European student-athletes’ perceptions on dual career outcomes and services: Insights from the “Facilitating Higher Education for Athletes – WINNER Education Model” LLP project

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Importance of sport
(European Commission, 2007)

Importance of education
(Capranica & Millard Stafford, 2011; Stambulova & Alfermann, 2009)

Organizational separation of sport and education in Europe

Difficulties in pursuing both careers
Dropouts in both system
(Conzelmann & Nagel, 2003; Donnelly & Petherick, 2004; Wylleman & Reints, 2010)
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EU interest in dual career (European Commission, 2007; 2011; 2012)

Research on dual career in Europe

- Amara, Aquilina, Henry & PMP Consultants, 2004
- Aquilina & Henry, 2010
- Henry, 2013
- INEUM consulting & Taj, 2008
- McCormack & Walseth, 2013
- Van Rens, Elling & Reijgersberg, 2015

No generalization of findings due to
- diversity of approaches
- from a specific country
- from specific sport/academic setting
Studies on personal aspects
(motivation, support, career development, personal development)

• Guidotti, Minganti, Cortis, Piacentini, Tessitore & Capranica, 2013
• Henriksen, Larsen & Christensen, 2014
• Lupo et al., 2014
• Lupo, Tessitore, Capranica, Rauter & Doupona-Topic, 2012
• Stambulova & Ryba, 2014
• Wylleman & Reints, 2010

Studies on student-athletes’
perception of challenges + needs

• Aquilina, 2013
• Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen, Bundgaard & Selänne, 2014

Problem:
Little information, limited number of participants + countries

Aim: Student-athletes’ perception of their dual career across countries, sport settings and academic majors
Focus Group (Kitzinger, 1994) developing a questionnaire

- 11 sample characterizing items
- 25 key items
  - Likert scale (1-5)
  - dichotomous (Y/N)
  - open-response
- sport/academic career development
- existing dual career services
- possible improvements
- back translation method (Su and Parham, 2002)
- verification at national levels, n=10
Student-athletes (n=221) from Finland, Estonia, Austria, Italy, Slovenia
• enrolled in university
• sport competitions for ≥10 years
• national/international level
• sport practice ≥10 h/week

Statistical analysis
• MANOVA (main effects)
• ANOVA (group effects)
• Cohen’s effect size (Hopkins, 2008)
• Chi-square test
• qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000)
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INTRODUCTION – METHODS – RESULTS – DISCUSSION

Gender

- Male: 53.1%
- Female: 46.9%

Type of sport

- Team: 71.7%
- Individual: 28.3%

Competition level

- National: 57.0%

- International: 43.0%

- Slovenia: 22.6%
- Finland: 22.2%
- Estonia: 11.8%
- Italy: 22.6%
- Austria: 20.8%
### Academic aspects

- **Meet requirements**: 3.4
- **High quality education**: 3.2
- **Future professional opportunities**: 3.5
- **Efforts**: 3.4
- **Satisfaction**: 3.5
- **Awareness of the university on DC**: 2.6

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SPORT ASPECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport success</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport negatively influences education</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the sport system on DC</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you experience decreased effort in...

- sport due to university studies? 44%
- university due to sport commitment? 56%

Decrement of success...

- in sport due to university 3,00
- in university due to sport 3,30
Suggestions for possible improvements

• general flexibility, off-campus exams (13%)
• support and understanding of special needs from both environments (12%)
• flexibility in class attendance (11%)
• online study material, inter-institutional cooperation, teachers’ availability, flexibility of lecture schedule (6%)
• credit recognition, long term study planning, tutorship etc. (≤3%)
Results differed between countries in terms of items related to

- Sport (4/4)
- University (4/6)
- Support & service (4/6)
Results differed between **females/males** in terms of items related to...

- University (2/6)
- Support & service (2/6)
Results differed between **types of sport** in terms of items related to...

- Support & service (2/6)
- Sport (1/4)
- University (1/6)
Results differed between **competition levels** in terms of items related to...

• Sport (3/4)
• Support & service (2/6)
• University (1/6)
Results depending on country, gender, type of sport, and competition level

Interpretation of previous studies and improvement of future research
Key issues: Low awareness + requested flexibility

<table>
<thead>
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<th>university / sport</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support, adaptations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduced efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative impact</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions primarily focused on university, especially flexibility

Importance for university to adapt to dual career
WINNER EDUCATION MODEL
FACilitating Higher Education For Athletes