

## The Relationship Between Social Support and Health Promoting Behaviors of Participation in Regular Life Sports

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to provide the basic data necessary for participants in regular life sports to continue positive and active participation by examining the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviours among them. To this end, exploratory factor, correlation and multi-regression analyses and reliability test were conducted by using the SPSS 21.0, based on data from 179 participants. First, there were positive correlations between social support and all sub-factors of health promoting behaviors of participants. Second, the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors was closely examined and it was found that material support had a positive effect on self-realization, interpersonal relationship and fitness and nutrition, emotional support had a positive effect on self-realization, health care and fitness and nutrition and informational support had a positive influence on interpersonal relationship and fitness and nutrition. social support life sports activities are the best methods necessary to continue and enjoy healthy life and health promoting behaviors to which everyone can have an easy access. In this aspect, this study examined the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors and we cannot but admit that some problems were revealed. Future studies should investigate the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors by fully reviewing the limitation and directions of analysis suggested in this study.

**Key words:** Health promoting, participation, social support, sports activities, behaviors, limitation

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### INTRODUCTION

Today, health problems are not merely associated with treatment or prevention of disease but more efforts are being made for promoting healthy habits and health enhancement. The goal of health is to help people fully unleash their health potential (Sang-Kook and Myung-Kon, 2009). Therefore, regular life sports activities are being widely recognized as an essential area in our healthy life and they are continuously attracting attention. Mi-Ok and Ji-Jung (2016) reported that there is a positive correlation between regular life sports and life satisfaction and Nam *et al.* (2014) indicated that regular physical activity has a positive effect on the health condition. Thus, regular life sports activities contribute to increasing the quality of life by improving the overall health condition. Hence, it seems necessary to involve modern people in more active and positive life sports activities in order to enhance their physical and psychological health. In particular, many scholars have emphasized the importance of social support as the main variable for successful life sports activities.

Studies on social support for life sports activities suggest that people whose spouses, friends and family members provide psychological and material resources

have a better physical and psychological health than the others who do not have these resources. Thus, support for statements or behaviors through which a person expresses one individual's values or importance increase his/her self-esteem and induce active behaviors for solving problems by allowing him/her to feel a shared sense of belonging (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Since, interpersonal relationship or social relations are a means of life for people who live in a society, a large community, social support obtained through social relations is a very essential factor in promoting involvement in life sports activities and in maintaining and enhancing a healthy life. Kwak reported that, companions including families, friends and relatives are very important factors in life sports activities and therefore, correlations with them are important for successful leisure activities, suggesting that social support from acquaintances among others is most important for such activities. Social support for life sports activities has been reported to increase life satisfaction (Hyung-Joong *et al.*, 2012) and enhance participant's psychological wellbeing or quality of life (Sung-Bum, 2007). Therefore, since, social support based on positive feedback has a significant effect on psychological wellbeing, it also positively influences individual's psychological wellbeing (Epstein and Baucom, 2002). Social support provided by social

members increases health satisfaction in communities, because it is obtained through interactions among social members.

Meanwhile, health promoting behaviors become more important as a part of efforts to diagnose health risk factors early such as diseases that decrease the individual quality of life, as health problems are transformed from the individual to the social and national level (Pender *et al.*, 2006). According to Pender, health promoting behaviors as activities for enhancing healthy life-styles indicate integrated actions taken to increase the level of wellbeing and to maintain and enhance self-realization and satisfaction (Kim *et al.*, 2000). Such behaviors have been verified to have a close relationship with social support of participants in life sports activities. Ho-Jung and Kyong-Sik (2007) study among elderly people reported that perceived social support has a positive effect on health promoting behaviors and thus, the stronger the social support from acquaintances, the better the health promoting behaviors. Kim *et al.* (2000) study of industrial workers also indicated the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors. Hence, since, interactions with acquaintances including families, relatives and friends, enhance the ability to solve or cope with immediate or potential health problems, social support consequently encourages people to give more attention to health promoting behaviours (Hyun-Wook and Ji-Tae, 2009). A consistent argument that involvement in life sports activities and social support are effects as a means for health promotion is a direct evidence for why people should participate in life sports activities. Based on the finding that social support ensures activeness, positiveness and sustainability of life sports activities and provides an opportunity for health promotion, the importance of life sports activities as health promotion behaviors has been verified. However, a few studies have assessed the relationships among social support, life satisfaction and health promotion in participants in life sports activities and Physical Education. Specifically, subjects included in studies on the relationship between social support and life satisfaction are limited to participants in life dance (Hea-Sook, 2007), dance sports (Suk-Kyung *et al.*, 2006) and soccer clubs (Jang-Hwan *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to the life sports domain. In addition, some studies examining the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors only target women (Jin-Young and Ki-Hyun, 2011) participating in life sports and old people (Eun-Kyoung *et al.*, 2007) or elderly women living alone (Yi, 2009). Thus, few studies have examined all participants in life sports.

The findings of previous studies mentioned above are not likely to be generalized to the life sports domains

they only focus on participants in life sports or target women or old people. Thus, the purpose of this study is to provide fundamental data necessary to continue participant's positive and active participation in life sports activities by investigating the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors among them.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Subjects:** This study selected participants in life sports activities, who lived in Gwang-ju Metropolitan City in 2016 as the study population. The subjects were sampled by using the convenience sampling method. The basic sampling process was conducted at a sports center located in Gwang-ju Metropolitan City. With help of one research assistant, the researcher conducted a questionnaire survey among the subjects through prior consultation with officials at the center. In the process, the purpose of the questionnaire was briefly explained to the subjects. Some participants who rejected the questionnaire were excluded. A total of 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the subjects and some questionnaires containing insincere responses were identified and excluded from the analysis, through consultation with the research assistant. Therefore, a total of 179 copies of the questionnaire were used in the analysis. The participant's average age was 37.45 years (SD = 7.40) and they consisted of 90 males 50.3% and 89 females 49.7%. They were divided according to their career in exercise: <1 year (n = 92, 51.4%), from 1-3 years (n = 49, 27.4%) and <3 years (n = 38, 21.2%). The participation events included fitness exercise (n = 54, 30.2%), badminton (n = 87, 48.6%) and table tennis (n = 38, 21.2%).

**Instrument:** The instrument for measuring social support was based on the scale developed by Jee-Won (1985) and corrected and complemented by Jung-Sook and Jin (2012) and In-Sook (2012). This scale consists of 4 sub-factors (material support, emotional support, informational support and evaluative support) with 25 items. Each item is evaluated on the basis of five points; 1 = 'not at all' and 5 = 'strongly agree'. In addition, an exploratory factor analysis using the varimax rotation as a principal components analysis showed that three sub-factors such as material support (46.64%), emotional support (6.83%) and informational support (5.74%) were extracted in this study (KMO = 0.932, Chi-square = 2593.175, p = 0.000). Reliability of material support (0.903), emotional support (0.902) and informational support (0.905) was also examined.

In the instrument for measuring health promoting behaviors, 44 items related to them, obtained from the

questionnaire developed by Walker *et al.* (1987) corrected and complemented by Boo-Kyung *et al.* (2002) were used. Health promoting behaviors consist of the following 5 sub-factors: self-realization, health care, managements of fitness and nutrition, support for interpersonal relationship and control of stress. Each item is based on a 5-point scale with 1 = ‘not at all’ and 5 = ‘strongly agree’. Then, an exploratory factor analysis using the varimax rotation as a principal components analysis exhibited that four sub-factors of health promoting behaviors were extracted in this study: self-realization (51.72%), inter-personal relationship (6.55%), fitness and nutrition (6.40%) and health care (5.43%) (KMO = 0.915, Chi-square = 2667.631, p = 0.000). Reliability of the extracted sub-factors was as follows: self-realization (0.911), inter-personal relationship (0.901), fitness and nutrition (0.909) and health care (0.915).

**Data processing:** This study selected a total of 179 copies of the returned questionnaires as the final effective study sample. For data processing in this study, frequency, exploratory factor, reliability, correlation and multi-regression analyses were conducted by using the SPSS 21.0 V.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Correlation analysis:** As shown in Table 1, among the sub-factors of social support, material support had a positive correlation with self-realization (r = 0.576), interpersonal relationship (r = 0.686), health care (r = 0.622) and fitness and nutrition (r = 0.607), emotional support had a positive correlation with self-realization (r = 0.537), inter-personal relationship (r = 0.584), health care (r = 0.834) and fitness and nutrition (r = 0.606) and informational support had a positive correlation with self-realization (r = 0.496), inter-personal relationship (r = 0.694), health care (r = 0.586) and fitness and nutrition (r = 0.587).

Pearson correlation analysis was calculated to evaluate the relationship between the social support and career decision-making attitudes of the college Taekwondo athletes.

Table 1: Correlations analysis

Variables	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A	-						
B	0.710***	-					
C	0.724***	0.730***	-				
D	0.576***	0.537***	0.496***	-			
E	0.686***	0.584***	0.694***	0.739***	-		
F	0.622***	0.834***	0.586***	0.444***	0.474***	-	
G	0.607***	0.606***	0.587***	0.689***	0.741***	0.470***	-

\*\*\*p<0.001, A: Material support, B: Emotional support, C: Informational support, D: Self-realization, E: Inter-personal relationship, F: Health care and G: Fitness and nutrition

**Relation between social support and self-realization:** As shown in Table 2, social support had a significant effect on self-realization. The explanatory power of this factor accounted for approximately 36.7% (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.367) of all variables. The relative effect, the beta of social support on self-realization was examined and it was found that self-realization was positively affected by material support (β = 0.368, p<0.001) and emotional support (β = 0.232, p<0.05).

**Relation between social support and interpersonal relationship:** As shown in Table 3, social support had a significant effect on interpersonal relationship. The explanatory power of this factor accounted for approximately 56.2% (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.562) of all variables. The relative effect, the Beta of social support on inter-personal relationship was examined and it was found that inter-personal relationship was positively affected by material support (β = 0.379, p<0.001) and emotional support (β = 0.019, p<0.001).

**Relation between social support and health care:** As shown in Table 4, social support had a significant effect on health care. The explanatory power of this factor accounted for approximately 70.1% (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.701) of all variables. The relative effect, the Beta of social support on health care was examined and it was found that health care was not Ed: Please review this result. From the table, it appears that it was positively affected positively affected by emotional support (β = 0.832, p<0.001).

**Relation between social support and fitness and nutrition:** As shown in Table 5, social support had a significant effect on fitness and nutrition. The explanatory power of this factor accounted for approximately 44.3%

Table 2: Relationship between social support and self-realization

Variables	B	SE	β	t-values
Constant	1.153	0.258	-	4.473***
Material support	0.385	0.099	0.368	3.891***
Emotional support	0.260	0.107	0.232	2.433*
Informational support	0.058	0.093	0.061	0.624

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.367, F = 33.783\*\*\*; \*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 3: Relationship between social support and interpersonal relationship

Variables	B	SE	β	t-values
Constant	0.467	0.240	-	1.988***
Material support	0.438	0.092	0.379	4.766***
Emotional support	0.023	0.099	0.019	0.232
Informational support	0.427	0.086	0.406	4.953***

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.562, F = 71.874\*\*\*; \*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 4: Relationship between social support and health care

Variables	B	SE	β	t-values
Constant	0.216	0.180	-	1.199
Material support	0.106	0.069	0.099	1.531
Emotional support	0.947	0.075	0.832	12.698***
Informational support	-0.090	0.065	-0.093	-1.390

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.701, F = 136.853\*\*\*; \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 5: Relationship between social support and fitness and nutrition**

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t-values
Constant	0.263	0.291	-0.903	-
Material support	0.353	0.112	0.280	3.162**
Emotional support	0.367	0.121	0.272	3.039**
Informational support	0.213	0.105	0.185	2.032*

$R^2 = 0.443$ ,  $F = 46.477^{***}$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

( $R^2 = 0.443$ ) of all variables. The relative effect, the Beta of social support on fitness and nutrition was examined and it was found that fitness and nutrition was positively affected by material support ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), emotional support ( $\beta = 0.272$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and informational support ( $\beta = 0.185$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors of participants in regular life sports. On the basis of the findings, the discussion has been conducted.

In order to satisfy the social needs, human beings interact with each other and therefore, they are socially supported. Social support is belief and faith generated based on the interactions among human beings. It can also be identified as social and psychological resources formed in various social relations. Hence, social support referred to in this study may mean conditions or environments in which participants in life sports can receive help or emotional support, if necessary. Both belief and faith in human relations are expressions of satisfaction with useful support and may imply many forms of help and aid provided by families, friends, neighbors and others.

In interactions among individuals, ‘love toward others’, ‘agreement with others’, ‘opinions’ and ‘symbolic and material aid for others’ are recognized as social actions. Social support is defined as interpersonal relationship including one or more than one emotional attention, effective assistance, information and evaluation of environments (Pender *et al.*, 1996).

Health is the ultimate goal desired by all human beings. As the recent disease pattern has been transformed to a chronic degenerative one due to economic and medical development along with rise in the health promotion concept, prevention of a disease becomes more important than treatment of a disease. Health promoting behaviors indicate routine activities conducted to enhance the well-being of individuals or groups and to maintain or improve self-realization and individual satisfaction. Thus, they are positive and subjective behaviors for maintaining and promoting health, apart from prevention and treatment of a disease (Jun-He and Seung-Wook, 2001).

Health promoting behaviors are not immediately practiced even if any behaviors for health are simply understood but they can be realized only through the cognition process including perception and understanding, acceptance of knowledge and analysis (Lee, 2004).

Examination of the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors shows that there are significantly positive correlations between social support and all sub-factors of health promoting behaviors of participants in regular life sports. Moreover, social support has a positive effect on health promoting behaviors. Specifically, material support influences self-realization, interpersonal relationship and fitness and nutrition; emotional support affects self-realization, health care and fitness and nutrition; and informational support has an effect on interpersonal relationship and fitness and nutrition.

These findings suggest that the stronger the social support, the more the practices of health promoting behaviors. Previous researches have consistently reported that social support for participants in life sports maintains and enhances their health by alleviating life stress. This study also reported that social support for participants in regular life sports is a factor that affects the practices of health promoting behaviors which is consistent with previous researches.

As shown in the study by Ahijevych and Bernhard (1994), a social network of spouses, friends and family members which is formed around individuals is judged as a factor that encourages the practices of health promoting behaviors. Consequently, health promoting behaviors can be enhanced by increasing social support for participants in regular life sports and social support may have preventive effects on all health behaviours (Yun-Gil, 2010). In particular, social support includes not only that provided by families, friends and relatives but also othersupport provided by communities. Thus, it is important to allow effective implementation of community-based social support. Desirable health promoting behaviors through which individuals spontaneously and actively care for health and manage their health are based on positive synchronization such as social support. In conclusion, it is necessary to consider many measures including social support, so that, positive and active life sports activities can be naturally conducted as a lifestyle in our society. Moreover, the importance of healthy lifestyle should be emphasized and extended by increasing the awareness of the relationship between health promoting behaviors as a routine lifestyle and involvement in life sports.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to provide the basic data necessary for participants in regular life sports to continue positive and active participation by examining the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors among them. To this end, exploratory factor, correlation and multi-regression analyses and reliability test were conducted by using the SPSS 21.0, based on data from 179 participants.

First, there were positive correlations between social support and all sub-factors of health promoting behaviors of participants. Second, the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors was closely examined and it was found that material support had a positive effect on self-realization, interpersonal relationship and fitness and nutrition; emotional support had a positive effect on self-realization, health care and fitness and nutrition and informational support had a positive influence on interpersonal relationship and fitness and nutrition.

Regular life sports activities are the best methods necessary to continue and enjoy healthy life and health promoting behaviors to which everyone can have an easy access. In this aspect, this study examined the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors and we cannot but admit that some problems were revealed. In the process of sampling, the area in which the participants lived was limited to Gwangju Metropolitan City, therefore, it is difficult to generalize the finding to other areas. Therefore, such a limitation may be minimized by applying quota sampling and not convenience sampling, for extracting samples.

## SUGGESTIONS

Future studies should investigate the relationship between social support and health promoting behaviors by fully reviewing the limitation and directions of analysis suggested in this study.

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