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Dual career motivation and athletic identity on elite athletes

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DUAL CAREER MOTIVATION AND ATHLETIC IDENTITY ON ELITE ATHLETES

KEYWORDS: Education, High sport level athletes, Athletic identity, Motivation.

ABSTRACT. The aim of this study was to analyze if the athletic identity and the dual career motivation depends on the type of sport and the gender. The sample consisted of 63 elite athletes (21.8 ± 3.2 years old). They were all studying higher education studies. Thirty-six were women (21.4 ± 2.9 years old) and twenty-seven men (22.4 ± 3.5 years old). Thirty-one were from individual sports and thirty-two from team sports. *The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale* (AIMS; Brewer et al., 1993) and the *Student Athlete's Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire Italian version* (SAMSAQ-IT; Lupo et al., 2012) were applied. The athletes of individual sports (23.78 ± 8.83 hours) trained more hours per week (23.78 ± 8.83 hours) than the team sport athletes (12.9 ± 4.67 hours) ($F_{1,59}$= 34.73; p< .001; η2= 0.371). Men had a stronger athletic identity than women ($F_{1,51}$= 4,27; p= .044; η2= .077). A multivariate effect was found at the SAMSAQ-IT depending on the type of sport ($F_{3,43}$= 3.98; p= .014). The athletes of individual sports achieved higher values than the athletes of team sports ($F_{1,45}$= 11.72; p= .001; η2= 0.207 for SAM; $F_{1,45}$= 7.75; p= .008; η2= 0.147 for AM and $F_{1,45}$= 5.20; p= .027; η2= .104 for CAM). The difficulties observed on women and athletes of individual sports could not be attributed neither to a low academic motivation nor a strong athletic identity.

In order to guarantee the psycho-social adjustment of the athlete, it is a key to manage the academic and the sport careers at the same time (Wylleman and Lavalle, 2003). Although, this dual career implies some difficulties (Vilanova and Puig, 2013). In this way, the more time the athlete spends on training and competing the less chances he or she has for being prepared to the labour market (Heinemann, 1998).

Previous studies highlighted that the profile with more difficulty to develop this dual career are women and individual sport athletes (Conde, 2013). A strong athletic identity was identified as a barrier for planning a future beyond the sport career (Stephan and Brewer, 2007). The athletic identity is known as the unique role involved on sport rather than developing in other areas (Lally and Kerr, 2014). A multi-dimensional identity which the athlete identifies with different roles will allow the athlete coping with success the transition to the end of the sport career.

Nevertheless, some authors point out that the negative impact of a strong athlete-identity could be compensated with a high academic motivation (Gaston-Gayles, 2004). Previous studies show how women are more motivated to studies and they also attain better grades than men (Doupona Topič, 2005; Shuman, 2009). Thus, a recent study comparing Italian and Slovenian student-athletes found that gender did not affect the academic neither the athletic motivation (Lupo, Tessitore, Capranica, Rauter and Doupona Topič, 2012).

Therefore, it would be interesting to assess the degree of the athletic identity and the dual career motivation, and to know if there are differences depending on the type of sport and gender, to prevent problems at their work-life balance. The aim of this study was to analyze if the athletic identity and the dual career motivation depends on the type of sport and gender.

Method

The sample consisted of sixty-three elite athletes (21.8 ± 3.2 years old). They were all studying higher education studies. Thirty-six were women (21.4 ± 2.9 years old) and twenty-seven men (22.4 ± 3.5 years old). Thirty-one were from individual sports (triathlon, shooting, gymnastics, track and field, and swimming) and thirty-two from team sports (hockey, basketball, football, volleyball, and water polo).

The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; Brewer et al., 1993) and the *Student Athlete's Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire Italian version* (SAMSAQ-IT; Lupo et al., 2012) were applied. The AIMS is a 10 items questionnaire in a Likert scale from 1 to 7 with a reliability of .89 at test re-test and .81 to 93 of internal consistency.

The SAMSAQ-IT is a 39 items questionnaire in a Likert scale from 1 to 6. It has 3 factors: Student Athletic Motivation (SAM) with 16 items and .85 of reliability; Career Athletic Motivation (CAM) with 18 items and .85 of reliability and Academic Motivation (AM) with 14 items and .78 of reliability (Lupo et al., 2012).

Two-way ANOVAs and MANOVAs were applied for analysing the training load, the AIMS and the SAMSAQ-IT´s factors. The post hoc analyses were done with Bonferroni adjustments. The Effect Size was measured with eta square. The risk level was fixed at .05.

Results

The athletes of individual sport (23.78 ± 8.83 hours) trained more hours per week (23.78 ± 8.83 hours) than the team sport

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athletes (12.9 ± 4.67 hours) ($F_{1,59}$= 34.73; p< .001; η2= .371). Gender did not affect the training load ($F_{1,59}$= .22; p= .638), neither the interaction between type of sport and gender ($F_{1,59}$= .29; p= .590).

Table 1 shows the descriptive data of the questionnaires. Men had a stronger athletic identity than women ($F_{1,51}$= 4,27; p= .044; η2= .077). A multivariate effect was found at the SAMSAQ-IT depending on the type of sport ($F_{3,43}$= 3.98; p= .014). Gender did not affect the SAM-SAQ-IT ($F_{3,43}$= .73; p= .539) neither the interaction between type of sport and gender ($F_{3,43}$= .64; p= .590). Significant differences were found at the 3 factors depending on the type of sport. The athletes of individual sports achieved higher values than the athletes of team sports ($F_{1,45}$= 11.72; p= .001; η2= .207 for SAM; $F_{1,45}$= 7.75; p= .008; η2= .147 for AM; and $F_{1,45}$= 5.20; p= .027; η2= .104 for CAM).

Discussion

The difficulties observed on women and athletes of individual sports could not be attributed neither to a low academic motivation nor a strong athletic identity. Similarly to Brewer et al. (1993), men had stronger athletic identity than women. The type of sport was not related with the athletic identity. Also, the values are higher than those found by Mitchell et al. (2014). In order to promote a variety of roles in the athletes, it would be necessary to monitor the athletes' identity. In this way the transition of the end sport career would be prepared with more guarantees (Lally and Kerr, 2014; Stephan and Brewer, 2007).

The type of sport affects the motivation for the dual career. These results are in contrast with the study of Lupo et al. (2012), where athletes of team sport achieved higher motivation for the dual career than athletes of individual sports. One plausible explanation was that the different training load could bias these results. In fact, the athletes of individual sports have a greater training load than the athletes of team sports. Particularly, the effect size was small in all cases but at the training load which was medium (Cohen, 1988). The present results are in agreement with Lupo et al. (2012), and contrary to Dupona Tópic, (2005) and Shuman (2009), no differences were found on the academic motivation according to the gender.

	Individual Sport				Team Sport				Total				Total			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Individual Sport		Team Sport		Women		Men	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
SAM	71.8	6.4	68.8	7.4	64.1	6.3	63.8	6.7	70.5	6.9	63.9	6.4	68.3	7.3	66.3	7.4
AM ††	65.3	7.9	61.8	5.8	58.3	6.9	58.8	8.7	63.8	7.2	58.5	7.6	62.0	8.1	60.2	7.4
CAM †	74.2	7.1	72.2	8.5	67.7	7.1	69.9	7.3	73.3	7.7	68.8	7.1	71.4	7.7	71.2	7.9
AIMS*	53.8	8.5	59.5	3.7	54.4	6.3	55.5	7.2	56.4	7.2	54.9	5.2	54.1	7.5	57.5	4.2

Note: SAM: Student Athletic Motivation, AM: Academic Motivation, CAM: Career Athletic Motivation
† and †† significant differences depending on the type of sport p< .05 and p< .01.
* significant differences depending on the gender p< .05.

Table 1. Mean and Standard deviation of the SAMSAQ-IT and the AIMS.

MOTIVACIÓN HACIA LA CARRERA DUAL E IDENTIDAD DEPORTIVA EN DEPORTISTAS DE ÉLITE

PALABRAS CLAVES: Formación, Deportistas de alto nivel, Identidad deportiva, Motivación.

RESUMEN: El objetivo del presente estudio fue analizar la identidad deportiva y la motivación hacia los estudios y el deporte en función del género y del tipo de deporte. Participaron 63 deportistas de élite en activo (21.8 ± 3.2 años) que cursaban estudios superiores, 36 mujeres (21.4 ± 2.9 años) y 27 hombres (22.4 ± 3.5años), 31 pertenecían a deportes individuales y 32 colectivos. Se aplicaron los cuestionarios *Athletic Identity Measurement Scale* (AIMS; Brewer et al., 1993) y *Student Athlete's Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire Italian Version* (SAMSAQ-IT; Lupo et al., 2012). Los deportistas de deportes individuales tenían una mayor carga de entrenamiento que los deportistas de deportes colectivos ($F_{1,59}$= 34.73; p< .001; η2= .371). Los hombres presentaron una identidad deportiva más elevada que las mujeres ($F_{1,51}$= 4,27; p= .044; η2= .077). Para el SAMSAQ-IT, hubo efecto multivariado del tipo de deporte ($F_{3,43}$= 3.98; p= .014). Las puntuaciones fueron más altas en los deportistas de deportes individuales que en los de deportes colectivos ($F_{1,45}$= 11.72; p= .001; η2= .207 para MD; $F_{1,45}$= 7.75; p= .008; η2= .147 para MA y $F_{1,45}$= 5.20; p= .027; η2= .104 para MCD). La mayor dificultad observada con los estudios en los deportistas de deportes individuales y en las mujeres, no puede ser atribuida ni a una menor motivación académica ni a una mayor identidad deportiva.

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