

CAREER/LIFE TRANSITION - A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ELITE SOCCER PLAYERS AND EX-PRISONERS

Author:
Pedro Carvalho

email:
pguedes@ubi.pt

Co-authors:
Neto, José O.
Sousa, J. Antunes

University:
UBI-CIDESD

Faculty:
Dept of Sports Sciences

Abstract

Aim

Standing from a holistic point of view we consider sport as an important human activity that can contribute to improve human quality of life after the professional period. In this paper we want to understand and gain insight about the way some special groups where sport is/was present, feel subjectively their own well being over their life-span. We intend to understand how do individuals perceive their actual well being after (1) finishing their athlete career as high elite soccer player's (winners of the 1986 European club championship) and (2) after being released as prisoners submitted to a sportive plan during the time they were in prison. Are there differences between groups?

Theoretical background and literature review

The concept of transition has, during the past decade, become a well-delineated topic of study among sport community (for a broader review see Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee, 2005). In Portugal there are no official programs to uncover transition processes as we see in other countries [see Anderson, D. and Morris, T. (2000) for deeper review]. Studies carried out in several countries reveal different sensations and effects. Most of the ex-players declare efforts were inadequate resulting in negative feelings of subjective well-being after their retirement; other underlines the impact of family and friends support as an essential element for their happiness [see Agresta, Brandão and Neto (2008)]. In the present study we followed very closely Coackley and Cassandra (2006) where findings centered around four core themes: (a) how former players understand and describe the sport-career transition experience; (b) systems of support to help with the sport-career transition; (c) how to prepare for the sport-career transition; and (d) subjective well-being. We also used instruments to measure the satisfaction of life.

Scores on the SWLS (satisfaction with life scale, in Diener, Emmons, Randy and Griffin, 1985) correlate moderately to highly with other measures of subjective well-being, and correlate predictably with specific personality characteristics. It is noted that the SWLS is suited for use with different age groups. Using the Conceptual Model of Adaptation to Career Transition (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998) we could compare 3 different groups of people: elite players, ex-prisoners and 'normal' people as a control group.

Methodology, research design and analysis: Using semi-structured interviews, former players were asked to provide information about their sport-career transition experience, a comprehensive description of it, and the subsequent effect on subjective well-being. The same was applied to ex-prisoners and to the control group, composed by 'normal' people that used sport as a mediator of their sociability process.

Using the interpretive tradition of phenomenology, the Conceptual Model of Adaptation to Career Transition and a triangulation method [Data triangulation, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered, Alan Bryman quoting Denzin, 1970] as the main theoretical framework, interviews with 3 different groups were conducted: 20 soccer players from 1986's Oporto FC soccer team, 20 ex-prisoners submitted to sport activity as an instrument to socialize and a 20 individuals of a control group, considering it as composed by "normal" people.

Results, discussion and implications

The results pointed to the idea that regular and leisure sport activity during all the life time creates a pacific sense of well-being in life. More extreme sport activities, either at a high competitive level or in prison, have more negative impacts in well-being after the transition period. The main sport policy implication would be to enhance the need of new corporate social responsibility of clubs, associations, other sport national boards and administrative organizations as public institutes to re-absorbed ex-prisoners. In fact, CSR mandates that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations, but also certain responsibilities to society that extend beyond these obligations (McGuire et al., 1988).

References:

- Agresta, Brandão and Neto (2008) Causas e Conseqüências Físicas e Emocionais do Término de Carreira Esportiva Physical and Emotional Causes and Consequences of Career Termination in Sports Rev Bras Med Esporte – Vol. 14, No 6 – Nov/Dez, 2008
- Anderson, D., & Morris, T. (2000). Athlete lifestyle programs. In D. Lavallee, & P. Wylleman (Eds.), *Career transitions in sport: International perspectives* (pp. 59–80). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Archie B Carroll (1999) Corporate social responsibility. *Business and Society*; Sep 1999; 38, 3; ABI/INFORM Global, pg. 268.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Coakley, S. Cassandra (2006) A Phenomenological Exploration of the Sport-Career Transition Experiences that affect Subjective Well-Being of Former National Football League Players.
- Creswell, J. W. (1995). *Research Design: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Diener, Ed, Emmons Robert A., Randy j. Lar.sem, and Griffin, Sharon (1985) The Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 1
- McGuire, J. B., A. Sundgren, and T. Schneeweis (1988) "Corporate social responsibility and firm financial performance." *Academy of Management Journal*, 31 (4): 854-872.
- Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee, 2005).
- S. CecilImage Erpimage, P. Wyllemanb and M. ZupanImage (2004) The effect of athletic and non-athletic factors on the sports career termination process. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, Volume 5, Issue 1, January 2004, Pages 45-59.
- Wood, D. (1991). "Corporate Social Performance Revisited". *Academy of Management Review*, Vol.4, pp. 691–718.