Academic, Athletic and Career Athletic Motivation as Predictors of Academic Performance Among Student-Athletes at the University of Peradeniya

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Abstract

Academic motivation as a predictor of academic performance for university athletes has been debated in the literature. The main objective of the present study was to determine the extent to which academic and athletic motivation can predict the academic performance of student-athletes at the University of Peradeniya. An additional purpose of this study was to investigate whether there are differences in motivational factors and academic performance between student-athletes who have started their sports career at the school level and those who have started their sports career at the university level. A total of 191 student athletes who actively partake in sports were selected using stratified sampling technique. A survey was conducted to collect data using student athletes' motivation towards sports and academics questionnaire (SAMSAQ) which had three main components: academic motivation (AM), student athletic motivation (SAM) and career athletic motivation (CAM). The SAMSAQ was a 30-item instrument where the participants responded on a 6-point Likert-type scale from 6 (very strongly agree) to 1 (very strongly disagree). A separate data collection form was used to collect the demographic data. The data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22 and the significance level used was 0.05. The mean GPA of the sample was 2.95 (SD$\pm$0.45). The mean motivation scores for AM, CAM, and SAM were 60.57 (SD$\pm$6.96), 18.32 (SD$\pm$3.72), and 33.64 (SD$\pm$3.52), respectively. Academic motivation (r = 0.263; p <0.01) and CAM (r = -0.191; p <0.01) were strongly related to GPA. However, SAM was not related to GPA. There was no significant difference in motivational factors and academic performance between student athletes who had started their sports career at the school level and those who had started their sports career at the university level. The findings from this study suggest that academic motivation can serve as a predictor of academic performance in university student-athletes specifically at the University of Peradeniya. Moreover, it is also helpful to note that, in this study, high career athletic motivation is strongly and negatively correlated with GPA, which means that the students who maintain their highest motivation levels towards career athletic goals have a negative effect on their GPAs.

Key words: Student-athletes, motivation, academic performance

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