

The Level of Athletic Identity among Higher Levels Players of Team Sports Games in Palestine

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The aims of this study were to investigate the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games, in addition to determine differences according to game type & playing experience variables. **Method and Procedures:** The study sample consisted of (520) players of the high level players of team sports games from Palestine. They were classified by game type, soccer accounted for 40.4% of the sample (n = 210), basketball accounted for 17.3% of the sample (n = 90), handball accounted for 23.1% of the sample (n = 120) & volleyball accounted for 19.2% of the sample (n = 100). To collect data, The authors applied the Athletic Identity Scale (AIMS; Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). The AIMS requires participants to respond to seven items designed to assess aspects of identification (social identity, exclusivity & negative affectivity) with the athlete role on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Participants' athletic identity is measured by a total composite score generated by a summation of the scores for the 7 items. To address questions in the study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to determine the reliability, means, standard deviation, percentages, one way anova test were used. **Results:** the results of the study showed the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games were very high, where the percentage of response for the total score was (81.14%). There weren't significant differences in athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games according to game type variable. Also there weren't significant differences in athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games according to playing experience variable.

Keywords: Athletic identity, AIMS, social identity, exclusivity, negative affectivity

INTRODUCTION

The most important characteristic of team sports is that the team plays as one individual. Team sports are different than other sports. They are teams that have interactive work nature as all team members are working together in harmony through complementary movement between them to achieve one goal. That

is through the direct contact between team members during playing and movement. Achievement and Success are results to the ability of communication and understanding between them (Yassin, 2006).

Athletic identity (AI) is considered the entity, supremacy and safety valve to any athlete because he develops respect and recognition between all society groups. There are many concepts and terms that define the athletic identity. Brewer et al. (1993) defined it as "The special component of sports according to self definition to the individual and it is the range that the individual determines with his sports role and that means how well the individual knows his sports role". (Cieslak, 2004; Burke, 1991) defined it as "A degree of importance, strength and individuality related to

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the athletic role the athletic plays and is affected by their environment". Cassie (2004) defined it as "How the individual feels his value, and the ability to take decisions and the clarity of the futuristic vision, binding to sports principles and defining goals that suits his abilities". Hutezler (2003) defined it as "Cognitive evaluation range related to social support which related to the athlete's role in sports games".

Athletic identity as part of a great self-concept is able to accurately define roles, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the athlete and could be considered the base of self-esteem and value that the athlete regards for the role of "self" (Engels et al., 2006).

Athletic identity is related positively to the athletic performance, failure and success experiences and age. (Brewer et al., 1993) pointed that there is a negative relation between athletic identity and age in a sample of athletic students. Also Houle, Brewer & Kluck (2010) verified the development of athletic identity through 3 different age groups (10 years, 15 years, age of majority) and found out that it rose till the age of 15 then stayed in that level in the age of majority. Martin et al (2014) referred that literature also points that the athletic identity can change in response to some events like success or failure. It is also related to practicing and participation (Anderson, 2004). It can provide the motivation and the discipline required to hard practice and success in high level sport (Callero, 1985; Danish, 1983). The Strong Athletic identity also relates to better health (improving nutrition and sleeping habits), fitness, self respect, improving social relations, strengthen the confidence and increasing the participation in physical activity and practice (Tasiemski et al., 2004; Brewer et al, 1993).

As for athletic identity according to Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001), it is composed of three fields: Social Identity which focuses on how the athlete sees himself as an athlete in other people eyes, the second field is Exclusivity which focuses on self image of the individual as an athlete and the third is Negative Affectivity which focuses on the athlete's fear of bad performance.

Athletic identity gained a lot of attention in athletic psychology (Ronkainen et al., 2016) as it is related to different subjects and has an obvious importance by using it in many scientific studies like: level of

athletic activity (Reifstech, 2011), and Self-esteem (Al_Qadoumi, 2014), athletic culture (Qadoumi and al-amad, 2017), tension (Vinga, 2015), self identity and its role in predicting the functional growth (Adams, 2011), self burning (Chang et al., 2018) and more.

Researchers examined lots of studies about athletic identity like Abo Alya (2018) study which aimed to identify the differences of athletic identity and team coherence of sports teams in Palestinian universities "Kadoori University" according to two variables: the sex and game type. Qadoumi and Al-Amad study (2017) to know the level of sports culture and its relation with the athletic identity for Physical Education students in Al-nagah National University. The study of Vinga (2015) was to know the relation between athletic identity and the tension in Physical Education students who are participating in sports activities in Lithuania. And the study of Lisa et al (2014) which was for determining the effect of athletic retirement on athletic identity and life satisfaction. Al-Qadoumi study (2014) was to know the relation between athletic identity and self-esteem of Physical Education students in Palestinian universities. The study of Daniel et al (2011) was to identify the athletic identity of society universities and determining how it is used to guide the students. Study of Bogdanov (2011) was to determine the effect of athletic identity of national teams' players on the athletic identity of athletes in Serbia and Ireland. Finally The study of Fraser et al (2009) was to determine the level of athletic identity of elite athletes in Australia.

Objectives

Current study aims to determine the level of athletic identity and the differences according to the game and the experience that elite players in sports teams in Palestine have.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Study Approach

Descriptive and analytical approach has been used because it suits the study purposes.

Study Society

The study society is composed of all professional football players, volleyball clubs, basketball and handball in West Bank, Palestine. There were (46) clubs which have about (1040) players according to athletic Palestinian unions in 2018-2019.

Study Sample

The study was conducted on random sample of sports teams players in Palestine according to the game type variable, if has 520 players distributed as (Football = 210, Basketball = 90, Handball = 120, Volleyball = 100) and that was (50%) of the society of study.

Study Tools

The researchers used Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) which was set by (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). It is considered the most used measurement scale in the previous studies to measure the athletic identity. The measurement scale is composed of (7) items. The response is determined from (1-7). Degree (1) represents the least degree of approval (I strongly disagree) and degree (7) is the highest degree of approval (I strongly agree). The examined person is asked to put a circle on the number that reflects his opinion, and like that, the lowest degree is 1 and the highest is 7. Items were Distributed these on 3 fields: Social identity (3) items, singularity (2) items and negative excitement (2) items.

Accuracy of the scale was confirmed and researchers applied it on exploratory sample composed of sports teams' players in Palestine outside the study sample and from the study society (55) players from all games. Then internal consistency was used to extract Pearson correlation coefficient values between scale parts with its total degree. It was found that these values ranged between (0.80 – 0.92). It has statistically significant at significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$). And this shows that the scale is sufficient for its purpose. To confirm the scale stability, Cronbach's Alpha test was used for internal consistency between items and the total degree to extract study tool stability factor on sample study individuals. Cronbach Alpha values for athletic identity scale were between (89.5% - 94.8%). Its value on the scale as a whole was (91.2%). These values show that the study tool is highly steady.

Statistical Processing

Researchers used Statistical Packages of Social Sciences program (SPSS) to process the data by extracting means (M), standard deviations (SD) and relative weights to determine the level of the player's athletic identity. One way anova test to determine the differences in the level of athletic identity according to the two variables: game type and players experience.

Viewing the Results of the Study

First: the results related to the first question for the study, which reads

What is the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine?

To answer the first question for the study, the researchers used the means, standard deviations and the percentage relative weights of each paragraph and for each domain, And the total score of the level of athletic identity in study sample, and in order to explain the results, relative weights were used as indicated in the study (Qadoumi, 2014): 80%, The highest level of athletic identity is very high, 70-79.99% is a very high athletic identity level, 60-69.99%, The level of athletic identity is average, 50-59.99% the level of the athletic identity is low, less than 50% is a very low athletic identity.

It appears from the results of the Table 1 that the level of the athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine was very high on items (1, 2, 6, 7), where the percentage of response was more than 80% and the level was high on the items (5,4,3), where the percentage response was respectively: (78.71%, 79.00%, 76.57%). With regard to the order of areas of athletic identity was the dimension of social identity ranked first (83.29%), followed by the dimension of negative emotion (83.14%), and finally after exclusivity dimension (77.71%), as it was a very high overall level of scale athletic identity.

Second: The results related to the second question for the study, which reads

Are there any statistically significant differences in the level of the athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to game type variable?

To answer the second question for the study, researchers with the use of means and standard deviations of the level of athletic identity of the players and one way anova to determine the differences according game type variable and the results of Tables 2 and 3 show that.

It is clear from the results of Table 3 that there are no statistically significant differences in the overall level of the athletic identity scale and its dimensions among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to game type variable.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and relative weights for the level of the athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine (N=520)

No.	Items and athletic identity scale dimensions	Mean	Standard deviations	%	Response	Rank
1	I consider myself an athlete	6.10	1.31	87.14	Very high	1
2	I have many goals related to sport	5.87	1.10	83.86	Very high	2
3	Most of my friends are athletes	5.51	1.38	78.71	High	3
	Total level of social identity dimension	5.83	1.09	83.29	Very high	1
4	Sport is the most important part of my life	5.53	1.40	79.00	High	1
5	I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else	5.36	1.50	76.57	High	2
	Total level of exclusivity dimension	5.44	1.31	77.71	High	3
6	I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport	5.86	1.31	83.71	Very high	1
7	I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport	5.80	1.44	82.86	Very high	2
	Total level of negative affectivity dimension	5.82	1.28	83.14	Very high	2
	Total level of athletic identity scale	5.72	1.05	81.14	Very high	-

*Maximum degree of response (7) degrees. ** (percentage =%)

Table 2: Means and standard deviations for the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to game type variable (N=520)

No.	Athletic identity dimensions	Game type variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Social identity dimension	Football	210	5.79	0.91
		Basketball	90	5.86	1.23
		Handball	120	5.75	1.36
		Volleyball	100	5.99	0.91
2	Exclusivity dimension	Football	210	5.45	1.13
		Basketball	90	5.60	1.25
		Handball	120	5.08	1.70
		Volleyball	100	5.72	1.06
3	Negative affectivity dimension	Football	210	5.75	1.18
		Basketball	90	5.72	1.44
		Handball	120	5.89	1.43
		Volleyball	100	6.01	1.12
-	Total level of athletic identity scale	Football	210	5.68	0.80
		Basketball	90	5.74	1.20
		Handball	120	5.60	1.27
		Volleyball	100	5.92	0.92

Third: The results related to the third question for the study, which reads

Are there any statistically significant differences in the level of athletic identity among the high-level players of the team sports games in Palestine due to the variance of the experience in the game?

To answer the third question for the study, researchers with the use of means and standard deviations of the

level of athletic identity of the players and one way anova to determine the differences according game type variable and the results of Tables 4 and 5 show that.

It is clear from the results of Table 5 that there are no significant differences in the level of athletic identity among among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to play experience variable.

Table 3: The results of one way anova to determin the significant differences in the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to game type variable (N=520)

No.	Athletic identity dimension	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Social identity dimension	Between Groups	3.867	3	1.289	1.085	0.355
		Within Groups	612.798	516	1.188		
		Total	616.665	519			
2	Exclusivity dimension	Between Groups	25.237	3	8.412	5.001	
		Within Groups	868.059	516	1.682		
		Total	893.296	519			
3	Negative affectivity dimension	Between Groups	6.071	3	2.024	1.228	0.229
		Within Groups	850.117	516	1.648		
		Total	856.188	519			
Total level of athletic identity scale		Between Groups	6.016	3	2.005	1.837	0.139
		Within Groups	563.205	516	1.091		
		Total	569.220	519			

* The level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). ** DF: Degree of freedom. *** Sig.: Significance level.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations for the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to play experiance variable (N=520)

No.	Athletic identity dimensions	Playing experience variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Social identity dimension	Less 5 years	164	5.82	1.13
		6-10 years	194	5.76	1.05
		More 10 years	162	5.92	1.09
2	Exclusivity dimension	Less 5 years	164	5.49	1.37
		6-10 years	194	5.40	1.22
		More 10 years	162	5.45	1.36
3	Negative affectivity dimension	Less 5 years	164	5.84	1.30
		6-10 years	194	5.81	1.23
		More 10 years	162	5.83	1.32
-	Total level of athletic identity scale	Less 5 years	164	5.73	1.08
		6-10 years	194	5.67	1.00
		More 10 years	162	5.76	1.06

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The study aimed to determine the level of athletic identity and differences depending on the variables of game type and experience of playing among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine, Where it turns out that the level of the athletic identity of team sports games in Palestine was too high and this is because of these players represent the highest athletic level and therefore they do have a high level of Performance delivery, experience success, collective interaction, self – esteem, mood, and emotional intelligence, in addition to sports training and arranging, and its contribution to the formation of positive experiences they have where there is an

agreement between the majority of studies In the presence of a positive impact of sports activities on the athletic identity. which in turn contributed to raise the level of their athletic identity. And the results were consistent with the results of studies (Reifsteck, 2011; Vinga, 2015; Fraser et al., 2009) which results showed a positive relationship between the level of sports practice and the continuation of sports activities and athletic identity, and showed some studies such as (Fraser et al., 2009) Said that after the retirement of some Australian athletes and the lack of sports activities led to a lack of level of athletic identity compared to younger people. These results are consistent with the concept of mathematical identity, which means the extent determined by the individual with the athletic

Table 5: The results of one way anova to determin the significant differences in the level of athletic identity among higher levels players of team sports games in Palestine according to play experience variable (N=520)

No.	Athletic identity dimension	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Social identity dimension	Between Groups	2.224	2	1.112	0.936	0.393
		Within Groups	614.440	517	1.188		
		Total	616.665	519			
2	Exclusivity dimension	Between Groups	0.671	2	0.335	0.194	0.824
		Within Groups	892.625	517	1.727		
		Total	893.296	519			
3	Negative affectivity dimension	Between Groups	0.100	2	0.050	0.030	0.970
		Within Groups	856.088	517	1.656		
		Total	856.188	519			
Total level of athletic identity scale		Between Groups	0.760	2	0.380	0.346	0.708
		Within Groups	568.460	517	1.100		
		Total	569.220	519			

* The level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). ** DF: Degree of freedom. *** Sig.: Significance level

identity assigned to any degree of knowledge of the individual's role in sports (Brewer et al., 1993; Cieslak, 2004; Cassie, 2004). While the results of this study differed with Qadoumi and AL-Ammad, 2016) and (Vinga, 2015) studies, Which showed that the level of athletic identity was high, and (Caudroit & et al., 2010) study, Which showed that the level of athletic identity was moderate.

While there are no statistically significant differences in the overall level of the athletic identity scale and its dimensionss according to game type variable due to the similarities in the conditions of the training environment and training structure by one training unit per dayin addition to the essence of interest in team sports games by the sports federations without differentiation between them and provide all suitable playing conditions for each player depending on the game type. Such results differ with the results of a study (Daniel et al., 2011) Which showed differences depending on the game type like basketball, followed by football and finally baseball. While agreeing with what Yassin (2006) pointed to that team sports games are distinct from other games that a difference in the nature of the interactive work, where like all members of the team work together in perfect harmony through motor and physical integration towards achieving a single goal And this is through direct contact between the members of the team during the game and moves and be accomplished and success as a result of the ability to communicate and understanding between them.

It turns out that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of athletic identity according to play experience variable due to the convergence of the players level of performance in different age because most of the players in the local and come into contact with each other with the loss of external friction, in addition to the stability of the level of athletic identity in adulthood and this is confirmed by (Houle, Brewer, & Kluck, 2010) In the development of athletic identity in three age groups (10 years, 15 years, and age of majority). and found that they increased until the age of 15 and then remained at this level in adulthood. Brewer et al. (1993) Indicates a negative relationship between athletic identity and age in a sample of student-athletes. He stressed (Fraser et al., 2009; Lisa et al., 2014) that the closer they get to retirement the less their level of athletic identity, while the results differed with the results of the study (Bogdanov, 2011) Which showed that the level of sports identity was high at the oldest age.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the results of the study and discussion, the researchers found the overall level of scale athletic identity among study sample was very high, a while there is no effect of the variables of the game type and experience playing on the athletic identity among the study sample.

RECOMMENDATIONS

based on findings, the researchers recommend that the management of sports clubs and coaches in the

development of sports identity of young people Because they have a role in influencing commitment and athletic affiliation in the future.

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