



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUATION OF THE ATHLETIC IDENTITY PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS OF A SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS WITH REGARD TO SOME VARIABLES (SAMPLE OF ISTANBUL GELIŞİM UNIVERSITY)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to evaluate the relationship between the athletic identity perceptions of athletes, who were studying in a School of Physical Education and Sports, selected variables. A total of 288 athletes participated in this study. The participants were studying at the School of Physical Education and Sports at Istanbul Gelişim University, and they were selected from students agreed voluntarily to participate this research by the random sampling method who were individual athletes and team athletes. The research consisted of two stages. The first, "Personal Information Form", which includes the branch of sport (individual or team), the years of playing sport and information about the number of competitions attended. The second stage is to determine the "Scale of Athletic Identity", which was developed by Brewer and Cornelius (2001) is the sporting identity perceptions of athletes, and the Turkish adaptation of which was done by Öztürk and Koca (2013), was used in the second stage. The data acquired were recorded with the IBM SPSS 22 packaged software. Mann Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis Test Statistics was applied as the statistical process. In the findings, 62.8% of the volunteers participating in the study were 37.2% of the team athletes were individual athletes, 37.5% of the sports year were 1-5 years, 50.0% of the sportspeople were 6-10 years, 12.5% and over years. When the number of competitions are examined, it is determined that 20.5% of the participants are between 20 and 20%, 16.3% are between 21 and 40, 7.6% are between 41 and 60 and 55.6% are over 61. there is a meaningful difference according to the sports branches of the athlete identity of the participants. There are differences according to the sports years of athlete's identity perception of participants. There are also significant differences according to the number of competitions of the athlete's identity aegis of the participants. In conclusion, while no significant difference was determined between athletic identity perception and the sports branch, a statistically significant difference was determined between athletic identity perception and the years playing sport, and the number of competitions.

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INTRODUCTION

Sports can be described as intense efforts to improve the individual's physical and mental health, to fight within competitive measures according to certain rules, to be excited, to judge and to be superior, to achieve success, to reach the highest point in personal terms (Araci, 1999). Yörükoğlu also defines these activities as competition with the activities related to the development of the person, who is the main element of sport, economic, cultural and social development, with power, health and mental health, protection and complete balancing (Yörükoğlu, 1990). In short, since it is concerned with human behavior above anything else, it is clear that sport has today become an indispensable social fact, one which has

great influence. This is true whether its aim is to create a society which is healthy and has a high degree of productivity, or to train creative and healthy young people who are able to view the future with confidence, or whether it aims to combat social disintegration and social alienation (Yıldıran, Yetim, 1996). "Identity" is the totality of an individual's perceptions of himself/herself that distinguishes him/her from other individuals. Identity is shaped as a result of the effects of his/her memories, beliefs, value judgments, sex, age, status and experiences. It was reported by Budak (2000) the definition of the concept of identity as "a subjective wholeness, consistency and feeling of continuity in terms of our identity"; and as whatever response we give to the question "Who am I?" that is different from everyone else and results the unique human beings e.i. "Identity of Self" is a perception that is a part of a self-system in which qualities and characteristics complement each other, one that distinguishes individuals from other

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people and that makes somebody a “specific” somebody (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Based on the concepts of identity and identity of self, we can define athletic identity as the self-identification and limitation of the individual within his/her “athletic roles”. All the factors (trainers, teammates, family members etc.) that occur within the athlete’s social life can help the athlete develop a strong sporting identity perception (Brewer *et al*, 1993). Athletic identity can also be thought as a cognitive structuring or a social role. Within the cognitive structure, athletic identity plays an important role in athletes. It is well known that athletic identity affects the coping strategies, behaviors and decision-making processes of the athletes (Horton and Mack, 2000). Athletic identity can be defined as the perception and limitation of the individual to his/her function as an athlete through experiences gained from competitions and by taking on a sporting role or roles (Bayansalduz *et al*, 2015). Athletic identity perception is connected with how much the athlete feels himself /herself to be an athlete as a result of the different sporting roles that he/she has occupied in relationships with teammates and trainers, both during training and in competitions. Living sportive life and all the sporting activities in which the athlete participates can help athletic identity stronger. For instance, a football player who is following the proper diet, sleeping properly, and his/her behavior on the football field and in social life can all be associated with athletic identity (Çetinkaya, 2010). The aim of this research was to evaluate the relationship between the athletic identity perceptions of athletes, who were studying in a School of Physical Education and Sports, selected variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Formation of a Volunteer Group

The research population of athletics students which study at School of Physical Education and Sports at Istanbul Gelişim University, while the sample of the research consists of a total of 288 students selected by the random sampling method from the departments of coaching, sports management, exercise and sports sciences, and recreation.

Data Collection Tools

Socio-demographic Information Form: This form, that created by the researcher, consists of three questions about the branch of sports (individual or team sport), years of playing sports, and number of competitions.

The Scale of Athletic Identity Perception: The “Scale of Athletic Identity”, that was developed by Brewer and Cornelius in 2001, and which was adapted into Turkish by Öztürk and Koca in 2013, was used in the research. The internal consistency coefficient calculated for the 10 item-ed one-dimensional form of the scale is 0.89. The statements occurring in the scale were evaluated through a 5 point Likert scale in which “1” means “I completely disagree” and “5” means “I completely agree”. A high score obtained from the scale indicates that the athletic identity is strong.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Sports Branch	Team Sports	220	62.8
	Individual Sports	68	37.2
	Total	288	100
Years of Playing Sports	1-5	108	37.5
	6-10	144	50.0
	11 or more	36	12.5
	Total	288	100.0
Number of Competitions	1-20	59	20.5
	21-40	47	16.3
	41-60	22	7.6
	61 or more	160	55.6
	Total	288	100.0

Table 2. Evaluation of the Participants’ Athletic Identity Perceptions according to Sports Branches

		n	median	min	max	Z	P
Athletic Identity	Team Sports	220	41.00	14.00	50.00	-	.416
Total	Individual Sports	68	41.00	23.00	50.00	.814	

Table 3. Evaluation of the Participants’ Athletic Identity Perceptions according to Years of Playing Sport

Years of Playing Sport	N	median	Min	max	X ²	P	Difference	
Athletic Identity	¹ 1-5 Years	108	38.00	23.00	49.00	14.795	.001	1-2
Total	² 6-10 Years	144	43.00	14.00	50.00			1-3
	³ 11 Years or more	36	41.00	28.00	50.00			

Table 4. Evaluation of the Participants’ Athletic Identity Perceptions according to Number of Competitions

Number of Competitions	n	median	Min	max	X ²	P	Difference	
Athletic Identity	¹ 1-20	59	37.00	23.00	49.00	31.860	.000	1-2
Total	² 21-40	47	40.00	28.00	49.00			1-3
	³ 41-60	22	36.00	25.00	49.00			3-4
	⁴ 61 or more	160	43.00	14.00	50.00			

Statistical Analysis

The acquired data is recorded with the IBM SPSS 22 packaged software. The inventory total scores that give personal information about the participants were given by determining the frequency (f) and percentage (%) values. The parametric and non-parametric distribution statuses of the scores were watched through examining the parametric and non-parametric distribution curves, skewness-kurtosis values, and parametric and non-parametric distribution curves examined through histograms. The data indicate non-parametric distribution. Mann Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis Analysis was applied as the statistical process.

RESULTS

Table 1 is examined it is seen that 62.8% of the volunteers who participated in the study were team athletes and 37.2% of them were individual athletes, 37.5% of them had 1-5 years of playing sport, and 50.0% of them had 6-10 years of playing sport and 12.5% of them had 11 or more years of playing sport. When the number of competitions is examined it can be determined that 20.5% of them had taken part in 1 to 20 competitions, 16.3% of them had taken part in 21 to 40 competitions, 7.6% of them had taken part in 41 to 60 competitions, and 55.6% of them had taken part in 61 or more competitions. The athletic identity perception of the participants according to sports branches is presented in Table 2. There is no statistically significant difference is determined between athletic identity perception total scores calculated according to the sports branches ($p < 0.05$). Athletic identity perception total scores of the participants according to years of playing sport are presented in Table 3. A statistically significant difference is determined in the athletic identity perception between 1 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years, and between 1 to 5 years and 11 years or more ($p < 0.05$). Athletic identity perception total scores of the participants which are according to number of competitions are presented in Table 4. It is determined that there is a statistically significant difference between the athletic identity perception and the number of competitions ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is determined that there is no statistically significant difference between the athletic identity perception total scores with regard to the sports branches of students studying in the School of Physical Education and Sports. In the research of Can and Kaçay (2016) conducted on athletes, they could not determine a significant difference between the athletic identity perception and the sports branch variable. These results also support our study. However, when another study is examined, it is seen that there was a significant difference between the athletic identity scores of participants according to the sports branch (Çetinkaya, 2015). This study is not in line with our findings. As a result of the statistics that are produced with the aim of determining the relationship between the athletic identity perceptions and the sporting experiences of the athletes, it is determined that there is a statistically significant difference in the values that are between 1 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years, and also between 1 to 5 years and 11 years or more. Within this context, we can associate the training the participants received at the sports academy with the self-actualization of the athletes having attained its optimal level. Significant differences are found between sports experience

and athletic identity perceptions when the related literature is examined (Bayansalduz *et al.*, 2015; Çetinkaya, 2015; Brewer *et al.*, 1993). Results support the literature, but this research results in different findings in our study (Can and Kaçay, 2016; Oregon, 2010; Adler and Adler, 1991; Elasky, 2006; Cornelius, 1995; Horton and Mack, 2000). When the athletic identity perception values of the students are analyzed according to the number of competitions it is determined that there is a significant difference between the athletic identity perceptions of students who participated in competitions between those who took part between 1 and 20 and from 21 to 40 times, between 1 and 20 and 41 to 60 times, and between 41 and 60 and 60 or more times. In the literature review, no study was encountered examining the relationship between athletic identity perception and the number of competitions taken part in.

In conclusion, while no significant difference was determined between athletic identity perception and the sports branch, but a statistically significant difference was determined between athletic identity perception and the years of playing sport and the number of competitions. The levels of athletic identity perception of athletes who have just started playing sport may not have progressed because they are inexperienced in their relationships with their teammates and their trainers. In addition, they may not have progressed because of the environments in which they play sports, competition conditions, and mood states associated with winning and losing. Within that context, it can be said that there is positive progress in the athletic identity perception thanks to the self-confidence given by numerous years of taking part sport and by the increase in the number of sporting roles played. However, some negative effects are experienced as a result of more advanced experience in sport, may come into question. A decrease in the expectation that athletes have of sport, a desire to change their living conditions or looking for different professions which may develop because of occupational dissatisfaction, the need for the individual to be present in different social groups leading to compartmentalization of his/her personality, the declining performance that is seen with advancing age and the athletic identity perceptions may show similar negative effects over the course of time. In addition, the opportunities the students have depend on their education and are thought to originate from the competitions in which they have participated, the training which they have received, and the social groups in which the athletes are involved.

Suggestions

1. The athletic identity perceptions of elite athletes could be evaluated.
2. The relationship between athletic identity perception, the optimal mood state and self-sufficiency can be evaluated.
3. The levels of athletic identity perceptions of elite athletes and amateur athletes could be evaluated.

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