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## THE EXPRESSION OF THE ATHLETICS IDENTITY OF YOUNG BASKETBALL PLAYERS

***Abstract:** the study aimed to find out the differences in athletic identity between young (16–18 years old) basketball players. It was found that many indicators of the athletic identity of young basketball players selected for the national team were higher than those not invited to the national team. For they were highly expressed the negative affectivity.*

***Keywords:** athletics identity, self-identity, basketball players, negative affectivity, positive affectivity.*

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***Аннотация:** целью исследования было выявить различия в спортивной идентичности молодых баскетболистов (16–18 лет). Выявлено, что многие показатели спортивной идентичности юных баскетболистов, отобранных в сборную, были выше, чем у не приглашенных в сборную. У последних была сильно выражена негативная аффективность.*

***Ключевые слова:** самоидентификация, баскетболисты, спортивная идентичность, негативная аффективность, позитивная аффективность.*

## Introduction

Hagiwara and colleagues (2018) argue that one of the most significant and important psychological factors determining athletic performance, athletic success, perseverance, and combativeness is athletic identity and positive physical self-esteem. Recently, however, it has been observed that a significant proportion of athletes face low self-esteem and athletic identity, which negatively affects not only their athletic performance but also their personality, so it is very important to find out how young basketball players value their athletic identity.

Several authors (Hagiwara, 2017; Hagiwara et al., 2018; Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2018; Russell et al., 2018) argue that the factor influencing athlete behavior is athletic identity. An athlete's identity is defined as a person's choice to be an athlete who is heavily influenced by friends, family, coaches, and the media.

According to Hagiwara with colleagues (2018), sporting identity is the level of maturity and understanding of an athlete about his / her efforts to maximize his / her potential in sport.

The model of sports identity consists of three aspects: social identity; sporting exclusivity; positive, negative emotions (Hagiwara et al., 2018).

According to Chen (2010), for athletes, sport is the most important tool for their self-expression. Athletic identity can be characterized as an excellent indicator of an athlete's path, in which athletic involvement, experience, psychological, and thinking factors allow the athlete to develop as a personality. Athletic identity increases depending on what athletic level you are at (Mills and Christensen, 2006). Professional athletes are more likely to show others that they are professional, with a strong desire to compete and win, unlike active athletes, who often have the ultimate goal of achieving personal results without following world-class standards. Of course, athletic identity is stronger among professional athletes, but if the knowledge gained from a professional athlete could be integrated and applied in the training of an active athlete, there is a

high probability that his athletic identity and level of athletic excellence will grow rapidly. The sports identity of young basketball players in Lithuania has been little studied.

#### Research methods and organization

Young basketball players aged 16–18, divided into two groups, were studied. The basketball players were selected to play for the national teams (group A) and the basketball players were candidates for the national teams but were not invited to the national teams after the selection camps (group B). There were 24 players in each group. At the time of the study, subjects were unaware of the results of the selection.

The study used the athletic identity scale AIMS -Plus (Cieslak, 2004). The athletic identity scale consists of 22 statements based on the answers to which 6 generalized indicators are calculated: social identity, uniqueness, self-identity, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and the overall indicator of athletic identity.

Statistical analysis. SPSS – 22.0 software packages were used for data processing. Before statistical analysis, the normal distribution of quantitative variables was tested using the Shapiro – Wilk test at  $p < .05$ . Analyzing the distributions of the scale variables, it was found that the distributions of all variables were not significantly distant from the normal distribution, therefore parametric criteria were chosen for the analysis. The Mean values and standard deviations of response estimates were calculated and Student's *t*-test was used to compare two independent samples. Significance level  $p < .05$  was adopted in the analysis.

#### Results

Data on the athletic identity components for young basketball players group A and group B are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

*Estimates of components of athletic identity for basketball players group A and group*

#### *B*

Sub-scale	Group A ( <i>n</i> = 24)		Group B ( <i>n</i> = 24)		<i>t</i> <i>df</i> = 46	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Self-identity	6.72	.231	6.41	.344	1.087	<.05
Social identity	6.75	.436	6.65	.328	0.514	>.05

Uniqueness	6.85	.257	6.56	.353	1.042	<.05
Positive affectivity	6.96	.351	6.40	.859	2.211	<.05
Negative affectivity	5.63	.384	5.98	0.236	-1.112	<.05
Overall athletic identity	5.83	.231	5.52	0.302	2.321	<.01

Notes. (*M*, *SD*) – mean and standard deviation; *t* – Student criterion; *p* – significance level; *df* – degree of freedom.

The research results were shown, that the same mean values of the athletic identity indicators of group A, such as uniqueness, self-identity, positive affectivity, and the overall indicator of athletic identity, were statistically significantly higher than those of group B. The mean of the negative affectivity indicator of group B was statistically significantly higher than the same mean of group A. Negative affectivity can act as a negative factor in stressful situations. The means of the indicators of social identity in both groups differed insignificantly.

### Conclusions

The athletic identity of the young basketball players selected for the national team is more pronounced than for those not included in the national team. non-invitation to the team highly expressed negative affectivity.

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