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# ***A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE DUAL CAREER OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETE***

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## ***Interplay of Sports and Education: A Review of Dual Career Literature***

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## Abstract

The literature on dual career in sports has been developed in a fragmented manner, lacking guidance on the factors that shape dual career choices for athletes and their implications for the sports community. This integrative literature review examines the planning, shaping, progression, and promotion of dual career choices for athletes. Two categories of factors that influence dual career choices and two sets of outcomes (positive and negative) resulting from dual career in sports were identified. Additionally, the study bridges and integrates the varying nature, contradictions, and paradoxes of dual career pathways for athletes, identifying different streams of thought relevant to dual career in sports and providing a thematic overview of future research avenues. This study has important implications for sports entities, coaches, and educational institutions, particularly in encouraging and influencing athletes to pursue higher education by addressing factors that promote dual career choices in sports.

**Keywords:** dual career, sports, athletes, talent development, sports management, integrative literature review.

## 1. Introduction

Today, sports is no more a leisure activity to be performed by athletes as a hobby or for entertainment. Instead, sports have successfully evolved itself into a serious business opportunity. Professional sports activities are even positively shaping the macroeconomic indicators of nations. But the flip side of this story involves some undesirable outcomes involved with twenty first century sports. Athletes are now more prone to the negative apprehensions towards the sustainability of their career. Highly unpredictable career transitions, never ending performance expectations of fans, and challenges of visualizing the sprite of sportsmanship with corporates' 'maximization of profit' has become a common story in the lives of athletes today. The identity of sportspersons seems to have become anonymous with employees of traditional business entities. The above challenges are shoving athletes to search for a security and stability in their lives (Hassan et al., 2023; Skrubbelttrang et al., 2020).

There has been an increase in call for more flexible entry and exit options in sports, and dual career options appeared as an important strategy to mitigate the issue that the athletes are facing currently. Consequently, increasingly a rich body of literature is emerging studying various aspects of dual career (Nam, 2021; Stambulova et al., 2015). These scholars have examined challenges and opportunities in career transition of dual career athletes, identity of athletes as well as role of dual career ecosystem in supporting the athletes (Mateu et al., 2020; van Rens et al., 2019). This increased attention is also evident in recent research where the study context is increasingly focusing on Asian countries as well as emerging nations, which was earlier dominated by European nations and developed economies (Guidotti et al., 2015; Nam, 2021). International Olympic Committee has a dedicated segment guiding dual career athletes on managing sports and academic or work career options, promoting how dual career is a winning combination.

The authors have observed that research on dual career lacks certain elements that turned as a source of motivation for authors to develop

the current review. Firstly, despite increasing awareness and recognition of the importance of dual career support for athletes, there is still a lack of consistency in the provision of support across different sports and countries (Ryba et al., 2020). A review could help identify best practices and areas for improvement in dual career support. Secondly, dual career athletes face unique challenges in balancing their academic and athletic commitments, and the demands of elite sport can make it difficult for them to pursue education and career opportunities outside of sport (Stambulova et al., 2021). A review could explore the factors that facilitate or hinder successful dual career pathways for athletes. Thirdly, dual career athletes may also experience psychological and social challenges related to their dual career pursuits, such as stress, identity conflict, and social isolation (Wylleman et al., 2018). A review of literature could investigate the types of support that are most effective in addressing these challenges.

Last but not the least, the authors have observed that the use of moderators or boundary conditions in these studies are minimal, and dual career studies are predominantly exploratory in nature.

Based on the discussion above, the current research aims to examine the following research questions through a review of relevant literature:

1. How dual career has been conceptualized in the relevant literature?
2. What are the major antecedent factors that shape the experience of dual career athletes, and how do they influence (outcome) athletes' career transitions?
3. What are moderating or boundary conditions that shape the dual career choices of athletes?

The current review aims to map the trajectory of dual career research and identify the major areas of research in dual career, including antecedents and consequences, based on an integrative framework and also suggest future research opportunities in dual career. The approach is consistent with prior work on sports (e.g., Karageorghis & Terry, 1997; Pollard & Lee, 2003).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. *Choosing an integrative literature review approach*

We conducted an integrative literature review (ILR) to examine the literature on dual career (Geidne et al., 2013; Jeong et al., 2021; Walzel et al., 2018). We chose the ILR approach due to its robust identification and selection process, which allows for critical examination of the literature, reducing biases and enhancing the quality of the analysis (Hassan et al., 2023). Additionally, the ILR approach enables the mapping of the existing literature, bringing together varied and diverse conversations through scientific synthesis of past research (Huff, 2008). This approach has been widely used in sports management, marketing, organizational behavior, human resource management, strategy, and psychology literature (Jugwani et al., 2019; Walzel et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). Furthermore, an ILR can provide insight into whether an effect is consistent across studies and identify the characteristics of future studies to demonstrate the effect (Hassan et al., 2023).

### 2.2. *Search protocol*

The research objectives were formulated based on our prior understanding of the topic and information gained through consultation with subject matter experts (Snyder, 2019).

### 2.3. *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Prior studies (e.g., Bavik, 2020; Snyder, 2019) have advised pre-defining the inclusion and exclusion criteria for purpose of search and enhanced robustness of the findings. The guidelines for the inclusion and exclusion were framed based on the recommendations of Cronin and George (2023), Hopia et al. (2016), Snyder (2019), and Vrontis et al. (2022) among others.



1. *Search boundaries/sources*: Accessing and analyzing all the databases are not only challenging but also costly as very few research databases are available free of cost. For the purpose of our study, we referred to EBSCO, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Science Direct and ProQuest database.
2. *Keywords or search strings*: The keyword search begins with exploring the title, articles' keywords and abstract (Cronin & George, 2023). We used truncation to increase search results (Gerhardus et al., 2007).
3. *Boolean keyword search*: We followed the approach suggested by Pollard and Lee (2003) to remove contents which were either incomplete or unclear. Boolean 'OR' and 'AND' operator was used to customize search on various databases (Vrontis et al., 2022).
4. *Setting the period of study*: To avoid missing any relevant study from the past, we did a thorough search of the database and relevant articles. After due consideration, the starting year was selected as 2012. The end date was set as December 2022 (Vrontis et al., 2022).
5. *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*: For the exclusion, the initial round of selection involved shortlisting only peer-reviewed articles published in top-tier journals (ABDC-A\*/A & ABS-IV/III/) to ensure quality and recentness (Budhwar et al., 2019). However, limiting our search to only these articles did not fetch many papers. Therefore, we had to include all peer-reviewed journal articles listed in the Scopus journal list.
6. *Language and field of research*: We limited our search to only those articles which were published in English and in journals focused on sports, psychology, physical education, management, and sociology. Journals on English literature, linguistics, mathematics etc. were excluded.
7. *Type of research work*: Only empirical works, conceptual papers and case research was considered for the purpose of review. Reflections, book reviews, conference proceedings etc. were removed from the list.

After applying the above search protocols and after further removing the duplicate ones and manual filtering of articles, we identified a total of 49 studies in the final stage. We also did a manual search by cross-checking the references from the final shortlisted 49 studies (Endres & Weibler, 2017). For example, a recently published review on parenting and dual career considered a sample of 14 research works (Tessitore et al., 2021).

### **3. Synthesis**

#### **3.1. *Conceptualizing dual career***

In general, the various definitions of dual career athletes are in agreement that it involves combining sport with a non-sport career. However, studies have made a clear distinction that dual career athletes typically have a full-time non-sport career, with sport pursued as a supplement to this. This distinction is particularly relevant for student-athletes at the primary or middle school level, where education is an important aspect. Similarly, for employee-athletes, non-sport work is seen as an out of sport career transition pathway. However, further research is needed to examine how full-time athletes navigate the dual career path. Overall, while the definitions of dual career athletes provide a useful framework, they also highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon. In the subsequent paragraph we have explained the same.

Dual career prepares athletes for careers outside the domain of sport. Not every athlete can have an illustrious career, hence focus on developing skills that can help them build a life and be employable is important. Dual career as a term represents the non-sport career pathways athletes consider while developing other employability skills. Hence, studies focusing on dual career primarily explored its significance on career transition and development of athletes (de Oliveira Castro et al., 2021).

Research on dual career has primarily relied on holistic lifespan perspective as a theoretical lens to explain dual career transitions. According to this perspective, sporting career goes through stages of early years, middle years, late years, and discontinuation. Simultaneously, athletes too go through a transition in their cognitive worldview. Sometimes these changes are a result of the life stage of the athletes and sometimes they are individual events like failure or injury that insinuates change in the mental makeup of athletes. Broadly, the way dual career has been conceptualized in the studies can be classified into two categories namely, student-athletes and employee athletes. Student-athletes are those athletes who pursue full-time education parallel with their sporting career. These athletes could be at various levels from middle-school, high-school, to pursuing professional and undergraduate studies in universities while participating in sport from intercollegiate level to international levels. Similarly, employee-athletes are those who held full-time non-sport career while pursuing their sporting career (de Oliveira Castro et al., 2021). Their work could range from unskilled work, self-employed, to skilled work.

To begin with, de Oliveira Castro et al. (2021) define dual career as the combination of elite sports training with education, training or work activities that can potentially lead to a post-athletic career. Nam (2021) also defines dual career as an athlete pursuing both sport and non-sport activities, with the aim of achieving excellence in both domains. Though de Oliveira Castro's definition was proposed only recently, we could find evidence for comprehensive definitions on dual career even in 2015. For example, Debois et al. (2015) have defined dual career as the simultaneous pursuit of two major goals, one being athletic and the other being vocational, educational, or personal. Similarly, we see Tekavc et al. (2015) defining dual career as the athlete's combination of sport and education, training, or work activities, with the aim of achieving excellence in both domains.

Stambulova and Wylleman (2015) have emphasized on the way sports and education are treated to suggest whether we can consider an engagement as dual career or not. Accordingly, dual career should ideally infer the act of pursuing two interrelated and equally

important career pathways, one being a sportsperson and the other being non-athletic (could be being a student or employee), with a focus on achieving excellence in both domains. This invariably, mean that it would not be necessary to only pursue education along with sports career to be considered as part of dual career. This definition caters to the wider sports community that engages in sports along with full-time/part time jobs. Ryba et al. (2015) also define dual career as a process of pursuing two career pathways, one being sport and the other being education, work, or other activities, with an aim to succeed in both.

Overall, we see that the definitions of dual career athletes agree on the combination of sport with non-sport career or education. However, some researchers have emphasized the simultaneous pursuit of two equally important career goals, while others focus on balancing the demands of both careers. Some definitions also consider the aspect of post-athletic career, whereas others do not. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider the definition of dual career when conducting research in this area.

### 3.2. *Determinants of dual career*

The review identified six major antecedents of dual career intentions. These were named as proactive mentorship (e.g., Hallmann et al., 2019; Kuokkanen et al., 2022), dual-identity in athlete-academic careers (e.g., van Rens et al., 2019), values underlying coaching behavior (e.g., Nikander et al., 2020), espoused values of sports clubs (e.g., Pink et al., 2015), personal and professional development (e.g., Debois et al., 2015) and multifaceted transition model of dual career (e.g., Burnett, 2003).

The influence of proactive mentorship in promoting dual career for athletes works follows several pathways. According to Nam (2021), senior player as experienced sportsperson provides sincere advice to younger athletes regarding educational challenges and career transitions. In other cases, these players can also act as a mediator and assist younger athletes to access social benefits through their

well-connected personal and professional network of people and by providing critical information for future careers. Nam (2021) also identified another pathway in which these players perform the role of a facilitators. As a facilitator, they identified and examined structural problems in the elite sport system, including a lack of educational rights for student-athletes, and voice their concerns. Hallmann et al. (2019) studied proactive mentorship and dual career intentions among the Danish population. Their study concluded that mentors not only fulfill the role of a benefactor, but also that of a supportive friend, a counsellor, accepting partner and role model. Proactive mentorship creates a conducive environment to facilitate easy transition of athletes to a dual career (Hallmann et al., 2019). More recently, Kuokkanen et al. (2022) observed that student-athletes who were highly committed to both sport and education tended to have better adjustment outcomes than those who prioritized one over the other. Additionally, the authors found that social support from family and coaches was crucial for the student-athletes' well-being and success in both sport and education.

In one of reviewed articles (van Rens et al., 2019), the authors described dual identity of Australian athlete-academic and highlighted its role in shaping dual career choices for them. Using a Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, they have argued that individuals develop dual identities-one that of academic and another of an athlete. In order to do balance the co-existence of the two identifies, they pay effort to train and develop themselves as a successful athlete and as a student. Here the motivation to balance the two identifies come from the expectation of higher well-being achievable through the co-existence of the two identifies. In another study (Cartigny et al., 2022), researchers surveyed 747 dual career athletes from 12 different countries, who were either in higher education or employed while pursuing their sport. The survey collected information about the athletes' identities, which included their identification with sport, education, and work, as well as their self-efficacy, which refers to their beliefs about their ability to succeed in their chosen fields. The researchers identified three distinct typologies of dual career athletes: athletes with a strong sport identity and high self-efficacy, athletes with a moderate sport identity and moderate self-efficacy, and athletes with a weak sport identity and low

self-efficacy. The study also found that athletes who identified strongly with both sport and education or work tended to have higher self-efficacy. The study highlights the importance of developing a sense of identity and self-efficacy in dual career athletes, which can have positive implications for their overall well-being and success in both sport and other aspects of their lives.

Values underlying coaching behavior is the third set of factors we identified in the literature. Into et al. (2020) investigated dual career among 451 student-athletes from Finland. Study argued that a perceived autonomy support and mastery climate in both school and sports contexts is negatively associated with symptoms of burnout in student-athletes (dual career). In contrast, perceived performance climate is positively associated with symptoms of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization in the context of dual career. The study helps us build arguments on what constitute in promoting dual career or the continuum of dual career among athletes. Interestingly, Into et al. (2020) was the only research paper that focuses on coaching in our reviewed list. This could be a possible future research direction for dual career researchers.

Espoused values was the other micro level factors which was detrimental in dual career pathway. Espoused values refer to the explanations for the goals, strategies, and philosophies. Underneath the espoused values lies the unconscious actions and resistant to change values, known as the basic assumptions (Nikander et al., 2020). Nikander and colleagues investigated how an Australian Football League (AFL) club culture balanced the maintenance of on-field success with the off-field development of its players. Results of the study showed that the AFL club had developed a culture that prioritized both on-field success and off-field player development. The culture was characterized by a strong focus on teamwork, a shared sense of purpose, and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. The participants reported that the club's leadership, communication, and support systems were instrumental in creating and maintaining the club culture. In one of our studies, Pink et al. (2015) examined the espoused value associated with sports and dual career in the context of Australia. According to their study, dual career development was

important for Australian footballers, football would always come first for them. Athletes who were successful in balancing their sport love and off-field life reported higher well-being and it in turn improved their future on-field performance. A successful dual career for these footballers were contingent upon the degree to which they could associate personal meaning to dual career pathways. Sports clubs helped in increasing the espoused value associated with dual career through organizational support which in turn motivated athletes to pursue dual career.

Finally, personal and professional development (e.g., Debois et al., 2015) and multifaceted transition model of dual career were the two other factors that shaped dual career. Debois's paper was developed by the European Elite Athletes Association (EEAA) and aimed to identify and manage the key determinants of the dual career of elite athletes. The paper identified several key determinants of successful dual careers, including personal characteristics of the athlete, support from family and coaches, access to education and career guidance, and the ability to balance the demands of both careers and highlighted how time constraints, conflicts between athletic and academic/professional schedules, and difficulties in obtaining education and career opportunities could be the potential barrier to dual career choices. Similarly, Debois et al. (2015) studied dual career choices and suggested a model of dual career comprising of four stages: talent identification, talent development, dual career support, and career transition. The researchers also identified key factors that contribute to successful transitions, including early identification of talent, a supportive environment that values education and career development, and access to resources such as education and career guidance. Study found that the model was effective in predicting and explaining the successful transition of French elite athletes from talent identification to dual career development.

Before moving to the discussion on the various outcomes, it is important to syntheses how the most recent research on dual career have show trends for focusing on the suggested categories of dual career determinants. Several studies have identified various antecedents or determinants that impact the dual career of athletes. There has been a sudden surge of studies, particularly in 2021 and 2022, emphasizing on the relevant

of factors that shape dual career. To illustrate, Stambulova et al. (2021) highlighted the significance of proactive mentorship and dual identity in academic careers for dual career development. Wylleman et al. (2022) emphasized a person-oriented approach to differentiate between single and dual career athletes, while Örencik et al. (2022) suggested that coaching behaviour can significantly impact the dual career of athletes. Hong et al. (2022) focused on the cross-cultural differences in the provision of dual career support services for junior athletes. Capranica et al. (2022) identified the importance of tangible financial factors such as educational support for the parents of dual career athletes. In contrast, Nyberg et al. (2023) highlighted the complementary factors involved in dual career transitions, and Geary et al. (2022) explored the significance of values, specifically athletic identity, for dual career development. Thus, the aforementioned studies have identified several categories of antecedents or determinants of dual careers in sports, including proactive mentorship, dual identity in academic career, values, and coaching behaviour.

### 3.3. *Outcomes of dual career choices*

Dual career could be both-rewarding and challenging for athletes. This was also evident in the findings of research papers we reviewed for the current study. Findings of the reviewed articles can be categorized into one offering positive outcomes and another set of findings highlighting the failed outcomes of dual career. Positive outcomes deal with those consequences of having dual career that contributed to the athlete's well-being in a positive way and assisted in career transition. Failed outcomes are those where pursuing dual career led to adversities for the athletes. In the following paragraphs, we explain how dual careers impact athletes positively as well as negatively.

As positive outcomes, from our review of the literature, we found the positive impact of dual career can be categorized into three forms, namely normative linear career transition, satisfaction and meaningfulness from dual career, and on-field sporting performance. Normative linear transition has been drawn on holistic lifespan perspective where transitions on sport career as well as personal life are



predictable. For instance, from adolescent to adulthood, retirement from sports career are examples of normative transitions. Debois et al. (2015) found that dual career positively impacts personal development of athletes through its enriching experience and social recognition. Owing to the predictable nature of normative transitions, they were found to be most effective as the transitions could be planned and negotiated before implementation (Debois et al., 2015). Similarly, review suggests that normative transition in the retirement stage was particularly helpful for athletes in team sports than individual sport athletes. This is possible since athletes in team sports had a long enough time to finish their education and plan for retirement.

Satisfaction and meaningfulness from dual career have been found to be context-driven. Since dual career is considered to be stress-ridden and complicated as athletes advance in the sporting career as well in their education or vocation, it is important that athletes do not feel burnout. Athletes in team sports were found to obtain better psychological and social support as they were able to share and learn from other team members and their experiences in similar circumstances (Davis et al., 2019). Further Davis et al. (2019) found that athletes who obtained flexible academic and sporting training schedules were able to appreciate the benefits of dual career and found it meaningful. In addition to these factors, athletes draw on their sporting identity from participating in prestigious sporting events, which further contributed to their social recognition and fueled satisfaction and meaningfulness (van Rens et al., 2019).

On field performance of athletes is the third outcome under positive implications of dual career. High-performing dual career athletes were found to have strong athletic identity which further resulted in better on-field performance (van Rens et al., 2019). On-field performance to an extent is also related to the second stream of outcome on satisfaction and meaningfulness. In this line, Debois et al. (2015) also found that dual career contributed to athletic development as well as academic development. Similar results were also observed by van Rens et al. (2019), however they add that athletic identity does not necessarily be interlinked with academic or vocational identity, although each of these identities led to better performance of the athletes.

Dealing with the negative or failed outcomes of having dual career, the outcomes studied in the existing scholars can be categorized into three groups, non-normative transition, mental health concerns, and dissatisfaction. Non-normative transitions are those defining moments in an athlete's personal life and sport career that are involuntary and result from unplanned important events that take place in an individual's life (e.g., injury, unexpected failure to participate in a major competition) (Debois et al., 2015). Scholars studying career transitions observed that non-normative career transition of dual career athletes were difficult to negotiate and accept (Debois et al., 2015). In some cases, non-normative transitions are also associated with decline in performance resulting in unplanned discontinuation of sport career. Performance decline due to injury and recovery from injury leads to stress of catching up with dual career (Andersson & Barker-Ruchti, 2019). It was observed that women athletes felt incapable to deal with the intensity of training as they advanced in their dual career.

Second category of failed outcomes relates to mental health concerns. As has been observed that due to increased expectations from education as well as sport performance, dual career athletes find themselves in stressful situations more often as they progress (Sallen et al., 2018). Hence, stress is observed in normative transition as well. However, non-normative transitions due to injury recovery or any other unplanned events also cause stress of catching up with the demands of dual career. Psychosocial challenges increase in the developmental and mastery stage with transition in personal life, specifically to adult life (Blijlevens et al., 2019).

The third failed outcome of dual career is dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction stemmed from identity of athletes and non-normative career transition. Dual career athletes were found to juggle between academic identity and athletic identity. Van Rens et al. (2019) identified that athletic identity and academic identity were in conflict in student-athletes. Their results show that dual career athletes considered academic identity to be independent of athletic identity, and academic performance and athletic performance were found to be negatively related. Similar evidence was also found by Mateu et al. (2020). They observed that student-athletes

perception to overcome transitional boundaries of dual career has a close association with sport and academics.

Going back again to syntheses the most recent works on dual career, we observed that most recent researches (2022 onwards) on dual career in sports have highlighted both positive and negative impacts of balancing athletic and academic pursuits. This is unlike the trends that existed a year or two ago. Studies published particularly in 2022 January onwards have emphasized the potential benefits of proactive mentorship, as student-athletes who have access to supportive mentors have been found to experience greater success in both their athletic and academic careers (Nyberg et al., 2023; Stambulova et al., 2021). Additionally, research has demonstrated the importance of fostering a dual identity in academic career, where student-athletes identify as both athletes and scholars, as this can contribute to greater satisfaction and success in both domains (Stambulova et al., 2021).

On the other hand, there are also negative impacts associated with the dual career in sports. For example, student-athletes may experience conflicting demands and stress due to the competing demands of their athletic and academic pursuits (Wylleman et al., 2022). Values have also been found to play a significant role in dual career development, as student-athletes may prioritize one domain over the other, leading to challenges in balancing their obligations (Örencik et al., 2022). Finally, coaching behavior has been found to impact the dual career development of student-athletes, with research demonstrating that negative coaching behavior can negatively affect both athletic and academic performance (Stambulova et al., 2021).

Despite these challenges, recent research has also identified potential solutions for addressing the negative impacts of dual career in sports. For instance, providing comprehensive support services for junior athletes can help alleviate the stress and demands of dual career development (Hong et al., 2022). Additionally, the development of online educational programs for parents of dual-career athletes has been found to be effective in supporting the dual career development of student-athletes (Capranica et al., 2022).

Overall, recent research has highlighted both the positive and negative impacts of dual career in sports, emphasizing the importance of proactive mentorship, fostering a dual identity in academic career, values, and coaching behavior in supporting the dual career development of student-athletes, as well as the need for comprehensive support services and educational programs to alleviate the challenges associated with balancing athletic and academic pursuits.

#### **4. Discussion**

The present review chapter aims to synthesize previous research on dual career pathways in the sports field, with the goal of shedding light on the various challenges and opportunities related to athletes' dual career choices. The synthesis of dual career research is significant for both scholars and practitioners, as it offers valuable insight into this field. Despite the considerable empirical research that has been conducted on dual careers in sports, attempts to synthesize these studies have failed to garner much support or bring anything to the attention of practitioners and scholars. As a result, the authors of this review chapter were involved in a pan-European dual career research aimed at developing an entrepreneurship diploma program for European athletes. It was realized that reports such as the European Union's 2012 guidelines and handbook on dual careers, which aimed to raise awareness of the available opportunities and challenges for athletes, were not being referred to or discussed much in academic circles. The current study attempts to address this gap by synthesizing prior research in the field of dual careers.

Dual careers in sports go beyond talent development strategies, as their benefits extend beyond active engagement in sports, and recent research has shown how dual careers can help athletes plan for a more stable and fulfilling retirement. However, balancing sports with education can be challenging, particularly for elite athletes who face media scrutiny, public expectations, and the risk of falling from grace. Despite these challenges, the study found that the benefits of dual career pathways outweigh the difficulties, as athletes are motivated

to seek better well-being, meaningful work, in-role performance, and satisfaction, as well as financial stability and the ability to cope with the day-to-day challenges of transitioning to retired life.

The review goes beyond the common view that dual career pathways follow a linear transition in every case. Instead, the study shows that the transition of an active athlete into retirement or from athlete to student, and its potential implications, are contingent upon several factors. A synthesis of the findings of the reviewed articles suggests that there are possible four streams or pathways for dual career. The first stream involves athletes who are fully committed to their sports career, with little or no interest in pursuing an alternative career. In this case, the athlete may need to sacrifice their educational and professional development to focus on their athletic goals. The second stream concerns athletes who pursue dual careers simultaneously, with the athlete balancing their sports and educational pursuits. This requires a great deal of effort and support from coaches, mentors, and family members, but it provides opportunities for personal growth and development. The third stream is for athletes who transition from their sports career to a post-athletic career, with education serving as a means of facilitating the transition. This type of transition requires planning, support, and guidance, as well as a redefinition of identity and goals. The fourth and final stream involves athletes who have to retire early from their sports career due to injury or other reasons and are forced to pursue an alternative career path. This type of transition can be particularly challenging, as it requires a re-evaluation of identity and goals, and the development of new skills and networks.

The review paper sheds light on the various challenges and opportunities related to athletes' dual career pathways and highlights the importance of synthesizing prior research in this field. It shows that dual career pathways are not always linear and may be contingent upon several factors, and that a supportive environment, guidance, and planning are crucial for the success of such pathways. The review also underscores the positive benefits associated with dual career pathways, which include greater well-being, financial stability, and a smoother transition to retirement.

## 5. Opportunities for future research

A critical assessment of reviewed articles and a broader analysis of existing reports and white papers on dual career from leading global agencies have assisted in holistically deriving future research opportunities. Future research on dual careers in sports should focus on the six themes identified in this study, namely complementary factors, tangible benefits, forced exit, training and development, cultural impact, and orientation. Research in these areas will help to develop a better understanding of the antecedents and determinants of a successful dual career in sports.

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of complementary factors in the dual career of athletes. For example, the study by Wylleman et al. (2022) found that athletes with a clear separation between their athletic and academic roles experienced less conflict and stress than those who did not have such a separation. Additionally, the study by Hong et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of supportive dual career services, which can provide athletes with the necessary resources to balance their athletic and academic commitments.

Tangible benefits, such as financial and career-related benefits, have also been identified as important factors in the dual career of athletes. A study by Örencik et al. (2022) found that financial support and career planning were important factors in the successful dual career of athletes. Similarly, Capranica et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of providing educational resources to parents of dual career athletes, which can help to ensure that athletes receive the necessary support to succeed in both their athletic and academic pursuits.

Forced exit is another important theme that future research on dual careers in sports should address. Research by Cartigny et al. (2022) highlighted the experiences of athletes who were forced to quit their athletic or academic careers due to their inability to meet their dual obligations. This research emphasizes the need for greater support and guidance for athletes who may be struggling to balance their athletic and academic commitments.

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