

Relationship between social intelligence with athletic identity among Wushu athletes

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to survey the social intelligence and athletic identity of the athletes in the field of Wushu. The statistical population for the study included 95 boys and 80 girls who participated in national team of Wushu. The data collection for determining the athletic identity was measured by the Brewer and colleagues' scale (1993) and the social intelligence was measured by social intelligence scale of Troms (2001). The data was then analyzed using statistical and descriptive indexes using variance analysis and T-Test and Pearson's correlation coefficient with the help of SPSS software. The study's results showed that the social intelligence was not significantly different between boys and girls. The athletic identity was higher in older and more experienced athletes (the difference was not significant). The link between social intelligence with the subscale of Social Identity was significant and positive and it was significant and negative with the subscale of excitability. The athletic identity has a negative effect on the social skills (subscale of social intelligence). The relation between the social intelligence and the athletic identity is a two-way and interactive relationship. With respect to the possible negative effects of athletic identity (negative excitability, extreme monopoly, the lack of other identity aspects such as social, family, and religious), growth and development of the athletic identity requires some support by the social intelligence.

Keywords: social intelligence, athletic identity, Wushu athletes, athletic

INTRODUCTION

Athletic identity is regarded to as the degree of dependence to sport and people with high athletic identity measure their own self-respect based on their sport performance [1]. Based on the Brewer's study, athletic identity is experimentally related to health, increased participation in physical activities and increased social relationships and self-confidence [2]. Out of all the possible selves, athletic identity for a person who identifies himself with it is defined as a degree of power and exclusivity [3]. Athletic identity consists of four sub-scales: personal identity, social identity, exclusivity, and negative excitability. Personal identity assesses the cognitive beliefs of the person regarding his sport activities. Social identity shows that how much other people believe in the examinees as sportsman. Exclusivity refers to the importance of sport for the athlete in comparison with other activities and the Negative Affectivity towards unpleasant feelings and depression due to sport injuries or poor performance by the athlete [4]. Since sport identity, regardless of paying attention to internal sub-scales (personal identity and negative excitability) are related to external factors (exclusivity and social identity), it plays an important role in upgrading the cognition, perspective, and social relations of the individual [5]. In

the whole, developing sport identity in a person means to further internalize his perspective on sport participation. The higher this internalization process gets the more chance for his athletic role in social environments to be approved. This will turn to a determining or dominant factor in professional athletes. Therefore, advancement in a person's athletic identity with the goal of internalizing positive perspective on physical activity and increased motivation for sport participation is an important goal [1]. As a result, focusing on the formation and effective factors on sport identity is of high importance. In the researcher's view, identity is a subject that is formed in relation with the society and other people and in his mutual and interactive relationship with his community [6]. Korger calls this as "adaptation of the person's self-image with social recognition". Therefore, identity provides a feeling towards oneself that is recognized by the community. In general, identity is the definition for the social self. In conclusion, the person might achieve a fairly stable self-image, but if the society does not recognize it, he will have flaws in his character [7]. On this basis, it seems that factors effective on the person's performance in the society helps him to find a good and proper balance with the community and other members of the society. One of these factors is the subject of

social intelligence. Social intelligence was first introduced by Sere dike and refers to the ability and capability of the person in getting along with others well and to establish successful relations with others [8]. In Gollman's view, social intelligence is the reason for our success in our social relationships and is not acquired by education and study. It can be trained during childhood and even adulthood [9]. Zirkel believed that social intelligence is closely connected with personality and personal behavior [10]. In his view, people with high social intelligence have a complete understanding of themselves and their environment. This quality enables them to control their feelings and decisions in their lives and life goals. He called his model as "aimed behavior". Based on this model the person picks his goals after evaluating the opportunities and the environmental threats. In fact, this model of social intelligence will help the individual to create a sense of identity [10]. On this basis, it seems that social intelligence has an effective role in forming a sport identity. On the other hand, participation in sport activities brings people closer to each other spatially and physically and this helps them to become skillful in the society. This will give them an opportunity to a cultural and social education [11].

Ghanaie in his study emphasizes on teaching harmonic body movements on the social growth and children's intelligence of pre-school children [12]. In Brewer's opinion, people with higher athletic identity scores have more interest in participating in sport activities and programs and this shows their more positive perspective on sport and sport activities [2]. In a study observed a positive relation between the sport-orientation and athletic identity of the athletes [4]. The results by this study showed that among girls, personal identity is the most important sub-scale for success while for boys; social identity and exclusivity are among the most important sub-scales. In a study on the effects of public physical education units of the university on the athletic identity of the college students noticed that they do not leave any effects on the students and achieves no improvement in their approach and sport participation [1]. The results by Shaji's study showed that there is a significant difference among the athletic identity of the national handball teams for the youth, young adults and adults [5]. The widest difference was seen between the youth and the young adult teams; however, all the national team players had strong athletic identity. Mills and Christensen studied the athletic identity of three groups of elite, leisure and non-athletic athletes and they found out that the non-athletic group received a lower score in all the three sub-scales of Social Identity, exclusivity and negative excitability [13]. This is while no significant difference was observed between the elite and leisure athletes in the subscales of exclusivity and Negative Affectivity [1]. Anderson and colleagues studied the relationship between athletic identity and training behavior. He

noticed a significant relation among the training behavior, exercise frequency and athletic identity [14]. The study results by Derick reveals that there is a significant relation between athletic identity of the college students diversified by sex, race, year at school and sport background [24]. In addition, Daniels and colleagues expressed that the structure of athletic identity of the young girls and boys are different [24]. Lau and colleagues studied the changes in national identity among children in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan before, during and after the Olympic games of 2008 in Beijing. According to their results, although there is no significant difference between the two sexes in their national identity, but in athletic identity, boys' scores were significantly higher than in girls [25]. In general and based on the definition for personality and the confirmation by different studies, one of the principles of formation, growth and internalization of athletic identity is the social interactions and activities, or in other words, the social intelligence of the people. On the other hand, strong athletic identity causes an increase in the internal motivation towards sports and sport participation and hence an increase in the social interactions and the person's social intelligence growth. On this basis, it seems that the relation between social intelligence and athletic identity is a two-way and interactive relationship. So in this study, the researcher is after finding out the connection between the social intelligence and the athletic identity in athletes taking part in national Wushu team's competitions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is of the measurement-descriptive. The goal of this study was to measure the social intelligence and athletic identity of Wushu athletes. The statistical population of the research included 320 girls and boys who were participating in national selection competitions for Wushu national team. To decide about the size of sample population, Morgan's table was used and 175 people were selected as the sample group, for which 95 were boys and 80 were girls. To collect the data related to athletic identity, Brewer and colleagues' athletic identity scale was used [2]. This scale has 10 questions and 4 subscales for Self-Identity, Social Identity, exclusivity and Negative Affectivity along with the 7-point Likert scale (completely agree to completely disagree). Jahandideh in his study reveals that the currency and endurance of this questionnaire [4] in Martin & Yu's studies and the internal stability of the questionnaire in [15] Masten and Anderson's studies are confirmed [14]. In this current study, the study of final index of the questionnaire using Cronbach's α method was measured to be 0.78. To measure the social intelligence of the athletes, the Troms social intelligence scale was used. This questionnaire was prepared by Silvera, Martin Yusen and Dahell in which three areas of social intelligence, i.e., social information processing, social skills and social awareness are assessed [15]. This

questionnaire consists of 21 questioners. In this questionnaire, the repliers are asked to express their beliefs regarding each question on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. Rezaei in studying the structure of factors and stability of this questionnaire obtained a score of 70% for the total scale and 81% for durability scale [16]. To measure the final index of the questionnaire for social intelligence, we used the Cronbach's α method and the result was equal to 0.74. The data obtained were analyzed by using the variance analysis tests and T-test and Pearson's Correlation Index using SPSS statistical software.

RESULTS

The demographic characteristics of the sample shows that the average age of the group under study was 18 years and average age of the girls was 16 and boys 20 years of age. In the selected sample, 55% of the repliers were boys and 45% were girls. Out of the repliers, 24% were 9 to 12 years, 34% were 13 to 16 years, 15% were 17 to 20 years, 17% were 21 to 24 years, and 10% were 25 years or older. Regarding sport background, the average experience of the athletes was 6 years. Of course, the athletic background of boys with an average of 7.88 years was longer than girls with an average of 4.71 years. Table 1 shows the descriptive findings of the identified subscales in the two questionnaires of social intelligence and athletic identity of the Wushu athletes of girls and boys.

The independent T-test results showed the difference in social intelligence score and the athletic identity score and its subscales in the girls and boys not to be significant. In addition, the ANOVA test showed that social intelligence of the athletes and their subscales such as age and athletic experience did not have significant differences. In analyzing the referential statistical data, it became clear that the athletic identity of men and women was not significantly different. The findings made clear that the most amount of athletic identity existed in age groups of 20 and older, but the Self-Identity difference among the different age groups was not significantly different. In terms of athletic experience, the 7 year and 10 year old groups had the highest athletic identity, but in the whole, there was no significant difference among different groups with different experiences. In table 2, the relation between the social intelligence and athletic identity and their

subscales was observed. The results of the correlation test show that the social intelligence score of the athletes had a direct and significant relationship with Social Identity and had significant but indirect relation with the Negative Affectivity factor.

DISCUSSION

The findings by the current study show that there is no significant difference between the social intelligence of the boys and girls. This is in compliance with the results by studies done by Selgi, Safarina and Rezaei [16-18]. In terms of athletic identity, the difference in athletic identity of men and women was not seen as statistically significant in older athletes (older than 20) and with longer sport background (although it was not statistically significant). This was in accordance with findings by Tasiemski and colleagues [3], Jahandideh [4] and Krylowicz [19]. This result signifies the idea that the starting age for sport activities and especially professional sports has an important role in the formation of athletic identity of the athletes. Therefore, emphasis on taking part in sports from childhood and youth, not only enhances the athletic identity, but also causes a faster growth and success in athletes. This will also help them to continue their sport activities and not to quit their athletic activities. Another point is that in various groups there was no significant difference based on sex, age, sport experience and athletic identity. This lack of any intense difference may be because of the high level of the sampled athletes. This is because the sampled group consisted of the attendees for the national team and were among the elites of Wushu whose performance level were very close to each other. Of course, another result is that the quality of taking part in sports plays a more important role than age, experience and sex. A study of the subscales of athletic identity of the athletes showed that Self-Identity has a more role in the formation of athletic identity of the athletes. This is in compliance with the study by Jahandideh [4]. As a result, the image a person has of him or herself and his or her Self-Identity characteristics are among the important factors of athletic identity formation. This result reminds coaches of the importance that needs to be given to the personality and mental and emotional state of their athletes at the time of selecting them for their teams.

Table 1: The descriptive findings of the identified subscales

	Social Intelligence				Athletic Identity				
	Information Processing	Social Awareness	Social Skills	Social Intelligence	Self-Identity	Social Identity	Exclusivity	Negative Affectivity	Athletic Identity
Girl	3.32 \pm 0.71	3.5 \pm 0.86	3.3 \pm 0.67	71.1 \pm 9.7	3.9 \pm 0.83	3.5 \pm 0.86	3.5 \pm 0.94	3.6 \pm 1.03	36.3 \pm 7.4
Boy	3.54 \pm 0.59	3.2 \pm 0.74	3.4 \pm 0.53	71.5 \pm 10.44	4 \pm 0.98	3.6 \pm 0.95	3.3 \pm 0.99	3.4 \pm 0.94	35.6 \pm 8.12
Mean	3.43 \pm 0.65	3.4 \pm 0.84	3.3 \pm .061	71.3 \pm 10.46	4.1 \pm 0.9	3.6 \pm 0.9	3.4 \pm 0.97	3.5 \pm 0.98	36.1 \pm 7.75

Table 2: The Relation between Social Intelligence and Athletic identity and their Subscales

	Athletic Identity	Negative Affectivity	Exclusivity	Social Identity	Self-Identity	Social Skills	Social Awareness	Social Information Processing	Social Intelligence
Athletic Identity	1	.748**	.850**	.760**	.782*	-.208*	0.089	.216*	-0.095
Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0	0.013	0.025	0.01	0.26
Negative Affectivity		1	.517**	.385**	.409*	-.186*	-.265**	-.210*	-.189*
Sig. (2-tailed)			0	0	0	0.028	0.002	0.013	0.037
Exclusivity			1	.545**	.593*	-0.161	-.184*	0.028	-0.018
Sig. (2-tailed)				0	0	0.057	0.03	0.021	0.835
Social Identity				1	.484*	-0.112	.186*	.280**	.188*
Sig. (2-tailed)					0	0.189	0.027	0.001	0.039
Self-Identity					1	-0.072	-0.048	0.13	-0.035
Sig. (2-tailed)						0.399	0.577	0.127	0.682
Social Skills						1	.346**	0.049	.677**
Sig. (2-tailed)							0	0.567	0
Social Awareness							1	-.250**	.574**
Sig. (2-tailed)								0.003	0
Social Information Processing								1	.307**
Sig. (2-tailed)									0
Social Intelligence									1

Results prove that there is a significant relationship between social intelligence and some subscales of athletic identity. As it was mentioned before, athletic identity consists of four subscales of “Self-Identity”, “Social Identity”, “exclusivity”, and “negative excitability”. “Self-Identity” is about how much the person regard himself as athlete. This Self-

Identity is formed from the imagination of the person of himself, regardless of his relationships and social interactions. Therefore it can be predicted that social intelligence has no relation with the Self-Identity, a result confirmed by this study (table 1). “Social Identity” is an indicator of the role of sport in social recognition of the individual. According to the results,

social intelligence has a significant and positive relation with Social Identity, a predictable and logical result. In fact, this type of personality is obtained from appropriate social relations based on social intelligence. "Negative excitability" becomes clear with feelings such as depression and bad feeling towards him or herself due to a lack of success in sport activities and "exclusivity" refers to the importance of sport compared to doing other activities. Results show that the social intelligence has a negative relationship with subscales of Negative Affectivity and exclusivity. In fact, weakness in behavioral and excitability skills in social relationships, or in other words, weakness in social intelligence, causes a more Negative Affectivity and extreme exclusivity. Therefore, the meaning and function of social intelligence is perception, interpretation and right behavior in social situations [20] and as an ability and social skill which includes perception, mental, cognition, analytical and behavioral parts [22]. Hence, while it is acceptable and logical to show some common excitement and exclusivity behaviors in the field of sport, but showing excessive excitements and intensive exclusivity behaviors are usually considered as undesirable social behaviors. Therefore, attention to social intelligence and advancement of this skill in athletes can play an important role in organization and directing of the behaviors and excitements by the athletes. Of course we must notice that social intelligence has a lot in common with important factors in managing excitements such as emotional intelligence and interpersonal intelligence.

The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between subscales of information processing with athletic identity and subscales of Social Identity. This relation with Negative Affectivity was significant but negative. Because this subscale emphasizes on the ability of perception, prediction of others' behaviors and feelings and measures the ability to receive the verbal and nonverbal messages in human relations, we can conclude that the enhancement of information processing will lead to an enhancement in sport and Social Identity. In case of faults in processing stages, undesirable excitement behaviors will leak out (negative excitability). Based on the results from this study, there is a significant but negative relation between social awareness with athletic identity and subscales of Negative Affectivity and exclusivity, but this relation with the subscale of Social Identity is positive. This subscale measures the inclination towards unawareness or excitability towards events in social situations and the active ability in behaving according to the needs of a situation, time or place.

Results show that there is a significant and negative subscale in social skills and athletic identity. This result expresses the fact that athletic identity has a negative effect on social skills (subscale of social

intelligence). In fact, too much dedication to sport and athletic identity growth in athletes may hinder their other personalities like social, family, friendship, religious, educational and emotional personalities [26]. Conclusion is that the athlete turns into a one-dimensional person and during failure, or emotional hurting times it causes them to show inappropriate emotional behaviors (negative excitability). More important than all, a one-dimension growth in the end of a training period will cause some emotional disorders in the athletes, because they have to get out of their athletic identity and replace it with a new one.

CONCLUSION

In general we can conclude that the relation between the social intelligence and athletic identity is a two-way and mutual relationship. On the one hand, social intelligence will lead to higher social interactions such as sport participations and advancement in athletic identity. On the other hand, strong athletic identity will lead in a deeper insight and internal motivation towards sport and as a result more sport participation and social interactions and higher social intelligence. Further, we must notice that although strong athletic identity will result in consistent growth in sport participation, it will be ensued with success and development of the athletes, considering the possible negative effects (Negative affectivity and intense exclusivity) we must say that the growth and development of athletic identity requires some mental and logical backing, what we call "social intelligence". Therefore, we advise trainers and athletes to pay attention to social intelligence before paying attention to athletic identity.

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