

Relationships of Social Support Perceived by College Taekwondo Athletes with Career Preparation Behavior and Career Exploration Behavior

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the relationships of college Taekwondo athlete's social support, career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior. The research tools used in this study were questionnaires with five-point Likert-type scale items: "never" (1 point), "unlikely" (2 points), "neither" (3 points), "likely" (4 points) and "very likely" (5 points). In order to determine the validity of the questionnaires, Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) were conducted. For the factor extraction, a principal component analysis was used, followed by a varimax rotation. With the exclusion of questionnaires judged to be inappropriate, 282 copies in total were collected. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 21.0 including a correlation matrix and multiple regressions. First, in the correlations of social support perceived by college Taekwondo athletes with career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior, material support was positively related to all the subfactors. Informational support and emotional support correlated positively with career counseling, career exploration, external activities and self-exploration. Second, material support had a positive impact on all career preparation behaviors. Informational support positively influenced career exploration and emotional support had a positive impact on career counseling and career exploration. Third, material support positively influenced all career exploration behaviors. Informational support had a positive impact on self-exploration while emotional support positively influenced external activities and self-exploration. This is important because it helps people feel good about their own life and such thinking has an impact on initiating or continuing positive behaviors. In situations where jobs are complicated and difficult to predict, the support of parents, professors and friends plays an important role in college student's career decisions.

Key words: Social support, college Taekwondo athletes, career preparation behavior, career exploration behavior, self-exploration

INTRODUCTION

Many Korean college students suffer severe conflict, anxiety and confusion of values about their career choice (Jang *et al.*, 2010). Recently, the number of college students who put off their graduation has been increasing because career education that should be provided in middle and high school is postponed until university entrance. For young people, the secondary education period is a controlled life, focused mostly on college entrance examinations and studying (Dae-Seok and Byung-Chul, 2009). Korean college students are very concerned about their career but prepare relatively little for it. Taekwondo athletes are not an exception (Yu and Yi, 2004). Their education concentrates on sports and little career education is conducted. In addition, the academic education necessary for careers other than in sports is

inappropriate. Therefore, Korean Taekwondo athletes came to paid little attention to their career and to structured studies (Han *et al.*, 2010).

College athletic teams are elite student groups in institutions of the educational system. In South Korea, excellent athletes are fostered in a school team and this system causes excessive competition as well as academic slumps (Yong-Sik and Young-Poong, 2001). In addition, problematic "premature old age" phenomena occur because overly demanding competition and exaggerated training. A perception has been fixed that school athletes are not interested in learning but devote themselves only to sports, so, it is hard imagining sportspersons to engage in physical activities and to learn at the same time. Taekwondo athletes cannot yet be guaranteed various learning activities at school and train during their whole school life; therefore, they have only a limited chance to pursue a career other than in sports.

Most student athletes hope that they can become members of the national team or professional athletes but in reality the door is very narrow. College Taekwondo athletes have limited career choices after college graduation unlike other majors. More than 90% fail to join a professional team and become unemployed (Han *et al.*, 2010). This is a difficult environment for Taekwondo athletes to explore and pioneer careers themselves.

Choosing a career has a very important meaning. A job is a fundamental means to maintain a livelihood and an essential ground for self-realization, so, college students are enthused about finding a career that fits their aptitudes, interests and abilities. They concretize this by choosing their job before graduation. Undergraduate years are the period when students finish formal education and move to the job world. In fact, collegians identify the issue of career choice as the biggest problem of their college life (Jin-Young and Kwang-Ho, 2012).

The career decision problem is surely a more urgent one for elite athletes who pursue various social activities and job opportunities. Although, the goal of training athletes should be the development of teams and in the long run, the enhancement of national prestige through sports, the cultivation of all-round personalities and development of the necessary qualities and courage to pioneer individual's careers, most universities instrumentalize student athletes for public relations to honor the school (Won-Gil and Soo-Woen, 2003). The obsession with results and the neglect of careers for individual athletes, except for the best ones is a sad reality. Except for a few elite athletes with outstanding skills, most students are very concerned about problems of advancing to a higher-level school and employment because of their mediocre sports abilities and poor academic records (Han *et al.*, 2010).

Currently, little career education is provided for college Taekwondo athletes and it is difficult for them to decide about and prepare a career while being engaged in sports. Thus, the situation is pressing to provide them with career education. Although, Taekwondo is recognized as an important sports event to the extent that South Korean colleges have set up independent departments for this discipline, the issue of extremely limited careers persists (Tae-Hee, 2013) which brings student's career problems to the fore.

Colleges should provide both direct and indirect experiences for Taekwondo athletes to choose a job themselves, breaking away from the simple notion of advancing to a higher-grade school. With a frank and open attitude, college Taekwondo athletes can turn occasions such as casual sports demonstration events or friendly matches into additional opportunities for choosing reasonable careers. Through this study, it

can be recognized that college Taekwondo athlete's specialties or hobbies may become stepping stones for jobs and that various experiences other than sports play important roles regarding their careers. In addition, managers, coaches and parents can prepare the necessary base data for recommendations to Taekwondo athletes about the participation in various activities to break away from the obsession with victory. It would be meaningful to examine the relationships of social support perceived by college Taekwondo athletes with career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior. At present, careers are a serious concern with rising numbers of graduates from Taekwondo-related departments which calls for a study about Taekwondo athlete's careers (Yeon-Soo and Han-Kyeo, 2012). This study aims to investigate the relationships of college Taekwondo athlete's social support, career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research subjects: This study was conducted in 2016 with initially 300 college students of departments related to Taekwondo. The convenience sample consisted of athletes who had competed in a college Taekwondo championship. Eighteen subjects were deleted because the data were judged to be unreliable, leaving 282 individual copies of surveys for the final analysis. The general characteristics of the subjects are described in Table 1.

Instruments: The research tools used in this study were questionnaires with five-point Likert-type scale items: "never" (1 point), "unlikely" (2 points), "neither" (3 points), "likely" (4 points) and "very likely" (5 points).

Table 1: General characteristics of the research subjects

Variables (classification)	Frequencies (n)	Percentage
Sex		
Male	212	75.2
Female	70	24.8
Year in college		
1st	91	32.3
2nd	110	39.0
3rd	65	23.0
4th	16	5.7
Award record		
No prize	28	9.9
Prize in a local competition	115	40.9
Prize in a nationwide competition	139	49.2
Sports career		
Under 7 years	34	12.1
7-9 years	43	15.3
9-11 years	93	33.0
Over 11 years	112	39.6
Total	282	100

The social support questionnaire consisted of 14 questions covering three subfactors. It modified instruments used in Soo-Woon and Chul-Wha (2015), Byeong-Seok (2013) and Han *et al.* (2010), based on the social support scale developed by Jee-Won (1985). The sub-factors were emotional support (7 questions), informational support (3 questions) and material support (4 questions).

The career preparation behavior questionnaire, contained 13 questions about three subfactors: career behavior (5 questions), career exploration (5 questions) and career counseling (3 questions). This instrument was a modified version of the career preparation behavior test developed by Yoon-Seok (2009).

The career exploration behavior questionnaire contained 12 questions about three subfactors, modifying the instruments used by Choi and Jyung (2003) and (Hyun-Ik, 2012) which were based on the career exploration behavior test developed by Stumpf *et al.* (1983). The subfactors were information collection (4 questions), external activities (3 questions) and self-exploration (5 questions).

Validity and reliability of questionnaires: In order to determine the validity of the questionnaires, Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) were conducted. For the factor extraction, a principal component analysis was used, followed by a varimax rotation. By examining Bartlett's identity matrix the independence of the variables from each other was determined and the KMO measure assessed the sampling adequacy. The eigenvalue was based on a value of over 1.0 and only items with a factor loading of more than 0.4 were selected. To analyze reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated and only items with a value of over 0.6 were considered.

For social support, 59.5% of the variance could be explained. Bartlett's identity matrix was 1517.941 (df = 91, p<0.001) and the KMO was 0.856. Cronbach's alpha for emotional support was 0.784 for informational support

0.786 and for material support 0.792. EFA of career preparation behavior accounted for 56.5% of the total variance. Bartlett's identity matrix was 732.604 (df = 55, p<0.001) and the KMO value was 0.746. Cronbach's alpha for career behavior was 0.786 for career counseling 0.788 and for career exploration 0.760.

With regard to career exploration behavior, the EFA results revealed that 56.4% of the variance was explained. Bartlett's identity matrix was 906.534 (df = 66, p<0.001) and the KMO value was 0.772. Cronbach's alpha for external activities was 0.770 for information collection 0.775 and for self-exploration 0.760.

Data processing: With the exclusion of questionnaires judged to be inappropriate, 282 copies in total were collected. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 21.0. including a correlation matrix and multiple regressions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Correlations of social support, career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior: As shown in Table 2, the material support displayed positive correlations with career behavior, career counseling, career exploration, external activities, information collection and self-exploration. Informational and emotional support correlated positively with career counseling, career exploration, external activities and self-exploration. Since, no correlation coefficient value exceeded 0.85, discriminant validity was secured according to the criteria of Kline (1998). In addition, the reference value for the multi Collin earity of independent variables was satisfactory, being smaller than 0.80 for all variables.

Relationship between social support and career preparation behavior

Relationship between social support and career behavior: As shown in Table 3, it turned out that the relationship

Table 2: Correlations of social support, career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior

Sub-factors	Material support	Informational support	Emotional support	Career behavior	Career counseling	Career exploration	External activities	Information collection	Self-exploration
Material support	-								
Informational support	0.141*	-							
Emotional support	0.117*	0.590***	-						
Career behavior	0.447***	0.065	0.073	-					
Career counseling	0.172**	0.207***	0.217***	0.194***	-				
Career exploration	0.224***	0.430***	0.415***	0.149**	0.363***	-			
External activities	0.172**	0.330***	0.401***	0.101	0.555***	0.527***	-		
Information collection	0.478***	0.087	0.104	0.661***	0.312***	0.191***	0.162**	-	
Self-exploration	0.224***	0.430***	0.415***	0.149*	0.363***	0.327***	0.527***	0.191***	-

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 3: Relationship between social support and career behavior

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t-values	Tolerance limit
Constant	1.708	0.273	-	6.256***	-
Material support	0.434	0.053	0.445	8.210***	0.978
Informational support	-0.015	0.068	-0.015	-0.219	0.647
Emotional supports	0.032	0.073	0.029	0.441	0.651

R² = 0.200, F = 23.173, p = 0.000; ***p<0.001

Table 4: Relationship between social support and career counseling

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t-values	Tolerance limit
Constant	1.734	0.385	-	4.500***	-
Material support	0.181	0.075	0.141	2.419*	0.978
Informational support	0.232	0.096	0.266	1.485	0.647
Emotional supports	0.197	0.102	0.139	2.022*	0.651

R² = 0.076, F = 7.634, p = 0.000; *p<0.05, ***p<0.001

Table 5: Relationship between social support and career exploration

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t-values	Tolerance limit
Constant	1.558	0.226	-	6.889***	-
Material support	0.132	0.044	0.159	3.021**	0.978
Informational support	0.232	0.056	0.266	4.110***	0.647
Emotional supports	0.224	0.060	0.240	3.729***	0.651

R² = 0.247, F = 30.796, p = 0.000; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

among all factors of social support and career behavior had a significant impact on material support (t = 8.210). A relative influence appeared in material support (β = 0.445). The independent variables of the multiple regression analysis accounted for 20.0% of the independent variable's variance with an F-value of 23.173 (p<0.001).

Relationship between social support and career counseling:

As shown in Table 4, it turned out that the relationship between each factor of social support and career counseling had a significant impact on material support (t = 2.419) and emotional support (t = 2.022). The relative influence was in the order of material support (β = 0.141) and emotional support (β = 0.139). The independent variables of the multiple regression analysis accounted for 7.6% of the social support variance with an F-value of 7.634 (p<0.001).

Relationship between social support and career exploration:

As shown in Table 5, the relationship between each factor of social support and career exploration had a significant impact on material support (t = 3.021), informational support (t = 4.110) and emotional support (t = 3.729). The relative influence was in the order of informational support (β = 0.266), emotional support (β = 0.240) and material support (β = 0.159). The independent variables of the multiple regression analysis accounted for 24.7% of the social support variance with an F-value of 30.796 (p<0.001).

Relationship between social support and career exploration behavior

Relationship between social support and external activities:

As shown in Table 6, the relationship between

Table 6: Relationship between social support and external activities

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t-values	Tolerance limit
Constant	1.739	0.244	-	7.128***	-
Material support	0.102	0.047	0.117	2.148*	0.978
Informational support	0.118	0.061	0.130	1.938	0.647
Emotional supports	0.300	0.065	0.310	4.626***	0.651

R² = 0.187, F = 21.372, p = 0.000; ***p<0.001

Table 7: Relationship between social support and information collection

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t-values	Tolerance limit
Constant	1.591	0.259	-	6.142***	-
Material support	0.446	0.050	0.473	8.892***	0.978
Informational support	-0.103	0.065	-0.014	-0.207	0.647
Emotional supports	0.060	0.069	0.873	0.873	0.651

R² = 0.231, F = 27.783, p = .000; ***p<0.001

Table 8: Relationship between social support and self-exploration

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t-values	Tolerance limit
Constant	1.558	0.226	-	6.889***	-
Material support	0.132	0.044	0.159	3.021**	0.978
Informational support	0.232	0.056	0.266	4.110***	0.647
Emotional supports	0.224	0.060	0.240	3.729***	0.651

R² = 0.247, F = 30.796, P = 0.000; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

each factor of social support and career counseling had a significant impact on material support (t = 7.128) and emotional support (t = 4.626). The relative influence was in the order of emotional support (β = 0.310) and material support (β = 0.117). The independent variables of the multiple regression analysis explained 18.7% of the social support variance with an F value of 21.372 (p<0.001).

Relationship between social support and information collection:

As shown in Table 7, the relationship between each factor of social support and career counseling had a significant impact on material support (t = 8.892). A relative influence appeared in material support (β = 0.473). The independent variables of the multiple regression analysis explained 23.1% of the social support variance with an F-value of 27.783 (p<0.001).

Relationship between social support and self-exploration:

As shown in Table 8, the relationship between each factor of social support and career exploration had a significant impact on material support (t = 3.021), informational support (t = 4.110) and emotional support (t = 3.729). The relative influence turned out to be in the order of informational support (β = 0.266), emotional support, (β = 0.240) and material support (β = 0.159). The independent variables of the multiple regression analysis accounted for 24.7% of the social support variance with an F-value of 30.796 (p<0.001).

Social support is a comprehensive concept including emotional, informational and material support. Various kinds of social supports received by college Taekwondo athletes cultivate a social value of the sport. It is suggested that this acts as an important factor for both

career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior: The higher their perception of career preparation behavior in social support, the stronger their confidence in other's support. In Ju-Won (2013), it was noted that social support helps active career preparation and Blustein and Flum (1999) reported that a better social support for college students was related to freer career exploration and better preparation consistent with these results, the present study found that social support had a positive impact on the subfactors of career preparation behavior. In particular, social support and career exploration influenced all the subfactors positively. One interpretation for this is that with more financial support for various job experiences as well as a firm belief in setting up and executing a plan, career preparation behavior can become more positive. It is presumed that there is a need for support that can help substantially, based on information about various specific careers for college Taekwondo athletes who prepare for a job. In Yeon-Soo and Han-Kyeo (2012), it was found that social support aids career activities and increases both the preparation and exploration of jobs which supports the result of this study. You and Yoon (2014) reported that collegians who received stable social support developed the adaptive ability to actively explore society and the environment; their actual career preparation behavior was positively influenced. This suggests that academic advisors, family, seniors, coaches and managers should provide meaningful social support to college Taekwondo athletes for making appropriate decisions concerning their careers. In addition, various career-related programs should be made available for the improvement of their career preparation behavior.

In this study, it turned out that social support had a positive impact on the subfactors of career exploration behavior. Especially social support and self-exploration positively influenced all subfactors. By Lee and Song (2004), it was noted that career exploration behavior increased in college students who perceived that they could build close relationships and exchange help with many people. Song and Hong (2010) stated that college students who perceived lower social support also showed lower career exploration behavior compared to equals who perceived higher social support. Regarding social support for individuals, neither its absolute quantity nor the network size is important but the individual's perceived extent of it.

The career problem is one of the important issues for college Taekwondo athletes. In particular, it was confirmed in this study that increasing emotional support can further vitalize actual career exploration behaviors based on knowledge.

Since, the number of studies about the relationship of domestic college Taekwondo athlete's social support with career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior is insufficient, the results of this study can help to provide a more multifaceted and broad understanding about college Taekwondo athlete's careers.

CONCLUSION

In this study, a survey was conducted with college Taekwondo athletes to investigate perceived social support. After analysis of 282 survey copies, the following conclusions were drawn. First, in the correlations of social support perceived by college Taekwondo athletes with career preparation behavior and career exploration behavior, material support was positively related to all the subfactors. Informational support and emotional support correlated positively with career counseling, career exploration, external activities and self-exploration. Second, material support had a positive impact on all career preparation behaviors. Informational support positively influenced career exploration and emotional support had a positive impact on career counseling and career exploration. Third, material support positively influenced all career exploration behaviors. Informational support had a positive impact on self-exploration while emotional support positively influenced external activities and self-exploration.

Social support refers to all forms of positive resources that can be obtained through social relations. Social support can help individuals to actively engage in career-associated behavior. This is important because it helps people feel good about their own life and such thinking has an impact on initiating or continuing positive behaviors. In situations where jobs are complicated and difficult to predict, the support of parents, professors and friends plays an important role in college student's career decisions. In particular, college students establish the process of role formation in various types or social exchange relations, e.g., the performance of tasks or consultation with an academic advisor: The higher their perception of social support through these relationships become, the more positive is the impact on career preparation and career exploration.

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