

Golfer Identity, Sport Citizenship, and Self-Presentation

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Not everyone who plays golf thinks of themselves as golfers but those who do, have a *golfer identity*. The first goal of this study was to create a measure of golfer identity by borrowing constructs from popular athletic and organizational identity scales. The second goal was to integrate into the new identity measure, items that reflect place identity and the extended-self. The third goal of the study was to test whether scores on the new identity measure were related to participation, ability, self-presentation, and sport citizenship. Over 3,700 golfers completed the identity survey and Vallerand's obsessive passion scale. They also responded to items assessing participation in golf and golf ability. The new golfer identity measure was reliable and had a consistent factor structure across a variety of demographic groups. As predicted, scores on the scale were related to self-presentation, sport citizenship, golf ability, and golf frequency. The identity scale was a better predictor of participation than was obsessive passion. *Golfers*, people who define themselves by playing golf, were much more likely to participate in a wide variety of golf-related activities than *people who play golf but do not define themselves as golfers*. The study includes recommendations for changing popular identity measures and for growing golf.

Keywords: athletic identity, golf, sport citizenship, self-presentation, place identity

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Athletic identity refers to self-concept derived from involvement in the role of athlete (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). People with an athletic identity are more likely to participate in physical activity and to embrace a healthy lifestyle than their counterparts (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993, Danish, 1983). In addition, the stronger the athletic identity, the more likely it is that athletes will suffer negative affect or depression when faced with injuries (Brewer, 1993) or unexpected sport career retirement (Alfermann, Stambulova, & Zemaityte, 2004; Lally, 2007).

The most popular measure of athletic identity is the 10-item Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) (Brewer, VanRaalte & Linder, 1993). This scale includes items like, "I consider myself an athlete," "Sport is the most important part of my life," and "Other people see me mainly as an athlete." Brewer and Cornelius (2001) experimented with a shortened, 7-item version of the AIMS, while Cieslak, Fink, and Pastore (2005) lengthened it, calling the new 19-item scale, AIMS-Plus. The AIMS and its variants have received considerable attention from researchers and appear to be valid across cultures (Brewer et al 1993, Brewer, Selby, Linder, & Petitpas, 1999; Brown & Hartley, 1998; Li & Andersen, 2008; Proios, 2012). The AIMS is, however, not the only identity scale. Anderson's (2004) 21-item Athletic Identity Questionnaire (AIQ) assesses four aspects of identity: athletic appearance, importance of sport/exercise, perceived competence, and encouragement from others. Nasco and Webb (2006) created the 10-item Public-Private Athletic Identity Scale (PPAIS). As the name suggests, the scale includes a measure of one's athletic identity known to the public, and a measure of one's internalized athletic identity.

Outside of sport psychology, researchers in recreation/leisure studies have examined the identities of highly committed participants in activities as varied as bird watching (Kellert, 1985), showing dogs (Baldwin & Norris, 1999), Civil War reenactment (Mittelstaedt, 1995); contract bridge (Scott & Godbey, 1994), and football spectating (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002). In this study, we set out to create a golfer identity measure based on popular athletic identity scales. Golfer identity is interesting because golf is a life-long sport and has a distinctive culture involving specialized clothing, language, values, courtesy norms, and locations. In addition, golf uses a handicap system that functions as a standardized method for evaluating golf ability. The handicap system allowed us to examine the relationship between identity and ability.

Facets of Identity

We propose 7 facets of golfer identity including: 1) golf as a component of the self, 2) perceived importance of golf, 3) social-labeling as a participant of golf, 4) social connections with other golfers, 5) pride in golf-related ability/knowledge, 6) personalization of criticism of golf, and 7) place identity/extended-self. The first facet is central to most measures of identity and may be closest to the core definition of identity. The second facet reflects the relative importance of the sport. The next two facets, social labeling and social connections, like the first two, overlap with themes from the AIMS. Sociologists and social psychologists emphasize the importance of social interaction in the process of self-definition. One group of researchers who call their work *Identity Theory*, argue that identity is primarily derived from the roles people fill (Burke, 1980; Stryker 1968; McCall & Simmons, 1978). The other group of researchers, who call their work *Social Identity Theory*, suggest that identity is

derived from the groups people occupy (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Abrams, 1988). See Hogg, Terry and White, 1995 or Stets and Burke, 2000 for comparisons of the theories. The distinction may not be essential to the current study because *golfer* is both a role and a group label, but both theories highlight the importance of social interaction in identity formation. Without others, there could be no roles or groups and thus no behavioral role expectations or group norms.

The fifth facet of golfer identity is related to perceived competence. A long history of research shows that people are more likely to value an activity when they experience success at the activity (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Weiner, 1985; White, 1959). Further, self-efficacy and self-esteem are so highly entwined with theories of self-verification (Swann, 1983) and identity that competence should be included in a measure of identity. The AIMS includes an indirect measure of competence, "I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport." The AIQ, PPAIS, and OI include competence as an explicit part of the identity measure.

The sixth facet, personalization of criticism, is derived from a popular organizational identity measure. Organizational identity, the extent to which one defines oneself based on membership in an organization, has been shown to be related to occupational attachment, work-group attachment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behavior (See Riketta, 2005 for meta-analysis). Ashforth and Mael (1989) include two items in their measure of identity: "When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment." "When someone criticizes (name of organization), it feels like a personal insult." We included a variation on these items in our scale. The items were added based on the assumption that people are motivated to maintain their self-esteem. Athletes are thus likely to be offended at the criticism of a sport if that sport is incorporated into the self.

The final facet of the golfer identity measure, place identity/extended-self, is not part of current athletic or organizational identity measures, but has received a great deal of attention among environmental psychologists, designers, and architects (Proshansky, 1978). Place identity is the feeling of a physical space being part of oneself. It reflects *rootedness* (Tuan 1974, 1977) in a place. When people spend a great deal of time in a location, like a gym or stadium, they start to form an attachment to the location (Altman & Low, 1992) and this can, in turn, lead to an identification with the location (Giuliani, 2003). Belk (1988) used the term *extended self* to describe those locations that are incorporated into self-definition. To our knowledge, the idea of place identity has not been examined among sport psychologists studying identity and thus presents an interesting research opportunity. See Table 1 for a comparison of facets across identity measures.

Sport Participation and Identity

Skill

There is mixed evidence as to whether athletic identity varies across ability groups like recreational and elite athletes, or Division I and Division II athletes. It is intuitively appealing that elite athletes would have a greater sense of athletic identity than the less proficient, but the findings on this topic are equivocal (Lamont-Mills & Christensen, 2006). This may be because many of the studies that test the

Table 1 Sport Identity Scale—Golf

Sport Identity Scale Themes &Items	Facets Similar To				
	AIMS	AIMS+	PPAIS	AIQ	OI
Sport as Component of Self	x	x	x		x
Perceived Importance of the Sport	x	x			
Social-labeling as a Participant of the Sport	x	x			
Social Connection to Other Sport Participants	x	x			
Pride in Sport-Related Ability/Knowledge			x	x	x
Personalization of Criticism of the Sport					x
Place Identity/Extended Self Related to Sport					

AIMS = Athletic Identity Measurement Scale, PPAIS = Public-Private Athletic Identity Scale, AIQ = Athletic Identity Questionnaire, OI = Organizational Identity Questionnaire

relationship between proficiency and identity include a rather narrow band of highly proficient athletes. Division II athletes are not uniformly of lower ability than Division I athletes. Another possibility is that the metrics that were used to define ability in identity studies have been imprecise. We suggest that if an objective measure of ability is used, and a study includes participants with a full range of ability, ability will be positively related to identity.

Frequency

An interesting possibility is that quality of participation (skill) may not be as closely related to identity as the *amount* of participation. For instance, most Division I and Division II basketball players have spent their entire childhoods on school teams, development teams, and league teams. Both groups have spent countless hours on the court. Thus, regardless of their relative ability, both Division I and Division II groups have spent a great deal of time playing and this time may have a greater effect on identity than ability. In the closest study we could find to the current line of research, Jun and Kyle (2012) used a golfer identity measure based on the AIMS-Plus scale and found that golfer identity was positively related to the number of years players had been involved in golf. Golfer identity was also related to the number of rounds played per year. Consistent with Jun and Kyle (2012), we predicted that golfer identity would be positively correlated with golf tenure and golf rounds played per year.

Public Self-Presentation

Despres (1991); Rapoport (1982), and Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) have documented that many people personalize their homes and workplaces with decorations to reflect who they are. If participation in a sport is part of a person's identity, a person may broadcast his or her interest in the sport via home, auto, and workspace decorations. Fans certainly display their personal connection to a team by clothing, pennants, stickers, and banners (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). There is no reason to assume that players would not

do the same, yet surprisingly little research exists on the topic. We predicted that players who identify with golf would be more likely to display their interest in the game by the use of office/home decorations, wearing golf related clothing when not in competition, giving pets/family/themselves golf-related names, posting their golf interest on social media, and using golf terms in nongolf conversations.

Sport Citizenship

Sport citizenship behaviors are voluntary actions that promote the game and benefit the larger community of participants. Sport and/or golf citizenship behavior is similar to organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988). Organizational citizenship includes behaviors like volunteering to be on committees, assisting coworkers, attending social events, organizing parties, and advocating for the organization. Organizational citizenship behaviors, sometimes referred to as *contextual performance* (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997), are behaviors that are performed beyond a formal job description and are usually performed without concern for rewards or compensation. Organizational citizenship behavior is decidedly *other-oriented*. There have been very few studies of organizational citizenship in sport (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). The notable exceptions include a study by Aoyagi, Cox, and McGuire, (2008) who introduced the concept of organizational citizenship behavior to the sport psychology literature and demonstrated that athletic citizenship was related to team cohesion and athlete satisfaction. Similar results were found by Martinez and Tindale (2014) who studied tennis and softball players. To our knowledge, no researchers have examined the relationship between identity and sports citizenship. We propose, that parallel to the findings about the relationship between organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002), people who identify with a sport will be better citizens of the game than people who do not identify with the sport. For golf, citizenship behavior includes activities like volunteering to organize a tournament, teaching others to play, and voluntarily repairing damage to the course.

Obsessive Passion

Obsessive passion for an activity is characterized by a feeling of obligation to participate (Mageau et al., 2011; Vallerand et al., 2003). Athletes who have an obsessive passion for a sport pursue competence in the sport to enhance, maintain, or protect feelings of self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Stenseng & Dalskau, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003). The obsessively passionate pursue their sport because of “the reassurance and ego-affirming moments it provides” (Mageau et al., 2009, p. 605). The obsessive’s motive for participation is based on the desire to avoid the negative feeling associated with not participating (anxiety, diminished self). Gustafsson, Hassmen & Hassmen (2011) have shown that athletes scoring high on obsessive passion scale demonstrate higher levels of physical and emotional exhaustion, life conflict, negative affect, and stress (Curran et al., 2013; Gustafsson et al., 2011). Obsessive passion is, however, positively correlated with liking an activity, participating in the activity, and spending time on the activity (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Houliort, 2003). Obsessive passion is also related to identity. As Mageau, Vallerand and colleagues (2009) put it, “people with a passion for swimming or

for writing do not merely swim or write. They are *swimmers* or *writers*” (p. 609). The relationship between identity and passion has been demonstrated in studies of college students (e.g., Aron et al., 1992), musician, and athletes (Vallerand, et al., 2008). We included obsessive passion as a test of the discriminative validity of the identity scale and we predicted that identity would be a better predictor of participation in golf related activities than would obsessive passion.

Method

Over 44,000 golfers, who were either members of the Minnesota Golf Association or a national panel of active golfers, were sent an e-mail invitation to complete a survey “about the way that recreational golfers think about the game.” Of the 7,220 people who started the survey, 750 participants completed less than 25% of the items so their responses were eliminated from further analysis. Of the remaining group, 465 failed an attention checker imbedded in the survey. This item read, “If you are attending to this survey please click *agree*” When the people who responded incorrectly to the item were eliminated, 6,005 remained in the sample (males = 5,308, 88.4%; females = 593, 9.9%, 104 or 1.7% failed to indicate their gender). Participants ranged in age from 15 to 90 years ($M = 57.9$) and represented all 50 states. About 5% of the sample was from outside the United States. The sample was comprised of active golfers who had been playing golf for 33 years (median) and who played 3 rounds per week (median).

Golf Participation

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they had, or would, perform 46 golf-related activities on a 4-point scale where 0 = “I would not do this,” 1 = “I have not done this but I might if I had the chance,” 2 = “I have done this,” and 3 = “I have done this frequently.” Participants could also indicate if an item, “does not apply to me or I could not do this.” This last option was treated as a missing response. Participants also responded to two items: “During the golf season, how often do you wear a cap with a golf-related logo on it when you are not playing golf? And, “During the golf season, how often do you wear a shirt/top with a golf-related logo on it when you are not playing golf?” Participants responded on an 8-point scale ranging from “less than one day per week” to “7 days per week.”

Golf activities were organized into nine broad categories: self-presentation, citizenship, play, ability, learning, spectating, collecting, simulating and a general lifestyle category. Self-presentation was subdivided into five subcategories: naming, decorating, social media, language and dress. Citizenship was divided into general and teaching subcategories.

Participants recorded their USGA Handicap Index, typical score for an 18-hole round (par 72), the number of dollars per week they spend on golf, and the number of rounds per month they played during the golf season.

Identity

Next, a subset of the sample ($N = 3,793$) completed questionnaire items related to identity and obsession. These participants responded to each of 14 identity items

on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. There were two items for each of seven facets of identity: Golf as component of the self, perceived importance of golf, social-labeling as a golfer, social connection to other golfers, pride in golf-related ability/knowledge, personalization of criticism of golf, and place identity/extended self related to golf. Participants responded to each item on a 5-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Obsessive Passion

Participants also responded to six items related to obsessive passion with golf on the same 5-point Likert scale. The items were based on Vallerand’s Obsessive Passion scale (2003) and included, “I have difficulties controlling my urge to play golf.” “I have almost an obsessive feeling for golf.” “I have the impression that golf controls me.” “If I could, I would only play golf.” “I can’t stop thinking about golf even when I should be thinking about something else.” “Golf is the only thing that really gets me motivated.” These items were mixed into the identity survey and the order of all items was randomized for each participant by the survey software. In addition to the items mentioned above, participants also indicated their birth year, state of residence, and gender.

Results

Participation

First, self-reports of the extent to which people have or would perform the golf-related activities were investigated. Participation in these activities ranged from a very small proportion: naming one’s son or daughter after a famous golfer .2%, to virtual unanimous participation. Over 99% had watched a professional golf tournament on television. See Table 2 for frequencies.

Scales

A principal components analysis with orthogonal rotation was performed on the 14 identity items and 6 obsession items. Three components emerged with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Twelve items from the identity scale loaded on the first component (loadings greater than .50). All six items related to obsession loaded on the second component (loadings greater than .72) and two items related to taking offense at criticisms of golf loaded on the third component (loadings greater than .79).

The assignment of items to components did not differ if orthogonal rotation was used nor if factors were tested with principal axis, least squares, or maximum likelihood factoring. Neither the number of factors nor the assignment of items to factors changed (although loadings were slightly different) when separate analyses were run for males/females, lower/middle/upper third of age groups, or lower/middle/upper third of ability groups (as measured by self-reports of typical score for 18 holes). Thus, the basic structure of the scale was similar for gender, age, and ability groups. Because of the stability of the factor analyses, an Identity Scale was

Table 2 Participation in Golf-Related Activities

	N	% Would Not Do This	% Might Do This	% Have Done This	% Have Done This Frequently	M	SD
Self-Presentation							
Naming							
Give a pet a golf-related name	5095	55.7	37.7	5.6	1.0	0.52	.65
Have a golf-related name or nickname	5119	64.8	23.1	10.0	2.1	0.49	.76
Name your son or daughter after a famous golfer	4794	89.2	8.9	1.7	0.2	0.13	.40
Decorating							
Place golf-related decorations in your workspace	5625	21.2	13.3	53.7	11.8	1.56	.95
Put golf-related decorations on the outside of your house/apartment	5613	56.5	22.6	18.7	2.2	0.67	.85
Place golf-related decorations (stickers etc.) on your car	5575	66.0	17.0	15.1	1.9	0.53	.82
Dress your child (younger than 5) in golf clothes	4206	64.8	18.5	14.8	1.9	0.54	.81
Get a golf-related personalized license plate	5572	68.8	26.5	3.7	1.0	0.37	.61
Get a golf-related tattoo	4794	94.4	4.9	0.5	0.3	0.07	.29
Social Media							
Identify yourself as a golfer on Facebook or similar social media	5156	35.9	27.4	30.8	5.9	1.07	.95
Post public comments about Internet golf articles	5457	56.4	25.5	15.3	2.8	0.65	.84
Have a golf-related signature line/quote on your e-mail	5482	68.9	22.6	06.6	1.9	0.42	.70
Write a blog about golf	5345	71.8	24.8	02.7	0.8	0.32	.56

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	N	% Would Not Do This	% Might Do This	% Have Done This	% Have Done This Frequently	M	SD
Language							
Use golf terms (like “mulligan”) when you are talking about nongolf topics to nongolfers	5805	26.9	16.2	51.0	5.8	1.36	.94
Use golf analogies and examples when you talk to nongolfers	5792	29.2	16.8	49.4	4.6	1.29	.94
Citizenship							
General							
Fix other people’s ball marks on the green	5898	0.5	0.4	20.9	78.2	2.77	.47
Repair other player’s divots in the fairway	5897	1.5	1.7	41.1	55.7	2.51	.61
Serve on a golf committee at a golf club	5767	14.2	44.3	27.9	13.6	1.41	.89
Organize a charity or recreational tournament	5744	17.5	37.4	35.0	10.1	1.38	.89
Serve as a tournament official	5669	23.4	55.1	16.6	4.9	1.03	.77
Organize a USGA tournament	5464	49.0	46.3	3.7	1.1	0.57	.62
Teaching							
Teach friends how to play golf	5780	16.4	19.2	55.5	8.8	1.57	.87
Volunteer to teach kids how to play golf	5690	17.7	52.4	24.4	5.6	1.18	.78
Work as a school golf coach	5225	47.2	44.6	5.7	2.5	.64	.70
Play							
Play in local charity or social tournament	5888	1.4	5.4	53.4	39.8	2.32	.64
Play on a course that has hosted a major	5851	1.5	33.5	49.1	15.9	1.79	
Play in an officially sanctioned USGA amateur event	5716	16.5	50.6	24.5	8.4	1.25	.83

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	N	% Would Not Do This	% Might Do This	% Have Done This	% Have Done This Frequently	M	SD
Learning							
Watch the Golf Channel news or golf educational shows	5872	2.3	3.2	42.8	51.7	2.44	.67
Subscribe to a golf magazine	5890	3.5	3.1	49.5	43.9	2.34	.71
Buy golf books	5863	6.9	9.3	58.8	25.1	2.02	.79
Take regular lessons	5833	10.6	33.1	45.9	10.3	1.56	.82
Spectating							
Watch professional golf tournaments on TV	5900	0.6	0.4	17.3	81.7	2.80	.45
Attend a professional golf tournament as a spectator	5900	1.4	11.1	59.2	28.3	2.14	.66
PGA Championship) as a spectator	5853	2.9	37.8	46.1	13.2	1.70	.73
Watch a rerun of a golf tournament (one you have seen before)	5763	29.6	11.1	43.0	16.4	1.46	1.08
Volunteer at a professional tournament	5841	8.8	56.5	26.1	8.6	1.35	.76
Collecting							
Have a collection related to golf (balls, programs, etc.)	5760	27.6	13.8	41.3	17.4	1.48	1.07
Collect golfer autographs	5668	47.0	26.2	23.7	3.1	.83	.90

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	N	% Would Not Do This	% Might Do This	% Have Done This	% Have Done This Frequently	M	SD
Simulating							
Play computer golf games	5698	23.6	13.9	52.8	9.7	1.49	.96
Participate in a fantasy golf league	5544	45.3	25.0	21.2	8.5	0.93	1.0
When I see an undeveloped field or property, I imagine how it might look and play if it were developed into a golf course.	5601	31.9	18.3	39.2	10.6	1.28	1.03
Lifestyle							
Buy a season pass to a local course or join a golf club	5879	3.6	14.1	33.8	48.5	2.27	.83
Take a golf vacation (where you play golf)	5899	1.4	10.5	46.2	41.9	2.29	.70
Own/rent a home on a golf course	5666	13.8	60.1	17.9	8.2	1.21	.78
Work at a golf course	5617	17.4	53.2	21.6	7.7	1.20	.83
Build a hole or putting green in your yard	5558	31.4	52.9	13.6	2.1	0.86	.72

(continued)

created by summing the 14 items related to identity (reverse coding where necessary). The Chronbach's alpha for the scale was .88 and would have been lower if any item were removed from the scale. Table 3 includes descriptive statistics for the items. The table also includes factor loadings for a second analysis containing only the 14 items related to identity.

Table 3 Golfer Identity Scale Items

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Corrected Item-Total <i>r</i>	Factor Loadings 1 2	
Golf as Component of Self					
Playing golf is a big part of who I am.	3.76	0.92	0.70	.74	.17
If golf were no longer a part of my life, I would feel empty or incomplete.	3.30	1.03	0.54	.47	.41
Perceived Importance of Golf					
Among all my hobbies, golf is the most important to me.	3.80	1.03	0.61	.70	.08
I could easily give up golf for another sport or hobby (reverse coded).	4.05	0.85	0.48	.54	.13
Social-labeling as a Golfer					
Most of the people who know me think of me as a golfer.	3.76	0.92	0.60	.70	.12
If I had to describe myself to a stranger, one of the first things I would say is, "I am a golfer."	3.15	1.02	0.60	.60	.33
Social Connection to Other Golfers					
I feel like I "fit in" when I am among golfers.	3.88	0.71	0.55	.59	.23
I feel a connection or kinship with other golfers.	4.06	0.63	0.51	.50	.34
Pride in Golf-Related Ability/Knowledge					
I am proud of my golf knowledge and/or skills.	3.94	0.72	0.52	.63	.09
Among all the sports I play, I am most competent at golf.	3.65	1.06	0.50	.65	.08
Personalization of Criticism of Golf					
When someone criticizes golf, it feels like a personal insult.	2.73	0.99	0.49	.17	.85
When people negatively stereotype golfers, it makes me angry.	2.86	0.97	0.38	.06	.88
Place Identity/Extended Self Related to Golf					
I am "in my element" when I am playing golf.	3.85	0.77	0.68	.75	.17
I feel most like myself when I am at the golf course.	3.45	0.86	0.64	.67	.29

N = 3663

Identity was only modestly related to gender: males ($M = 50.5$), females ($M = 48.9$), $F(1, 3562) = 19.11$, $p < .001$, or age $r(3531) = -.07$, $p < .001$, and only modestly related to the number of years the participants had been playing golf $r(3533) = .13$, $p < .001$.

An Obsession Scale total was created by summing the six obsession items. The Chronbach's alpha for the scale was .89 and would be lower if any item were removed from the scale. Obsession was only modestly related to gender (males $M = 13.2$), (females $M = 11.8$), $F(1, 3663) = 52.13$, $p < .001$, age $r(3531) = -.10$, $p < .001$, and number of years the participant had been playing golf $r(3533) = -.07$, $p < .001$.

Next, responses to items under each participation category were summed to create participation subscales. The same was done for the items under each of the seven identity facets.

Predicting Participation

The correlations between self-reports of willingness to participate in golf activities and Identity, Obsession, and rounds per month appear in Table 4. Identity was, as predicted, related to self-presentation, citizenship, play, ability, learning, spectating, collecting, simulating, and lifestyle. For every major and subcategory of participation, Identity was more highly related to participation than was Obsession or frequency of play.

The correlations between the identity facet subscales and participation subscales appear in Table 5. Personalization of criticism was less highly correlated to participation than the other facets of identity. The other facets were similarly related to participation.

To test the relative contribution of the identity items to prediction of participation, overall participation score (sum of all participation subscales) was regressed on the seven identity facet subscale scores. The overall model was significant $F(7, 1410) = 114.80$, $p < .001$ ($R^2 = .36$). The significant predictors of participation included: Social Labeling as a Golfer ($Beta = .17$, $p < .001$); Pride in Golf-Related Ability/knowledge ($Beta = .17$, $p < .001$); Place Identity/Extended Self ($Beta = .15$, $p < .001$); Personalization of Criticism of Golf ($Beta = .11$, $p < .001$); Social Connection to Other Golfers ($Beta = .09$, $p < .002$); and Perceived Importance of Golf ($Beta = .08$, $p < .007$). The one facet that was not significant, when all other facets were included in the model, was Golf as Component of Self ($Beta = .03$, $p < .31$). The last component was not significant because of shared variance with the others.

Discussion

In this study, a new measure of golfer identity was created by borrowing constructs from popular athletic and organizational identity scales. Items that reflect place identity/extended-self were integrated into the new identity measure. The new measure was reliable and had a consistent factor structure across a variety of demographic groups.

There was a strong relationship between golfer identity and golf skill. Thus, the study is consistent with some of the studies in the athletic identity literature (Danish, 1983; Good, Brewer, Petitpas, Van Raalte, & Mahar, 1993; Matheson,

Table 4 Correlation of Identity, Obsession, and Participation

Activity	Identity	Obsession	I > O	Rounds Per Month
Self-Presentation				
Naming	.35	.29	*	.00
Give a pet a golf-related name	.26	.18	*	.00
Have a golf-related name or nickname	.27	.22	*	.04
Name your son or daughter after a famous golfer	.20	.21		.00
Decorating	.46	.34	*	.02
Place golf-related decorations in your workspace	.35	.19	*	.02
Put golf-related decorations on the outside of your house/apartment	.27	.20	*	.06
Place golf-related decorations (stickers etc.) on your car	.28	.23	*	.03
Dress your child (younger than 5) in golf clothes	.28	.20	*	-.02
Get a golf-related personalized license plate	.30	.25	*	.05
Get a golf-related tattoo	.13	.11		.00
Social Media	.39	.29	*	.00
Identify yourself as a golfer on Facebook or similar social media	.29	.18	*	-.01
Post public comments about Internet golf articles	.25	.21		.00
Have a golf-related signature line/quote on your E-mail	.27	.23		.06
Write a blog about golf	.24	.21		.02
Language	.26	.14	*	-.02
Use golf terms (like “mulligan”) when you are talking about nongolf topics	.21	.12	*	-.02
Use golf analogies and examples when you talk to nongolfers	.24	.13	*	-.02
Dress	.34	.29	*	.15
Wear a golf cap when not playing	.26	.24		.12
Wear golf shirt/top when not playing	.33	.27	*	.14
Citizenship				
General	.38	.14	*	.15
Fix other people’s ball marks on the green	.20	.05	*	.06
Repair other player’s divots in the fairway	.22	.07	*	.10
Serve on a golf committee at a golf club	.27	.08	*	.17
Organize a charity or recreational tournament	.21	.18	*	.06
Serve as a tournament official	.24	.08	*	.08
Organize a USGA tournament	.29	.18	*	.06

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Activity	Identity	Obsession	I > O	Rounds Per Month
Teaching	.33	.18	*	.07
Teach friends how to play golf	.27	.16	*	.05
Volunteer to teach kids how to play golf	.27	.12	*	.08
Work as a school golf coach	.28	.16	*	.05
Play—Tournaments	.29	.11	*	.15
Play in local charity or social tournament	.18	.05	*	.08
Play on a course that has hosted a major	.13	.00	*	.09
Play in an USGA amateur event	.27	.15	*	.14
Play				
Rounds per month	.21	.18		1.0
Years playing	.13	.08	*	.10
Dollars per week spent on golf	.06	.06		.19
Ability				
Handicap	-.33	-.17	*	-.12
Typical Score for 18 Holes	-.36	-.19	*	-.15
Learning	.37	.23	*	.07
Watch the Golf Channel news or golf educational shows	.30	.22	*	.06
Subscribe to a golf magazine	.29	.15	*	.03
Buy golf books	.29	.16	*	.04
Take regular lessons	.11	.10		.06
Spectating	.36	.15	*	.04
Watch professional golf tournaments on TV	.25	.11	*	.02
Attend a professional golf tournament as a spectator	.22	.04	*	.02
Attend a major (British Open, Masters, US Open, PGA Championship) as a spectator	.16	.00	*	.04
Watch a rerun of a golf tournament (one you have seen before)	.31	.23	*	.02
Volunteer at a professional tournament	.17	.02	*	.03
Collecting	.33	.20	*	.00
Have a collection related to golf (balls, programs, etc.)	.32	.19	*	.08
Collect golfer autographs	.20	.14	*	.06
Simulating	.31	.20	*	-.05
Play computer golf games	.13	.14		-.05
When I see an undeveloped field or property, I imagine how it might look and play if it were developed into a golf course.	.30	.23	*	-.02
Participate in a fantasy golf league	.21	.16	*	-.02

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Activity	Identity	Obsession	I > O	Rounds Per Month
Lifestyle	.41	.23	*	.18
Buy a season pass to a local course or join a golf club	.21	.10	*	.23
Take a golf vacation (where you play golf)	.29	.12	*	.12
Own/rent a home on a golf course	.12	.05	*	.09
Work at a golf course	.27	.15	*	.04
Build a golf hole or putting green in your yard	.24	.19	*	.00
All	.54	.38	*	.09

N = 3,049–3,567. If $r > .05$, $p < .01$. Difference between correlations greater than .03 = $p < .05$

Brewer, Van Raalte, & Andersen, 1994; Tasiemski, Kennedy, Gardner, & Rachel 2004) but not all (Hurst, Hale, Smith, & Collins, 2000; Tusak, Faganel, & Bednarik, 2005). See Lamont-Mills and Christensen, 2006. The current study did benefit from an objective measure of ability and a participant sample that included a wide range of ability. Few studies of athletic identity have had both.

A key finding was that golfer identity was related to self-presentation as a golfer. Self-presentation was represented by decorating one’s home, car, and office. This is consistent with research in environmental psychology that shows that people who identify with their neighborhoods are more likely to decorate their houses in a way that shows their identity (Harris & Brown, 1996). People who identified as golfers were also more likely to broadcast their interest in the game with names they gave themselves, their children, and their pets. *Golfers* display their interest in golf with social media, the language they use, and the way they dress.

Golfer identity was also related to golf citizenship behavior as people who define themselves by playing golf were more likely to volunteer, organize tournaments, serve on committees, and teach others than were their counterparts. This finding is consistent with research on organizational citizenship behavior (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich, Golden & Shortell 2002; Organ, 1988).

Golfer identity was positively related to seeking learning opportunities, speculating, collecting, and simulating golf play. Finally, golfer identity was positively related to a desire to bring golf into one’s lifestyle by living on a golf course, becoming a member of a golf club, and taking golf vacations. We did not make explicit hypotheses regarding these activities, but it is not surprising that they are related to identity. More work needs to be done to examine the causes and consequents of participation in the peripheral aspects of a game. While not typically the primary focus of sport psychology, these peripheral forms of participation should be of interest to sport and recreation researchers.

It is noteworthy that years playing golf had very little relationship with identity. This was inconsistent with our prediction. It is unclear why this is except the participants in the study were included because they were actively involved in golf. Those people who do not play, or had stopped playing golf, were not included in

Table 5 Correlation of Identity Facets and Golf Participation Subscales

Golf Activities	Golf as Component of Self	Perceived Importance of Golf	Social Labeling as a Golfer	Social Connection to Other Golfers	Pride in Golf – Related Ability / knowledge	Person- alization of Criticism of Golf	Place Identity / Extended Self
SP—Naming	.27	.24	.29	.23	.23	.23	.30
SP—Decorating	.36	.32	.38	.32	.30	.30	.39
SP—Social Media	.30	.26	.32	.25	.26	.24	.33
SP—Language	.20	.17	.19	.22	.16	.15	.21
SP—Dress	.26	.25	.28	.20	.21	.20	.29
Citizenship—General	.26	.24	.33	.31	.34	.17	.29
Citizenship—Teaching	.25	.22	.25	.22	.35	.14	.31
Learning	.28	.33	.26	.28	.28	.17	.29
Spectating	.26	.27	.29	.26	.31	.17	.29
Collecting	.24	.22	.27	.25	.25	.17	.27
Simulating	.25	.24	.23	.19	.21	.19	.28
Lifestyle	.32	.32	.32	.29	.32	.20	.35
Tournament Play	.20	.21	.24	.23	.29	.08	.26
All Activities	.45	.42	.49	.43	.45	.35	.50

N = 1450–3703. All *p* < .001. Differences between correlations greater than .05 are significant at *p* < .05. Differences greater than .06 are significant at *p* < .01.

the study. Perhaps a relationship between identity and golf tenure might have been found if the study had included participants who had dropped-out of golf.

Identity was a better predictor of participation than was obsessive passion. Obsessive passion was included primarily to test the discriminant validity of the identity measure. Obsessive passion was related to many central and peripheral aspect of golf participation, but it was not as highly correlated to participation as was golfer identity.

Weaknesses

Like many questionnaire studies, some of the results in this study may have been affected by common method variance. The survey was a bit long and this may have contributed to a less thoughtful response to items than we would have hoped. Fortunately, there was variability in responses, but asking questions at different points in time, or using different scaling methods, may have reduced the potential for common method problems.

In retrospect, it would have been wise to include Vallerand's measure of harmonious passion in the study. Harmonious passion is the counterpart to obsessive passion and reflects a healthy attachment to an activity and it would be interesting to test its relationship to identity. In fact, some of the items in the harmonious passion scale directly assess identity.

It would have also be wise to compare responses to the identity measure we created with the full AIMS, AIMS Plus, AIQ, and PPAIS where the phrase "athlete" was substituted for "golfer." Although we did include items that were similarly worded to items in the various identity measures, we did not include all the items from those measures. A better test of the identity scale might include more direct comparisons with other athletic measures. For instance, the AIMS is a measure of the strength and exclusivity of identification with sport. It would be instructive to test whether the results we found for identity and participation relate more closely to the strength or the exclusivity aspects of the AIMS.

Significance of the Findings

The study included a large sample of active golfers who represented all fifty states. The analysis provides a snapshot of the U.S. golfer. The activity frequency data highlights opportunities for regional golf associations to get more players involved as volunteers. There were many participants who indicated that they would be willing to serve as a tournament officials, organize a tournament, work at a golf course, volunteer to teach kids how to play, and serve on a committee. Perhaps these players simply need to be asked to help.

Over 50% of the participants had not played in an official USGA event but were willing to do so if the opportunity arose. A large number of players had played in charity and social tournaments (93%) but these events often involve less restrictive rules (i.e., scrambles, team events, winter rules) than USGA tournaments. There is thus a large untapped market of players who might play in official tournaments.

For sports researchers in general and athletic identity researchers in specific, the study offers insights into topics that have received little attention. For instance, defensiveness to criticism is not included in measures of athletic identity and it might be wise to add this facet to measures. More importantly, place identity/extended

self has received very little attention by sport psychologists and this is an area ripe for development. Environmental psychologists and architects have already established theoretical and methodological foundation for the study of place identity and their work could easily be adapted to athletic settings. Place identity could be examined for a wide variety of sports and may be related to home-field advantage, stress reduction, and performance enhancement. This study also suggests that while identity is usually conceptualized as having affective, cognitive, and behavioral components, identity also has an environmental component.

There has been little research on sports citizenship and this study included a taxonomy of golf citizenship behavior. Similarly, there has been little research on the ways that athletes display their connection to a sport. A taxonomy of self-presentation strategies was also developed for this study. Both sports citizenship and self-presentation represent opportunities for more research in sport psychology.

Despite the success of early athletic identity scales, there is certainly room for sport-specific measures of identity. *Athlete* is a general term with broad boundaries for role or group membership. It is easier to derive a social identity from group membership when there are clear boundaries delineating who is in the group and who is out (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity is also more likely to form when one is a member of a group that has specific and distinctive characteristics. *Athletes* include participants from a wide variety of sport, and each of these sports has its own subculture. Consider how much less precise our expectations are for the attitudes and behaviors of *athletes* than, say, *long-distance runners*. More work should be done on sport-specific identity scales.

In sum, scores on the golfer identity scale were positively related to golf skills, self-presentation as a golfer, golf citizenship behavior, and an assortment of peripheral ways that golfers are involved in the game. Identity was a better predictor of these outcomes than was the number of rounds a golfer played. In other words, participation in many golf-related activities was more highly related to *being* a golfer than to *playing* golf.

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