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A case for change in how we refer to dual career athletes: a person first approach

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ABSTRACT

Rationale/Purpose: Dual Career Athletes (DCA) combine education, training, or work with a sporting career within broader sports management and educational environments. A holistic approach embraces the DCA as a "person first, athlete second". This study examines the literature regarding DCA stereotype, labelling, identity, and wellbeing, and proposes a change in how we refer to DCAs, to person(s) engaging in dual career (PEDC).
Design/methodology/approach: Using social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorisation theory (SCT) we discuss the use of person-first language regarding PEDCs. Three key areas are considered; PEDC stereotype; PEDC identity development and PEDC wellbeing within their sporting and educational environments.
Findings: PEDCs can adopt unidimensional athletic identities and experience stereotype with potentially negative implications for DC. PEDCs face challenges impacting wellbeing, exacerbated by narrow identity development and stereotype with low tendencies for help seeking. Labels can act as cues in stereotype and identity formation and wellbeing promotion.
Practical Implications: It is proposed that the term PEDC should be adopted by researchers, those involved in sports management structures, academic personnel within educational institutions, parents and peers.
Research contribution: : The study supports the holistic, person first approach to DC and proposes a change in how we refer to people engaging in DC.

Introduction

Dual career (DC) has been defined as the combination of education, training, or work with the initiation, development, and finalisation of a lifelong sporting career along with other domains of life such as playing a role in society, developing partner relationships, and an identity that enables successful engagement in the community (European Commission, 2012a; Vervoon, 2016). The cultural praxis of athletes' careers is a research paradigm that encourages sport psychology research and practice to encapsulate the contextual, cultural, and holistic realities of athlete-participants and much of the research surrounding dual career athletes (DCA)/student-athletes (SA)/athlete-students (AS) reflects this approach (European Commission, 2012b; López de Subijana et al., 2015; Ryan, 2015; Stambulova & Ryba, 2014). The holistic development of DCAs includes

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the integration of the athletic, psychosocial, and academic/vocational aspects of their lives while considering their personal values within the context of their sporting and wider social milieu, before, during and after their athletic career (de Subijana et al., 2020; Debois et al., 2015; Douglas & Carless, 2006).

The importance of DCA entourage and support structures in DC engagement has been highlighted in the literature. DCA entourage includes multiple stakeholders at micro (individual DCA), meso (parents, peers, academics/employers, sports management, etc.), macro (sports clubs, educational institutions, labour market, etc.) and policy (national and European governing bodies) levels (Capranica & Guidotti, 2016). Similarly, support structures differ across cultures and have been categorised at the European level as state-centric (support structures are regulated), state sponsored formal system (authorises but does not require universities to make provision for DCAs), national sporting bodies as intermediary (advocate with universities on behalf of the DCA), and laisser faire (no formal structures exist) (Henry, 2010; Lupo et al., 2015).

Recent research has placed an emphasis on the promotion of dual career development environments (DCDEs). These are purposefully developed systems that interact to provide support to PEDCs and include stakeholders at meso, micro, macro, and policy levels, and they can range in organisation and complexity from sports friendly schools and universities to purposefully developed DC systems (Morris et al., 2021). Central to the successful operation of these environments are the people who manage or represent the various institutions and how they interact and assist the DCA in navigating their DC journey(Korhonen et al., 2020; Storm et al., 2021).

The examination of the challenges of DC and the importance of DCA resources and support systems is well established, with challenges categorised in relation to DCA physical, psychological, social, educational and financial situations (López-Flores et al., 2021; O'Neill et al., 2013; Stambulova et al., 2015). In line with the cultural praxis of athletes careers philosophy, research relating to DC challenges and DCDEs promotes the holistic approach to DCAs and their DC development (Morris et al., 2021; Storm et al., 2021). Central to DCA holistic development and DCDEs is the person-first approach whereby focus is placed on the "person first, athlete second" or the "athlete as a person doing sport and having other life issues" (Eubank, 2016, p. 2; Morris et al., 2021; Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014, p. 606; Storm et al., 2021).

This paper will focus on three specific DC challenges highlighted in literature; negative stereotyping of DCAs (Geraniosova & Ronkainen, 2014; Haslerig, 2017a; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004), DCA identity development and tension (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Cartigny et al., 2021; Franck et al., 2016; Stambulova et al., 2015), and DCA wellbeing (Drew & Matthews, 2018; Lopes Dos Santos et al., 2020; van Rens et al., 2019). Through theoretical discussion these challenges will be explored, culminating in the suggestion to change the current use of the terms DCA, SA, and AS in DC research and practice, to the term person(s) engaging in DC (PEDC). The social identity theory (SIT) and the self categorisation theory (SCT) is used as a framework for the examination of the DC challenges highlighted. Justification for the use of the term PEDC will be outlined for each DC challenge using theory relating to labels, linguistic bias, and situational and identity safe cues in social settings. The term PEDC will be used henceforth.

Social identity theory and self-categorisation theory

SIT focuses on group behaviour and issues such as stereotype, discrimination, and factors that result in different types of intergroup behaviours (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Central to the

theory is the idea of social categorisation such that we categorise people into groups with a perception of how they think, feel, and behave creating stereotypical expectations (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Turner & Oakes, 1986). The SCT is closely related to the SIT. Self-categorisation is defined as "placing oneself in a social category and thinking of oneself as a member of said category" and it describes the cognitive representations one has about who they are (Reimer et al., 2020, p. 3). The self, according to the SCT operates at three levels of inclusiveness or abstraction, the self as an individual, the self as a group member, and the self as a human being, and these form the human, social, and personal identity elements, respectively (Reimer et al., 2020; Turner et al., 1987). Personal identity refers to self-categories which define the person as unique by comparison to other in-group members, while social identity refers to self-categories that define the similarities between the individual and the in-group in contrast to outgroup members and it forms the basis of group behaviour (Prentice, 2006; Turner et al., 1994; Turner & Reynolds, 2012).

SCT proposes a continuum of human behaviour flanked at one end by interpersonal behaviour based on personal identity and at the other by intergroup behaviour based on social identity, such that one could distinguish between types of behaviour, whilst also acknowledging that people are capable of more than one type at a given time (Tajfel & Turner, 2001; Turner & Reynolds, 2012, p. 402). The identity process of moving from behaviour based on personal identity to social identity is known as depersonalisation and in this context, is not the loss of the individual identity or the self, but merely a change from the personal to the social level of identity (Prentice, 2006; Turner et al., 1987).

PEDC stereotypes

Stereotypes consist of two parts where *members of a group* (e.g. PEDCs) are linked to *specific traits and/or performance outcomes* (e.g. academically weak) generalised across all members with no regard for individual member differences (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Smith & Martiny, 2018). The characteristics of the stereotype attributed to PEDC's in higher education include that they are intellectually inferior; engage in education primarily for athletic reasons; they choose courses of reduced academic rigour; and receive reduced admissions criteria or special academic privilege (Harrison et al., 2009; Haslerig, 2017a; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004). The effects of these stereotypes result in pigeonholing PEDCs as athletes only; negative interactions with academic staff and non-athlete students; reduced PEDC perception of their academic ability as well as the perception that others have lower academic expectations for them (Geraniosova & Ronkainen, 2014; Harrison et al., 2009; Haslerig, 2017a; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004; Wininger & White, 2015).

An examination of the literature regarding stereotype highlights the importance of culture, DC environments, PEDC entourage and PEDC agency and perception within those contexts. Using qualitative semi-structured interviews Haslerig (2017a) explored the individual and systemic obstacles that impacted the ability of American PEDCs to negotiate the stereotypes that were levelled at them because of their athlete status. Firstly, they found that stereotypes were "lobbed at them" throughout their college years, with some reduction as time went on and they began to achieve academically (Haslerig, 2017a, p. 336). However, while some academically successful PEDCs felt they were disproving or interrupting stereotypes, they were at odds to "out" themselves as athlete's in the classroom as they perceived their success would be undervalued or they would not be given the full benefit of their achievements. Much of the research examining negative stereotype and PEDCs emanates from the United States (Dee, 2014; Harrison et al., 2009; Haslerig, 2017a, 2017b; Martins

et al., 2020), where athletic eligibility is very much tied to academic performance within the collegiate system that prevails, however, there is research from cultures that operate different systems of support or management for DC.

The system of support for PEDC DC in Slovakia is defined as laisser-faire (Henry, 2010). Similar to findings in the United States, prejudice and stereotype were identified as part of the Slovakian PEDCs daily routine in higher education (Geraniosova & Ronkainen, 2014). Using semi-structured interviews and interpretative phenomenological analysis, they found that the perception of sportspersons as students was predominantly negative, both in terms of how they perceived themselves, how they behaved, and how teachers viewed them. Furthermore, PEDCs suggested that is was impossible to get good grades as a result of teacher prejudice.

Similar recommendations regarding the need to reduce teacher stereotype through the development of DC support structures were also cited in relation to elite PEDCs in Greece (Zafeiroudi et al., 2020). It is also noteworthy that the Greek system of support is more advanced than Slovakia (sporting institutions as intermediaries), and yet similar issues prevailed (Henry, 2010). PEDCs in the UK also operate in a similar support structure to that described in Greece (Henry, 2010). An action research study by McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis (2004) using a variety of data collection processes with PEDCs and stakeholders (informal discussion, formal interviews, in-house educational documentation, and focus groups) highlighted how PEDCs in the UK also experienced comparable judgements with regard to their engagement in the academic domain. One PEDC, for example, recalled obtaining the top mark in an academic paper and being immediately questioned as to "how" and "why" he achieved the mark over and above his academic peers.

The experiences of PEDCs in the work environment has not been highlighted extensively in research (Moreno et al., 2021; Stambulova & Wylleman, 2019). However, Oros and Hanțiu (2016) examined the DC experiences and perceptions of PEDCs (n=239) in Romania. They found prejudice and stereotype in the workplace regarding PEDC proficiencies and abilities, whereby PEDCs experienced skepticism from employers that they did not know anything but sport. This approach may also be reflective of the support system that operates in Romania, whereby athletes are primed towards winning competitions and there is a lack of awareness in relation to supporting and developing sustainable DC experiences (European Commission, 2017). PEDC stereotyping was also identified as an issue amongst Australian PEDCs (Georgakis et al., 2014). Using a mixed methods approach, they found that PEDCs were perceived as "dumb jocks" (by university staff and students), as not taking academic work seriously, and that they were uninterested, bored, and only in higher education because they had to be.

Individual PEDC agency plays a role in the perception of PEDCs in educational and workplace settings. Many studies cite positive attitudes and support towards PEDCs as a result of their positive engagement with all elements of their DC commitments, in supportive DC environments (Condello et al., 2019; Henriksen et al., 2020; Li & Sum, 2017; Nikander et al., 2020). However, the PEDC stereotype can also become a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby PEDCs identify and relate to the stereotype, behaving in ways that further preserve its existence (Geraniosova & Ronkainen, 2014). Using semi-structured interviews with elite level PEDCs (competing at national level or higher), Cosh and Tully (2014, p. 183) found that PEDCs were "just doing enough to pass". Many of the PEDCs cited prioritising sport to the detriment of academic engagement, and this decision was described as being mostly outside of their control largely as a result of the time constraints associated with elite level

sport. The prioritisation of sport by PEDCs has also been highlighted in other studies and contexts (Aunola et al., 2018; Cartigny et al., 2021; Ryba et al., 2017) which may also serve to perpetuate PEDC stereotype.

Negative implications of PEDC stereotype

Stereotype threat refers to the perceived probability and fear of living up to a negative stereotype about one's social identity through actions and behaviours, even in situations where one does not ascribe to the associated stereotype (Dee, 2014; Inzlicht et al., 2006; Smith & Martiny, 2018). For stereotype threat to be salient and impactful it is necessary for the marginalised group to be aware of and feel targeted by the stereotype and research suggests that PEDCs are moderately to extremely aware of the stereotype that is directed at them (Aronson & McGlone, 2009; Feltz et al., 2013; Georgakis et al., 2014; Haslerig, 2017a; Schmader et al., 2008).

Athletic identity is defined as the degree to which an individual identifies with their role as an athlete (Good et al., 1993). Several studies have examined the impact of the salience of athletic identity and stereotype threat, with the priming of PEDC "athlete", "student" and "student- athlete" identities yielding interesting results. The priming of the "athletic" or "student" identities separately was shown by Yopyk and Prentice (2005) to impact on perceived competence and performance on a difficult maths test, with those in the athlete primed condition performing less well than those in the student primed condition. In a test of maths ability of 60 male ($n = 33$) and female ($n = 27$) NCAA Division III PEDCs, Riciputi and Erdal (2017) found that priming just the "athlete" identity resulted in fewer attempts and lower mean scores. They found little difference between male and female PEDCs suggesting that there may be equivalent pressure on both genders leaving them open

to stereotype threat. In a study of 84 male ($n = 40$) and female ($n = 44$) PEDCs in higher education in the US where the "student-athlete" identity was primed, Dee (2014) found that it had a negative impact on the academic performance (compared to their non-athlete peers) and self-regard of the participants. While results regarding gender were not statistically significant (as a result of sample size), he did suggest that males were more likely to experience stereotype threat and the potential negative effects over their female counterparts, which potentially contradicts findings by Riciputi and Erdal (2017).

In a study examining the predictors that increase susceptibility to stereotype threat, Feltz et al. (2013) studied factors such as PEDC athletic identity, coach regard for PEDCs academic ability, gender, and sport type and level of performance among PEDCs ($n = 318$) in higher education institutes. They found that PEDCs with higher athletic identity, or those that participated in higher profile sports and at greater levels of performance were more likely to display a greater susceptibility to stereotype threat (Feltz et al., 2013). Furthermore, regarding gender, it was found that coach perception of their academic ability had a significant direct effect on stereotype threat amongst female PEDCs only. To the author(s) knowledge, there has not been any studies on the implications of stereotype threat on PEDC cohorts outside of the United States and thus our understanding of this phenomenon in this regard is limited.

While much research focuses on the negative impacts of stereotype and stereotype threat, PEDC responses are not homogenous (Stone et al., 2012). PEDC reaction to stereotype varies to the point where in some instances the response to a stereotype threatening situation is positive, with "stereotype reactance" (counter stereotype behaviours) leading to improved performance outcomes and disrupted stereotype effect (Harrison et al., 2009; Haslerig, 2017a; Inzlicht et al., 2006). Similarly,

the exposure to counter-stereotypical role models such as athletic peers that place a strong emphasis on academic success can also result in stereotype reactance (Aronson & McGlone, 2009; Harrison et al., 2015; Olsson & Martiny, 2018). Stereotype reactance, however, can be thwarted by the prevailing culture, whereby PEDCs have resisted revealing themselves as "athletes" in the classroom, despite academic success (Haslerig, 2017a).

As highlighted previously, there are other potentially negative implications for PEDCs of the prevalence of negative stereotypes. PEDCs can operate in educational environments whereby they believe they will not be awarded top grades due to teacher prejudice, they would not be given the full credit for academic achievement, and they may not be taken seriously by student peers or academic staff, leading to demoralising and demotivating effects and in some cases reduced academic self-efficacy (Geraniosova & Ronkainen, 2014; Haslerig, 2017a; Levine et al., 2014; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004; Wininger & White, 2015). PEDCs do not need to experience stereotype threat to underperform academically and despite holding positive private attitudes towards academic achievement, they can conform to specific behaviours that undermine academic achievement if they perceive this to be the norm amongst their athlete peers, or wider sporting environment (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Levine et al., 2014).

The case for person-first language

One way of reducing stereotype and stereotype threat is through the reduction of situational cues that promote them (Smith & Martiny, 2018). Considering the two parts of a stereotype (*members* and *perceived traits*) highlighted previously, situational cues can target one (subtle activation) or both (blatant activation) parts of the stereotype and can prompt an individual to the part of their identity that may be under threat (Killeya-Jones, 2005; Schmader

et al., 2008; Smith & Martiny, 2018). A label refers to a particular category of people, and aims to convey information about its members setting category boundaries and position in society. This can lead to the use of slurs and the creation of negative stereotype with the aim of derogation based on an individual's distinct features and can lead to reduced performance in that domain (Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019; Croom, 2013; Goffman, 1963). The slur "dumb jock", has been used to describe PEDCs, and where the use of a slur prevails, it may become acceptable and contribute to the tolerance of the associated views of this cohort (Croom, 2013; Georgakis et al., 2014, p. 120; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004).

Linguistic bias is a systematic lack of equality in the choice of language use that is reflective of the social cognitions about the traits or characteristics that define the group (Beukeboom, 2012; Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019). Labelling through linguistic bias can act as a situational cue which can promote entitativity for a stigmatised group and prime and facilitate the formation of stereotype (Beukeboom, 2012; Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019). The use of language to create bias is generally achieved by two mechanisms (Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019):

- the content of the label; which communicates the classification of the individuals it is referring to, setting their boundary and position in society (e.g. female, cyclist, Irish);
- the form of the label; which refers to the grammatical use of words (nouns, verbs and adjectives), and how for instance nouns activate stereotype content and are binary in nature (you either are a student or you're not) whereas adjectives are not.

Linguistically, when examining the content aspect of the terms DCA, AS and SA, DCA favours the "athlete" part of the individual engaging in DC thus setting the "boundary" and "position" of this group firmly as athletes,

while SA and AS primes and sets the "position" and "boundary" of the group as students and athletes only, with neither label inferring the other dimensions of their lives as espoused by the holistic approach to DC. When examining linguistic form, the terms DCA, AS and SA utilise nouns (e.g. athlete, student) which may elicit stereotype content and are also very clear-cut on the individuals being either "athletes", "athlete-students" or "student athletes". The linguistic foundation therefore for the adoption of person-first language lies in the placement of the noun i.e. the person, before the descriptive element, for example, "person engaging in DC". Putting emphasis on the person-first and then the identity element (that otherwise may be used to define or stereotype), prioritises the individual's personhood before referring to their characteristic domain or category (Gernsbacher, 2017; Granello & Gibbs, 2016).

The labels "student athlete" and "athlete" have been recognised as stereotype threat cues that have the potential to highlight the disproportionate relationship between group membership (student-athlete), individual performance objectives, and the negative stereotype about the group's ability to perform (Schmader et al., 2008; Stone et al., 2012). The proposed change to the term PEDC should not only remove the existing linguistic cue associated with the DCA, AS, and SA terms, but also promote the person first, holistic approach of the cultural praxis paradigm in PEDCs educational and sports management environments.

PEDC identity and self-categorisation

The process of stereotyping and self-stereotyping is not always biased or prejudicial. In fact, stereotyping and self-stereotyping are important if we are to identify as group members, or, globally, to group individuals into particular categories and afford us knowledge regarding the characteristics of those groups in society

(Beukeboom & Burgers, 2017; Turner et al., 1987). Part of engaging and identifying with elite sport environments is the development and maintenance of athletic identity. The development of an athletic identity is a key component in the process of becoming an elite athlete and enhanced athletic performance, however over-adherence can occur to the detriment of other identity elements (Cosh et al., 2015; Franck et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2016). PEDCs also have the capacity to develop and engage with multiple identities depending on their individuality, social and environmental milieu, the salience of particular identities and any conflict experienced between them (Cartigny et al., 2021).

SCT also suggests that one can have many self-categorisations, and the complexity of self-categorisations depends on the level of perceived overlap between the categorisations, such that where there is only partial overlap, the implications for social identification become more complex (Prentice, 2006; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). How individuals deal with such complexity varies; intersection (where categorisations converge to form a single consolidated ingroup); dominance (one dominant social identity, with all other identities defined in terms of the dominant identity); compartmentalisation (social identities are differentiated and expressed in relevant contexts); merger (the sum of combined social identities, social identity transcends all individual categories) (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) (Figure 1).

The impact of culture in the elite sport setting on the identity and behaviour of athletes reflects the phenomenon of complexity in relation to identity resolution. Carless and Douglas (2013) found that the performance narrative prevalent in elite sport settings, promoted by significant others such as coaches, through pressure and coercion, impacted on how athletes behaved and storied their lives. Three athlete profiles emerged; living the athlete story such that they exclude aspects of their lives to satisfy the perceived performance
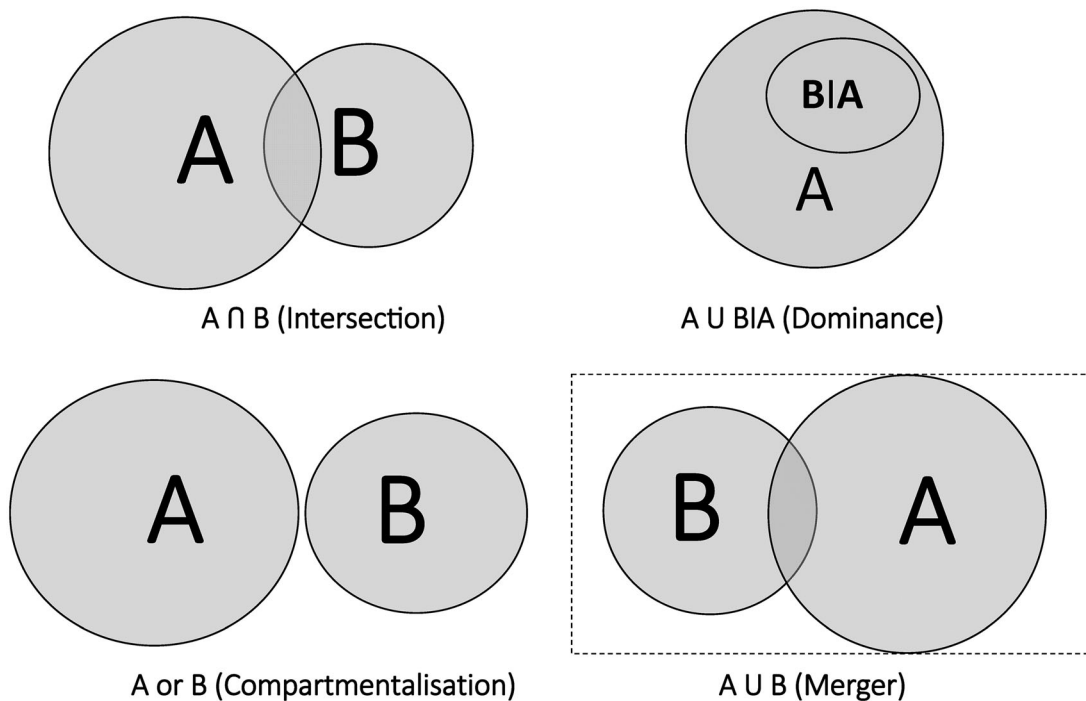
Figure 1. Profiles of the complexity of self-categorisation (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

narrative (similar to dominance); resisting the athlete story such that they engaged with other identities outside the elite sport context (similar to merger); playing the part of athlete where they behave in ways that satisfy the required narrative in the elite sport context (to prevent being ostracised) but tell different stories in their lives outside sport (similar to compartmentalisation).

Cartigny et al. (2021) also identified three PEDC DC profiles (AS, DCA, and SA) using measures of athletic identity, career identity and self-efficacy. The DCA profile was indicative of the merger profile or as Cartigny et al. (2021) put it, holding an identity "more central to their core self", and AS and SA profiles indicative of the dominant profile whereby their sporting and academic lives dominated their identities, respectively. PEDCs that experience role conflict, particularly where the athletic identity is considered more salient, report issues such as difficulty engaging with the college

experience, difficulty forming relationships outside sport, prioritisation of sport over other areas, making career decisions that favour sport as opposed to career aspirations (Debois et al., 2015; Hickey & Kelly, 2008; Ryan, 2015).

Social identity or in-group-out-group distinction is evident with PEDCs whereby some feel distinctive from others, misunderstood, and isolated in environments outside sport and increased distinction enhances athletic identity (Rasquinha & Cardinal, 2017; Turner et al., 1987). In a study of the athletic identity of elite GAA PEDCs in Ireland, they cited feeling distinctive because of their lifestyle, fitness, and performance levels, with one being labelled a "freak" as a result of the lifestyle he was willing to adhere to in order to play at that level (Geary et al., 2021). They also felt there was a lack of understanding of their situation as PEDCs by family, friends, and the public at large which is also reflected in other DC research (Benson et al., 2015; Stephan & Brewer, 2007).

Furthermore, PEDC social isolation can result in difficulty forming relationships outside of sport, specifically in higher education where the demands of socialising are at odds with the athlete role (MacNamara & Collins, 2010; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004).

PEDC identity and self-categorisation: the case for person-first language

Identity safe settings include identity-affirming cues such that an individual's social identity is encouraged and respected, does not feel threatened, nor will it impinge on one's success or outcomes in a particular setting (Davies et al., 2005; Murphy & Jones Taylor, 2012). The importance of the elite sport environment has been identified. Research regarding identity complexity and PEDCs displaying their true social and self-identities in the elite sport environment unearthed for some a level of fear that any identity outside of 'athlete' may not be acceptable (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Cartigny et al., 2021) Identity safe cues can be introduced to settings and very often involve subtle changes to how situations are presented and subsequently perceived. The use of person-first language may serve as an identity safe cue, that if accepted by PEDCs, sports professionals, academic and university staff, media outlets, parents, and peers, could promote identity safe settings for PEDCs to develop multiple identities in line with their multidimensional existence.

There are many potential benefits to engaging with DC such as the development of transferrable skills and dual career competencies (Debois et al., 2015; Georgakis et al., 2014), overcoming difficult life transitions (Ryan, 2015; Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014), development of life-balance and the potential to engage with social experiences outside sport (Huang et al., 2016; Stambulova et al., 2015). Successful engagement with DC can be difficult to achieve, and athletic identity plays a key role in how PEDCs combine their athletic and

academic lives (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Debois et al., 2015; López de Subijana et al., 2015; van Rens et al., 2019). Being part of a particular ingroup and feeling distinct from out-group members is a key part of the depersonalisation process and is necessary to feel part of a salient group or identity. However, for some athletes and PEDCs, this can also herald an over-identification with the athlete role, social isolation, and difficulty maintaining relationships outside sport (Benson et al., 2015; Geary et al., 2021; MacNamara & Collins, 2010). While not suggesting that the process of depersonalisation be suppressed, it would be useful to prime PEDC self-identity and other identity elements using person first language to reduce perceived distinction and lack of understanding between PEDCs and others, and promote their individuality within the group, in line with the person first approach to DC.

PEDC wellbeing

The benefits of engaging in DC in relation to PEDC life balance and general wellbeing has been shown in research (European Commission, 2012a; Fuchs et al., 2016). Stambulova et al., (2015, p. 12) define optimal DC balance as when PEDCs 'achieve their educational and athletic goals, live satisfying private lives and maintain their health and well-being'. Identity development can impact on PEDC wellbeing (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Ronkainen et al., 2016). Using semi-structured interviews ($n = 8$) and identity and life satisfaction scales ($n = 86$) van Rens et al. (2019) explored the importance of athletic and academic identities on PEDC wellbeing, across a variety of competition levels. They found that where PEDCs fulfilled self-determined needs in both athletic and academic identities their overall wellbeing benefitted. Furthermore, a strong association with the athlete identity was not related to wellbeing but the development of multi-dimensional identities had the potential to positively

impact PEDC wellbeing. These findings were somewhat inconsistent with Stambulova et al. (2015) who found that PEDCs perceived that they could not maintain a constant equal focus on their athletic and academic responsibilities without sacrificing wellbeing.

In addition to athletic identity considerations, PEDCs experience many stressors that impact wellbeing, and stressors can be categorised as physical, educational, social, psychological, and economic (Lopes Dos Santos et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2013). Using four focus group interviews, comprising of 8 PEDCs each, Janse van Rensburg et al. (2011) found barriers to PEDC wellness including but not limited to time management issues, tensions between academic and sport schedules, social activities, lack of counselling services and negative status within the student body. Cosh and Tully (2015) identified similar PEDC stressors and suggested their inability to utilise coping strategies to deal with DC stressors would likely negatively affect academic and sporting performance and impact on their mental or emotional wellbeing.

PEDC wellbeing can be categorised into physical, intellectual, social, and emotional elements, and it has been found that PEDCs are more likely to pay most attention to their intellectual and social wellbeing but less to their emotional and physical wellbeing (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2011). For some, engaging in DC is a protective factor in relation to the development of mental health issues and several studies demonstrate lower levels of depressive symptoms, for example, in PEDCs than non-PEDCs in higher education (Egan, 2019; Gorczynski et al., 2017). However, concerns around the mental health of PEDCs have been highlighted and although there is limited research in relation to prevalence rates, studies do indicate concerning levels of mental health issues amongst PEDC cohorts.

In a study of 257 PEDCs in the United States (167 males and 90 females), it was found that 21% of participants reported experiencing symptoms of depression (with higher levels of depression also associated with higher trait and state anxiety), and females had 1.32 greater odds of reporting such symptoms than their male counterparts (Yang et al., 2007). A study of male and female Canadian PEDCs ($n = 388$ at time 1; $n = 110$ at time 2), found that 18% of participants had reported a previous mental illness diagnosis, yet only 1.8% of PEDCs were languishing, approximately 52% were moderately mentally healthy across both data collection times, and approximately 45% were flourishing (Van Slingerland et al., 2018). School aged PEDCs in elite sport schools in Germany ($n = 786$) were also found to experience mental health disorders, with 17% reporting one disorder, 15% reporting two, 11% reporting three and 23% reporting four or more while 27% did not report any disorder, (Brand et al., 2013). Furthermore, by comparison to their non-athlete counterparts, female PEDCs were more likely to experience significantly less symptoms of panic, posttraumatic stress, and specific phobia, while the differences in males was much less pronounced.

A number of studies have been conducted on mental health and PEDCs in Ireland (Drew & Matthews, 2018; Sheehan et al., 2018b, 2018a). Drew and Matthews (2018) found that in a cohort of 185 PEDCs in higher education, the prevalence of PEDCs reporting elevated symptom levels for depression and anxiety was 27% ($n = 50$) and 34.1% ($n = 63$), respectively and 45% of PEDCs reported symptoms of depression and anxiety outside the normal range. Furthermore, the higher the competition level the more likely symptoms were to manifest themselves, with elite PEDCs approximately three times more likely to report moderate to severe symptoms of depression than competitive PEDCs. Sheehan et al. (2018a) found similar prevalence rates amongst ($n = 215$), with 45% reporting mild-to-moderate depressive symptoms (46% female, 43% male), and

13% reporting high trait anxiety (10% female, 17% male).

The finding that PEDCs paid less attention to their physical wellbeing may be reflected in research specific to elite athletes whereby they can avoid the toll that sport takes on their bodies, with some flaunting the fact, and others willing to play through pain, pushing their bodies to the limits, often referring to them as being separate from themselves (Hunt & Day, 2019; Janse van Rensburg et al., 2011; Theberge, 2008). This approach may be due to the perception of what it means to be "mentally tough" in high performance sport which conjures up images of macho, tough, and masculine (Andersen, 2011). Furthermore, elite sportspeople are often portrayed through the media lens as superhuman, with emphasis placed on their physical prowess, natural talent, and willingness to play through pain to satisfy a cultural need for "records and sporting heroes" (Pike, 2010; Silva & Howe, 2012, p. 187).

Elite athletes and PEDCs have been identified in multiple studies as demonstrating a reduced likelihood of seeking help in relation to performance related issues or wellbeing concerns. Drew and Matthews (2018) found that while 21% of PEDCs reported requiring support for serious mental health issues in the previous year, almost two thirds did not obtain this support. One reason for the reduced willingness to seek support has been the perceived stigma associated with mental illness, with mental toughness or the macho culture of elite sport often seen as contradictory to mental health, and "mental weakness" evoking stigma inducing language such as pathetic, weak, and miserable (Andersen, 2011, p. 71; Bauman, 2016; Green et al., 2012; Gulliver et al., 2012; Janse van Rensburg et al., 2011; Lõpez & Levy, 2013). In a study of 165 PEDCs in higher education ($n = 165$) in the United States, Lõpez and Levy (2013), found four significant barriers to seeking help, with three relating to fear; fear of stigma, fear of their teammates finding out, and fear that

they would be considered weak. It is also more likely that PEDCs will place less value on help-seeking than their non-PEDC counterparts (Bird et al., 2018; Wahto et al., 2016).

PEDC wellbeing: the case for person first language

Reardon et al. (2019) suggest that to manage and support wellbeing amongst elite athletes, a destigmatising environment needs to be created where the promotion of help seeking is a central part of training and self-care. Research suggests the need to monitor PEDCs physical and psychological loads and assist them in developing coping strategies, cultivating psychological support within team environments, provide educational flexibility and use educational-psychological stress management intervention programmes to support PEDC DC (Cosh & Tully, 2015; Lopes Dos Santos et al., 2020; Sallen et al., 2018).

The suggestion to use person first language is suggested to form part of a broader wellbeing framework and to foster PEDC environments whereby health and wellbeing interventions and support are part of the holistic approach to PEDCs, that they are "fundamentally human beings whose physical, mental, and social health is reflected through their well-being" (Giles et al., 2020, p. 1255). The use of person first language should also impact PEDC perception and attitude, priming them towards viewing themselves as people first and encouraging them to focus on all aspects of their wellbeing (Purcell et al., 2019; van Rensburg, et al., 2011). Furthermore, the use of situational cues and identity safe settings through person first language (as highlighted previously), should also promote the development of multiple identities amongst PEDCs and promote greater wellbeing through healthy identity development in line with SID and SCT (Davies et al., 2005; Murphy & Jones Taylor, 2012; Ronkainen et al., 2016; Stambulova et al., 2015; van Rens et al., 2019).

The use of person first language when dealing with mental illness is dealt with in research. Replacing terms such as "mentally ill" with person first language "person with mental illness" (while using the same definition in both instances) was found to elicit a greater tolerance amongst college students, adults in a community setting and student and professional counsellors (Granello & Gibbs, 2016). Another reason for the promotion of person-first language is founded in its capacity to encourage recovery environments that promote inclusion, reverence, dignity, and optimism and as an important starting point in reducing stigma "one word at a time" (Jensen et al., 2013, p. 148). While the person-first language approach regarding mental health is somewhat removed from the use of the term PEDC as proposed here, it forms part of a more global approach to dealing with PEDCs founded in the need to always see the person first and remove the stigma around help seeking amongst this cohort.

Concluding remarks

Research promoting the use of person-first language in other domains has found that it impacts positively on how others view individuals and groups, how they view themselves, and reduces the "one size fits all" approach to dealing with individuals in practice (Crocker & Smith, 2019; Jensen et al., 2013). On the other hand, it is argued that it may act as a mechanism to create another reason for differentiation while denying individuals of an important part of their identity (Gernsbacher, 2017; Granello & Gibbs, 2016). The arguments proposed against the use of person first language are valid and highlight important considerations. However, it is important to understand the arguments being made and the contexts from which they stem in order to understand the best approach, and in this case, the need to see the person first when dealing with PEDCs

is well documented (Eubank, 2016; Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014; Wylleman et al., 2020).

Traditionally, the use of the terms SA, AS or DCA have been used in research to describe individuals engaging in DC. Linguistically the use of these terms place importance on either the athlete, the student, or the student and the athlete, but do not encapsulate PEDCs in the workplace or their lives outside sport, study, or work. The proposal to use person first language, and the term PEDC is grounded in the desire to put the person first, considering the literature regarding language and labelling, stereotype, identity, and the wellbeing of PEDCs. To enact a change in this regard, it is vital for researchers, sport psychologists, coaches, educators, academic administrators, parents and peers, media outlets and PEDCs to embrace the person first approach to PEDCs and how we refer to them in our daily interactions.

It is important to note that it is not suggested here that the use of person first language is a "cure-all" to PEDC stereotype, identity and mental health issues, it is merely a step in the right direction (Crocker & Smith, 2019). Furthermore, while using person first language is seen as an important step in advocating for the person first approach, it does not abdicate from the need to examine and confront the underlying reasons why stereotype exists in the first instance or why mental health and identity issues are prevalent and advocate for change in these areas (Crocker & Smith, 2019; Gernsbacher, 2017).

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