

**Title:** Motivation of Slovenian and Norwegian Nordic Athletes towards Sports, Education and Dual Career

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**Sports:** Cross-country skiing, ski jumping, and biathlon

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**Main theme:** Motivation

**Secondary themes:** Dual career, Slovenian and Norwegian athletes

**Aims:** The aim of the current study was to examine the motivation factors of elite Nordic athletes from Slovenia and Norway in relation to their dual careers and to explore how they cope with their dual careers in education and sport. Student athletes from Norway and Slovenia were recruited because they both do not have structural measures in place for the higher education of elite athletes.

**Method:** The participants included 117 elite athletes (both males and females) from Norway and Slovenia. The participants had competed at the Olympic Games, World Championships, and/or the World Cup in cross country skiing, ski jumping, and biathlon. The Student Athletes' Motivation towards Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ-EU) was used to examine the athletes' motivation for education, sports, and their dual career. Questions relating to the athletes' training, competition, schooling and life of athletes during their top-class career were also added to the SAMSAQ-EU questionnaire.

**Results.** 60% of Norwegians and 64% of the Slovenian athletes trained between 20 and 35 hours per week and 60.7% of the Norwegian and 68.2% of the Slovenian athletes were involved in a dual career (i.e., education and sport). All of the Norwegian participants who were in education during their sporting career had "very little" to "some" problems in

coordinating their sport and academic careers, while 57.7% of the Slovenian participants had “some” to “too many” problems. In relation to gender, females were more motivated for education than males and the motivation for a dual career was higher among Slovenian participants in comparison to Norwegian respondents. The mothers of Norwegian athletes had a higher education than the mothers of the Slovenian athletes and there was a statistically significant link between the education of fathers and the education of mothers. The Slovenian participants were orientated towards sports mainly by themselves, whereas the Norwegian respondents were orientated mainly by their further educated parents. With regards to average values of Academic Motivation (AM), Student Athlete Motivation (SAM) and Career Athlete Motivation (CAM), the results showed that females were more academically motivated than males. Females were also more motivated towards their sports than males, whilst males were further motivated towards their dual careers than females. The current findings could be applied to improve Slovenian education and sport systems because comparatively, the Norwegian system proved to be extremely successful. Slovenia may need a legislative intervention to enable adjustments of higher education for elite student athletes through regulatory arrangements. This will consequently, help facilitate their academic careers and in turn, improve sport performance.

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