researcher. To ensure a truthful and accurate analysis of data, Vadim Vinokur and his climbing partner/manager were also asked to review the transcribed interview (data) and the final results of the study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to spoken words. Qualitative analysis is a search for relationships and general similarities among categories of data. In order to organize and manage the data, a thematic analysis as defined by Van Manen (1990) and using the adapted methods of Shelley (1999), was employed. Inductive, line-by-line analysis, was employed to identify and then code the data. The data were grouped or simplified into lower-order themes (general and broad-based themes) and then higher-order themes (specific and narrow themes). While grouping the themes, the researcher focused on the following research question: What motivates Vadim Vinokur?

The following steps, adapted from Shelley (1999), were used to manage, analyze, and interpret meaning from the data.

1. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and the participants read over the transcriptions to validate their accuracy.
2. Each transcription and journal entry was read in order to obtain a “feel” for and an understanding of the interview and material.
3. Significant statements and phrases that related to the research questions were extracted from each transcription and journal entry.
4. Meanings were formulated from the extracted significant statements and phrases as they related to the aforementioned research questions. The meanings were categorized as meaning units.
5. The meaning units were then synthesized into lower-order themes.

6. Lower-order themes were integrated into higher-order themes by which the experiences and motivations of the participant and the perceptions of the climbing partner/manager were described.
7. The participants were then asked to review the higher-order themes to ensure accuracy and validity. If the participants disagreed with the higher-order themes an opportunity to clarify meaning, motivations, and perceptions was provided.
8. The higher-order themes from Vadim Vinokur's journal were compared to the participants' (i.e., Vadim Vinokur and his climbing partner/manager) emergent higher-order themes to produce exhaustive higher-order themes. These exhaustive higher-order themes provided the answer to the outlined research question and are supported by verbatim participant quotations (i.e., in the Results section).

This data analysis process was followed for the participant interview, climbing partner/manager interview, as well as, the participant's journal entries (see Appendix G for an example of the data analysis flow chart for the Vadim Vinokur interview and higher-order theme #5).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is described as a way to establish credible and trustworthy data. The question becomes, how can the researcher persuade the reader that the inquiry is worth attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)? Trustworthiness is comprised of four components: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Truth value is described as confidence in the findings of a particular inquiry. Applicability is explained as the application of the findings to other contextual situations. Consistency is defined as the ability to repeat the findings with the same subjects. Neutrality is described as an

elimination of researcher biases and an adherence to subject honesty in the description of the findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

In order to establish trustworthiness in this particular study, the researcher employed four procedures. The four procedures were triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and the use of a study auditor.

Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of more than one source of data in order to emphasize a single point. A variety of data sources allows the researcher to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research question (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Specifically, the triangulation of data consisted of comparing interview data collected from Vadim Vinokur, his climbing partner/manager, and from Vadim Vinokur's journal entries.

Member Checking

Member checking is a function performed to test for factual and interpretative accuracy. In addition, member checking can provide evidence of credibility and trustworthiness. In quantitative terms, member checking would be analogous to internal validity. This "check" is important to the overall accuracy and validity of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Herein, the verbatim transcriptions and higher-order themes were reviewed by the participants to ensure accuracy of description and analysis. In other words, if the participants answered a question but the transcription or higher-order themes did not accurately convey the meaning the participant was trying to establish, then the member-checking provided an opportunity for challenge, clarification, and possible alteration. In addition, member checking provided a prospect for additional data

collection, as the participant was free to alter, add, or discuss the transcribed data and/or higher-order themes in order to achieve the most accurate data.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing helps ensure the validity of the collected and analyzed data. It can be used as a way to obtain methodological guidance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The peer debriefer played the role of the “devil’s advocate,” in order to challenge the internal thought process of the researcher. This challenge occurred as the researcher was questioned about biases, meanings, and interpretations. As such, the peer debriefer helped the researcher clarify and sharpen methodological choices and data analysis decisions. The role of peer debriefer was assumed by Mary Turner DePalma, Ph.D.

Study Auditor

The role of the study auditor was performed by Greg Shelley, Ph.D. His role was to oversee the analysis and ask critical questions to help the researcher clarify results. His role mirrored that of the peer debriefer, in that the study auditor performed a system of checks and balances. The main difference is that the study auditor was more intimately involved in the research process, and thus had the role of overseeing the reliability of the study. This was done by first examining the process of data collection. Second, the auditor examined the actual transcriptions and journal entries to verify accuracy. Third, the auditor examined the analysis of the data. Finally, the auditor questioned and analyzed the results of the analysis as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Summary

To summarize, the purpose of this study was to gain insight into the motivation of Vadim Vinokur. As such, a qualitative phenomenological case study was employed. Data consisted of interviews with Vadim Vinokur and his climbing partner/manager and analysis of a journal kept by Vadim Vinokur during practice and competitions. The analysis of data was done in eight steps: 1) verbatim transcriptions of interviews, 2) reading of each interview transcription and journal entry, 3) extraction of significant statements pertaining to the outlined research question, 4) formulation of significant statements into meaning units, 5) formulation of meaning units into lower-order themes, 6) integration of lower-order themes into higher-order themes, 7) review of higher-order themes by the participants, and 8) development of exhaustive higher-order themes. Trustworthiness was maintained by use of triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and a study auditor.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The following research question was examined: What is the motivation of America's finest and most consistent professional competition rock climber, Vadim Vinokur? Raw data included semi-structured, in-depth interviews with Vadim Vinokur, his climber partner/manager, and the personal journals of Vadim Vinokur kept during the 2003-2004 competition season. Inductive content analyses generated 79 meaning units which were categorized into 30 lower-order themes. The lower-order themes were further categorized to produce a total of 13 higher-order themes.

The higher-order themes for participant interview, the climbing partner/manager interview, and the analysis of the competition journals can be found in Appendices H, I, and J. The number of higher-order themes totaled six for the interview with Vadim Vinokur; three for the interview with the participant's climbing partner/manager, and four for the competition journal.

Exhaustive Higher-Order Themes

The exhaustive higher-order themes emerged by comparing and contrasting the higher-order themes of the participant's interview, the participant's climbing partner/manager interview, and the analysis of the participant's competition journal. Three exhaustive higher-order themes emerged as the answer to the research question. They were as follows:

1. Vadim Vinokur was motivated to master the skill set required for competition rock climbing. Included in that skill set were physical, mental, and problem solving skills. Vadim was motivated by the pursuit of perfection. He was also

motivated by completing a challenge. In addition, rock climbing allowed Vadim a forum to physically work hard, which gave him a sense of success. Finally, Vadim was motivated by the belief that he had talent in the sport of rock climbing and thus, should continue to make an active effort to be a competition climber.

2. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by being a part of the society of elite professional rock climbers. This society was where the participant could work and connect with others like himself. In addition, the respect and admiration of others were motivating factors. Vadim was also motivated by his ability to connect and communicate with nature and the outdoors.
3. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by the quest to get to the top of both the climb in front of him and the World Cup competitions. Included in the motivation of accomplishing his climbs was the process of "finding his way" and the challenge of figuring out what the route setter wanted from him.

Exhaustive Higher-Order Theme #1

Vadim Vinokur was motivated to master the skill set required for competition rock climbing. Included in that skill set were physical, mental, and problem solving skills. Vadim was motivated by the pursuit of perfection. He was also motivated by completing a challenge. In addition, rock climbing allowed Vadim a forum to physically work hard, which gave him a sense of success. Finally, Vadim was motivated by the belief that he had talent in the sport of rock climbing and thus, should continue to make an active effort to be a competition climber.

A desire to master the skills of rock climbing was an emergent theme from the journal entries, the participant's interview, and the climbing partner/manager's interview.

In his competition journal from October 3rd he described a poor competition performance.

Vadim stated:

Climbing in isolation went fine, but I felt rusty and out of tune with my body. I just couldn't get into the fluidity of movement at all. I did my breathing and it felt a bit better, but not quite focused. I climbed first ok, but later started to feel really clumsy and out of sync.

This excerpt from his competition journal illustrated Vadim's desire to master the physical and mental aspects of competition climbing. He felt, "really clumsy and out of sync." In addition, Vadim mentioned his inability to become totally focused.

In his interview, the quest for mastery and perfection was exemplified by the following answer that Vadim provided in response to the question of what drives him:

You have a template of how to deal with world competition and you have major chunks, and then again, there are small pieces that affect the whole mosaic. So it is pretty interesting and makes me what I am and I still don't, to some extent, have it mastered and I don't feel that I would be ready to give it up until I have mastered it. So that's pretty much what drives me, perfection, something along those lines. That's what I want. I want to see it through. I am a perfectionist.

Vadim's desire for mastery was also expressed by his climbing partner/manager. She stated, "I think he knows that it still hasn't all quite clicked together, it has at moments but not kind of for a long run and I think he's still working to fulfill that."

The motivation of seeing a challenge through to the end was expressed by Vadim when he was asked to describe his top three motivating factors. His response began with "It is something that I started that I want to see through." Later in his answer he stated:

I still don't feel that I have reached my potential. I want to really get to the bottom of it. I want to dig as deep as I can and say okay, I see the bottom.

This is it, this is as far as I can go. I haven't felt that way yet. I haven't felt that this is the best effort that I am capable of.

When the climbing partner/manager was asked how she thought Vadim would answer the question of why he became a professional climber, she responded, "He really believes that he can accomplish something, and he's determined to stick with it until he has seen it through to its fulfillment." Similarly, when she was asked how she felt Vadim would answer the question of what drives him to be a professional climber, she answered, "...the fact that I think, in some way, he hasn't fulfilled his potential and I think he knows that." She went on to say, "He doesn't feel that he's accomplished what he's capable of in competition."

An aspiration for, and enjoyment of working hard was also expressed in both interviews. In his interview, the participant was asked what inspired him. He responded, "Nothing is given and nothing is guaranteed and you have to always work hard and not assume anything is just going to happen. If it comes too easily, there is something wrong." When asked to describe success, he stated the following: "Being successful is working real hard on something, having to struggle with it, and then succeeding at it." Interestingly, when asked to describe failure, Vadim stated the following: "Having the feeling that I did not try enough." When asked to describe challenge, Vadim responded,

"I have to feel that I did a day of hard training or work and I want to feel like I am shut down, that my arms are falling off. I like that. I love just being utterly exhausted."

The climbing partner/manager reiterated this theme when asked how she thought Vadim would answer the question, about how climbing makes him feel? She responded, "...everything he's accomplished has been through really hard work and serious commitment." When asked about how Vadim would talk about success, she answered, "He's actually pretty clear that success, for him as an athlete, is when he's really tried his hardest." She also stated that Vadim felt, "success is doing work and then going out there and fighting the good fight."

Vadim was also motivated by the knowledge that he was a uniquely talented rock climber, and as such, he should continue to compete at the highest level. In his journal, after coming in 6th place in a World Cup competition, Vadim wrote, "Remember the lesson—you can compete with the best of them and better. Believe in your climbing." In his interview, when asked how he started competing in rock climbing events, Vadim answered, "I was fourteen years old and almost won my first competition... That's what sort of triggered my interest in it..." When asked what motivated him to become a professional rock climber, he said, "...I was pretty good at it, so once I realized I was good at it, I kind of wanted to explore how far that would go." In talking about the 1999 World Championships he explained:

I finished 17th and that was the world championship; and that was pretty good you know. It was really tight from being 17th and being in the finals. It was literally maybe two or three moves which, I was like, I can be good at it.... So I was like huh, I should give it a shot.

The climbing partner/manager echoed this response when asked how Vadim might answer what his top three motivating factors were in starting to climb. She stated,

At one point he did a competition, he was pretty young then and he did pretty well and he talks about that as a turning point...He was doing it casually and he suddenly thought, 'Wow, I actually could be a serious competitive climber and I better start training if I'm gonna do that'.

Exhaustive Higher-Order Theme #2.

Vadim Vinokur was motivated by being a part of the society of elite professional rock climbers. This society was where the participant could work and connect with others like himself. In addition, the respect and admiration of others were motivating factors. Vadim was also motivated by his ability to connect and communicate with nature and the outdoors.

Being in a society of elite professional rock climbers was a motivating factor for Vadim Vinokur. This factor was mentioned in his competition journal, his interview, and in the interview with his climbing partner/manager.

In his competition journal Vadim wrote about climbing a challenging climb he was attempting (rated 5.14d), and what it meant to be attempting it with colleagues from the World Cup circuit. Vadim stated, "I think watching Christian, it gave me a good lift. Christian was moving through the boulder problem pretty well, it gave me confidence; I didn't get intimidated by it." In another entry, Vadim wrote about the same colleagues, "It's nice to climb with them but also they, to some extent, take the pressure off (my climbing partner), and that helps my cause."

In his interview the topic of climbing with others came up several times. When asked what he looked forward to in climbing Vadim responded, "Hanging out with friends." In addition, when asked about a challenge of competitions Vadim talked about his difficulty in remaining focused,

I am a very social person and a lot of times I feel that the challenge for me is that I remain focused because I come in, I see all my friends. It is the World Cup. I haven't seen them in like about 5 or 6 months, you catch up. You talk in isolation. All of a sudden you have to go climb and you haven't warmed up properly.

Vadim also talked about social relationships when he discussed how he started climbing competitively. Vadim responded that in the beginning, "I had a motivated group of people that I was climbing with and because they were older they were pushing me pretty hard." He also mentioned that his father was a major influence in starting his climbing. He said, "My dad was a climber. He started climbing in the mid 1970's and he brought me along on one of his trips.....He would drag me along....I said dad let me try." Vadim mentioned that his father started a climbing gym and began coaching himself and several others. He stated, "He (his father) built a nice indoor wall... There was a bunch of motivated guys, there was me, a girl and three other guys older than me."

In the interview with Vadim's climbing partner/manager, the society of elite professional rock climbers was again referred to. When asked what Vadim might state about competitions, she responded, "I think he loves competition and I think he loves being around his peers, you know, as much as the actual climb." She continued with, "I think (he would talk about) being part of the world community of elite climbers which

uniquely happens in competition.” Similarly, when asked what Vadim looked forward to in non-competition settings, she said, “I think he might say the social aspect of it. That, he can hang out a little bit more with people.” Similarly, when asked what she thought drove Vadim to climb in competitions she answered, “There’s the cultural thing. I think there is being amongst a group of peers and elite climbers and a culture that accepts this as something that’s an important thing and a good thing.” She went on to say, “(in competition settings) for him, he’s only around people who spend their time thinking about and working on what he does, which is being an elite climber. Being with them means a lot to him....I think it is an important aspect.”

His climbing partner/manager also mentioned Vadim’s father as an influence and getting him started in rock climbing. When asked what motivated Vadim to start climbing she responded, “I think he would talk about his father and their climbing together...” She also stated, “It (climbing) always had a certain amount to do with his father and his connection with him.” When asked how she thought Vadim might describe his top three motivating factors, she responded, “I think he would certainly say his father, and being around his father.”

In addition to connecting and communicating with others, the respect and admiration of others was a motivating factor for Vadim. When asked, about his motivation to compete, Vadim answered, “It’s an ego thing and I want to see where I am at. How do I stack up against the rest of the world crew?” When asked about his main purpose, Vadim answered, “A lot of people watch me (train) and I get inspired.” When asked about how he sees himself in the world of rock climbing, he answered, “I kind of, on one hand, feel like my ability is not respected enough in America.” When asked about

other motivating factors, Vadim answered, "I have a number of different factors, I just wanted to be with my dad more, wanted to be on an ego trip, wanted to hang with the group of other classmates..."

His climbing partner/manager also mentioned status and respect of others as a motivating factor for Vadim. When asked how she thought Vadim saw himself in the rock climbing world, she responded, "He sees himself as having some stature." When asked about Vadim's top three motivating factors to competitively climb, she responded, "That he can do really hard stuff and that he has as much ability as just about anyone in the world."

Finally, Vadim was motivated by an opportunity to connect and communicate with nature. This aspect of motivation was mentioned in all three data sources.

In his competition journal, Vadim wrote about a bad experience he had at a competition in Prague, Czechoslovakia. His solution and way of dealing with the bad experience was expressed as: "I need some sun and climbing on rock to set me straight."

Concerning his purpose Vadim responded, "Climbing is a lot more than just sport. It is a way for people to communicate with the world." He then talked about getting others involved in rock climbing and why that provided him a sense of satisfaction. He stated, "Climbing is a wonderful thing, so directing people towards it and allowing people to explore themselves and put them more in touch with the outdoors and the whole community (is satisfying)."

At one point, Vadim broke both of his legs in a bad fall and was confined to a wheel chair for several months. When asked about the period just after he was able to climb again he stated, "I had all this pent up energy from being stuck in a wheel chair and

just wanted to do stuff outside, because I loved climbing outdoors. I wanted to do anything that would take me outside..." Finally, summarizing his climbing outdoors versus climbing indoors he stated:

I really like bouldering with my friends. We just go outdoors, and it is a beautiful day and I just enjoy being outside. I always remember these nice, crisp, fall days, in New England and the sun is gorgeous and you touch rock and it feels sticky. You feel totally invincible.

Exhaustive Higher-Order Theme #3

Vadim Vinokur was motivated by the quest to get to the top of both the climb in front of him and the World Cup competitions. Included in the motivation of accomplishing his climbs was the process of "finding his way" and the challenge of figuring out what the route setter wanted from him.

Getting to the top was a motivating factor that was mentioned in both of the interviews and in Vadim's competition journal. In his journal, Vadim wrote about a time when he did not get into the finals of the World Cup competition in Prague. "I ended up 17th. I was rather unhappy thinking Prague would be the place where I would be in the final. Watching the final hurt—I felt I could be there and be rather competitive." He also wrote about a route called Underground, rated a 5.14d that he worked for several years to complete. The following quote is about his final attempt at the climb. He would not be able to attempt this climb for at least another year. He wrote,

I went all the way, almost. I fell (after) it (the toughest part of the climb) was all over. I was in shock; it was not supposed to happen. I just needed to do one more move. I still feel devastated by doing all that climbing and

blowing it where I shouldn't have. I'm not sure I have the motivation now.

I feel emotionally drained.

In contrast Vadim later wrote in his journal, about some success that he had in a competition in China where he finished 2nd in the semi-finals and made it into the finals. He wrote, "Boy, did it feel good to come down and know that I am in the final..."

In his interview, Vadim also talked about getting to the top. When asked to talk about rock climbing Vadim responded, "It is pretty much moving up a particular surface... You try to get as high as you can, preferably all the way to the top.... you just kind of move along and you try to get to the top." When asked about what drove him to continue being a professional climber he responded, "I set out to win a World Cup competition. So that was my goal, my intention." In addition, when asked what kept him climbing even when he had experienced serious injuries, Vadim mentioned the United States National competition, which he has won more than 10 times. He stated, "...to win the Nationals was not really the goal. I mean it was a nice stepping stone, but it was never really the goal. It was more about (winning) the World Cups; a higher goal."

His climbing partner/manager also cited placement in world competitions as a motivational factor. When asked about Vadim's least favorite moments in climbing she stated, "He would probably say the frustrations of competitions where he hasn't made it to the semifinals." In terms of what motivated Vadim to train, she stated:

As far as that physical training, of showing up at the gym and doing what needs to be done (he would say), "Well this next competition is longer,

steeper route...there'll be more moves. I better do more of this kind of training for the next three weeks, for the next competition.”

Vadim's desire to make it to the top was fueled by the motivation to find his way through the challenges presented by both the climb and what the route setter had designed for him. This motivational aspect was also discussed in both interviews. For example, when asked to describe rock climbing Vadim stated:

...it becomes more like a chess game because you try to understand what the route setter wants from you....the competition is you do your best against yourself and also try to figure out whether the route setter did a job good enough to compete, so you can figure it out.

When asked to describe the differences between outdoor and indoor climbing Vadim further clarified, “Climbing indoors is a chess game. I am trying to figure out what the route setter wants me to do.” In addition he stated, “The challenge is to finish a route that is really physically and technically difficult.”

When asked to describe what he looked forward to when he was not climbing in indoor competitions Vadim answered,

Rock really doesn't have a particular logic.....there is nothing that says this is the way you should do it, which really challenges my creativity...it is a different exercise. In indoor climbing it is more-what does the route setter think, what does he have in store for me? Then it is more like my canvas, painting, whatever I want because I can find my way. That is challenging with routes that have not been done. But you don't know how to do them, but you find your way. That's cool! I like to find my way.

His climbing partner/manager also mentioned figuring out the route as a motivational factor. When asked about how Vadim might talk about the differences between indoor and outdoor climbing she responded, "He loves figuring out routes and figuring out sequences and figuring out just what has to be done in order to execute a route..." When asked what she thought Vadim looked forward to in indoor competitions she stated, "Just seeing how well he can figure out the challenge that the route setters (set)..." In sum, she stated, "It is that unique situation... route setter pitting his will, his creative imagination against a very very good climber who's trying to unravel the problem. And it's all about problem solving. And I think he likes the challenge."

Summary

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with Vadim Vinokur and his climbing partner/manager, and review of the personal journals of Vadim, kept during the 2003-2004 climbing season, provided the data for answering the following research question: What is the motivation of America's finest and most consistent professional competition rock climber, Vadim Vinokur? Each of the three data sources was analyzed to produce higher-order themes. These higher-order themes were then compared and contrasted to produce exhaustive higher-order themes, to answer the research question. The results indicate that Vadim Vinokur was motivated to compete in the sport of rock climbing by three sources:

1. Vadim Vinokur was motivated to master the skill set required for competition rock climbing. Included in that skill set were physical, mental, and problem solving skills. Vadim was motivated by the pursuit of perfection. He was also motivated by completing a challenge. In addition, rock climbing allowed Vadim a

- forum to physically work hard, which gave him a sense of success. Finally, Vadim was motivated by the belief that he had talent in the sport of rock climbing and thus, should continue to make an active effort to be a competition climber.
2. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by being a part of the society of elite professional rock climbers. This society was where the participant could work and connect with others like himself. In addition, the respect and admiration of others were motivating factors. Vadim was also motivated by his ability to connect and communicate with nature and the outdoors.
 3. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by the quest to get to the top of both the climb in front of him and the World Cup competitions. Included in the motivation of accomplishing his climbs was the process of “finding his way” and the challenge of figuring out what the route setter wanted from him.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study examined the motivation of Vadim Vinokur, America's best professional rock climber. The study was designed to answer the following research question: What is the motivation of America's finest and most consistent professional competition rock climber, Vadim Vinokur? The participant and his climbing partner/manager were interviewed using a semi-structured in-depth interview format to gain an understanding of Vadim Vinokur's motivation to compete in the sport of rock climbing. Inductive content analysis produced higher-order themes which were then compared across data sources to form exhaustive higher-order themes. The three exhaustive higher-order themes are the answer to the aforementioned research question.

In this chapter, the results of this study are compared and contrasted to prior research. Each of the three exhaustive higher-order themes is addressed as each relates to, and differs from, prior research. As already mentioned, research to date has been primarily focused on the recreational rock climber. Existing literature suggests that recreational rock climbers are motivated by sensation seeking (a desire to engage in activities that produce complex sensations and experiences), acquisition and mastery of skill, a forum for creativity, enjoyment of the outdoors, recognition from peers, a chance to engage in and thrive in challenging situations, a desire for control (control over decision making, reactions, and personal space), and an escape from daily life.

Exhaustive Higher-Order Theme #1

Vadim Vinokur was motivated to master the skill set required for competition rock climbing. Included in that skill set were physical, mental, and problem solving skills. Vadim was motivated by the pursuit of perfection. He was also motivated by completing a challenge. In addition, rock climbing allowed Vadim a forum to physically work hard, which gave him a sense of success. Finally, Vadim was motivated by the belief that he had talent in the sport of rock climbing and thus, should continue to make an active effort to be a competition climber.

Mastery of skills has been cited in prior research as a motivational factor for many recreational rock climbers. Slanger and Rudestam (1997) stated that “85% of the participants (rock climbers who climb without safety equipment) identified a desire for mastery” (Slanger & Rudestam, 1997, p. 366). In addition the authors wrote, “When asked specifically, all but three members of the high risk groups acknowledged that desire for mastery was a motivating factor” (Slanger & Rudestam, 1997, p. 366). Mastery was also cited by Lyng (1990) as a motivating factor.

Vadim Vinokur was also motivated by mastery of the skill base. When asked what drove him to compete Vadim responded, “I am definitely looking forward to that challenge.” When asked to clarify what he meant by “that challenge”, Vadim stated,

You have a template, how to deal with world competition and you have major chunks, and then again, there are small pieces that affect the whole mosaic. So it is pretty interesting and makes me what I am and I still don't, to some extent, have it mastered and I don't feel that I would be

ready to give it up until I have mastered it. So that's pretty much what drives me, perfection.

In addition to Slinger and Rudestam (1997), McIntyre (1991) described "competence" as one of 6 factors impacting why recreational rock climbers climb. "Competence" included the development of skills and abilities and a sense of accomplishment. The results of the present study found that Vadim was highly motivated by mastery and perfection. In addition, Vadim described a sense of accomplishment when asked about what drove him to continue to be a professional rock climber. He stated, "Because 4 years down the road I haven't really felt I accomplished anything. I have, but not what I set out to do." In addition, when asked about coming back from injuries and continuing to compete, Vadim responded, "I am the sort of guy that likes to see things through....I still have more to explore." Vadim felt that because he had not won a World Cup competition and put all the pieces of the skill set together he had not yet achieved success. As a result, he did not feel as though he had accomplished his goals. He stated, "I set out to win a World Cup Competition. So that was my goal, my intention." In this way, accomplishment for Vadim Vinokur might be different than that of "competence" postulated by McIntyre (1991). "Competence" was defined as obtaining a sense of accomplishment. In other words, "competence" included the sense that accomplishment has been achieved. Vadim was motivated by the desire to obtain accomplishment. In his own mind, he had not succeeded because the ultimate goal to win a World Cup competition had not been accomplished. Completing a climb can provide sense of accomplishment, however, the ultimate sense of goal achievement and satisfaction had not yet been reached. In addition, the aforementioned mastery of skill was likely very

different from the feeling of acquiring skills that McIntyre (1991) cited as motivation for the recreational rock climbers in his study. Vadim viewed skill acquisition on a different level. For Vadim, skill acquisition was not just gaining skills, but also mastering them and weaving each skill together in perfect harmony. This was stated when Vadim described his best performance in a World Cup event, "I felt, wow, I really put it together. I kind of wish I could put it together more often..."

The completion of goals and seeing a challenge through to its end was also a motivating factor for Vadim. He stated,

I still don't feel that I have reached my potential. I want to really get to the bottom of it. I want to dig as deep as I can and say okay, I see the bottom.

This is it, this is as far as I can go. I haven't felt that way yet. I haven't felt that this is the best effort that I am capable of.

Vadim's remarks are congruent with the need for achievement noted by Robinson (1985) in his investigation of the characteristics of elite recreational rock climbers. Specifically, it was reported that 97% of all the elite level rock climbers surveyed "consciously set themselves specific climbing goals to achieve" (Robinson, 1985, p. 402).

The final two aspects of exhaustive higher-order theme #1 describe a forum in which to work hard, as well as the draw to compete due to an acknowledgement of talent. These motivational factors have not been noted in prior research focusing on recreational rock climbers. Vadim noted that he started competing professionally because he was talented and he was placing well. This was clear as Vadim talked about his first competition, "I was 14 years old. I almost won my first competition...That's what sort of triggered my interest in it." He also noted that working hard was a way in which he

gained a sense of success. When asked to describe success he stated, "Being successful is working real hard on anything..." He also described being motivated to train hard by the prospect of upcoming World Cup events. He stated, "I try to think about next week, where I have a World Cup, and I don't have time to feel that way (lethargic)."

Exhaustive Higher-Order Theme #2

Vadim Vinokur was motivated by being a part of the society of elite professional rock climbers. This society was where the participant could work and connect with others like himself. In addition, the respect and admiration of others were motivating factors. Vadim was also motivated by his ability to connect and communicate with nature and the outdoors.

Feher et al. (1998) reported that recreational rock climbers paralleled other individual and team sport athletes on the extraversion factor on the Eysenck Personality Inventory. In short, rock climbers tended to be extroverted. In addition, Levenson (1990) indicated that recreational rock climbers were more social and anti-structural than the norm. Being social and extraverted were noted as personality traits of Vadim. He stated that one obstacle when preparing for competitions was talking and catching up with other climbers rather than focusing on the competition. He stated,

I am a very social person and a lot of times I feel that the challenge for me is that I remain focused because I come in, I see all my friends. It is the World Cup. I haven't seen them in like about 5 or 6 months, you catch up. You talk in isolation. All of a sudden you have to go climb and you haven't warmed up properly.

One potential difference between Vadim and other recreational rock climbers discussed in the literature, might be that extraversion was viewed by Vadim as a detriment to his ability to compete.

The need to be associated with a group of professional climbers was not, however, cited as a motivational factor in prior research, if for no other reason, because professional rock climbers have not been studied to date.

McIntyre (1991) cited recognition as a motivating factor for many climbers. He defined recognition as the "external image created by the climber" (McIntyre, 1991, p. 35). In addition, McIntyre also discussed peer recognition as a motivating factor. Peer recognition was contingent upon the level of difficulty of the climb, as well as, the perceived exertion to complete that climb (McIntyre, 1991). This is congruent with Vadim's desire to gain the respect and admiration of others. When asked to describe his main purpose, Vadim stated that, "A lot of people watch me and I get inspired....To think these guys are watching me do this crazy stuff. You set a high standard and they get inspired."

A final part of exhaustive higher-order theme #2 relates to Vadim's desire to connect with the outdoors and nature. This theme was found in the research of McIntyre (1991). In short, McIntyre (1991) called this motivating factor "physical setting" and described it as being close to nature and enjoying wilderness. Vadim talked about the natural surroundings of rock climbing outdoors as something that he enjoyed. When asked to describe the difference between indoor and outdoor climbing, he stated,

I really like bouldering with my friends. We just go outdoors, and it is a beautiful day and I just enjoy being outside. I always

remember these nice, crisp, fall days, in New England and the sun is gorgeous and you touch rock and it feels sticky. You feel totally invincible.

Exhaustive Higher-Order Theme #3

Vadim Vinokur was motivated by the quest to get to the top of both the climb in front of him and the World Cup competitions. Included in the motivation of accomplishing his climbs was the process of “finding his way” and the challenge of figuring out what the route setter wanted from him.

The quest to win World Cup competitions was a motivational factor unique to Vadim Vinokur. Given the lack of research focusing on the professional competition rock climber prior to this investigation, Vadim’s quest to get to the top has yet to be supported in other studies on professional climbers.

However, Vadim’s motivation to “find his way through the challenges” might also be viewed as a sense of control over the situation facing him. This sense of control was cited by several authors as a potential motivational factor for climbers (Kiewa, 2001; Lyng, 1990; McIntyre, 1991). Vadim talked about control over finding his way. He described climbing climbs that no one in the world had attempted before. He stated, “That is challenging with routes that haven’t been done. You don’t know how to do them, but you find your way. That’s cool! I like to find my way.” Control is often defined as control over decision making, control over competent reactions, and control over personal space (Kiewa, 2001). In addition, control may be a motivating factor for some climbers due to their daily lives (Kiewa, 2001; Lyng, 1990). This may help clarify the differences between Vadim’s definition of control as “finding his way” and the

recreational rock climber's desire to have control of decision making, competent reactions, and personal space. Vadim is a professional competition rock climber. His daily life is rock climbing. He is therefore, unable to "escape" daily life through rock climbing. The escaping of daily life is a prominent motivating factor in the recent research of recreational rock climbers (Kiewa, 2001). This may, however, be the most prominent difference with regards to recreational and professional rock climbers.

Finally, the challenge of finding out what the route setter wanted from him, was also not noted in prior research. Again, this is related to the fact that the professional competition climber has not been studied prior to this investigation.

A Note on Sensation Seeking as a Motivating Factor

To say that rock climbers engage in rock climbing for the sole reason of new and novel experiences may be too simple an explanation. For many rock climbers, the experience of being on a rock face hundreds of feet in the air is neither unusual nor unique. Those at the elite and professional level have climbed thousands of times. Often the climbing experience is more work like than adventurous. For example, in high altitude rock climbing Delle Fave, Bassi, and Massimini (2003) reported that only 2.2% of the climbing experience (time) is the climber actually climbing. In addition, Delle Fave et al. (2003) found nearly 36.8% of expedition time was devoted to maintenance, which was comprised of sleeping, eating, resting, and drinking. Another 26.4% of the time was spent in camp activities. Camp activities were comprised of moving from one camp to another, cooking and fixing beverages, preparing rucksacks and equipment for actual climbing, discussing routes and climbing techniques, and setting up tents. In other

words, there was a systematic approach to climbing that most high altitude rock climbers reported using.

Competition and elite level rock climbers will often climb the same climb several times before completing it to their standards. Vadim, for example, attempted one climb (Underground 5.14d) at least 20 times over 3 years before he completed it. Also, there is often the mundane work of setting up safety ropes and anchors, designing the path of the climb, and choosing the right equipment to take on the climb. Once in the climb, the climbing activity itself is methodically and precisely planned out. In addition, the competition climber will spend 3 to 5 hours a day practicing moves and climbing routes. In many ways, climbing is not a unique, novel, or adventurous experience for the professional rock climber. Climbing is an experience that takes patience and thought. Accordingly, Vadim's motivation did not include the seeking out of novel and unique experiences.

Summary

There are both similarities and differences between the motivations of Vadim Vinokur and the motivations of recreational rock climbers reported in prior research. The similarities include the following: A desire to master the mental and physical skill set of rock climbing, a need for achievement, the desire to see a challenge through to its end, the recognition of a peer group, the desire to commune with nature and to be outdoors, and the desire to have control over decisions. The differences include: The need for unique and novel experiences, the need to have a forum for creativity, an escape from daily life, and the chance to engage and thrive in challenging activities.

The motivational factors unique to Vadim included: The use of rock climbing as a forum for hard work, the draw to compete as an acknowledgement of skill, the desire to be a part of an elite society of competition climbers, and a quest to get to the top of his climb and the World Cup competition standings.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary

This study examined the motivations of America's top professional competition rock climber. A phenomenological qualitative research design was followed. The primary source of data came from, Vadim Vinokur, by way of a semi-structured, in-depth interview. In addition, Vadim's climbing partner/manager was similarly interviewed. Vadim also kept a competition journal during the 2003-2004 World Cup season that became a third source of data. Data analyses revealed Vadim Vinokur to be motivated by three primary reasons:

1. Vadim Vinokur was motivated to master the skill set required for competition rock climbing. Included in that skill set were physical, mental, and problem solving skills. Vadim was motivated by the pursuit of perfection. He was also motivated by completing a challenge. In addition, rock climbing allowed Vadim a forum to physically work hard, which gave him a sense of success. Finally, Vadim was motivated by the belief that he had talent in the sport of rock climbing and thus, should continue to make an active effort to be a competition climber.
2. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by being a part of the society of elite professional rock climbers. This society was where the participant could work and connect with others like himself. In addition, the respect and admiration of others were motivating factors. Vadim was also motivated by his ability to connect and communicate with nature and the outdoors.

3. Vadim Vinokur was motivated by the quest to get to the top of both the climb in front of him and the World Cup competitions. Included in the motivation of accomplishing his climbs was the process of "finding his way" and the challenge of figuring out what the route setter wanted from him.

The results of this study provided Vadim Vinokur with a better understanding of his motivations to climb. In addition, this is the first investigation of a professional competition rock climber's motivation. As such, it expands the existing knowledge about the motivations of rock climbers.

Conclusions

This investigation provided a unique look at the motivations of the best professional competition rock climber in America. Although some of the motivations of this competition climber mirrored that of recreation rock climbers, there were also differences. In addition, it was revealed how a top level professional competition climber views competition climbing. Vadim Vinokur viewed competitions as challenges to be completed and places to bond with others of the same profession. He also enjoyed working hard and viewed success as effortful completion of a challenge.

This investigation is important as it is the first such investigation into the growing professional sport of rock climbing. In addition, it investigates the motivations of a truly unique individual, who has been the best American competition climber for the past 10 years. The information gained through this investigation can be used by coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists to enhance their guidance of individuals participating in the sport of competition rock climbing.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research on rock climbers has progressed to a point where there now exists a clearer understanding of the motivations of recreational rock climbers. Still, little is known about the motivations of professional competition rock climbers. There is now evidence demonstrating that there are both similarities and differences between the motivations of professional rock climbers and recreational rock climbers. Consequently, there is a need to continue to investigate these similarities and differences. In addition, there exists a need to examine the personality traits of professional rock climbers and how such personality traits impact individual motivations. It is also suggested that future research examine climber's motivations across age, gender, and ethnicity.

Replication of this type of study (with more subjects) is warranted as new information on the motivations of professional rock climbers has arisen. A recommendation would be to replicate the methodology of this study with the top 10 world ranked professional competition rock climbers. Expansion of this investigation would help solidify information gained through the present research as well as bring to light new insights on the motivations of professional competition rock climbers.

Finally, research is needed on the motivation of professional climbers among those that compete in the different arenas of competition climbing. For example, what motivational differences exist between individuals who take part in bouldering, speed climbing, difficulty climbing, and high altitude climbing? Future studies are needed to bring about new understanding and clarification within these areas.

APPENDIX A

Vadim Vinokur Interview Guide

1. Tell me about rock climbing.
2. What motivated you to start rock climbing?
3. Why did you become a professional climber?
4. What drives you to continue to be a professional climber?
5. What are some of your favorite moments in rock climbing?
6. What are your least favorite moments in rock climbing?
7. Tell me about any times you been injured or had a bad fall.
8. How does climbing make you feel?
9. Tell me about competitions.
10. Tell me about climbing outdoors vs. indoors.
11. Describe climbing a challenging climb outside vs. a competition climb.
12. What drives you to climb?
13. What do you look forward to in competition?
14. What do you look forward to in a non-competition climbing session?
15. What drives you to compete?
16. What were your top three motivating factors to start climbing? Explain each.
17. What are your top three motivating factors to climb now? Explain each.
18. Describe challenge in recreational rock climbing.
19. Describe challenge in competition climbing.
20. What do you enjoy about rock climbing competition?
21. Who inspires you? Why?
22. What inspires you? Why?
23. What is success? Give me an example.
24. What do you attribute success to?
25. How do you define failure? Give me an example.
26. What do you attribute failure to?
27. Describe challenge in training.
28. How do you motivate yourself to train?
29. Tell me about training.
30. How do you see yourself in the world of climbing?
31. What do you see as your main purpose?
32. What do you see in your rock climbing future?
33. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share about the past, present, and future motivating factors for you in the sport of rock climbing?

APPENDIX B

Climbing Partner/Manager Interview Guide

How would Vadim answer the following questions:

1. Tell me about rock climbing.
2. What motivated you to start rock climbing?
3. Why did you become a professional climber?
4. What drives you to continue to be a professional climber?
5. What are some of your favorite moments in rock climbing?
6. What are your least favorite moments in rock climbing?
7. Tell me about any times you been injured or had a bad fall.
8. How does climbing make you feel?
9. Tell me about competitions.
10. Tell me about climbing outdoors vs. indoors.
11. Describe climbing a challenging climb outside vs. a competition climb.
12. What drives you to climb?
13. What do you look forward to in competition?
14. What do you look forward to in a non-competition climbing session?
15. What drives you to compete?
16. What were your top three motivating factors to start climbing? Explain each.
17. What are your top three motivating factors to climb now? Explain each.
18. Describe challenge in recreational rock climbing.
19. Describe challenge in competition climbing.
20. What do you enjoy about rock climbing competition?
21. Who inspires you? Why?
22. What inspires you? Why?
23. What is success? Give me an example.
24. What do you attribute success to?
25. How do you define failure? Give me an example.
26. What do you attribute failure to?
27. Describe challenge in training.
28. How do you motivate yourself to train?
29. Tell me about training.
30. How do you see yourself in the world of climbing?
31. What do you see as your main purpose?
32. What do you see in your rock climbing future?
33. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share about the past, present, and future motivating factors for you in the sport of rock climbing?

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Statement—Professional Climber

Hello, my name is Joshua Lifrak. I am a graduate student in the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. I am researching the motivations of professional rock climbers and would like to invite you to be the subject of my graduate thesis study. This would entail answering several questions about professional rock climbing during a 2-hour interview. I will tape record, transcribe, and analyze the interview. I will also ask that you keep a journal throughout the competition season. The information gained from your participation in this study will be used as direct quotations. You will not be an anonymous subject. There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Statement— Climbing Partner/Manager

Hello, my name is Joshua Lifrak. I am a graduate student in the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. I am researching the motivations of professional rock climbers. I would like to invite you to be a subject of my graduate thesis study. This would entail that you be willing to answer several questions about your climbing partner during a 2-hour interview period. I will tape record, transcribe, and analyze the interview data. The information gained from your participation in this study will be used as direct quotations. You will not be an anonymous subject. There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Form (Professional Climber)

1. Purpose of Study—The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the motivation of America's best professional competition rock climber.
2. Benefits of Study— This investigation will enhance the study of motivation for athletes, particularly those whose lives are at risk while they are participating in their sport. This investigation may also help you to better understand your own motivations and the meanings you derive from rock climbing.
3. What You Will Be Asked to Do— You will be asked to answer several questions about professional rock climbing over a 2-hour interview period. I will tape record, transcribe, and analyze the interview data. You will be asked to review the transcripts for accuracy. I will also ask you keep a journal throughout the competition season. The total participation time will be approximately 5 hours over 2 months.
4. Risks—Participation in this study poses no additional risk of injury or harm to you. This study poses no professional risk to you.
5. If You Would Like More Information about the Study—Please feel free to contact the primary researcher, Joshua Lifrak, at 917-847-1053.
6. Withdrawal from the Study—You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may omit answers to questions you feel uncomfortable answering.
7. How the Data will be Maintained in Confidence— The tapes and transcripts of the interview along with your journal entries will be secured by the investigator in his office in Manhattan. The data reported from your interview will appear as direct quotations from the transcribed text, in order to emphasize a theme. You will not be an anonymous subject.

I have read the above and I understand its contents. I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older. I give permission for my journal entries to be examined and for the information gained through inquiry to be released.

Print or Type Name

Signature

Date

I give my permission to be audio taped.)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form (Climbing Partner/Manager)

1. Purpose of Study—The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the motivation of America's best professional competition rock climber.
2. Benefits of Study—This investigation will enhance the study of motivation for athletes, particularly those whose lives are at risk while they are participating in their sport. The investigation may also help to gain knowledge about of the meaning of sport to the professional rock climber.
3. What You Will Be Asked to Do—You will be asked to honestly answer questions about Vadim Vinokur and his motivation to rock climb as a professional. I will tape record, transcribe, and analyze your interview. You will be asked to review the transcripts for accuracy. The interview will take one hour. The total time of participation will be approximately 5 hours over 2 months.
4. Risks—This study poses minimal risk of injury or harm. This study poses no professional risk to you.
5. If You Would Like More Information about the Study—Please feel free to contact the primary researcher, Joshua Lifrak, at 917-847-1053.
6. Withdrawal from the Study—You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may omit answers to questions you feel uncomfortable answering.
7. How the Data will be Maintained in Confidence— The tapes and transcriptions from the interview will be secured in the investigator's office in Manhattan. The data reported from the interviews will appear only as major themes or direct quotations from the transcribed text, in order to emphasize a theme.

I have read the above and I understand its contents. I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older. I give permission for the information gained through inquiry to be released.

Print or Type Name

Signature

Date

I give my permission to be audio taped.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

Data Analysis Flow Chart: Vadim Vinokur Interview—Higher-Order Theme # 5

Significant Statements	Meaning Units	Lower Order Themes	Higher Order Theme	
SS 37. I am the type of guy who likes to see things through.	MU 12. I was trying to get into clear sailing. I pulled myself together. I never happened before where I climbed that well. I really put it together. I wish I could put it together more often. I want more consistency. A fighting spirit some days it is there some days it is not. Some days you can pull it together. Sometimes you figure it out and it is clear. It just clicks and makes sense.	LOT 7. I still have more to explore. I haven't gone as far as I can. I have not fulfilled my potential. I am capable of a win and I should win. The opportunities are here. I have not accomplished what I set out to do.	HOT 5. I am a perfectionist. I have not reached my potential. I have not mastered rock climbing. I have not put it all together yet. I still have more to do. I want to find my limit. I want to be at the end. I am the type of person that likes to see things through. I climb because I want to feel like I am taking something seriously. I still have more to explore. I have not yet finished what I started. I like being totally exhausted. I need to do a lot of hard work. Climbing makes people better.	
SS 80. Sometimes you figure it out and it is clear.		LOT 10. Being able to control all aspects of climbing. Putting it all together. Trying to get into clear sailing. Figuring it out and it becomes clear. I am a perfectionist. I don't feel I have reached my potential. I like to see things through. I still do not have it mastered.		
SS 117. I still don't feel I have it mastered.		MU 14. I have to feel like I did hard training. I like being totally exhausted. I admire people who don't give in and have mental toughness. You always have to work hard. If it comes too easy, something is wrong. Being successful is working hard having to struggle and then pulling through. I need to do a lot of hard work. I do my work because I know what it takes. Train hard and you learn a lot about yourself. I wanted to feel that I was taking something very seriously.		LOT 11. Being successful is working hard. I want to feel like I am taking something seriously. I want to find my limit. I want to scrape the bottom of the barrel.
SS 118. I don't feel I would be ready to give up until I have mastered it.				
SS 119. What drives me is perfection.				
SS 120. I want to see it through.				
SS 121. I am a perfectionist.				
SS 122. I want to feel at the end.				
SS 123. I want to feel that I am done now and I have gotten it out of my system.				
SS 141. I want to get to the bottom of it.	MU 17. I like to be in complete control. Being able to control all of the aspects of climbing.	LOT 14. I will always climb.		
SS 142. I want to dig as deep as I can.				
SS 164. You always have to work hard.				
SS 165. If it comes too easily, something is wrong.	MU 25. I am the type of guy that likes to see things through. I am a perfectionist. I still do not have it mastered. I don't feel I have reached my potential. Failure is feeling, I could have done better.			
SS 169. Being successful is working real hard and having to struggle with it and then getting through.				

APPENDIX H

Vadim Vinokur Interview Higher-Order Themes

1. Looks forward to challenge. One challenge is to try to finish a physically and technically challenging route. Tries to get as high as he can. Tries to get to the top. It is you versus yourself. You have to do it yourself. My goal is to win a World Cup competition. Competitions are an opportunity to see where I stack up against the rest of the world. Trying to compete at the highest level. Trying to get to the top. Climbing is a solitary thing. I want to focus on climbing alone
2. It becomes a chess game. There are a lot of twists and turns which is good. I like to find my way. It is a place for preparation and analysis (finding my way). I started climbing because I was a kid and I was bored.
3. You don't get a second chance. Carpe Diem. I can be good at climbing. I should give it a shot. There is no time for excuses. Competitions form a deadline. I don't take anything for granted. There is nothing that says this is the way it should be.
4. Climbing is an ego trip. It is a place to hang out with friends. It is a social setting. It is a place I can have an impact. Others watching me inspire me. It is a place I can teach. I started climbing to be with my dad.
5. I am a perfectionist. I have not reached my potential. I have not mastered rock climbing. I have not put it all together yet. I still have more to do. I want to find my limit. I want to be at the end. I am the type of person that likes to see things through. I climb because I want to feel like I am taking something seriously. I still have more to explore. I have not yet finished what I started. I like being totally exhausted. I need to do a lot of hard work. Climbing makes people better.
6. I enjoy being outdoors. Climbing is a way to communicate with the world.

APPENDIX I

Climbing Partner/Manager Higher-Order Themes

1. Connection with peers. Acceptance by peers. Respect of self and others based on the culture of competition rock climbing.
2. Becoming a better climber, perfecting his craft, accomplishing his goals, measured against rest of the pro climbing world.
3. He is drawn to challenge. He knows he is challenged when he is working hard, this in turn helps solidify feelings of success, satisfaction, and accomplishment.

APPENDIX J

Vadim Vinokur Journal Higher-Order Themes

1. Climbing well, performing well in World Cup events, making it to the top, moving easy and light, getting into the zone feels good, exciting, builds and reinforces confidence and self-worth. Performing poorly, not climbing well, and not completing climbs disavows feelings of confidence and self-worth.
2. Climbing is about small refinement; learning to keep things simple, learning how to blend both the body and mind for optimal performance, and taking away lessons from experiences. (honing skills)
3. Effort and pulling through lends itself to good feelings.
4. Working with others is nice and provides a place to gain confidence.

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