



## The relationship between emotional intelligence and athlete burnout

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### ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotion, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and athlete burnout. There is a negative significant relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence. Also there is a negative significant relationship between burnout with self-motivating, self-awareness, self-control, social awareness and social skills. Emotional intelligence is an important factor in preventing athletes' burnout.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, burnout, athletes

### INTRODUCTION

Research in general psychology has emphasized the utility of emotional intelligence [1, 2] and it is proposed to be a construct associated with adaptive psychological functioning [3]. Defined as 'the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotion, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions' [4], measures of emotional intelligence associate with successful performance in a number of applied settings [5] including sport [6]. They also associate with a number of health-related variables, including minimizing the effects of stress [7]. There is a growing interest in emotional intelligence in sport. Recent research found emotional intelligence related to emotions experienced before successful and unsuccessful performance [8]. Lane et al [8] found that emotions correlating with successful performance vigor, happiness, and calmness, whereas emotions associating with poor performance include confusion, depression and fatigue. The competencies of perception, understanding, utilizing and managing emotions effectively in the self and others comprise the core of emotional intelligence [9, 10, 11]. Competency in perception of emotion involves recognizing emotion-related facial and voice cues of others and awareness of one's own body states relating to emotion. Competency in understanding one's own and others' emotions consists of knowing the causes and consequences of different emotions as well as being able to differentiate between varying emotions. Utilizing emotions involves harnessing the effects of emotions, for example by drawing on positive mood to enhance creative thought. Managing emotions in the self and others consists of regulating emotions so that they are compatible with the requirements of a situation or the goals of individuals. Some conceptualizations of emotional intelligence, including those of Goleman [12] and Bar-On [13], include competencies, such as social skills, that build on these basic competencies.

In the sport environment, burnout has been defined "as a psychological, emotional, and physical withdrawal from a formerly pursued and enjoyable sport as a result of excessive stress which acts on the athlete over time" [14]. In the workplace setting, the burnout syndrome has been characterized in by three distinct dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low feelings of accomplishment [15]. Due, however, to the contextual differences between the working environment and the sporting environment, Raedeke [16] modified these three dimensions to include: physical/emotional exhaustion, sport devaluation and a reduced sense of accomplishment. Physical/emotional exhaustion is associated with intense training and competition. An individual experiencing emotional exhaustion would dread doing an activity that previously was enjoyed, feel as if he was going through the motions or feel

emotionally exhausted after the activity when previously he felt little to no exhaustion. A reduced sense of accomplishment is related to skills and abilities. Decreased feelings of accomplishments materialize as feeling that efforts are wasted or worthless and an overall feeling of frustration. Sport devaluation refers to a loss of interest or resentment toward the sport and performance results. An individual suffering from high feelings of sport devaluation would become apathetic about his sport and not care about personal or team performance. The dimensions of physical/emotional exhaustion and a reduced sense of accomplishment are similar to the constructs in the work environment; however, the devaluation dimension in sports is different than the depersonalization dimension in the work environment. The Raedeke dimension of sport devaluation focuses more on the value an individual places on their performance and on sport in general rather than the interpersonal relationships like depersonalization does in the workplace.

Some researchers investigate correlation between emotional intelligence and job burnout in workplace. Saiari et al [17] showed there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout Syndrome and emotional intelligence components. Platsidou et al [18] showed that burnout dimensions were predicted by EI factors (emotion regulation and self- or others' emotions appraisal). Jude [19] indicated that emotional intelligence and locus of control when taken as a whole significantly predict burnout. Ekermans[20] indicate Higher EI is significantly related with lower stress and burnout in a sample of South African nurses. Therefore, the present study question is there significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout on athletes?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participant

The population of the study consisted of 300 team (football, volleyball, basketball, and handball) and individual (wrestling, swimming, badminton, track and field) sports. The sample size was equated with the population.

### Measures

**Emotional intelligence questionnaire.** The SyberYashring (1986) questionnaire for emotional intelligence is used in this research. It includes 33 questions of 5 components. These elements are as self-motivation, self-awareness, self-control, social consciousness and social skills. With filling this questionnaire, each subject receives total number of 6, 5 of which is related to subscales and 1 number is assigned to the total emotional intelligence. The alpha Cronbach coefficient to this questionnaire was 0.84.

**Athlete Burnout Questionnaire.** Burnout was measured by the Athlete Burnout Questionnaire [21] a sport-specific questionnaire. The stem for each question was "How often do you feel this way?" Athletes are asked to rate the extent to which they experience each item in relation to participation motives on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from (1) "almost never", (2) "rarely", (3) "sometimes", (4) "frequently", and (5) "almost always." The ABQ is comprised of 15 items that are separated into three subscales, each containing five items. The three subscales are: devaluation of sport participation, reduced sense of accomplishment and emotional and physical exhaustion. In the current study, two of the three subscales showed acceptable levels of internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's alphas of .88 (exhaustion) and .84 (devaluation).

### Method

The method of the study is descriptive correlational. The data was collected using questionnaires and through field study procedure. Descriptive statistics were used for describing and categorizing raw data and for measuring Mean, frequency, SD and table drawing. Also, Pearson coefficient of correlation and Kolmogorov Smirnov test and T-test were used. For analyzing data the SPSS software was applied and 93% of confidence level was considered.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of table 1 indicate that the highest frequency for age is belonging to 18-21 range. In regarding to gender women has highest frequency.

**Table 1: Demographic information of athletes**

Variable	Range	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-21	179	63.3
	29-39	67	23.7
	40-50	16	5.7

	51-61	4	1.4
	Total	283	100.0
Gender	Men	95	33.6
	Women	188	64.4
	Total	283	100
Sport	Team sport	147	51.9
	Individual sport	136	48.1
	Total	240	100

**Table 2: Pearson coefficient between emotional intelligence and burnout**

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
self motivating	3.49	0.14	1						
Self awareness	3.71	0.14	0.30**	1					
Self control	3.44	0.17	0.35**	0.31**	1				
Social awareness	3.47	0.21	0.27**	0.24**	0.56**	1			
Social skills	3.70	0.14	0.20**	0.29**	0.28**	0.30**	1		
Emotional intelligence	3.56	117.53	0.65**	0.66**	0.72**	0.66**	0.63**	1	
Burnout	2.44	36.60	-0.19**	-0.54**	-0.18**	-0.17**	-0.23**	-0.40**	1

The results of table 2 indicate that there is negative significant relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence. Also there is negative significant relationship between burnout with self motivating, self awareness, self control, social awareness and social skills.

**Table3. Regression associated with prediction of burnout according emotional intelligence and its subscales**

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F (df)	Burnout	B	Beta	t	Sig
Emotional intelligence	0.55	0.30	23.55(5)		80.14		15.96	0.00
				self motivating	-0.05	-0.02	-0.40	0.69
				Self awareness	-1.28	-0.51	-9.24	0.00
				Self control	0.15	0.05	0.83	0.40
				Social awareness	-0.18	-0.05	-0.85	0.40
				Social skills	-0.21	-0.08	-1.51	0.13

As the results of table 3 indicate that emotional intelligence subscales can predict 30% burnout.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and athlete burnout. Emotional intelligence relates to beliefs concerning one's ability to manage emotions [1, 2] and self-efficacy expectations to manage emotions [3, 2]. EI is proposed to assess individual's ability to identify optimal emotional states, to change emotions, and use emotions to enhance performance [4]. For example, if an individual believes that an emotional state such as feeling vigorous and happy will help bring about optimal performance, then that person will assess how they are feeling currently in comparison to the optimal emotional profile [22]. The results of this study indicate that negative significant relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence. This result is consistent with the findings of Saiari et al [17], Platsidou et al [18], Jude [19] and Ekermans [20]. The researchers' investigations indicate that those who enjoy of higher emotional intelligence, are socially more active, have less excitements and also sleepless and less suffering from body pains and disorders. The burnout syndrome and other disease signs are less evident among them. The first component of emotional intelligence, is the social consciousness or the capability to distinguish others emotions and agitations that plays the most important role in clarifying burnout syndrome.

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