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The study of religious beliefs among male athletes and non- athletes

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this research was to compare the religious beliefs of male athlete and non-athlete students of Sarab Islamic Azad University. 310 male students were selected as the sample, based on Morgan Table. The research instruments consisted of a researcher- made questionnaire and the Maabed Religious Beliefs questionnaire. The reliability index calculated through Cronbach with alfa coefficient (0.89). The result indicated higher religious beliefs for skilled athletes compared to beginners. Religious Beliefs for athletes of team sports were higher than those involved in individual sports. Overall results showed that the religious beliefs among athletes were stronger than non- athletes.

Key Words: Religious Beliefs, athlete, non-Athlete, skillful Athlete, beginner athlete, team Sports, individual Sports.

INTRODUCTION

Developing societies are continually changing. The changes occur in various fields; such as social, economic, political, cultural, sports and so on. One of undeniable changes in society is people's religious beliefs among different classes. So if religious beliefs are undermined in a society, that society is facing serious danger of destruction. Since in nowadays communities exercising is essential and most young people are engaged in sporting activities, according to importance of exercise and its role in maintaining the values, athletic behaviors and moral virtues, the researchers try to study religious beliefs among male university athletes and non-athlete students to reach the general conclusion that whether sports play an empowerment role in religious beliefs or not. Ghiasvand (2007) demonstrated that university students pay less attention to behaviors such as, fasting and going to holy shrines and there is no difference between athletes and non-athletes in praying God and attending in prayers in the company [3]. Stroch (2004) studied the religious beliefs of female and male athlete and non-athlete students. The overall result showed that the religious beliefs of athletes were higher than non-athletes [7]. Blake (2003) studied religious commitment, religious beliefs and religious spirituality among female and male athletes and non –athletes. The result showed that women have higher religious

beliefs compared to men. Moreover, adherence to religious beliefs was higher in athletes than non-athletes [1].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

310 university male students (150 athletes, 160 non-athletes) were randomly selected according to Morgan Table. The research instruments consisted of a researcher- made questionnaire and the Maabed Religious Beliefs questionnaire. The reliability index calculated through Cronbach alfa coefficient (0.89). Data were analyzes by Independent T-test.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of religious beliefs among subjects

Variable	N	Mean	St. dev.	Variance	Tilted co.	Min.	Max.		Quartile dev.	
Religious beliefs	310	270.47	33.901	1149.31	-0.153	159	365	1 st Q	2 nd Q	3 rd Q
								292	272.5	249

As table and graph 1 show the mean religious beliefs of the subjects was 33.90 ± 270.47 , and tilt coefficients was -0.15 which indicated negative data distribution. It can be said religious beliefs of subjects are moderate.

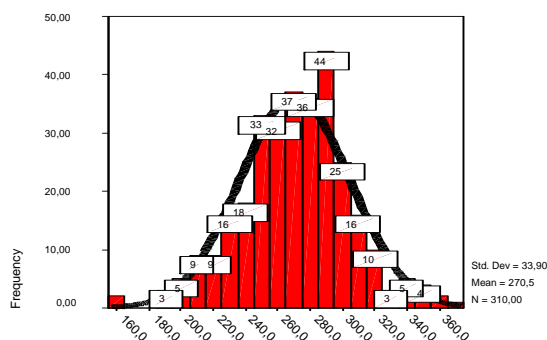


Figure 1: Distribution of religious beliefs among subjects

Table 2: Comparison of religious beliefs between skilled and beginner athletes

	N	Mean	St. dev.	T
Skilled	100	286.69	31.808	4.686
Beginners	50	260.78	32.146	-

According to table 2, the religious beliefs of skilled athletes was 286.69 ± 31.8 and in beginners it was 260.78 ± 32.14 . As $t = 4.68$ with a significance level of $P=0.000$, so, religious beliefs among skilled athletes are higher than the beginner athletes.

Table 3: Comparison of religious beliefs among individual and team athletes

	N	Mean	St. dev.	T
Team	81	284.345	35.779	2.1106
Individual	61	272.131	31.991	-

According to table 3, the religious beliefs of team athletes was 284.345 ± 35.77 and in individual athletes it was 272.131 ± 31.99 . As $t = 2.1$ with a significance level of $P=0.03$, so, religious beliefs among skilled athletes are higher than the beginner athletes.

Table 4: Comparison of religious beliefs between athletes and non-athletes

	N	Mean	St. dev.	T
Athletes	150	278.053	34.092	3.898
Non-athletes	150	263.368	32.239	-

According to table 4, the average level of religious beliefs among athletes is 278.05 ± 34.09 and in non-athletes is 263.36 ± 32.239 . Different variances have been obtained. As $t = 3.898$ with a significance level of $P = 0.000$, so, religious beliefs among athletes are higher than non-athletes.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the religious beliefs of the athletes are higher than non-athletes. Practice of religious beliefs varies among beginners and experts. The results showed that the religious beliefs of more skilled athletes are higher than beginners. Skilled athletes show more devotion to their religion and religiosity than beginners. By increasing sport skills, skilled athletes fill their free time by exercising and religion prayers and they are rarely applied to internet chatting, watching movies and a variety of satellite and CD films which weaken the religion and religious beliefs.

So, religious beliefs are valuable among our hero athletes. Thus, skilled athletes obtain ethical and religious advantages and they become humble. Our religious society and history have trained heroic culture. There are some poetries and proverbs in this regard that can be referred to miracles. These miracles address to humility that play an important role in our religious beliefs which empower the skilled athletes' religious beliefs.

As the results show practice of religious beliefs in group and individual athletes are different. The results showed that the levels of religious beliefs among team athletes are higher than the individuals. Cooperation is high in team sports than individual sports, in individual sports the person thinks about his or her success, but in team sports the athletes direct all their efforts towards the success of team and strengthens the spirit of sacrifice and dedication which will ultimately strengthen their religious beliefs. Islam is cooperation religious, and generosity and unanimity are emphasized so much.

Results show practice of religious beliefs is different among athletes and non-athletes. The results showed that the practice of religious beliefs among athletes is higher than non-athletes. It can be referred to following affective factors in considering the role of religious beliefs. As before mentioned the religious thoughts, sport and heroic have been interwoven in history of Iran. Since our religious leaders advised the importance of the sport, so it is an essential to consider religion and morality in sport, thus it empowers athlete beliefs. In other hand, our greats respected sport and related places and they tried to maintain their respect. It can be referred to respect of sport place and kissing wrestling cushion by wrestlers, respect to skilled individuals, etc. These affairs show athletes beliefs toward moral and heroic values. Puriya-e-Vali and Gholam Reza Takhti are the examples of morality and religious thoughts in sport [6].

Government Policy and the religious beliefs of community can be involved in religious beliefs among athletes. Our society is a religious one and this can be due to the strong religious beliefs that are increasing among the athletes. The concept of culture is an uncontrollable variable in the studies. Culture refers to the lifestyle of a community. Dressing, the ritual of marriage, family life, religious ceremonies, leisure and entertainment are all considered in the culture of a

community. Diversity of human cultures is impressive. Behavioral norms and cultural values of cultures are very different. Small communities have often the same cultural and industrial societies encompass many different subcultures [2]. The population of this research was selected from Sarab Azad Islamic University, a small city in East Azarbayjan, with the same culture, religion and tongue. Some students come here from different parts of Iran with some different tongue and cultures, and maybe with different religion beliefs. Free time can also plays an important role in strengthen or weaken religious beliefs. Findings of Nikkhah (2001) showed that the athletes fill their free times with heavy exercises and they do not have enough time to use satellite and internet, but non-athletes fill their free times with satellite and internet, thus these facilities affect the religiosity of the youths. At times of high unemployment individuals have more time and engagement with specific issues such as internet and satellite. Any of these factors can weaken the religious convictions [5]. Imitation and following religious leaders can also be involved in strengthening or weakening of religious beliefs. As the majority of athletes follow great religious leaders, but non-athletes may follow some people who are not bound by religion and its attachments; it can be referred to foreign actors, and foreign singers and, etc. This is inappropriate behavior and ultimately led to the weakening of religious beliefs. There is no known society in which there is a problem of religion, although religious beliefs and practices are different from one culture to another one. Small communities have often the same culture. Although the industrial communities of culturally diverse and encompass many different sub-cultures [2]. In England, there is a clear pattern in terms of religion, age, gender, class and geography. Older people are more religious than younger groups. One of the variables that impact on religious identity is that, women are more religious than men [1].

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