

“GIRLS MORE OFTEN STUDY AT THE TRAINING CAMPS COMPARED TO BOYS”: THE ROLE OF COACH IN GENDERING OF ATHLETES’ DUAL CAREER PATHWAYS

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Abstract. The article presents the results of a study on the role of a coach in motivating athletes to build two careers, as well as their coaches’ views on the dual careers of girls and boys. The results have showed that student-athletes in high school of sports schools often perceived the motivational climate created by the coach as a process aimed at achieving sports results. The interviewed athletes explained that this approach did not motivate them to the learning process, and moreover, devalued their educational goals. It was revealed that although the coaches emphasized the importance of receiving secondary education for athletes, they could not justify how these ideas were included in coaching practice. The coaches have agreed that those athletes who switch to elite sports should focus on developing their sports career, while the requirements of elite sports and higher education were often considered incompatible. The results have showed that coaching styles play an important role in supporting the motivation of athletes to achieve the goals of two careers.

Keywords: coaching; motivational climate; dual career; gender; feminist post-structuralism

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”ДЕВОЧКИ ЧАЩЕ УЧАТСЯ НА СПОРТИВНЫХ СБОРАХ ПО СРАВНЕНИЮ С МАЛЬЧИКАМИ”: РОЛЬ ТРЕНЕРА В ГЕНДЕРНОМ РАЗДЕЛЕНИИ ДВУХ КАРЬЕРНЫХ ПУТЕЙ СПОРТСМЕНОВ

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Аннотация. В статье даются результаты исследования о роли тренера в мотивации спортсменов на построение двух карьер, а также их взглядов на двойную карьеру девушек и юношей. Результаты показали, что учащиеся-спортсмены

в старших классах спортивных школ часто воспринимали созданный тренером мотивационный климат как нацеленный на достижение спортивного результата. Опрошенные спортсмены объяснили, что такой подход не мотивировал их на учебный процесс, а скорее обесценивал их образовательные цели. Выявлено, что тренеры, хотя и подчеркивали важность получения спортсменами среднего образования, не могли обосновать, как данные идеи включены в тренерскую практику. Тренеры согласились с тем, что те спортсмены, которые переходят в элитный спорт, должны сосредоточиться на развитии своей спортивной карьеры, при этом требования элитного спорта и высшего образования часто считались как несовместимые. Результаты показали, что стили коучинга играют важную роль в поддержке мотивации спортсменов к достижению целей двух карьер.

Ключевые слова: коучинг; мотивационный климат; двойная карьера; гендер; феминистский постструктурализм.

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Introduction. Contemporary athletes in Nordic countries are often expected to combine their sporting careers with education and/or work to create a dual career pathway (DC). DC includes multiple benefits, such as broader identity development, enhanced sport performance, and better employability and adaptation to life after the athletic retirement (for a review, see Stambulova & Wylleman, 2019). Despite the benefits, not all athletes have equal access to construct a DC pathway. Recent research indicates that socio-cultural discourses of gender are ingrained in DC policies and practises, creating gender hierarchies and inequalities and influencing athletes' motivation and career aspirations (Ryba et al., 2021). While the existing DC policy documents (European Commission, 2012; 2014) state that coaches should promote gender equality and holistic perspective to athlete development in their coaching practise, coaches' role in gendering of athletes' DC pathways is not clearly understood. This is a critical limitation in the earlier literature as coaches are the most important socializing agents for adolescent athletes especially (e. g., Knight et al., 2018; Wylleman et al., 2013), whose gender views may transmit to athletes in coach-athlete interactions. Earlier literature also indicates that coaching practises are often heavily shaped by the sociocultural discourses of gender, and that coaches may reproduce gender hierarchies and inequalities in their coaching practise (de Haan & Knoppers, 2020; Grahn, 2014). The present study aimed to examine the role of the coach in athletes' DC motivation, and whether and how coaches contribute to the gendering of athletes' DC pathways. The present thesis consists of three sub-studies using both qualitative and quantitative research methods and was carried out as a part of the Finnish Longitudinal Dual Career Study (Ryba et al., 2016).

Research questions. The present study was guided by two overall research questions: (1) What are coaches' views on athletes' DCs and what are the ways they can support athletes' holistic development in their coaching practise? (2) How do the coaches contribute to the gendering of athletes' DC pathways? To answer the two main research questions, the following sub-questions were asked and answered in the original publications:

(1a) What kind of coach-created motivational climates did the athletes experience in upper secondary sport schools?

(1b) How did the perceived coach-created motivational climates impact athletes' dual career experiences?

(2a) Are there gender differences, across upper secondary education, in student-athletes' motivational orientations (i. e., mastery versus performance orientation) in: a) sport, and b) school?

(2b) To what extent do coaches' coaching styles, in terms of affection and psychological control, play a role in student-athletes' mastery and performance orientations in: a) sport, and b) school? Are there gender differences in these associations?

(2c) To what extent do athletes' gender, coaches' gender, and their interaction (*athletes' gender X coaches' gender*) play a role in coaching styles with respect to affection versus psychological control?

(3a) How do coaches situate education in the holistic development of athletes, and how do these views and beliefs inform their coaching practice?

(3b) How do discourses on gender inform coaches' opinions and practices regarding athletes' DCs?

Methodology and methods. The participants in Study 1 were 17 student-athletes who participated in semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed with thematic analysis guided by the theory of Empowering Coaching (Duda, 2013). In Study 2 the participants were 248 (51 % female, 49 % male) student-athletes from six Finnish upper secondary sport schools. Athletes filled out questionnaires at the beginning of the first year and at the end of the third year of upper secondary school. The data were analyzed with structural equation modelling. The participants in Study 3 were 10 (three female, seven male) coaches who participated in semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed with reflexive thematic analysis and interpreted through a feminist poststructuralist lens (Butler, 1990; 1993; Weedon, 1997).

Results. The results showed that student-athletes in upper secondary sport schools often experienced the coach-created motivational climates as disempowering due to the coaches' exclusive emphasis on athlete development and performance improvement. The interviewed athletes explained how this approach did not encourage them to focus on studies, but rather made them devalue their educational goals. Similarly, while all the interviewed ski coaches emphasized the importance of young athletes achieving secondary education, they nevertheless lacked practical examples of how these ideas informed their coaching practise. The coaches

also agreed that those athletes who were transitioning to elite sport should focus on developing their athletic careers, as the demands of elite sport and higher education were often seen as incompatible due to the lack of time for example. Despite these contradicting views, the results showed that coaching styles have an important, yet gendered role in supporting athletes' motivation toward DC goals: An affective coaching style was found to predict male student-athletes' mastery-oriented motivation in sport, and mastery-oriented motivation in school for both male and female student-athletes. Female student-athletes were also found to demonstrate higher levels of mastery orientation both in the domains of sport and school, and student-athletes reported that female coaches demonstrated more affection in their coaching style compared to male coaches. Moreover, interviewed ski coaches considered holistic development to be particularly important when coaching female athletes, and they explained how coaching female athletes was challenging compared to coaching men. In this way, coaches were found to reproduce the existing gender hierarchies in sport that consider men as the norm through discourse and language.

Implications and conclusion. The results can be used to educate coaches on how to support athletes' DCs and to challenge the dominant gender hierarchies in sport in their coaching practise. We conclude that coaches play an important role in athletes' DC motivation and also contribute to the reproduction of gender inequalities and feminization of DC discourses.

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