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ATLETISMO, RUGBY Y FÚTBOL: VALORACIÓN DE LA MOTIVACIÓN Y AUTOCOMPASIÓN A LO LARGO DE LA TEMPORADA

Ariadna Siri Schuchner
Universidad Europea del Atlántico (España)
ariadna.siri@alumnos.uneatlantico.es · https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5261-9003
Mariacarla Martí-González
Universidad Europea del Atlántico (España)
mariacarla.marti@uneatlantico.es
Marcos Mecías Calvo
Universidad Europea del Atlántico (España)
marcos.mecias@uneatlantico.es · https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4719-7686
Iker Muñoz Pérez
Universidad Europea del Atlántico (España)
Iker.muno.perez@gmail.com · https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5480-1581
Andrea Corrales Pardo
Universidad Europea del Atlántico (España)
andrea.corrales@uneatlantico.es · · https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2118-3822

Resumen. Las investigaciones basadas en la motivación y la autocompasión han demostrado que son características personales que influyen en el desarrollo de cada individuo. El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar la evolución de la motivación y de la autocompasión a lo largo de una temporada deportiva completa, con el fin de valorar si existen diferencias entre los distintos periodos de la misma teniendo en cuenta cada deporte. En la investigación participaron 48 deportistas (42 hombres y 6 mujeres) de edades comprendidas entre los 15 y 53 años (media= 23,5) que practicaban fútbol (29,2%), atletismo (31,3%) o rugby (39,6%) en un equipo de la Comunidad Autónoma de Cantabria. Respondieron a dos pruebas: un cuestionario de motivación (BRSQ) y una escala de autocompasión. Los resultados obtenidos mostraron que ambas variables se mantienen estables a lo largo de la temporada deportiva si se realiza el análisis de manera globalizada. En cambio, si se comparan los deportes entre sí, se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en la mayoría de las variables de la motivación lo que implica que esta está influenciada por el deporte que se practique. En el caso de la autocompasión, únicamente la variable Mindfulness contaba con significancia, por lo que está sujeta también a la influencia de las diferentes características de cada deporte.

Palabras clave: Motivación, autocompasión, rugby, atletismo, fútbol.

ATHLETICS, RUGBY, AND FOOTBALL: ASSESSMENT OF MOTIVATION AND SELF-COMPASSION THROUGHOUT THE SEASON

Abstract. Research based on motivation and self-compassion has shown that they are personal characteristics which influence the development of each individual. The aim of the present study is to analyze the evolution of motivation and self-compassion throughout a complete sport season, in order to assess if there are differences between its periods taking into account each sport. The research involved 48 athletes (42 men and 6 women) between the ages of 15 and 53 (average = 23.5) who played soccer (29.2%), athletics (31.3%) or rugby (39, 6%) in the Autonomous Community of Cantabria. They answered two tests: a motivational questionnaire (BRSQ) and a self-compassion scale. The results obtained showed that both variables remain unchangeable throughout the season if the analysis is carried out in a general manner. On the other hand, if sports are compared to each other, statistically significant differences were found in most of the motivation variables, which implies that this is influenced by the sport that is practiced. In the case of self-compassion, only the Mindfulness variable had significance, so it is also subject to the influence of the different characteristics of each sport.

Keywords: Motivation, self-compassion, rugby, athletics, football.

Introduction

Physical exercise, physical activity and sport are conditioning factors of the quality of life, health and well-being of people, producing benefits both on a psychological and physical level (Bro, Ballart, Juan, Valls & Latinjak, 2012). Sport is a means for people to challenge themselves, gaining a sense of identity, learning about their physical abilities, and developing skills and social relationships (Sutherland, Kowalski, Ferguson, Sabiston, Sedwick & Croker, 2014). The reasons -why people carry out this activity- are social involvement and pleasure obtained from them (Corbí, Palermo-Cámara & Jiménez-Palmero, 2019), mainly linked to optimal development (Ferguson, Kowalski, Mack & Sabiston, 2014). Some authors affirm that there are differences in the motives of men and women, emphasizing that women tend to practice it due to a relationship with body image and weight control (Corbí et al., 2019). On the other hand, the positive experiences that arise help the athlete to develop greater self-confidence and self-esteem, in addition to promoting self-reliance, regardless of gender (Sutherland et al., 2014).

A set of implicit and explicit signals that define the keys to success or failure in the sporting experience, called the motivational climate. This climate is created by the athlete's environment (parents, coaches, colleagues, friends) (Almagro, Sáenz-López, González-Cutre & Moreno-Murcia, 2011) and can be of two types: task-oriented motivational climate or mastery and motivational climate towards the ego or competitive (Cervelló, González-Cutre, Moreno & Iglesias, 2016). If the motives are task-oriented, there is an increase in interest in the practice of physical activity supported by feelings of joy and satisfaction, which facilitates the prolongation of the practice (Ramírez-Granizo, Zurita, Sánchez-Zafra & Chacón, 2019). The approach is focused on the process, effort and personal improvement of each of the individuals and what is important is persistence and collaboration (Almagro et al., 2011). On the other hand, if the climate is oriented towards the ego, the goals are approached as a personal prestige and fame is sought (Ramírez-Granizo et al., 2019), the process focuses on the result and the comparison between colleagues prevails. It is usually promoted through the absence in the variety of tasks, authoritarian leadership and public recognition based on social comparison, in

addition, there would be an evaluation of success or failure based on victory or defeat (Almagro et al., 2011).

From the perspective of the Theory of Self-Determination (Deci and Ryan, 1985), the motivational climate is considered a social factor that influences motivation through three main basic needs: competence, autonomy and social relationship (Almagro et al., 2011). That is why this theory suggests that motivation should be taken into account as a multidimensional variable (Martín & Guzmán, 2012) that includes social, causal, contextual and behavioral factors (Monteiro, Moutao & Cid, 2018). In this sense, motivation is defined by Martín, Navas, Notari, Olmedo and Pinilla (2014) as the "set of social and individual variables that determine the choice, intensity and persistence in a task, as well as performance". This conceptualization describes the construct as a stable factor being an individual trait (Martín, Navas, Notari, Olmedo & Pinilla, 2014). In addition, it consists of two types of components: energy or impulse intensity (which is why people invest time and energy in sport) and directionality (indicates why people are oriented to one goal and not another) (Fradejas & Espada, 2018).

Traditionally, this theory identified three major types of motivation: intrinsic, extrinsic, and demotivation (Martín & Guzmán, 2012; Shokri, Viladrich, Cruz & Alcaraz, 2014; Pulido, Sánchez-Oliva, González-Ponce, Amado, Montero & García-Calvo, 2015), referring to the type of motivation adopted by the athlete regarding their participation, or not, in a specific activity and whose regulation can be internal or external (Pestillo, Andrade, Nickenig, Ferreira, Norraila & López, 2016).

Intrinsic motivation is mainly characterized by pleasure or satisfaction that a person obtains by a mere fact of performing an activity (Pulido et al., 2015). It encompasses the activities that the individual performs voluntarily, due to factors such as the pleasure that it produces, personal satisfaction of reaching a goal, new experiences lived or an internalization of the behavior (Pestillo et al., 2016). This is the prototype of self-determined motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Extrinsic motivation can be divided into the following motivational continuum: integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation and external regulation (Balaguer, Castillo & Duda, 2008; Almagro et al., 2012; Pulido et al., 2015). Integrated regulation refers to activities that are immersed in the person's lifestyle, and highlights characteristics that have to do with values, personal needs, goals ... (Balaguer et al., 2008; Pulido et al., 2015). The regulation identified is composed of those activities that entail a benefit for an individual who performs them (Almagro et al., 2012; Pulido et al., 2015). Introjected regulation is defined by the feeling of guilt that appears for not having participated or for participating in the activity out of pride (Haney, Ramos & Agudelo, 2015; Pulido et al., 2015). External regulation refers to participation for a reward or prize (Pulido et al., 2015). In all cases it is supported by contingencies (Haney et al., 2015).

Finally, demotivation is defined as the absence of any type of motivation, so the individual would not find a reason to continue practicing sports (Pulido et al., 2015). It is related to the lack of desire to act (Monteiro et al., 2018), which could be due to a perception of incompetence and low self-esteem and self-concept (Martín et al., 2014). It usually manifests with feelings of frustration, fear or depression, since the subject does not express intention to carry out any activity (Haney et al., 2015).

In addition to this division, three research models are defined on motivation in sport and physical exercise: global, contextual and situational. The first refers to the general motivational orientation of the athlete, the second refers to motivation towards a specific context, for example, physical exercise, and the third refers to motivation directed to a specific activity, such as a sport concrete. The consequences of situational motivation can be of three types: cognitive, if the subjects are focused on the task; behavioral, if they

spend more time and effort on activities; and affective consequences, related to more positive states (Bro et al., 2012). Some studies have observed that those tasks with cognitive consequences need more procedural, more elaborate, structured, sophisticated and organized knowledge, so athletes must be quick subjects in decision-making (Cervelló et al., 2016).

The Self-Determination Theory affirms that human beings are active organisms that tend to personal growth and to optimally and effectively involve ourselves in our environment (Balaguer et al., 2008). Motivation is inclusive in competition and performance to achieve sporting achievements and its study is considered important since it helps to understand the reason why people initiate, maintain or discard participation in sport (Haney et al., 2015). That is why in order to maximize adherence to physical-sporting activity, it is essential to know the variables that intervene when adopting said commitment or not. This is how the athlete could be perceived as more competent and confident in certain activities, which would imply a greater satisfaction of the basic needs postulated by the Self-Determination Theory (Moreno-Murcia et al., 2011). In addition, in this way, all possible benefits would appear, such as psychological well-being, emotional development and self-esteem (Reis, Kowalski, Ferguson, Sabiston, Sedwick & Croker, 2015).

Despite all the benefits mentioned above, sport can lead to situations of social comparison and evaluation, which are common experiences that can generate difficulties in the personal context (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedwick & Tracy, 2011). These judgments give rise to concern about body image, fear, guilt, shame, worry or anxiety, before which it has being seen that certain athletes have difficulty handling it. In addition, athletes experience a wide variety of setbacks, which are often emotionally painful, which is why a good method of coping with them is necessary (Reis et al., 2015). Thus arises the development of self-compassion, which is strategy characterized by being an emotional regulation to face the different situations that occur throughout the development of physical-sports activity, such as negative thoughts, emotions associated with failure or negative events (Mosewich, Croker, Kowalski & DeLongis, 2013).

Self-compassion is a term that comes from Buddhism and it was presented as a way of self-knowledge that facilitates an improvement of well-being and maximum enlightenment (Pauley & McPherson, 2010). It has been practiced and studied for more than 2,600 years (Araya & Moncada, 2016) since it allows the observation of one's thoughts and emotions (Ferreira, Pinto-Gouveia & Duarte, 2013) being kind and accepting, particularly when facing a poor execution (Walsylkiw & Clairo, 2016). It has been defined as the ability to be open to one's own suffering, without avoiding it or disconnecting from it, but rather generating the desire to alleviate it and heal with kindness (García-Campayo, Navarro-Gil, Andrés, Montero-Marín, López-Artal & Marcos, 2014). This is how it presents a healthy way of relating to oneself, accepting all one's own aspects without taking into account social comparisons and evaluations (Ferguson et al., 2014), which allows facing emotions with a greater degree of understanding of them (Pauley & McPherson, 2010).

Self-compassionate people are aware of their own well-being and sensitive to the discomfort of others, being able to be more tolerant of themselves and without exercising self-criticism or judgment (Araya & Moncada, 2016; Walsylkiw & Clairo, 2016). It consists of three interrelated components that form a continuum (Gálvez, 2012; Dunne, Sheffield & Chilcot, 2016): Self-Kindness, defined as kindness to oneself (Araya & Moncada, 2016) which implies being kind and understanding with oneself instead of exercising self-criticism or Self-Judgment (Gálvez, 2012; Dunne et al., 2016); Common Humanity defined as recognizing that others go through difficulties similar to ours instead

of resorting to isolation, known as Isolation (Gálvez, 2012; Araya & Moncada, 2016; Dunne et al., 2016); and Mindfulness, which consists of realizing what is happening in the present moment, taking distance from one's own thoughts and feelings, the opposite effect would be Over-Identification or avoidance of them (Araya & Moncada, 2016; Magnus, Kowalski & Mchugh, 2014). This last element, Mindfulness, allows stress management and coping with sports situations, focusing on objectives and information relevant to the task being performed (Mosewich, Croker & Kowalski, 2013). Together, these three components ensure self-acceptance and a positive attitude towards the self (Walsylkiw & Clairo, 2016).

Although self-compassion has often been conceptualized as an individual experience, it can develop through relationships that are maintained with others, since the presence of others can act as a facilitator or catalyst for self-compassion experiences (Crozier, Mosewich & Ferguson, 2018). The most self-compassionate individuals tend to present more satisfaction, greater emotional intelligence, and less anxiety and depression (Dosil, 2008). Its influence on pain has also been studied, since it is associated with greater acceptance of it, which in sporting terms could be related to the subjective experience and coping with injuries, both muscular and bone (Gálvez, 2012). It is associated with a better quality of life, well-being and happiness, having the potential to attenuate and neutralize negative emotions and their effects (Ingstrup, Mosewich & Holt, 2017). In the sports context, these details can determine the optimal performance (Serpa, Guerrero & Boleto, 2019). Likewise, differences have been found depending on whether it is a team or individual sport, since the partner factor can affect commitment and self-compassion (Crozier et al., 2018). In the sports field, it is considered a resource to manage stressful experiences, improving adaptation to new situations (Mosewich et al., 2013).

In this study, they assessed the psychological, motivational and self-compassion variables in athletes who practice rugby, soccer and athletics. Rugby is characterized by being a highly demanding sport both physically and mentally, since it produces physical wear and tear as it is a contact sport, which is practiced internationally in which it is necessary to have numerous psychological skills such as concentration or strength mental (Kerr, 1987). Along with soccer, they are two of the most common team sports worldwide. Soccer is considered the most popular sport in the world, in whose practice a large number of factors intervene in turn, such as the technical resources of each athlete, physical and physiological conditions, tactical knowledge and psychological abilities (Castro-Sepúlveda, 2015). Furthermore, we consider relevant its comparison with an individual sport, such as athletics, since it is influenced by variables other than team sports.

With all it, this study aims to understand the evolution of motivation and self-compassion throughout a complete season, in order to assess whether there are differences in these psychological variables throughout the season and between different sports.

Method

Analysis of data

A descriptive analysis was performed using the SPSS 22 statistical package (IBM SPSS).

Design

It is a longitudinal design with a survey methodology.

Participants

In this study we have 48 subjects (42 men and 6 women) with an age range that goes from 15 to 53 years (mean = 23.54 and standard deviation = 8.83), practicing different sports modalities (athletics 31.3%, soccer 29.2% and rugby 39.6%). As study inclusion criteria, the subjects were considered to be totally healthy, and fit for the test. The exclusion criteria of the study, leaving out the subjects who had one or more of them, were established those who had suffered an injury, recent or old, in the upper body, those who had taken some type of medication, and those who had performed in the 24 hours prior to the test a strength training or another type of exercise that limited them for this type of measurement, since in both cases the range of motion in the joints could be affected.

As sociodemographic variables, age, sex and the sport they practice were taken into account.

Instruments

Self-compassion scale (SCS; Neff, 2003b) is a scale that consists of 12 items which must be scored using a Likert scale in which 1 represents "almost never" and 5 means "almost always", in order to measure the level of self-compassion of each subject individually. From this scale, three separate subscales are developed, which include self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, as well as their opposites: Self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification. It has a strong internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha> 0.86) and a good correlation between its items (r> 0.97) (García-Campayo et al., 2014).

Behavioral Regulation in Sport Questionnaire (BRSQ; Lonsdale et al., 2008) the Spanish version of the same "*Cuestionario de Regulación Conductual en el Deporte"* (Viladrich, Torregrosa, & Cruz, 2011), designed to assess motivation in the practice of sport. It is made up of six subscales, of four items each, designed to measure amotivation, regulations: external, introjected, identified and integrated, and intrinsic motivation. Each item is answered on a Likert-type scale, which ranges from 1 (completely false) to 7 (completely true). All the statements are direct and the total score for each subscale is obtained by averaging the responses to its four items, so that a higher score is interpreted as greater regulation of the type measured by the scale. This questionnaire has a 95% confidence interval presenting a Cronbach's Alpha = 0.78 (Lonsdale, Hodge & Rose, 2008).

Procedure

The person in charge of the chosen clubs was contacted to inform about the objectives and ask for their collaboration. The administration of the questionnaires to the athletes took place in front of the main researcher, who previously made a brief explanation of the objective of the study and how to correctly fill in the instruments, highlighting the importance of the sincerity and anonymity of the data. Initially, they were given the information sheet and informed consent to later offer them the tests. In the case of the underage participants, it was their parents or guardians who signed the informed consent. In addition, they remained close at all times to solve any possible doubts that arose. The time required to fill in the scale and the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes. The data obtained was treated with the utmost confidentiality and scientific rigor, reserving its use for research work following the scientific method required in each case, in compliance with Organic Law 15/1999 of December 13 on the protection of Personal Data (LOPD) (*Ley Orgánica 15/1999 de 13 de diciembre de protección de datos de Carácter Personal (LOPD))* and the procedures used respect the ethical criteria of the

committee responsible for human experimentation (local or institutional) and the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975, amended in 2013.

Results

In order to carry out the comparative analyzes, we have first proceeded to determine whether the variables present a normal distribution. Consequently, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test show that the data of the variables do not present a normal distribution, since the coefficient obtained is significant (p> .05). For this reason, non-parametric statistics will be used for the following statistical analyzes.

Next, the *Friedman Test* was performed, which is a non-parametric test that is equivalent to the *ANOVA* test, in order to compare whether there are significant differences in the different variables throughout the season. This is how the six variables of the Motivation Questionnaire were analyzed (internal motivation, external motivation, introjected motivation, identified motivation, integrated motivation and demotivation) and the three variables of the Self-Compassion Scale (self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness). After performing this analysis, non-significant results were obtained (p> .05), as can be seen in Table 1, so it can be stated that there are no statistically significant differences between the different moments of the season.

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Table 1

Friedman Test: Comparison throughout the season.

		Sig.
Motivation	External	.75
	Internal	.49
	Introjected	.67
	Identified	.76
	Integrated	.55
	Demotivation	.50
Self pity	Self-kindness	.50
	Common humanity	.13
	Mindfulness	.39

Note: * $p < 0.05$

The *Kruskal-Wallis test* was administered in order to find out if there were significant differences between the different sports studied (soccer, athletics and rugby) throughout the season. Like the previous test, it was carried out with the nine variables (six of motivation and three of self-compassion).

Table 2
Kruskal-Wallis test: Comparison between sports.

		Sig.
Motivation	External	.05
	Internal	.03*
	Introjected	.00*
	Identified	.01*
	Integrated	.52
	Demotivation	.07
Self pity	Self-kindness	.26
	Common humanity	.91
	Mindfulness	.00*

Note: *p < 0.05

In Table 2 it can be seen that there are significant differences (p <.05) in almost all the motivation variables, so it can be stated that there are differences between the sports analyzed. In some of the variables these differences are very significant (p <.01) such as introjected motivation or identified motivation, while others do not present significance such as external motivation, integrated motivation and demotivation, therefore, these factors are they remain stable regardless of the sport that is practiced.
Regarding the self-compassion variables, it is observed that only the Mindfulness factor presents statistically significant differences (p <.05), so it is the only factor that varies depending on the sport that is practiced.

Discussion and Conclusions

The main objective of the present study is to understand the evolution of self-compassion and motivation throughout a complete season in athletes who practice rugby, soccer and athletics. To carry it out, the two variables were analyzed separately and in the different proposed sports, thus obtaining a breakdown of results that facilitate the understanding of the development of these factors over time.

Due to its multidimensional nature, studying the different variables in combination is very fruitful to understand the motivation and self-compassion of athletes towards sports practice and thus suggest strategies to be able to develop them adaptively. That is why in this work the subscales of the two variables have been taken into account, and the differences between the subfactors throughout the season have been analyzed.

Motivation has been one of the major concerns of sports establishments, that want to get to know what are the reasons that lead to sports practice (Torralba, Braz & Rubio, 2014). The results in this regard reveal that the athletes maintained both their extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in the same values throughout the season. Intrinsic motivation presented high values while extrinsic motivation maintained lower values. This information shows that the pressure exerted by the environment and the need to satisfy other people (Corbí, Palermo-Cámara & Jimenez-Palermo, 2019) is not so high. This is the case of the study carried out by Pelletier et al. (1995) who affirm that the athlete is proud of the recognition of others and that is why in competitive times it has a high regulation towards prizes focused mainly on the search for prestige and respect (Almagro et al., 2011).

The results showed that intrinsic motivation remained high, which is related to high intrinsic satisfaction, being able to act as a protective factor against burnout (Ramis, Torregosa, Viladrich & Cruz, 2013). In addition, it shows that the participants practice the corresponding sport voluntarily because it generates pleasure and satisfaction both for

the experiences and for the possibility of reaching a goal (Pestillo et al., 2016). In fact, another study has linked intrinsic motivation to well-being, continuous participation, sports performance, and ethics (Martinent et al., 2014).

In this sense, Deci and Ryan (200) affirm that we can consider some profiles as functional or adaptive and others as dysfunctional or maladaptive, considering intrinsic motivation as highly adaptive. On the contrary, extrinsic motivation is related to exhaustion or burnout (Lonsdale & Hodge, 2011; Madigan et al., 2016) and low levels of performance (Martinent, Cece, Elferink-Gemser, Faber, & Decret, 2018). That is why the modifications throughout the season would increase the need to establish programs to maintain self-determined motivation throughout the process. This is not the case in our sample, since it remains stable, but it is considered important to have the means and strategies to be able to act in the event of a fluctuation.

Regarding the self-compassion variable, no significant differences were found either in relation to the sport practiced or at the time of the season, therefore, according to our results, we can affirm that self-compassion remains stable and high throughout the period. These results agree with those obtained by Ferguson et al. (2014), who also affirm that self-compassionate athletes are more autonomous and have greater intrinsic motivation. They have higher "constructive reactions" which means that they are more persistent and positive in the face of adversity, and they have fewer "destructive reactions", which is related to less ruminant thoughts and less negative self-criticism. In this way, athletes with high self-compassion respond in a more adaptive way to the difficulties of sport (Leary et al. 2007; Neff 2003a, b) and do not usually give up, thus obtaining positive results (Gilbert et al., 2011). Also corresponding to our results, Mosewich et al. (2014) state that self-compassionate individuals intend to modify and improve their personal weaknesses to overcome their failures. This demonstrates the importance of self-compassion in all those subjects who do sports since it will facilitate good performance.

This is how we conclude that both motivation and self-compassion are personal variables that substantially affect sports performance and may vary depending on the context. These variations can be decisive in predicting the performance of athletes, being then necessary to take them into account in the preparation of the sessions throughout the season, being able to include different activities and practices that facilitate the increase of the most appropriate values. That is why, although it is shown that motivation and self-compassion remain stable, it is advisable to have effective intervention programs in the event of possible modifications.

In future research, it would be interesting to replicate the study with another type of intercultural population and a greater variety of sports. A greater number of competitive seasons should be included to advance in the knowledge about the longitudinal development of these variables and, in addition, it would be very useful to know the type of motivation and self-compassion in any sporting context, regardless of the modality that is practiced. It would also be interesting to compare the different sports between them, being able to check if the individual / team variable influences or if what the differences are according to the type of sport. In addition, other variables such as motivational climate, cohesion in team sports and its influence on motivation and self-compassion could be included.

On the other hand, the practical implications would be aimed at generating an intervention program that facilitates maintaining the most appropriate type of motivation and self-compassion at each moment of the season.

Finally, this study presents some limitations that should be corrected in future research. In the first place, it is considered necessary to design interventions under more

controlled conditions, also checking other factors that influence athletes such as sociocultural or economic level. Second, only one questionnaire was used for each variable, so it would be interesting to use other instruments to check and compare the results.

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