



## The Relation between Personality Characteristics and Emotional Intelligence of Elite Female Swimmers Participating in Iran championships

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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this study is to investigate the relation between personality characteristics and emotional intelligence of elite female swimmers participating in Iran championship. The research methodology is correlative and the data has been collected through field study. Concerning the small size statistical population, the samples have been all tested. Thus, 75 female swimmers participating in Iran championships in 2014 have been selected. Pearson correlation coefficient has been used to investigate the relation between variables. The measuring instrument includes personality specification scale (Arostertz and Debron Stain, 1981) and Emotional intelligence scale (Siber or Shrink, 1986). The results showed that there is no meaningful relation between emotional intelligence and power-seeking trait ( $p = 0.523$ ,  $r = 0.143$ ); moreover, meaningful positive relation was obtained between emotional intelligence and success-seeking feature ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.428$ ). At the end, positive meaningful relation was observed between emotional intelligence and feeling of belonging ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.587$ ).

**Keywords:** Personality characteristics, emotional intelligence, elite female swimmers

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, with increased investment in professional sport, improvement of sport performance has been more considered. The growing increase and development of sport environment has led to increased motivation for presence in sport environment and investigation of the effects of personality, emotion and stress that each has manifested new challenges for players and coaches. The study and investigation of sport performance and organizational behavior makes it clear that personality, emotion and even stress usually influence sport processes and outcomes. Thus, the researchers have introduced emotional intelligence and knowledge of personality characteristics of athletes to study and search the best instrument for management of stressful sport environments in various levels. Those who make use of their emotional intelligence are usually more compatible with the surrounding environment and high self-esteem and are well-informed of their abilities (Bar, 2010, Aghayar and Sharifi Daramadi 2010).

According to Bar-Ann, emotional intelligence is a collection of abilities, capabilities and skills that equip the individual for effective compatibility with environment and achieving success in life and in this trait, emotional intelligence is the main feature that distinguishes it from cognitive intelligence. According to Golman (1995), emotional intelligence determines

our capacity in recognition of our feelings and others and helps us to create motivation in ourselves and control and govern our emotions and regulate our relations with each other. Emotional intelligence includes our ability in making skills in creation of healthy relations with others and feeling of responsibility against duties (Goleman, 1955).

On the other hand, personality is one of the main components that can help individuals know themselves and others better; i.e. an aspect of human life that allows us to predict how the individual behave in certain occasions, the owners of each personality characteristics behave in special way and have certain expectations, motivations, expectations and goals (Narimani *et al.*, 2007).

Thus, this issue that personality characteristics of an individual affect the values, feelings, attitudes and behaviors of individual is totally logical and reasonable (Khaef *et al.*, 2011).

Individuals are different with each other in terms of talents, interests, capabilities and other personality characteristics, it is obvious that individual differences are the cause of many differences in human behavior and the first origin of these differences is the human personality since the studies show that it might be that most organizational problems are associated with personality factors.

It means that the personality characteristics provide the ground for individuals to perform various behaviors in various situations [6]. In this regard, Kang *et al* (2013) studied the role of social workers in relation with conditional emotional intelligence and life satisfaction of young individuals and concluded that conditional emotional intelligence has indirect role in life satisfaction of samples and emphasized that the positive role of emotional intelligence is stronger than its negative role.

Sylvain Laborde *et al* (2013) in their study, "The role of emotional intelligence in regulation of feelings and performance against pressure", makes 28 tennis players to stroke 30 services under pressure. The reactions to pressure were evaluated personally (filling questionnaire) and practical (secretion of cortisol and successful tennis service). The variation of pressure was along with increased anxiety and decreased self-esteem in tennis service performance. These findings are the initial evidences that show evaluation of special emotional intelligence and secretion of cortisol is important for athletes in various occasions.

Ilhan *et al* (2014). Studied analysis of the relationship between the emotional intelligence and professional burnout levels of teachers. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the emotional intelligence and professional burnout levels of teachers. The nature of the study consists of high school teachers employed in city center of Kirsehir Province; 563 volunteer teachers form the nature of sampling. The statistical implementation of the study is performed using SPSS.16.0 software. T-test was applied in percentage frequency and dual groups, and One-Way Anova test was applied for the comparison of more than 2 members in a group together with Pearson Product Correlation Test. Consequently, a negative relation was found between emotional intelligence and burnout levels of teachers.

Deborah O'Neil (2011) studied the sport and efficiency of emotional intelligence and high performance of coaches and concluded that empathy and transfer of emotions is an essential task for highlighted coaches and building of reliable relation with athletes.

The coaches who have not strong relations with their athletes have less effect in motivating and encouraging them for their better performance. Relying on the empathy when the team energy is decreasing can expand positive emotional empathy and elevate the team performance and individuals.

Williams *et al* (2010) studied the relation between emotional intelligence of athletes and anxiety before competition in national sport university of Taiwan. Their analysis showed that athletes with lower emotional intelligence have higher cognitive anxiety compared to those who have high emotional intelligence. Freeland (2007) studied the relation between emotional intelligence and personality characteristics of students. His research sample (23 males and 55 females from Aclahama University)

completed the emotional intelligence scale of Mayer *et al* (2002). The results showed that there is a close relation between personality characteristics and scores of emotional intelligence as the predictive factors of emotional intelligence components.

Aslankhani *et al* (2008) carried out a study entitled the relation between emotional intelligence and personality features in elite and non-elite adult athletes with age range of 20-30. To this end, 12 male athletes of basketball, handball, boating, Judo and Karate teams who were the members of national and club teams (60 members of national team and 60 member of second and third division leagues of clubs) who were volunteering selected and completed Shring emotional intelligence scale and five personality trait of Neo. The results of the study showed that there is positive and high relation between personality traits of conscientiousness extraversion personality trait, openness to experience and compromise with emotional intelligence in elite athletes than non-elite athletes.

Concerning the studies and significance of emotional intelligence in improvement of performance of athletes and the effect of personality characteristics in control of emotional intelligence, this study seeks to investigate the relation between emotional intelligence and personality characteristics of female elite swimmers. The question that is proposed is that what relation is there between emotional intelligence and personality characteristics of Iranian elite female swimmers?

## METHODOLOGY

The present study is correlative whose data has been collected through field study.

**Statistical sample and population:** All elite female swimmers who have participated in championships of Iranian club in 2014 including 75 individuals are considered as population. Concerning small size of statistical population, the samples were all tested, the mean age of subjects was 23.67 years.

Measuring instrument is Siber or Shring (1986) emotional intelligence questionnaire. This questionnaire includes 33 questions of 5 values that are ordered based on five-point Likert scale. The subscales of emotional intelligence questionnaire include empathy, self-motivating, self-regulating, self-awareness and social skills. Personality characteristics scale is taken from Startes and Brown Stein study (1981) that is about the personality characteristics of success seeking, power seeking and feeling of belonging. This questionnaire includes 15 items that are developed based on the options, completely disagree, relatively disagree, impartial, relatively agree and completely disagree and can measure the above personality characteristics. The questionnaires have been distributed between athletes and collected after being filled. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to study the relation between variables.

**FINDINGS**

The findings have shown that 40% of swimmers have diploma, 22.67% were school student and 37.33% were university student (Table 1). Moreover, 48% of swimmers were active in freestyle swimming (Table 2).

The mean emotional intelligence in swimmers was reported as 92.38 that is in average level (Table 3). The personality feature of success seeking with mean of 4.23 had the highest mean (Table 4).

**Table1: Description of frequency and percentage of education of swimmers.**

Number and percentage	Education		
	Student	Diploma	University Student
Number	17	30	28
Percentage	22.67%	40%	37.33%

**Table 2: Description of frequency and percentage of specialized swimming type of swimmers.**

Number and percentage	Type of specialized swimming			
	Freestyle	Backstroke	Breaststroke	Butterfly stroke
Number	36	11	20	8
Percentage	48%	14.66%	26.67%	10.67%

**Table 3: Description of mean emotional intelligence and its components in swimmers.**

	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Self-motivation	16.21	3.61	25	12
Self-awareness	18.14	7.15	52	12
Self-regulating	23.39	5.38	31	13
Empathy	19.5	4.07	26	11
Social skills	16.67	2.74	20	11
Emotional intelligence	92.38	18.19	147	68

**Table 4: Description of mean personality traits in swimmers.**

	Success-seeking	Power-seeking	Feeling of belonging
Number	75	75	75
Mean	4.23	3.15	3.48
SD	2.24	1.89	2.31
Min	2	1	2
Max	5	5	5

**Table 5: The study of the relation between emotional intelligence and personality traits of female swimmers using Pearson correlation.**

		Success-seeking	Power-seeking	Feeling of belonging
Emotional intelligence	Correlation coefficient	0.143	0.428	0.287
	Significance level	0.532	0.001	0.001
	Number	75	75	75

The results of Pearson correlation showed that there is no meaningful relation between emotional intelligence and power-seeking trait. However, the correlation of emotional intelligence and power-seeking trait is meaningful and positive. Thus, increased emotional intelligence leads to increased success-seeking trait. At the end, positive meaningful relation was observed between emotional intelligence and feeling of belonging. Thus, increased emotional intelligence leads to increased feeling of belonging (Table 5).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Meaningful positive was seen between emotional intelligence and personality traits of success seeking and feeling of belonging. However, no relation was observed between emotional intelligence and power-seeking feature. In fact, the results indicate that in individuals that have personality traits of success seeking and feeling of belonging and probably higher emotional intelligence, increased incline of individual to these traits leads to increased emotional intelligence. This finding is in line with Heidari Pour (2013), Aslankhani (2008), Kajbaf Nejad (2010), and Freeland (2007). In these studies, the relation between emotional intelligence and some personality traits have been approved.

It might be the case that with increase of emotional intelligence, the probability of using emotion-based style also increases. These individuals are more emotional and have incline toward making emotional and friendly relations. It might be that the probability of using emotion-based style at the time of coping with stress also increases in these individuals since solving of stressors using expression of positive or negative emotions can be attributed to the personality traits of these individuals to some extent.

Mayer and Salvei had perceived that individuals are different in diagnosis of their own feelings and others and for the first time, they expanded the concept of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, according to Mayer and Salvei theory, is not just the reflection of an ability or trait, rather it is a combination of several distinct abilities of argumentation and emotional and has more attention to essential emotional issues and extinguishing personal and social problems rather than social intelligence. According to them, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are different in terms of having more satisfaction of family environment that encourages learning of feelings and perception of beauties in them and they are usually different in their feeling toward others and they are regulated, friendly, motivated and optimistic individuals. According to Salvei, emotional intelligence is associated with health results. In his study, he concluded that individuals with higher score in intelligence test had better ability for coping with stress and when they were under pressure and stress, they

were less likely to become sick or suffer from heart disease.

Performance of individuals is affected by various variables. One of the most important variables is personality traits of individuals. The results obtained from investigation of personality traits of individuals indicate that the individuals' behavior depend on their personality traits and behaviors; thus, the personality traits of individuals provide the ground for their behaviors (Seunghyun, 2008). The personality traits are in fact considered as morality drivers to achieve the objective. It means that these traits and characteristics make individuals motivated to perform various behaviors in special occasions. In a certain situation, the individual characteristics of any individual makes him take a behavior proportionate to himself. Since the individual's characteristics can be matched in totally different forms, it can be expected that in a certain situation, various and different reactions exist and it is here that the concept of personality is enabled (Nekoei and Pirmoradi 2010).

The results have shown that increased emotional intelligence leads to increased success-seeking and feeling of belonging. Thus, it is recommended that the coaches use theoretical training and elevate emotional intelligence to increase the probability of incline toward success-seeking and feeling of belonging traits.

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