

2020

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Recommended Citation

Filiz, Bijen Assist. Prof. Dr. and Durnalı, Mehmet Assist. Prof. Dr.. (2020). Examining the Relationship between Academic Motivation and Social-Emotional Competency in Student-Athletes. *i.e.: inquiry in education: Vol. 12: Iss. 2, Article 10*.

Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol12/iss2/10>

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i.e.: inquiry in education is published by the Center for Inquiry in Education, National-Louis University, Chicago, IL.

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Cover Page Footnote

This paper was presented at the 13th FIEP European - 29th FIEP World Congress in Istanbul in September, 2018.

Examining the Relationship Between Academic Motivation and Social-Emotional Competency in Student-Athletes*

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Abstract

The purpose of this correlational study was to examine the relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of student-athletes in terms of gender, grade, and active participation in sports. The study group consisted of 200 volunteer student-athletes studying at a sports high school. The Academic Motivation Scale and the Delaware Social-Emotional Competency Scale were used. According to the results, there was a significant difference between the mean scores related to the sub-dimensions of “Intrinsic motivation (IM)-to accomplish, Extrinsic motivation (EM)-introjected regulation, and amotivation” according to the variable of doing active sports, and “self-awareness, social-awareness, and EM-identified regulation” according to gender variable by independent sample *t*-test. The one-way ANOVA analysis results showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of “self-awareness, social-awareness, and IM-to know” sub-dimensions according to the variable of grade. The Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation test showed that there was a negative relationship between the sub-dimensions self-awareness and social-awareness via EM-identified regulation. This study showed a low negative correlation between academic motivation and social-emotional competency in student-athletes. Significant differences were found between various sub-dimensions according to the variables of gender, grade, and active participation in sports.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Motivation, Social-Awareness, Self-Awareness, Social-Emotional Skills

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Introduction

Sport appeals to human beings in terms of integrating a set of physical, psychological and mental efforts, as well as socializing (Eime et al., 2013). Sport education enhances the values of love, respect, and ethics, and it gives importance to personal and social values such as respect for human rights and taking responsibility (Sadık, 2014). In this regard, social-emotional competence is the backbone of physical education and sports programs (Gagnon, 2016). These programs allow for many opportunities to develop various interpersonal and collaborative skills and make school organization effective. The students are expected to gain social-emotional competence in physical education and sport courses through the guidance of the teacher and accurate educational policies.

Empathy, problem-solving, persistence, and ability to manage one's emotions are critical skills for students to gain (Stafford-Brizard, 2016). Students can learn these skills by observing a suitable model. For learning to occur, students need to practice repetitively, receive special corrective feedback, and review these skills regularly. However, a variety of learning experiences should be provided while students practicing their skills to become competent. Moreover, while applying these skills, teachers can improve the ability of students to learn and perform more successfully by creating an emotionally secure classroom environment with targeted, positive feedback (Ciotto & Gagnon, 2018). Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process of recognizing and managing emotions, feeling concern for others, making responsible decisions, acting ethically, developing a positive relationship, and solving challenging situations effectively (Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2013). SEL provides a framework for preventing problems in schools and enhancing students' well-being and achievements, as well as emphasizing active learning. There are five social-emotional competencies targeted through SEL: responsible decision making, self awareness, social awareness, self management, and relationship skills (CASEL, 2013).

There are various and many motivational problems in education and training. Students' amotivation to learn, which many teachers encounter, leads to motivational problems. As a result, motivation is a concept that educators need to be concerned about, particularly by taking the cognitive domains of education into account as the most important objective (Ünal-Karagüven, 2012). Motivation is recognized as the most significant consequence of all the aspects that affect student performance and academic engagement (Francis et al., 2004). Thorkildsen and Nicholls (2002) define motivation as "an internal force that activates, guides, and maintains behavior over time" (p. xi) and assert that it encompasses some structures that guide a person's enthusiasm or to elude specific tasks.

There is an abundance of research on social-emotional competence, such as, for instance, emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), children's social behaviors as predictors of academic achievement (Malecki & Elliot, 2002), social and emotional learning in schools (Türnüklü, 2004), social competence, social skills and creative drama (Önalın, 2006), SEL (Coryn et al., 2009), social skills assessment in the peer group (Kwon et al., 2012), and promoting SEL in physical education (Ciotto & Gagnon, 2018). However, there seems to be a gap in terms of investigating diverse populations.

Some studies focus on pre-service physical education teachers' academic motivation and academic self-efficacy (Alemdağ et al., 2014), prospective teachers' perceptions of academic motivation levels (Gömleksiz & Serhatlıoğlu, 2014), school burnout in secondary school

students containing the role of homework, school engagement, and academic motivation (Özdemir, 2015), high school students' academic motivation (Sıcak & Başören, 2015), the relationships between academic motivation and academic success of physical education teacher candidates (Ünlü & Erbaş 2016), and the future expectations and academic motivations of students attending associate degree programs (Akbaşı et al., 2017).

There is a growing interest in examining the link between social-emotional competency and academic achievement. For instance, the results of the research of Payton et al. (2008) indicate that these SEL programs also significantly improved students' academic performance in addition to improving students' social and emotional skills, and provided compelling evidence of the significant positive effect that the SEL programs have on students' academic achievement (Zins et al., 2004). Moreover, Schonert-Reichl (2017) has concluded that the success of the SEL programs is directly related to teachers' beliefs and their well-being. In this context, teachers' attitudes will increase the academic success and academic motivation of the students.

While several studies have been conducted specifically on the relationship between SEL and academic achievement, there is a lack of research on SEL and motivation (e.g. Mega et al., 2014; Roeser et al., 2002). Research on SEL and motivation is particularly lacking in Turkey. Therefore this study, which focuses on the relationship between SEL and the motivation of high-school student athletes, can fill in important gaps in research and scholarship on the subject.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of high-school student athletes in a school in Turkey. The following research questions guide this study:

1. Is there any relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of student-athletes?
2. Is there any difference in the relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of the student-athletes by gender?
3. Is there any difference in the relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of the student-athletes by grade?
4. Is there any difference in the relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of the student-athletes who actively participate in sports (i.e., among the athletes who regularly trained each week)?

Method

This quantitative study employs correlational analysis to examine the relationship between academic motivation and social-emotional competency levels of the student-athletes. The analysis intends to measure the degree of relationship between several variables further discussed in this section.

Participants

The participants consisted of 200 volunteer student-athletes studying at a sports high school in the spring semester of the 2017–2018 academic year. Some of them were only on the

school team, and some were on both the school and the club teams. The athletes who regularly trained each week were included in the the active sports group, and the ones with irregular training intervals were included in the non-active sports group. Demographic data of the students participating in the study are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Study Participants

Variable	Sub-group	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Female	86	43
	Male	114	57
Grade	1	79	39.5
	2	76	38
	3	17	8.5
	4	28	14
Doing active sports	Yes	141	70.5
	No	59	29.5

Data Collection Tools

In this study, we used the Academic Motivation Scale and the Delaware Social-Emotional Competency Scale.

Academic Motivation Scale

This scale was developed by Vallerand et al. (1992; 1993) for high school students in Canada. The measurement tool consists of 28 items and includes seven sub-dimensions: Intrinsic motivation (IM)-to know, IM-to accomplish, IM-to experience stimulation, extrinsic motivation (EM)-identified regulation, EM-external regulation, and amotivation. Expressions in the amotivational dimension are scored as in other dimensions. In the scale, the students were asked why they continued their education and researchers attempted to determine the reasons that motivated them. There are some questions like “Why are you going to school? Because...” on the scale about extrinsic and non-motivation. The higher the score is, the higher the student’s level of academic motivation is. On the scale, participants are expected to use a 7-point Likert type rating. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the original scale is between .83 and .86 (Vallerand et al., 1993). It was adapted to Turkish by Ünal-Karagüven (2012) and the adapted version was used for the purposes of this study. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the scale is between .67 and .87.

Delaware Social-Emotional Competency Scale

This scale was developed by Mantz et al. (2016) in order to evaluate students’ social-emotional competencies psychologically, and it was adapted into Turkish culture by the authors (Filiz & Durnalı, 2019), which we used here. The original scale consists of 12 items. We divided the items into four sub-dimensions to evaluate students’ social-emotional competencies: decision-making responsibility, relationship skills, self-management, and social awareness. The original scale was applied to the students who were studying in the second through fifth grades at the primary, secondary, and high school, for a total of 32,414 students. For the correlation coefficients between the total social-emotional competency

scores and sub-dimensions of the scale, the mean and high correlations were calculated between .65 and .95 in sub-dimensions and between .47 and .82 in total. The internal consistency coefficients were found to be between .58 and .69 and a total of .84 (Mantz et al., 2016).

Data Collection Process

The scales were applied to voluntary student-athletes at the sports high school. Before the application, the student-athletes were informed about the research. The student-athletes filled out the scales within 30 minutes. The application permission was obtained from the Bursa District National Education Directorate.

Data Analysis

To compare the mean scores in unrelated measurements, we used variance analysis (One-way ANOVA, independent sample *t*-test), and we used Tukey's test to determine the meaningful difference between the groups. The Pearson Correlation Multiplication test was used to examine the relationship between sub-dimensions. Statistical Analysis Program (SPSS 23.0) was used. Before using the parametric tests in the study, when the histogram and scatter plots were examined, we saw that the curve showed a symmetrical distribution and the Skewness and Kurtosis values were between [-1.5 and +1.5] (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In addition, we examined the homogeneity of the sample by Levene test according to gender, grade and active participation in sports, and the *p* value was higher than .05. As a result of the analysis, we saw that the data showed normal distribution and the group variances were equal.

Results

The relationship between sub-dimensions of academic motivation and social-emotional competency of student-athletes are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Relationship Between Sub-Dimensions of Academic Motivation and Social-Emotional Competency of Student-Athletes

Sub-dimension	Self-awareness	Social-awareness
IM-to know	-.07	-.02
IM-to accomplish	.01	.07
IM-to experience stimulation	-.06	.01
EM-identified regulation	-.15*	-.16*
EM-introjected regulation	-.06	.00
EM-external regulation	-.07	-.07
Amotivation	.02	.08

p<.05*

In Table 2, the Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation test shows that there is a negative relationship between the sub-dimensions of self-awareness ($r=-.15^*$) and social-awareness ($r=-.16^*$) and EM-identified regulation. We found no relationship between other cases of sub-dimensions.

Table 3

Differences Between the Scores of Sub-Dimensions of Academic Motivation and Social-Emotional Competency of Student-Athletes According to Gender Variable (T-Test)

Sub-dimension	Gender	<i>n</i>	\bar{X}	Sd	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IM-to know	Boy	114	21.72	4.73	1.262	.21
	Girl	86	20.82	5.24		
IM-to accomplish	Boy	114	18.02	5.17	.366	.71
	Girl	86	17.73	5.80		
IM-to experience stimulation	Boy	114	18.04	5.09	.321	.75
	Girl	86	17.80	5.48		
EM-identified regulation	Boy	114	24.46	3.81	2.477	.01*
	Girl	86	22.94	4.88		
EM-introjected regulation	Boy	114	19.62	5.33	.990	.32
	Girl	86	18.87	5.27		
EM-external regulation	Boy	114	24.77	3.75	1.628	.10
	Girl	86	23.84	4.35		
Amotivation	Boy	114	11.40	7.38	.397	.69
	Girl	86	11.80	6.53		
Self-awareness	Boy	114	10.87	3.90	6.189	.00*
	Girl	86	14.07	3.20		
Social-awareness	Boy	114	12.60	3.60	3.727	.00*
	Girl	86	14.38	2.96		

p<.05*

Table 3 shows statistically a significant difference found between the mean scores of self-awareness and EM-identified regulation sub-dimensions, and social-awareness and EM-identified regulation sub-dimensions according to gender variable (*p*<.05). There is no significant difference regarding other subscales in terms of gender variable (*p*>.05). Male student-athletes ($X=24.46 \pm 3.81$) show a more meaningful opinion compared to females ($X=22.94 \pm 4.88$) on EM-identified regulation sub-dimension. Female athletes ($X=14.07 \pm 3.20$) show a more meaningful opinions than the boys ($X=10.87 \pm 3.90$) on the self-awareness sub-dimension. Female athletes ($X=14.38 \pm 2.96$) show a more meaningful opinion compared to boys ($X=12.60 \pm 3.60$) on the social-awareness sub-dimension.

Table 4

Differences Between the Scores of Sub-Dimensions of Academic Motivation and Social-Emotional Competency of Student-Athletes According to Grade Variable (One-Way ANOVA)

Sub-dimension	Grade	<i>n</i>	\bar{X}	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Tukey
IM-to know	1	79	21.23	Between groups	239.38	3	79.79	3.352	.02*	2<4
	2	76	20.53							
	3	17	21.18	In groups	4665.17	196	23.80	3.352	.02*	2<4
	4	28	23.93							
	Total	200	21.33	Total	4904.55	199				
Self-awareness	1	79	12.06	Between groups	229.66	3	76.55	5.229	.00*	3<1
	2	76	12.54							
	3	17	9.23	In groups	2869.34	196	14.64	5.229	.00*	3<2
	4	28	13.78							
	Total	200	12.24	Total	3098.99	199				
Social-awareness	1	79	13.56	Between groups	131.31	3	43.77	3.841	.01*	4>2
	2	76	12.95							
	3	17	11.76	In groups	2233.31	196	11.39	3.841	.01*	4>3
	4	28	14.96							
	Total	200	13.37	Total	2364.62	199				

p < .05*

Table 4 exhibits the results of one-way ANOVA that show a significant difference between the mean scores of “self-awareness [$F(3,196)=5.229, p<.05$], social-awareness [$F(3,196)=3.841, p<.05$], and IM-to know [$F(3,196)=3.352, p<.05$]” sub-dimensions according to the variable of grade. There is no significant difference regarding other subscales in terms of the active participation in sports variable ($p>.05$). According to the multiple comparison test results, there was a significant difference between the Grade 2 and Grade 4 classes according to the sub-dimension IM-to know ($p<.05$). The mean score of the answers given to the second year of high school is 20.53 and the mean score for the high school Grade 4 is 23.93.

There is a significant difference between the third, first, second and fourth grades according to the sub-dimension of “self-awareness” in terms of the grade levels of the athletes ($p<.05$). The mean score of the answers given to the first grade of high school is 12.06, the mean score of the answers given to the second grade is 12.54, the mean score of the answers given to the third grade is 9.23, and the mean score of the answers given to the fourth grade is 13.78.

There is a significant difference between the fourth, second, and third grades according to the sub-dimension of “social-awareness” in terms of the grade levels of the athletes ($p<.05$). The mean score of the answers given to the second grade is 12.95, the mean score of the answers given to the third grade is 11.76 and the mean score for the fourth grade is 14.96.

Table 5

Differences Between the Scores of Sub-Dimensions of Academic Motivation and Social-Emotional Competency Student-Athletes According to Active Participation in Sports Variable (T-Test)

Sub-dimension	Doing active sports	<i>n</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IM-to know	Yes	141	21.28	5.02	.257	.80
	No	59	21.47	4.87		
IM-to accomplish	Yes	141	17.40	5.34	2.016	.04*
	No	59	19.08	5.53		
IM-to experience stimulation	Yes	141	17.58	5.32	1.497	.14
	No	59	18.80	5.01		
EM-identified regulation	Yes	141	23.64	4.62	.860	.39
	No	59	24.22	3.65		
EM-introjected regulation	Yes	141	18.78	5.33	2.161	.03*
	No	59	20.54	5.09		
EM-external regulation	Yes	141	24.23	4.28	.735	.43
	No	59	24.69	3.40		
Amotivation	Yes	141	10.83	6.58	2.348	.02*
	No	59	13.35	7.72		
Self-awareness	Yes	141	12.11	3.89	.728	.47
	No	59	12.56	4.10		
Social-awareness	Yes	141	13.13	3.48	1.499	.14
	No	59	13.93	3.33		

p<.05*

Table 5 shows statistically meaningful differences between the mean scores of IM-to accomplish, EM-introjected regulation, and amotivation sub-dimensions according to the variable of active participation in sports ($p < .05$). There is no significant difference regarding other subscales in terms of this variable ($p > .05$). Students who do not actively participate in sports ($X = 19.08 \pm 5.53$) show a more meaningful opinion compared to those who do ($X = 17.40 \pm 5.34$) on IM-to accomplish sub-dimension. Students who do not actively participate in sports ($X = 20.54 \pm 5.09$) show a more meaningful opinion compared to those who do ($X = 18.78 \pm 5.33$) on EM-introjected regulation. Students who do not actively participate in sports ($X = 13.35 \pm 7.72$) show a more meaningful opinion compared to those who do ($X = 10.83 \pm 6.58$) on amotivation sub-dimensions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study underscore the low negative correlation between academic motivation and social-emotional competency of student-athletes in high school. In recent years, there has been an ongoing debate that the aim of education in schools should be not only academic learning, but also the development of emotional, social, and ethical competence (Cohen, 2006). This is because schools are an ideal environment for developing emotional learning and well-being, and the school has a strong impact on children's emotional development (Appleton & Hammond-Rowley, 2000; Bywater & Sharples, 2012). Moreover, children's increased levels of participation in sports are positively associated with emotional well-being (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006). The low level of social-emotional competencies and academic motivations of the student-athletes are expected to be high. Possible reasons for this are as follows: social-emotional learning environments cannot be

provided and SEL objectives might not be realized by teachers and coaches in the sport and school environment; student-athletes might not be encouraged to acquire these behaviors; and teachers and coaches might not sufficiently exhibit appropriate role-modeling to make students gain these behaviors. Therefore, providing social-emotional learning environments during other physical activities such as physical education, sports classes, and dance at schools, as well as presenting SEL programs to students, will have important effects on both improving their social-emotional competences and increasing their academic motivation. Teachers can provide students with powerful social-emotional learning tools, enabling them to become healthy, productive, and successful individuals in the community.

The findings of this study show that controlling the behavior of others, caring about how others think, analyzing conflicts with others, thinking before acting, learning from one's behavior, and behaving well with others have been parallel in a negative way. With that, the student-athletes have enjoyed learning new and interesting things. This situation can be interpreted as that they enjoy learning new things in the subjects that are of interest to them, but at the same time, they do not care how others feel and think, and they do not give any effort to act in harmony with others. This result of the research is also important. They have not shown self-awareness and social-awareness behaviors while they have been learning new things. This situation revealed that the social-emotional competencies of high school athletes have not developed at an adequate level, and schools and sports clubs have not been equipped to develop social-emotional skills from elementary school onwards. Several reviews about SEL programs found evidence of greater effectiveness of social-emotional competency in the early years (ages 2–7) than in older children (Tennant et al., 2007). It is important that teachers and coaches provide students with social-emotional learning skills from an early age at schools and clubs.

We found that male student-athletes paid more attention to high school education compared to their female counterparts. This result demonstrates that male athletes think that their high school education will develop their skills necessary for working life, that they will be better prepared for the job they want, and that they can make better choices for their careers. Therefore, we think that male athletes care more about making a career, earning money, the concept of establishing a family, high career goals and future careers according to patriarchal societal rules than female athletes. In their study, Filiz and Demirhan (2018) determined that girls put more importance on future life than boys. They have interpreted this as the girls' desire to have a good job in the future more than boys. Türkmen (2013) found that there was a meaningful higher mean of academic motivation for male student-athletes in the sub-dimensions of EM-external regulation and amotivation and a higher mean at a meaningful level for the sub-dimensions of IM-to know for female student-athletes.

We found that female athletes are more concerned with their behaviors towards others than males were. Therefore, female athletes were more sensitive than males in thinking about how others feel, solving problems with others, feeling responsible in their own behavior, and lecturing behavior. In this regard, it can be stated that the female athletes exhibit more constructive, selfless, emotional, and harmonious behaviors than the males. Moreover, the females make more effort to get along with others more than males. Further, female athletes are more willing to care about how other people feel, to live well with others, and to have more than one close friend. Thus, female athletes have better relations with others than the males, and that these relations should be sustainable. Therefore, we confirm that the social-emotional competencies of female athletes have been improved more than those of the males. In some studies, it has been determined that girls have higher levels of social-emotional

competence than boys (see Goldin et al., 2006; Endrulat, et al., 2010). These results support the results of the present research.

We found that participants who were not active in sports had more pleasure while challenging themselves in their classes than those who were involved in active sports regarding the IM-to accomplish sub-dimension of academic motivation. This result shows that those who do not actively participate in sports enjoy success in their lessons, enjoy the moment they reach a personal goal, and enjoy individual satisfaction in their lessons. Students learn more about the topics they are interested in and more curious about. Teachers can create a more positive learning environment by identifying the instructional needs of students (Çelik, 2003). Moreover, the participants who were not active in sports feel more important about their achievements at school according to the EM-introjected regulation sub-dimension of academic motivation. Those who did not actively participate in sports show certain behaviors more than those who did actively participate in sports. These behaviors include: feeling important when they are successful at school, proving to themselves they can finish high school, and showing themselves that they are successful in their lessons and that they are intelligent. Learners having a high level of motivation in gaining skills or learning a subject are more adaptable, work harder, and show more endurance and success when faced with difficulties (Zimmerman, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Therefore, participants created a sense of individual satisfaction by keeping their motivation towards the success of the course. Moreover, they paid more attention to their academic achievements than their sports achievements. We can conclude that student-athletes were not happy with their sporting achievements, they have not been praised by their coaches, or their achievements were not appreciated.

The results of this study show that student-athletes who did actively participate in sports cared less about why they went to school compared to those who did, regarding the amotivation sub-dimension of academic motivation. Subsequently, those who do not actively participate in sports are less productive at school, are unstable about going to school, and pay less attention to studies while at school. Studies show that school dissatisfaction and a negative sense of belonging at school are positively related to behavioral problems and low achievement, and lead to results such as alienation from school (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, as cited in Bilgic & Sarı, 2010). Therefore, students who do not actively participate in sports are more amotivated in school. It may be due to reasons including low rates of participation in social activities in schools, not taking part in school teams, not being popular in school, or having low course achievement.

The findings of this study show that fourth-grade students got more pleasure when they learned new things compared to second grade regarding the (IM)-to know sub-dimension of the academic motivation. Thus, the fourth-grade students gained pleasure and satisfaction from learning new things and discovering things they were interested in. This is because the second-grade students did not have a clear idea about their future careers and they were not specialized in sports, while the fourth-grade students were more mature in their sports, and have clear plans for the future. İlgan et al. (2013) determined that the students' perceptions of motivation levels and school quality of life decreased as the grade level increased. The result of this research does not support the result obtained from the present research.

We found that the students studying in the first, second, and fourth grades cared more about their behaviors towards others compared to those studying in the third grade regarding the self-awareness sub-dimension of the social-emotional competency. Thus, the students

studying in the first, second, and fourth grades were more sensitive than others in the third grade in thinking about how others feel, solving problems with others, feeling responsible for their behavior, and drawing lessons from their behaviors. In general, the third-grade students were required to begin the university preparatory process, but students who actively participated in sports had an intense working pace between school and club training and could not usually create free time for studying. This may cause pressure, stress, and anxiety for them. Therefore, it can be said that students who are experiencing stress and anxiety cannot sufficiently demonstrate their self-awareness behaviors. The research of Duchesne et al. (2008) showed that high anxiety in elementary school predicted non-completion of high school. Therefore, the expectation of academic and sports success increases when the age of the students increases, and the stress and anxiety created by these expectations together with the academic and self-awareness competencies may decrease. In his study, Tarasova (2016) determined that there is no difference between the levels of social-emotional competency of the second-, third-, and fourth-grade students. This result does not support the results of the present research.

The results show that the students who studied in the fourth grade made more effort to get along with others than those studying in the second and third grades regarding the social-awareness sub-dimension of social-emotional competency. Thus, the students in the fourth grade were more willing to care about how others feel, to live well with others, and to have more than one close friend. Therefore, the fourth grade students were more concerned about the friendship relationships they have developed over the four years and they were more connected to each other. Successful students develop personal strengths along with perseverance and positive academic thinking. At the same time, they learn broader social and emotional competencies by interacting with different individuals and groups through social skills and respects (CASEL, 2013). We can conclude that the fourth-grade students are more successful in academic motivation and show more social awareness behaviors. In a study, Tarasova (2016) found that the fourth-grade students had higher self-awareness and social skills than the second-grade students. The research found that the social skills of the fourth-grade students developed more, and they had more extensive communication experiences with their peers and adults in various social settings. It also stated that general social-emotional competency increased with age. This result supports the results of the present research.

This study revealed a low negative correlation between academic motivation and social-emotional competency sub-dimensions. Furthermore, there were significant differences according to gender, class, and active participation in sports. This study focused only on the data obtained from high school student-athletes' social-emotional competency and academic motivation.

Recommendations for Educational Professionals and Further Research

We recommend that teachers and administrators seriously take into account the importance of sports, which have enormous benefits for social-emotional competences and academic motivation.

The student-athletes are expected to enjoy learning something new that they are interested in, but they might not care about how others feel and think, and they might not have any motivation to act in harmony with others. Some student-athletes might not exhibit self-awareness and social-awareness behaviors while learning something new. For this reason, the

athletes should be taught to do the sports activities that develop their social-emotional competencies in line with their learning needs. The SEL model can be adapted to physical education courses, and new programs can be developed to improve the social-emotional competency of students.

Finally, this study can contribute to effective educational policies. It offers considerable data in support of the importance of social-emotional competency and academic motivation. Future studies can be carried out on primary and secondary educational levels. Different variables, such as academic achievement, attitude, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility, for instance, can be studied in relation to social-emotional competency.

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