Investigating the role of Identity in the Retirement from Sport in Graduating Athletes
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Background

Athletic Identity is “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athletic role” (Brewer et al. 1993).

The retirement transition commands a lifestyle shift and a re-definition of oneself outside the athletic role, which can lead to a feeling of loss for that former self as well as a loss of purpose (Lally 2007).

Cognitive shifting of perceived control to a more internal locus of control and engaging in more problem-focused coping strategies lead to more positive adjustment outcomes. (Grove 1997).


Data Sources

Utilizing list-serves within the sport psychology community and preexisting relationships with athletic departments and coaches

Participant Eligibility Requirements:

- NCAA Student-Athlete
- Graduated Spring 2017
- will NOT continue to play at the elite level

Analyses

ANOVA Analyses and Bivariate Correlations will be utilized to determine between subjects differences and

Thematic Analysis will be run through Nvivo software to examine overarching themes between participant experiences.

Research Design

Preliminary survey includes self-report measures to assess:

- Athletic Identity (AIMS)
- General Physical, Social, and Emotional Well-being (RAND-36)
- Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ACSI)
- Emotion Regulation (ERQ)
- General Self-Efficacy (GSE)
- Satisfaction with season and personal performance

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview

Guided interview will allow for assessment across subjects of central themes as well as more in-depth exploration of themes as they emerge. Interviews will assess current adjustment, team and athletic institution attachment, background in sports, and preparedness to transition upon commencement.

Research Questions

- What role do expectations of the retirement process play in the outcome of this transition?
- What factors lead to a successful balance of the student and athlete role?
- How do satisfaction with season of play and personal performance impact the transition?
- Which facets do student-athletes feel the most or least prepared for regarding the transition out of sport?
- How do student-athletes translate team-oriented health behaviors beyond retirement?

Significance of Project

- Expand upon the current literature identifying the retirement from sport to be unique compared to retirement from career.
- Demonstrate the unique intersection of identities present in this population.
- Allow mental health professionals to more effectively advise student-athletes in order to promote more successful adjustment through this transition.
- Identify the impact of expectations in order to better prepare student-athletes with realistic expectations regarding this transition.

Project Timeline

August 2017: Distribution and Analysis of Preliminary Survey

October 2017: Qualitative follow-up Interviews Conducted

December 2017: Transcription, Analysis, and coding of qualitative data

References