

INTRODUCTION

Sport and exercise psychology encompasses the scientific study of people and their behaviours in the sport context of physical activities, as well as the application of this knowledge to practice (Weinberg and Gould, 2010). This discipline is experiencing a strong demand from the social sector linked to sport, requesting intervention on psychological factors both in relation to sports performance and in other areas, such as effective communication with the athlete's family members (Cantón, 2010).

The performance of an athlete can be measured in absolute performance, which refers to the theoretical optimal performance of an athlete in a sporting endeavour and is directly related to the physiological composition of the athlete and therefore his or her genetics. This is a purely theoretical value and is not real, as it reflects the athlete's potential in a perfect world and does not take into account other factors such as psychological, meteorological, rivals, referees, etc. In order to take these factors into account, the concept of relative performance of the athlete is born, this is a much more dynamic and situational concept, it reflects the performance of the athlete during a competition in relation to his absolute development potential. This is where the so-called performance inhibitors come into play, elements that cause an athlete's relative performance to be lower than his or her absolute potential. They can be divided between external (weather conditions, referees, opponents...) and internal (physiological, such as injuries or fatigue and psychological, such as motivation, anxiety or focus of attention) (Gee, 2010).

It is here, in the internal psychological inhibitors of performance, that sport psychology comes into play.

The idea of the mind-body relationship is widely accepted, i.e. our attitudes and emotions directly affect our bodies, modifying physiological patterns (Bradley & Lang, 2000), as well as our choice of behavioural responses and the effort we put into their execution (Leith & Baumeister, 1996). Therefore, there are a large number of psychological constructs that have been shown to be counterproductive in sports performance and it is mental training that will provide athletes with a series of psychological strategies to improve their abilities when facing training and competitions with greater guarantees of success (Dosil, 2005).

The great advantage of these psychological performance inhibitors is that they are under the control of the athlete and, as mentioned above, they are trainable. In doing so, an athlete with a lower absolute performance potential can outperform a physiologically superior athlete by minimising the influence of such inhibitors and thereby enhancing their relative performance (Gee, 2010).

The factors influencing sport dropout have been studied over time. In some studies, such as the one conducted by Cecchini *et al.* (2005), sport dropout has been related to the progressive decrease in motivation. Busman (1999), on the other hand, confirmed that sport dropout could only be understood from a multifactorial perspective involving the following factors in decreasing order: incompatibility of studies and training, injuries, conflict of interests with other activities, conflicts in the sport environment, lack of family support, motivational characteristics of the athletes, low social mobility and a critical attitude towards competitive sport. Salguero, Tuero and Márquez (2003) studied the reasons for dropping out specifically in swimming and concluded that the following items were the most significant: "I had other things to do", "the training was too hard", "my performance did not improve", "my friends had dropped out", "I did not like the coach", and "it was not entertaining enough".

Following this line, at the end of 2019 the management team of the Swimming Federation of the Valencian Community (FNCV) considered the need to know the opinions of its groups regarding the situation of this sport in the Community. The aim was to design proposals for the future that would be sensitive to the expectations of the members, especially with regard to reducing dropout rates and promoting continuity.

In order to gather the necessary information to create an intervention project as personalised and adjusted as possible to the reality of the FNCV, it was decided to take a photograph of their situation at that time.

METHOD

Participants.

Information was collected from different groups. Swimmers (131) of multiple categories (juvenile, infant, junior and senior). 92 fathers and mothers (FM). Coaches (22). Lastly, a group of ex-swimmers (16), federated athletes who had left swimming some time ago, also participated.

Instruments.

A number of model questionnaires were created for the groups described above. These questionnaires included two types of questions. On the one hand, closed questions where you had to choose an answer option or rate your opinion on a numerical scale. On the other hand, a series of open questions were formulated in which the answers had to be written, dealing with topics such as their beginnings in the world of swimming, sensations in competitions or their memories of starting to compete. In addition, a series of group meetings were organised with people from each group to discuss various topics adapted to each group.

Procedure.

The data were collected in three periods between February and March 2020. The first was in Castellón (La Salera), followed by another in Elche (Polideportivo Esperanza Lag) and a third and final one in Valencia (Benimamet). The subsequent period of confinement was used to conduct telephone interviews with the group of former swimmers.

A total of 245 questionnaires were obtained from 131 swimmers, 92 from PM and 22 from coaches. With regard to the group interviews, a total of 85 people participated, 20 athletes, 50 FM and 15 coaches.

Statistical analysis.

Nearly 12,000 numerical responses were statistically analysed in order to find trends of opinion within and between groups. The 4,000 open-ended questions were classified into categories with repeated ideas. They were then coded and new statistics were obtained.

Telephone interviews were treated in a similar way to the questionnaires.

A descriptive analysis of the different variables used in the study was carried out using means and standard deviation. To analyse the relationship between variables, a Pearson correlation analysis was carried out. The entire statistical process was carried out using STATISTICA from StatSoft.

RESULTS

Of all the data collected here, we will focus specifically on the reasons that directly influence the drop-out of athletes.

Regarding the profile of the swimmers: the swimmers who do better in their studies are also more willing to train, they value better the help of their coach, their mother and the Federation. The relationship with the coach is consistent with the desire to train, the desire to compete, the clarity of objectives and the assessment of the facilities and the club. The most motivated swimmers are also the ones who best value the other aspects including the help of the Federation. Regarding the question "What did you miss when you started competing?" the answer "nothing" is predominant followed by (2) more support (3) more psychological/emotional support for pressure management, self-esteem, motivation, success management, confidence (4) more information related to the world of swimming.

As for the points to improve as an athlete and as a coach, they are respectively: (1) emotion management and (2) better technique; (1) passivity, stubbornness, distraction, unrealistic, (2) negative reactions, (3) lack of support.

With regard to the question "When you think about giving up swimming, what is the main reason?" 40% of respondents said that the main reason was the difficulty of combining sport and other activities, mainly studies; 20% did not even consider this question, 14% saw the relationship between effort and results as unbalanced and 11% argued psychological aspects such as pressure, stress or low self-esteem.

DISCUSSION

After compiling the information on the reasons for the athletes and coaching staff of the FNCV to drop out, it can be seen that they coincide with other studies such as that of Klint and Weiss (1986), where the causes of dropping out were related to the reconciliation with other activities, pressure management, the relationship with the coach and the management of emotions.

Regarding the main reason why swimmers think about quitting swimming, this coincides with the study by Gómez, Gálvez, Escribá, Tárraga and Tárraga (2017), where the main reason for quitting is combining it with their studies. This is fundamentally due to a problem of structure and coordination with the rest of the activities that swimmers have to face in their daily lives.

In this line, seeing the results obtained and having a picture of this specific group, the next step is to create a possible intervention proposal following the initial objective of this study, to reduce early dropout in these swimmers. Due to the space allowed by this work, it has been agreed to extend the form of intervention in dual career and to mention the other possible sessions, since one of the main reasons for dropping out, as has been seen in the results, is compatibility with studies.

INTERVENTION PROPOSAL

Objectives:

1. Train both swimmers and parents through psycho-education to better understand the world of swimming.
2. Create a Career Assistance programme to encourage the combination of studies and sport.
3. To achieve a correct management of swimmers' emotions.
4. Improving swimmers' motivation through goal setting
5. Working on swimmers' confidence and self-esteem
6. Equipping trainers with assertive communication strategies.
7. Work on and improve the feedback that coaches give to their swimmers.
8. Setting up a school for parents

Proposed intervention plan:

Firstly, we would work on psycho-education with the aim of improving their knowledge of swimming and that they understand the role played by each of the groups within this world and how this can affect the athlete. Here we will also explain the structure of the club where they are swimming, the sporting transitions, the events and some reference marks and how competitions work.

In the following sessions, the dual career aspect would be worked on, following the following structure:

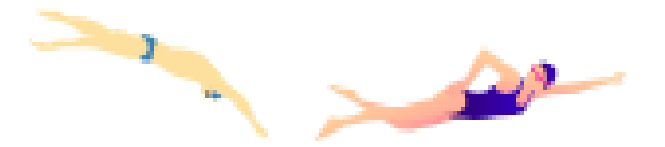
- Session 1: Psychoeducation on dual careers and the role of the dual career counsellor. Informing which consists of a series of practices aimed at supporting athletes through conflicts in balancing sport with other areas of their lives. Show the Holistic Sports Career Model which depicts the transitions and stages associated with each of the six domains of development (sport, psychological, psychosocial, academic, financial and legal). Show career trajectories (linear model, parallel model, convergent model, divergent model). The dual career counsellor has the role of offering preventive support in combining sport and studie
- Session 2: Collecting information from the athlete
DCCQ-A Questionnaire, which includes 38 competencies divided into different factors (Dual Career Management, Career Planning, Emotional Awareness and Social Intelligence and Adaptability).
Conduct competency profiling
- Session 3: Plan intervention according to the results of each athlete.
- Intervention
- Follow-up

Next we would work on managing emotions, explaining how our emotions and thoughts affect our behaviour, emphasising the emotion of fear and nervousness. Then we would work on the following points: recognising and changing negative thinking, self-talk, structuring the environment to stop paying attention to it and promote relaxing thoughts, controlled breathing, Jacobson's progressive relaxation and visualisation. At this point we will also be working on the swimmer's self-confidence.

Another important point is the setting of goals to increase the swimmer's motivation. Specific, measurable and achievable goals. Goals related to learning specific skills should include mastery criteria; goals need to identify the circumstances under which the desirable behaviour would occur. Introduce deadlines for the achievement of goals, as well as positive reinforcement when goals are met.

In terms of assertive communication strategies for coaches, the differences between pre-, intra- and post-training and competition would be discussed. How the choice of response affects the performance and well-being of their swimmers. Types of communication and conflict resolution techniques. This would also include work on communicating feedback.

Finally, the creation of a school for parents should include psychoeducation on swimming and emotional development, the different evolutionary stages and the consequent changes that their children will go through and how it can affect their daily life and provide them with strategies to cope with these changes in a positive way as well as strategies for assertive communication.



INTRODUCCIÓN

La **psicología del deporte** está experimentando una fuerte demanda por el sector social vinculado al deporte (Cantón, 2010)

Rendimiento absoluto: rendimiento teórico óptimo, genética. **Rendimiento relativo:** rendimiento en relación con su potencial absoluto, teniendo en cuenta los **inhibidores del rendimiento**. (Gee, 2010)

Inhibidores de tipo interno psicológico. Enfoque centrado en el continuo desarrollo de las habilidades y capacidades psicológicas, no implicando per se un déficit previo de éstas (Cantón, 2010)

Relación cuerpo-mente. Nuestras actitudes y emociones afectan directamente a nuestro cuerpo, modificando patrones fisiológicos (Bradley & Lang, 2000), la elección que hacemos de las respuestas conductuales y el esfuerzo que proponemos para su ejecución (Leith & Baumeister, 1996). Existen un gran número de constructos psicológicos que han demostrado ser contraproducentes en el rendimiento deportivo (Dosil, 2005).

Factores del abandono deportivo: motivación (Cecchini *et al.*, 2005), perspectiva multifactorial, incompatibilidad con estudios,)entrenador, gestión emocional, lesiones (Busman, 1999). Salguero, Tuero y Márquez (2003), motivos de abandono en nadadores coincidiendo con estudios anteriores.

Objetivo: Federación de Natación de la Comunidad Valenciana (FNCV)

- Diseñar propuestas de futuro para reducir el abandono deportivo y potenciar la continuidad competitiva.

MÉTODO

Participantes

131 nadadores + 92 padres y madres (PM) + 22 entrenadores

Instrumentos

Cuestionarios + entrevistas

Procedimiento

Febrero - marzo de 2020, coincidiendo con la asistencia de participantes en tres campeonatos del calendario de competiciones. Castellón (La Salera), Elche (Polideportivo Esperanza Lag) y Valencia (Benimámet). El estudio se anunció a través de la página web de FNCV.

Análisis estadístico

Análisis descriptivo y relación entre variables con análisis de correlación de Pearson (STATISTICA, StatSoft)

RESULTADOS

Infantiles: M=15.4 DT=0.5; Alevines: M=13.6 DT= 0.49

Junior: M=17.16 DT= 0.4; Absolutos: M=21.26 DT= 3.61

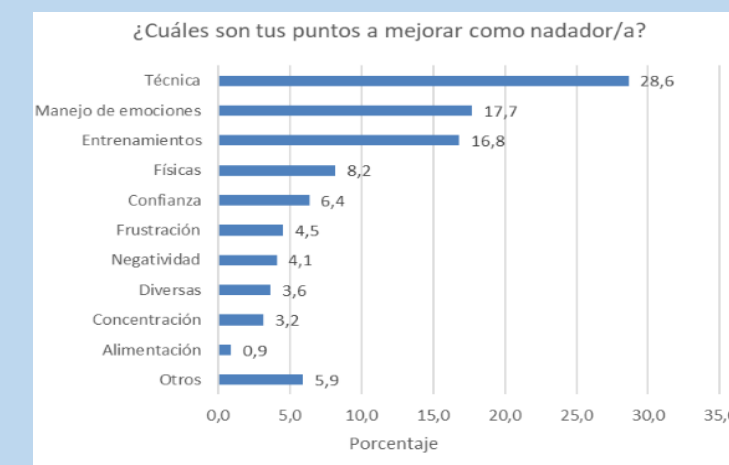
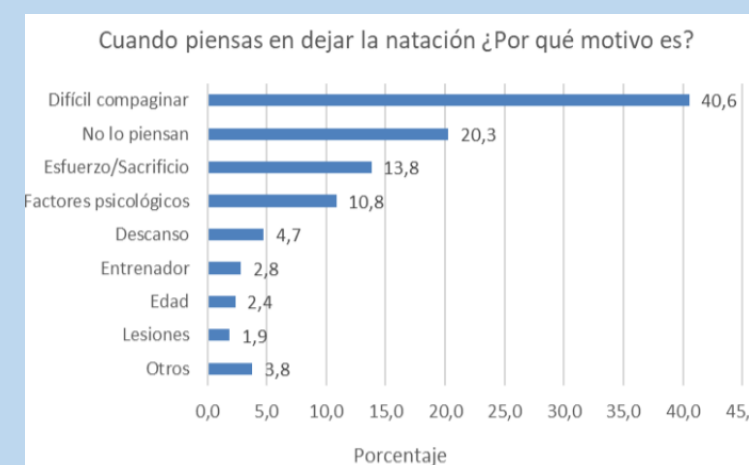
Mejor estudios y más ganas de entrenar (r=0.20) (p<0.05)

Relación con el entrenador concuerda con las ganas de entrenar (r=0.19) (p<0.05)

Relación con el entrenador concuerda con competir (r=0.21) (p<0.05)

Relación con el entrenador concuerda con claridad de objetivos (r=0.22) (p<0.05)

Los nadadores más motivados valoran mejor el funcionamiento de federación (r=0.18) (p<0.05)



DISCUSIÓN

Los resultados coinciden con otros estudios como el de Klint y Weiss (1986) donde las causas de abandono eran:

Compaginación con otras actividades **Manejo de emociones** **Relación con el entrenador**

Respecto al motivo fundamental por el que los nadadores piensan en dejar la natación, coincide con el estudio de Gómez, Gálvez, Escribá, Tárraga y Tárraga (2017) donde el principal motivo de abandono es la **compaginación con los estudios**. Esto se debe fundamentalmente a un problema de estructura y coordinación con el resto de actividades que tienen que afrontar los nadadores en su día a día.

En base a estos datos se ha creado una propuesta de intervención centrándose en el aspecto de carrera dual.

PROPUESTA DE INTERVENCIÓN

Objetivos:

1. Formar a nadadores y a padres mediante psicoeducación para que comprendan mejor el mundo de la natación
2. Crear un programa de Asistencia de Carrera para fomentar la compaginación con los estudios y el deporte
3. Conseguir un correcto manejo de las emociones de los nadadores
4. Mejorar la motivación de los nadadores mediante el establecimiento de objetivos
5. Mejorar la confianza y autoestima de los nadadores
6. Dotar a los entrenadores de estrategias de comunicación asertiva
7. Trabajar el feedback que los entrenadores dan a sus nadadores
8. Crear una escuela de padres

Plan de intervención propuesto:

1. **PSICOEDUCACIÓN** (1 sesión de 60 minutos; primeros de septiembre). Con el objetivo de **mejorar los conocimientos** de la natación.
2. **CARRERA DUAL** (las sesiones empezarían a mediados de septiembre).
3. **MANEJO DE EMOCIONES** (3 sesiones de 50 - 60 minutos; principios enero). Cómo afectan nuestras emociones y pensamientos a nuestra conducta, enfatizando en la emoción del **miedo** y el **nerviosismo**. En este punto también estaremos trabajando la autoconfianza del nadador.
4. **ESTABLECIMIENTO DE METAS** (1 sesión de 60 minutos; noviembre). Para **aumentar la motivación** del nadador. Objetivos específicos, medibles y alcanzables.
5. **COMUNICACIÓN ASERTIVA ENTRENADORES** (2 sesiones de 40 minutos; principios de octubre). Diferencias existentes entre pre, intra y post entrenamiento y competición. **Cómo afecta la elección de la respuesta al rendimiento y bienestar de sus nadadores.**
6. **CREACIÓN DE UNA ESCUELA DE PADRES**. (septiembre) Debería incluir una **psicoeducación** de la natación y emocional, las diferentes etapas evolutivas y los consecuentes cambios por los que sus hijos van a atravesar y cómo puede afectar en su día a día y dotarlos de estrategias para afrontar estos cambios de una manera positiva así como de estrategias para una comunicación asertiva.

CARRERA DUAL

1ª sesión: Psicoeducación sobre la carrera dual y el papel del asesor en carrera dual

- Informar que consiste en una serie de prácticas destinadas a apoyar a los deportistas en los conflictos para compaginar el deporte con otras áreas de su vida (Stambulova y Wylleman, 2014)
- Mostrar el Modelo Holístico de Carrera Deportiva (Wylleman, 2019) el que representa las transiciones y las etapas asociadas a cada uno de los seis dominios de desarrollo (deportivo, psicológico, psicosocial, académico, financiero y legal).
- Mostrar las trayectorias de la carrera deportiva (modelo lineal, modelo paralelo, modelo convergente, modelo divergente)
- El asesor de carrera dual tiene el rol de ofrecer un apoyo preventivo en la compaginación del deporte y los estudios

2ª sesión: Recogida de información del deportista

- Cuestionario Dual Career Competency Questionnaire for Athletes (DCCQ-A; De Brandt et al. , 2017), recoge 38 competencias divididas en distintos factores (Gestión de Carrera Dual, Planificación de Carrera, Conciencia Emocional e Inteligencia Social y Adaptabilidad)
- Realizar el perfil de competencias

3ª sesión: Planificar intervención en función de los resultados de cada deportista

Intervención

Seguimiento

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