

Title: The Importance of the Type of Sport and Life Experience in the Dual Career in Elite Sport Based on the Analysis of Poland

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Aims: Most studies in sports psychology suggest that there are significant differences between athletes in individual and team sports in motivation. However, when it comes to the overall enjoyment and the optimal mental state, the type of sport does not seem to be affected. The present study was interested in exploring the different experiences that athletes have in their dual career based on the different sports they participate in. A number of questions were put forward including; (1) Can a sports career be combined with education, regardless of the type of practiced sport? (2) Does the type of athlete's personal experience influence the choice of a dual career? (3) Does the athlete's development in dual career contribute to his/her holistic development?

Method: 243 athletes took part in the study, including 161 athletes from individual sports and 82 athletes from team sports. The mean age was 18 years old, and the majority of participants were in the secondary level of athletes, and only a small handful in the higher education level. A small proportion of the athletes had already graduated higher education, were in postgraduate education, and some were not in any education at all. 91% of the athletes were from summer Olympic sports, and the remainder were from non-Olympic and

Winter Olympic sports. The dual career competency questionnaire was administered, which asks athletes to measure how competent they feel in areas that they perceive to be essential to a successful in a dual career. In addition, athletes had to rate their experiences of 7 different dual career scenarios.

Results and Practical Implications: Results suggest that undertaking a dual career is possible in all types of sport, but the experience mainly depends on the athletes' life experience, of which there was no difference between team and individual sports. The results did suggest that individual athletes are more patient when it comes to development and work on dual careers and have considerable belief that they can overcome challenges, whereas team athletes are more willing to make sacrifices, that may be due to the influence of teammates. In addition, motivations behind undertaking a dual career are not influenced by the type of sport. In sum, these results suggest that when working with athletes in a dual career setting, personal life experiences are important to take into account when they experience challenges, as these may determine how they cope.

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