

The Relationship between Self-identity and Career Preparation Behaviour among College Sports Players

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Background/Objectives: This study was performed to examine the relationship between self-identity and career preparation behaviour among college sports players.

Methods/Statistical analysis: To examine the relationship among variables this research did correlation analysis, and to examine causal relationships among variables, it did multiple regression analysis. The significance level was set at $\alpha=.05$.

Findings: This study has come to the following results: firstly, there is a positive relationship between self-identity and career preparation behaviour among college sports players. Secondly, self-identity has a statistically significant effect on career exploration. Thirdly, self-identity has a statistically significant effect on career exploration. Lastly, self-identity has a statistically significant effect on career consultation.

Improvements/Applications: In conclusion, such findings seem to demonstrate that the more confidently college sports players evaluate themselves, the more apparent their plans are and the more actively they seek information on future jobs, the more effort they make in their career preparation.

Keywords: *College Sports Player, Self-identity, Career Activities, Career Exploration, Career Consultation.*

Introduction

As a person grows from infant to adolescent, to adult and as a member of society, his or her identity becomes complex in the contents of roles and characteristics depending on the social groups he or she belongs to and how they are positioned within them. Thus, people set self-identity priorities or give their representativeness, based on their essential social positions (Kim et al., 2013). Accordingly, to live correctly as a social member, a person should have a clear consciousness of his/her self-identity.

A comparative study on the self-identities of student sports players and common students reported that, in specificity and social adjustment, sports players are lower than common students (Kim and Kim, 2005). It is a finding that indicates that in adult life in society, self-identity is an essential element. Given the research finding that awareness of self-identity has an excellent effect on one's awareness of future career and behaviour in preparing for a career (Holahan and Holahan, 1987; Lee 2011; Hong 2013) we can recognise that self-identity is closely related with one's career.

In the relationship between self-identity and career, firstly, the former is related to identifying one's ability and talent. Secondly, self-identity is also closely related to self-confidence and trust in oneself. Thirdly, it is found that one who has high self-identity tends to have a nomadic consciousness on career and do a nomadic exploration of career (Koo et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2012).

Deciding on one's career is an essential thing in one's life because it is a decision on one's way of life (Osipow 1987) and the quality of one's life. Accordingly, that means one should prepare adequately for such a decision. Therefore, schools, in particular, colleges, which are the highest educational institutions to ordinary people and the ones where students prepare for their future jobs, should play an important role in the preparation of students' careers. Nevertheless, many Korean college students suffer conflicts, anxieties and a confusion of values in choosing their future careers (Park 2001; Kim and Park 2011).

Recently, an increasing number of college students postponed their graduations, apparently because they were worried about their future careers and not ready to decide on them. The situation is also right for college sports players. In particular, college sports players are rarely given any education on their future careers outside of the sports area (Jung et al., 2017). Also, their academic studies in preparation for a career are not correctly performed and as their human relations with people outside of the sports area are minimal, they do not think deeply about growth as a human being (Kang and Ryu 2013). It affects self-identity designating who one is. Self-identity is highly related to the general problem regarding careers, such as decisions on a career and preparation for a career (Shin and Lee 2004).



Whilst at college, an important time for career planning and preparation, there is little career preparation for college sports players. It may be caused by not enough education on careers for sports players in middle and high school. Then, there is the current question of career problems for Korean sports players and the reason why we should pay attention to the career problem of sports players is that they have problems in deciding and preparing for their future careers because they spend time playing sports. Therefore, we can say that it is urgent to provide sports players with career education.

Existing research on career problems for sports players has focused on high school sports players (Moon and Lee 2010; Kim and Kim 2018; Lee and Jeon 2006), and there has not been sufficient research on college sports players. The research on them focuses on variables like consciousness on career (Park 2014; Park et al., 2017) and exploration of career (So and Jung 2013; Kim and Kim 2014). However, in particular, there has been not sufficient research on variables like self-identity which directly and indirectly affects career preparation behaviour and explains the focus factor on career education. In this respect, it is necessary to do research on the relationship between self-identity and career preparation behaviour.

Research Methods

Research Objects

The objects of this research are college sports players registered in the Korean Sports & Olympic Committee in 2019. Using a convenience sampling method, this research selected 300 college sports players and performed a survey on them. Survey respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire and the copies of the questionnaire were collected immediately after they were filled out. Excluding some copies which were not sincerely filled out, 277 copies in total were used for final analysis. The general characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: General characteristics of respondents

Variable	Classification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	male	151	54.5
	female	126	45.5
Year	freshman	75	27.1
	sophomore	79	28.5
	junior	66	23.8
	senior	57	20.6
Sports career	less than 4 years	45	16.2
	4-5 years	58	20.9
	6-7 years	92	33.2
	8 years or over	82	29.6
Sports category	record event	85	30.7
	fighting event	97	35.0
	ball event	95	34.3
		277	100

Survey Tools

Self-Identity

The scale of self-identity of this research was the revised version of what (Park 1996) developed. Self-identity consisted of the following questions: self-acceptance (5 questions), confidence in future (4 questions), subjectivity (4 questions) and autonomy (4 questions) (Kim and Kim 2011; Lee and Seo 2012). Respondents were asked to choose their answers from the Likert scale ranging from 'No' (1 point), 'No' (2 points), 'So so' (3 points), 'Yes' (4 points), to 'Definitely yes' (5 points).

Career Preparation Behaviour

In this study, the questions on career preparation behaviour were a revised version of what (Kim 1997) developed. It consisted of the following questions: career activities (5 questions), career exploration (6 questions) and career consultation (4 questions) (Lee and Hong 2013; Lee 2016). Respondents were asked to choose their answers from the same Likert scale mentioned above.

Validity and Reliability

This research did a principal component analysis of exploratory factor analysis to test the validity of the survey tools. This research used varimax among orthogonal rotation methods to simplify factor construct. The criteria to extract characteristic variances was eigenvalue 1.0 or over. Variables included in the factor were those with factor loading .50 or over. This research used Cronbach's α coefficient following the standard of internal consistency to test the reliability of survey tools.

Self-Identity

Table 2: Validity and reliability of Self-identity

Q No.	Self-acceptance	Confidence in future	Subjectivity	Autonomy	h^2
Q 05	.879	.025	.019	-.012	.663
Q 02	.872	-.008	-.011	-.029	.788
Q 03	.857	-.034	.000	.010	.744
Q 04	.849	.134	-.028	.056	.699
Q 01	.814	.075	-.158	-.018	.763
Q 13	.014	.855	.244	-.016	.789
Q 10	.066	.853	.160	-.072	.712
Q 11	.033	.831	.308	-.043	.790
Q 12	.074	.807	.235	-.014	.693
Q 15	-.033	.210	.860	.055	.761
Q 16	-.092	.189	.833	.075	.736
Q 14	-.111	.307	.729	.158	.743
Q 17	.072	.386	.709	-.205	.773
Q 06	.009	.011	.095	.839	.676
Q 09	.012	-.059	-.062	.827	.713
Q 08	.017	-.015	-.075	.819	.643
Q 07	-.029	-.067	.167	.781	.691
Eigenvalue	4.589	3.749	2.790	1.251	
Variance%	26.996	22.051	16.410	7.357	
Cumulative %	26.996	49.047	65.457	72.814	
Reliability	.704	.709	.681	.690	
KMO=.833, $\chi^2=2762.441$, df=136, p=.001					

As shown in Table 2, the Bartlett's identity matrix of self-identity was 2762.441, the significance probability was .001 and the KMO index was .833, showing that the selection of variables was proper. Factor analysis of 17 questions extracted 4 factors, which explained

72.8% of total variate. Factor loadings of self-acceptance and sub-factor of self-identity were .814~.879. Those of confidence in future were .807~.855, those of subjectivity were .709~.860 and those of autonomy were .781~.839. Reliability values for 4 factors were as follows: .704 for self-acceptance, .709 for confidence in future, .681 for subjectivity and .690 for autonomy. All of them were reliable.

Career Preparation Behaviour

Table 3: Validity and reliability of career preparation behaviour

Q No.	Career activities	Career exploration	Career consultation	h ²
Q 10	.890	-.100	.034	.748
Q 07	.886	-.114	-.055	.787
Q 08	.878	-.019	-.027	.814
Q 06	.875	-.086	-.063	.662
Q 11	.862	-.126	-.016	.692
Q 09	.845	-.014	.085	.776
Q 03	-.111	.894	.036	.802
Q 02	-.098	.882	-.004	.772
Q 01	-.065	.860	.067	.722
Q 05	-.010	.826	.097	.803
Q 04	-.109	.798	.117	.760
Q 13	-.046	.069	.833	.522
Q 14	-.045	-.009	.778	.701
Q 12	.009	.094	.716	.607
Q 15	.051	.086	.715	.522
Eigenvalue	5.060	3.405	2.223	
Variance%	33.735	22.700	14.823	
Cumulative %	33.735	56.435	71.258	
Reliability	.676	.845	.819	
KMO=.866, $\chi^2=2729.717$, df=105, p=.001				

As shown in Table 3, Bartlett's identity matrix of self-identity was 2729.717, the significance probability was .001 and the KMO index was .866, showing that the selection of variables was proper. Factor analysis of 15 questions extracted 3 factors, which explained 71.3% of total variate. Factor loadings of sub-factors were as follows: .845~.890 for career activities, .798~.894 for career exploration and .715~.833 for a career consultation. Reliability values for 4 factors were as follows: .676 for career activities, .845 for career exploration and .819 for a career consultation. All the values were reliable.

Data Treatment

The data collected was analysed using the SPSS (ver 21.0) program. The collected data was under descriptive statistics analysis, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis to identify normal distribution, validity and reliability. This research did correlation analysis to examine relations among variables, and, to examine causal relations among variables, it did multiple regression analysis. The significance level was set at $\alpha=.05$.

Research Findings

Correlation between Self-Identity and Career Preparation Behaviour of College Sports Players

Table 4: Correlation between self-identity and career preparation behaviour

Variable	A	B	C	D	E	F	GH
Self-acceptance	-						
Confidence in future	-.001	-					
Subjectivity	.084	-.070	-				
Autonomy	-.070	.040	.562***	-			
Career activities	-.106	.196***	.472***	.502***	-		
Career exploration	.916***	-.062	.023	.133*	.177***	-	
Career consultation	.032	.836***	-.106	-.017	.151*	-.026	-

*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

Correlations among self-identity and career preparation behaviour are shown in Table 4. Specifically, there was a positive correlation between self-acceptance and career exploration ($r=.916$). Confidence in future was also positively correlated with career consultation ($r=.836$) and career activities ($r=.196$). Subjectivity was also positively correlated with career activities ($r=.472$). Autonomy was positively correlated with career activities ($r=.502$) and career exploration ($r=.133$).

Relationship between Self-Identity and Career Preparation Behaviour

Table 5: Relationship between self-identity and career activities

	B	SE	Beta	t	tolerance	VIF
Constant	1.120	.306		3.656***		
Self-acceptance	.115	.051	.112	2.274*	.972	1.029
Confidence on future	.243	.058	.206	4.221***	.985	1.015
Subjectivity	.298	.055	.326	5.457***	.660	1.515
Autonomy	.318	.063	.303	5.078***	.664	1.507

R²=.358, Corrected R²=.349, F=37.999***

*p<.05, ***p<.001

Self-identity significantly affected career activities (F=37.999, p<.001) and its explanatory power was about 35.8% (R²=.358) out of total variate. Beta values showing relative influences of self-identity on career activities are as follows: self-acceptance (β=.112, p<.05), confidence in future (β=.206, p<.001), subjectivity (β=.326, p<.001) and autonomy (β=.303, p<.001) [Table 5]. That is, all the sub-variables of self-identity positively affect career activities.

Relationship between Self-Identity and Career Activities

Table 6: Relationship between self-identity and career exploration

	B	SE	Beta	t	tolerance	VIF
Constant	.605	.145		4.165***		
Self-acceptance	.919	.024	.916	38.263***	.972	1.029
Confidence in future	.071	.027	.062	2.591**	.985	1.015
Subjectivity	-.028	.026	-.031	-1.075	.660	1.515
Autonomy	-.050	.030	-.048	-1.687	.664	1.507

R²=.849, Corrected R²=.846, F=381.136***

***p<.001, **p<.01

Self-identity significantly affected career exploration (F=381.136, p<.001) and its explanatory power was about 84.9% (R²=.849) out of total variate. Beta values showing relative influences of self-identity on career exploration are as follows: self-acceptance (β=.916, p<.001) and confidence in future (β=.062, p<.01) [Table 6]. That is, self-acceptance and confidence in the future among college sports players have positive effects on career exploration.

Relationship between Self-Identity and Career Consultation

Table 7: Relationship between self-identity and career consultation

	B	SE	Beta	t	tolerance	VIF
Constant	.582	.181		3.208***		
Self-acceptance	.030	.030	.033	.991	.972	1.029
Confidence in future	.856	.034	.835	25.106***	.985	1.015
Subjectivity	-.027	.032	-.034	-.839	.660	1.515
Autonomy	-.027	.037	-.029	-.722	.664	1.507

R²=.703, Corrected R²=.699, F=161.334***

***p<.001

Self-identity significantly affected career consultation (F=161.334, p<.001) and its explanatory power was about 70.3% (R²=.703) out of total variate. Beta values showing relative influences of self-identity on career exploration are as follows: confidence in future (β=.835, p<.001) [Table 7]. That is, confidence in the future among college sports players has a positive effect on career consultation.

Discussion

This study was performed to examine the relationship between self-identity and career preparation behaviour among college sports players. Based on the findings of this study, the following can be discussed.

College sports players belong to the educational institution for adults. In the general sense, college is institutionally and culturally different from middle school and high school. College sports players are supposed to accumulate various kinds of knowledge in humanities and society and face the out-of-school career. However, unlike other college students, they are closed in an 'isolated island culture' and 'the sole culture called sports,' and tend to focus only on sports. They have difficulty in adjusting to life other than sports training (Lee 2003) and suffer stress caused by game scores (Moon and Pak 2013). So, they focus only on training and are not well prepared for a future career, and, in severe cases, lose self-identity.

Self-identity is a psychological mechanism that allows one to be able to feel the essential existence of oneself in any place and time and in any social status and role (Erickson 1986). When one has a well-established sense of identity, one has confidence to be oneself. But, in the opposite case, one experiences a sense of isolation, insecurity and resistance. In such a case, one can have difficulty in adjusting to society. Thus, one needs to prepare for the future career more thoroughly. Accordingly, this study examined the relationship between self-

identity and career preparation behaviour among college sports players. The findings are as follows.

Firstly, it was found that self-identity and career preparation behaviour are positively related. Secondly, the self-identity of college sports players was found to positively and significantly affect career activities, career exploration and career consultation. (Yang and Kim 2008) found that a sense of identity, which can be understood as personal characteristics, has significant effect on the career decision level and career preparation behaviour, supporting the findings of this study. Similarly, (An and Han 2002) argued that a sense of self-identity formed through the individual socialisation process works as an essential variable in career choice and career preparation behaviour. Specifically, they argued that a sense of self-identity affects career preparation behaviour like career activities, career exploration and career consultation, which is similar to the findings of this study.

Such findings prove that self-identity is an essential variable for career preparation behaviour among college sports players. Accordingly, to improve the career preparation behaviour of those players, we need to help them establish self-identity. It is necessary to develop career education programs based on the self-identity of sports players. Then, if they voluntarily explore their careers and seek career consultation, they will make desirable decisions about their careers.

Conclusion

This study was performed to examine the relationship between self-identity and career preparation behaviour among college sports players. This study has come to the following conclusions.

Firstly, there is a positive relationship between self-identity and career preparation behaviour among college sports players. Secondly, self-identity has a statistically significant effect on career exploration. Thirdly, self-identity has a statistically significant effect on career exploration. Lastly, self-identity has a statistically significant effect on career consultation.

Such findings seem to demonstrate that the more confidently college sports players evaluate themselves, the more evident their plans are and the more actively they seek information on future jobs, the more effort they make for their career preparation.

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