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# Athletes' motivational needs regarding burnout and engagement

Julio R. Martínez-Alvarado\*, Félix Guillén\*\* y Deborah Feltz\*\*\*

## ATHLETES' MOTIVATIONAL NEEDS REGARDING BURNOUT AND ENGAGEMENT

KEY WORDS: Soccer, Self-Determination Theory, Need satisfaction, Engagement, Burnout.

ABSTRACT: This study analyzed the relationships between the basic motivational needs, burnout and engagement in soccer players with the aim of finding an explanation for why these athletes stay engaged or burnout. Participants were 227 male Spanish third division soccer players between the ages of 18 and 32 ( $M = 23.36$ ;  $SD = 3.63$ ), who completed questionnaires measuring perceived autonomy, perceived competence and the need for relatedness in order to examine basic motivational needs. Athletes also completed questionnaires to analyze burnout and engagement. Soccer players reported moderate satisfaction of psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness, and low to moderate levels of athlete burnout symptoms of emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization as well as moderate to low burnout factors in the global assessment. In regards to engagement factors, moderate to high levels were reported for vigor, dedication and absorption. The results of the structural equation model showed positive and negative predictions of the basic psychological needs about engagement and burnout respectively. The need for autonomy is the variable that predicts best the symptoms of the athlete burnout and engagement in Spanish third division soccer players. Finally, the reduced personal fulfillment symptom was the psychological need that best predicted the burnout symptoms.

In Spain, due to their competitiveness, soccer athletes who play at the third divisional level are at a critical point in their sports experience where they can become more engaged in soccer or become more burned out. Thus, soccer players belonging to the Spanish third division face situational factors such as high stress levels, pressure to get good results, high training load and high demands for the championship throughout the season, conditioned by the possibility to become professional. These factors can unsettle the balance between costs and benefits of participation at this level. Thus these soccer players are not exempt from experiencing the symptoms of burnout. Self-determination theory (SDT) may provide an explanation for why these athletes stay engaged or burnout. SDT (Deci and Ryan, 2002) contends that human behavior is voluntary or self-determined. This theory establishes that human behavior is motivated by three primary and universal basic psychological needs: perceived autonomy (to perceive oneself as the active source of one's behavior), perceived competence (to feel effective when displaying one's abilities) and perceived relatedness (to feel accepted by the other members of a community). The three basic psychological needs influence motivation, thus the fulfillment or satisfaction of these needs fosters subjective and eudaimonic well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001) whereas frustration of these needs will be associated with greater extrinsic motivation and amotivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

The need for competence is understood as the desire of individuals to interact effectively with the environment in which they perform their activity and to obtain optimal functioning leading to the pursuit of challenges (Deci, 1975; Deci and Ryan, 2002). The athlete may feel competent if he or she obtains the desired results. On the other hand, the need for autonomy is the sense of being the source or the precursor of one's own behavior. The individual wishes to have a participative role in the decisions deriving from his or her sport activity thus having the opportunity to make choices. Several sport research studies carried out within the framework of SDT have found the need for autonomy to be the main predictor of self-determined motivation (Cresswell and Eklund, 2005a, 2005b). Reeve (2002) defends the multifaceted nature of the autonomy construct emphasizing the realistic sense of volition as well as the perceived internal locus of causality. Finally, the need for relatedness to others or the need for affiliation refers to the individual's desire to feel connected to others and to feel accepted by the relevant people in his or her environment or group.

Maslach and Jackson (1984) defined *burnout* as a three-dimensional syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of emotional and physical tiredness resulting from the constant interaction with the people involved in the athlete's daily activity. Depersonalization refers

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to the development of lack of empathy and negative attitude toward the people the individual works for, or toward those having permanent contact with him or her. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to feelings of lack of productivity or lack of achievement in personal performance leading to the loss of confidence in one's own personal accomplishment.

Another definition of the burnout syndrome offered by Raedeke (1997) adapts the three-dimensional concept proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1984) to the sports context. Raedeke (1997) describes burnout as a syndrome characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion, reduced sense of achievement and devaluation/resentment toward the sport practiced. Physical and emotional exhaustion are associated with intense training and competitions. The reduced sense of achievement is related to abilities and skills that the athlete is unable to reach; he or she is unable to achieve personal goals or performs below his/her expectations. Sport devaluation refers to a loss of interest or resentment toward performance and the sport.

Some studies on burnout in the sports context (Cresswell and Eklund, 2005a; Cresswell and Eklund, 2005b; Lemyre, Roberts, and Stray-Gundersen, 2007; Lemyre, Treasure and Roberts, 2006; Quested et al., 2011) have been carried out within the SDT framework (Deci and Ryan, 2002; Ryan and Deci, 2001). However few research studies have analyzed the relation between basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and burnout in the sports context (Carlin, Garcés de los Fayos and De Francisco, 2012). One of the few studies that have followed this line of research has been Hodge, Lonsdale and Ng's (2008) study with 133 elite rugby players. The authors established two groups of players: one group was classified as "high-burnouts" and the second group was classified as "low-burnouts". The results indicated perceived autonomy and competence were related to athlete burnout factors. The group classified as "high-burnouts" reported significantly lower scores in autonomy and competence than those reported by the "low-burnouts" group. Moreover, Perreault, Gaudreau, Lapointe and Lacroix, (2007) explored the relationship between the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness and the three factors of athlete burnout. They found negative relations between the satisfaction of each basic need and athlete burnout factors. The need for competence moderately predicted athletes' reduced sense of achievement. In regard to sport devaluation and physical and emotional exhaustion, they were significantly predicted by satisfaction of the need for autonomy. Finally, the need for relatedness is the variable that best predicts the burnout levels experienced by student athletes.

Engagement is characterized by the feeling of being immersed in an activity such as a sport. The individual creates a bond with his or her activity resulting in greater dedication to and involvement with the performed task. Thus engagement is defined as a positive state of mind in performance characterized by vigor, dedication, efficacy, and absorption by some authors (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001), although others like Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002) just mention vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor refers to the display of mental resistance where the athlete demonstrates a willingness to invest high amounts of energy. Dedication refers to a high level of involvement in the activity performed together with a feeling of meaningfulness, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride toward the task. Absorption takes place when an athlete is completely focused on his or her activity.

Engagement is an optimal state in sports as well as a type of well-being, which seems to have an influence on the performance as it is one of the components of mental toughness (Crust, 2007). This makes it the conceptual opposite of athlete burnout. Considering these concepts are complete opposites, this premise holds that the study of engagement is a preventive strategy against burnout symptoms. Very few works have applied the study of engagement in the sports setting (DeFreese and Smith, 2013; Hodge, Lonsdale and Jackson, 2009; Lonsdale, Hodge and Raedeke, 2007) and needs to be studied in order to know more about how it relates to other aspects (Lonsdale, Hodge and Jackson, 2007).

Pioneer research that applied the study of engagement in athletes carried out by Lonsdale et al. (2007), first showed that this construct is composed of three factors that are similar to those established by Schaufeli et al. (2002): confidence, dedication and vigor. However, in this study of a qualitative nature by Lonsdale et al. (2007), the factor of absorption was not empirically supported. Confidence was defined as the belief in one's ability to reach high levels of performance allowing the athlete to achieve the desired goals. Dedication referred to the desire to invest time and effort in the pursuit of goals the athlete views as important. Finally, vigor was defined as the physical, mental and emotional energy and liveliness experienced by the athlete. However, it must be noted that these findings are not conclusive and need to be confirmed with more representative samples. The second part of this pioneering study analyzed the psychometric properties of the *Athlete Engagement Questionnaire* (AEQ; Lonsdale, Hodge and Jackson, 2007). The results confirmed a factorial model of 16 items distributed between four factors and not three: confidence, dedication, vigor and enthusiasm. Contrary to conclusions from their earlier inquiry, enjoyment and excitement items were not subsumed by the vigor factor and formed a separate factor which was called enthusiasm.

On the other hand, Hodge et al. (2009) led a study on engagement based on the postulates of SDT. The results found basic psychological needs to be antecedents to engagement and state flow to be a consequence of engagement and satisfaction of such basic psychological needs. The satisfaction of basic psychological needs positively and significantly predicted engagement mainly through the need for autonomy and the need for competence. Engagement did not completely mediate the effects of basic psychological needs on state flow, given that the need for autonomy and the need for competence are predictors of flow.

In the sports context, there are no studies relating the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness to the burnout and engagement constructs. Based on the above literature, the present study analyzed the relationship among basic motivational needs, burnout and engagement in Spanish soccer players of the third division. Third division soccer programs provide an ideal sport context in which to analyze these relationships because we think that when players consider that the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relationship with the others have been fulfilled, there will be a negative relationship with the symptoms of burnout and a positive one with the engagement factors. The three basic psychological needs will be negatively associated with burnout and a positively associated with engagement.

We hypothesize the following directional model of relationships based on the previous literature (see Figure 1). The latent variables of perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness positively predict engagement and negatively predict burnout.

## Methods

### Participants

The sample consisted of 227 male soccer players affiliated with 11 out of the 21 teams belonging to Group 7 of the National Third Division in Spain. Participants were between 18 and 32 years age ( $M = 23.36$ ;  $SD = 3.63$ ). These athletes have been practicing soccer on average for 16.04 years ( $SD = 4.19$ ). The average time they have been affiliated with their current teams is 2.13 years ( $SD = 2.72$ ), and they have trained an average of 8.69 hours per week ( $SD = 1.83$ ). All subjects completed the questionnaire voluntarily and in all cases the affiliated players participated.

### Procedures

The soccer players answered the questionnaire before or after training, under the supervision of the main researcher and without the presence of their coach. They were reminded that their questionnaires would be kept confidential and therefore were asked to answer questions honestly. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

### Measures

**Basic Motivational Needs.** The *Perceived Autonomy Scale* (Reinboth and Duda, 2006) was adapted to the sports setting with a Spanish sample by Balaguer, Castillo, and Duda (2008) and was used to measure the need for autonomy. This scale is composed of 10 items. The athletes were asked to express their feelings as they played soccer by responding on a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*very true*). An example item is "I feel my opinion is taken into consideration when making decisions on how the practice/training should be carried out." The reliability of the Spanish version scale has been confirmed using Cronbach's alpha .96. The internal reliability for the current sample was  $\alpha = .83$ .

**Perceived Competence** was measured using the Spanish version of the *Perceived Competence Scale from the Intrinsic Motivation Questionnaire* (IMI; McAuley, Duncan y Tammen, 1989) developed by Balaguer et al. (2008). The scale is composed of five items grouped around the factor known as perceived competence. The players were requested to indicate their level of agreement with each statement by registering their answers on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). An item on this scale was, for example: "I think I'm pretty good at soccer." The reliability of this scale has been largely confirmed (Balaguer et al., 2008; McAuley et al., 1989). The internal reliability for the current sample was  $\alpha = .71$ .

The Spanish version of the *Need for Relatedness Scale* (Richer and Vallerand, 1998) developed by Balaguer et al. (2008) was used to assess the need for relatedness. The scale is composed of five items, for instance: "When I play soccer, I feel supported." These items assess the perceived degree of acceptance and relatedness the player feels as he is training or playing soccer. The athletes used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Each item starts with the following heading: "When I play soccer, I feel..." The reliability and validity of the scale has been confirmed (Balaguer et al., 2008). The internal reliability for the current sample was  $\alpha = .83$ .

**Athlete Burnout.** To assess the levels of athlete burnout, the *Athlete Burnout Inventory* (Garcés de los Fayos, 1999) was used. This inventory is composed of 27 items: 7 of these items measure

emotional exhaustion, 11 items measure depersonalization and 9 items assess personal accomplishment. An example of one of the latter is: "every time I practice sports I feel more personally accomplished". One of the items used to assess depersonalization is: "I treat some of the people that are around me in my sports practice as if they were objects". Finally, one of the items included for the measurement of emotional exhaustion is "being disciplined in the practice of my sport makes me emotionally exhausted". The reliability of the Athlete Burnout Inventory has been confirmed (Garcés de los Fayos, 1999). The internal reliability for the current sample was  $\alpha = .71$  for emotional exhaustion,  $\alpha = .80$  for depersonalization, and  $\alpha = .74$  for reduced personal fulfillment.

**Athlete Engagement.** For the measurement of athlete engagement, the Spanish version of the "Utrecht Work Engagement Scale" (UWES; Salanova, Schaufeli, Llorens, Peiró and Grau, 2000) adapted to the sports context. The adapted scale is named *Athlete Engagement Scale* (AES) and it is composed of 15 items distributed between three factors of five items each: vigor, dedication and absorption. The soccer players were asked to frankly express the feelings experienced during their sports practice by means of a Likert scale ranging from 1 (rarely) to 7 (nearly always). An example of an item corresponding to the vigor factor is: "I'm strong and vigorous in my sports practice." For the dedication factor, an example item is "I'm proud of my work." Finally, an example item for the absorption factor is, "When I'm training, I forget about everything that's happening around me." The UWES reliability has been confirmed in many studies carried out in the work context (Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli and Den Ouden, 2003; Salanova et al., 2000; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Taris and Van Rhenen, 2008) with acceptable values in all cases in the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Unlike the Spanish version of the UWES (Salanova et al., 2000), which does not calculate any total score for engagement, this study includes the total scores for the scale. The internal reliability for the current sample was  $\alpha = .75$  for vigor,  $\alpha = .75$  for absorption, and,  $\alpha = .74$  for dedication.

### Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables included in our study. It is paramount to confirm the normality of data in order to be able to apply the maximum likelihood technique in the analysis of structural models.

Taking as a reference the burnout-engagement model used in the work context (Salanova et al., 2000; Schaufeli et al., 2002) for the study of burnout and starting from the premise which affirms that burnout and engagement are opposite constructs (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker and Lloret, 2006), two structural models were tested using the AMOS 7.0 statistical software. In Model 1, we suggest a tridimensional structure of sports burnout, which has received a greater empirical support (Cresswell and Eklund, 2005a; Hodge et al., 2008; Lemyre et al., 2007; Raedeke and Smith, 2001). In this first model, the first thing to appear is the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness as exogenous variables that exercise an influence on the endogenous variables sports burnout and engagement. In a second model, we decided to remove the variable depersonalization from burnout due to its empirical inconsistency shown in studies undertaken in the sports context (Lemyre et al., 2007).

For the fit assessment of the model the following indexes of goodness of fit were used: chi-square divided by the degrees of

freedom ( $\chi^2 / gl$ ), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the incremental fit index (IFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). A  $\chi^2 / gl$  quotient lower than 5.0 indicates a good fit of the model. Values equal or higher than .90 in IFI, CFI and TLI indexes are considered acceptable. These indexes show values ranging between 0 and 1. The RMSEA assesses the degree of lack of fit of the residual covariance matrices of the theoretical and empirical models. Values between .05 and .10 are considered acceptable (Cole and Maxwell, 1985). Finally, bivariate correlations of all variables were carried out using the Spearman's coefficient. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency.

**Results**

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows that the soccer players participating in our study reported moderate satisfaction of psychological needs for

competence ( $M = 5.25$ ;  $SD = .82$ ), autonomy ( $M = 4.85$ ;  $SD = .93$ ) and relatedness ( $M = 3.83$ ;  $SD = .70$ ), and low to moderate levels of athlete burnout symptoms of emotional exhaustion ( $M = 2.03$ ;  $SD = .63$ ), reduced personal accomplishment ( $M = 2.27$ ;  $SD = .64$ ) and depersonalization ( $M = 1.91$ ;  $SD = .64$ ) as well as moderate to low burnout factors in the global assessment ( $M = 2.07$ ;  $SD = .44$ ). In regards to engagement factors, moderate to high levels were reported for vigor ( $M = 5.47$ ;  $SD = .96$ ), dedication ( $M = 5.81$ ;  $SD = .94$ ) and absorption ( $M = 5.63$ ;  $SD = .89$ ). Also moderate to high global level was reported ( $M = 5.63$ ;  $SD = .81$ ).

Asymmetry and kurtosis tests showed that our data were within normality. Thus, we were able to carry out the subsequent structural equation analyses using the maximum likelihood method.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Asymmetry</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
Competence	5.25	.82	-.51	.65
Autonomy	4.85	.93	-.48	.18
Relatedness	3.83	.70	-.77	1.07
Emotional Exhaustion	2.03	.63	.59	-.09
Depersonalization	1.91	.64	.97	1.11
Reduced Personal Fulfillment	2.27	.64	.36	-.16
Total Burnout	2.07	.44	.47	.29
Vigor	5.47	.96	-.59	.06
Dedication	5.81	.94	-.99	1.28
Absorption	5.63	.89	-.56	.02
Total Engagement	5.63	.81	-.74	.78

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for basic psychological needs, athlete burnout and athlete engagement factors.

Structural Equation Model

The final outcomes for both models are shown in Table 2. For Model 1 (three-dimensional athlete burnout model) the fit indexes were acceptable ( $\chi^2/df = 393.72/250$ ;  $p < .01$ ;  $CFI = .93$ ;  $TLI = .91$ ;  $IFI = .93$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$ ). For Model 2 (bidimensional athlete burnout model) there is a difference of -22 degrees of freedom albeit acceptable fit indexes ( $\chi^2/df = 372.11/228$ ;  $p < .01$ ;  $CFI =$

$.93$ ;  $TLI = .91$ ;  $IFI = .93$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$ ). We decided to maintain the three-dimensional structure of athlete burnout.

Figure 1 shows the standardized regression coefficients of the direct effects. As seen in this table, all values are significant and indicate that basic needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are predictors for both athlete burnout and engagement in soccer players.

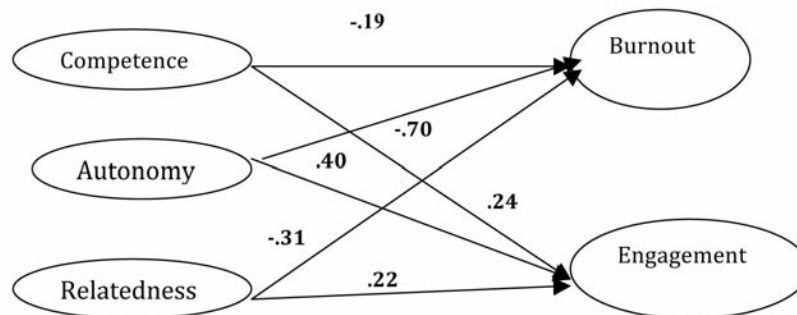


Figure 1. Final outcome of the hypothesized model.

## Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis shows the positive and significant relations between the three basic motivational needs, the relation between autonomy and relatedness being the most significant (.46). Basic psychological needs show a negative and significant relation with athlete burnout symptoms of emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment, the relation between autonomy and reduced personal accomplishment being the most significant ( $r = -.48$ ). Basic psychological needs are positively and significantly associated with athlete engagement factors, the relation between vigor and autonomy being the most significant ( $r = .44$ ). Burnout factors and global burnout scores are positively and significantly related, the most significant association being

the relation between emotional exhaustion and global burnout scores. Burnout factors and engagement showed negative and significant relations with each other, the most significant of which was the relation between absorption and reduced personal accomplishment ( $r = -.45$ ). Athlete engagement factors are positively and significantly associated, the most significant relation being the relation between dedication and global scores of Engagement ( $r = .89$ ). Global burnout and global engagement scores showed significant relations in accordance with the theoretical foundations supporting their inclusion. Table 2 shows these reliability coefficients as well as Pearson's correlations calculated for all variables.

	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Competence	.71										
2. Autonomy	.83	.17**									
3. Relatedness	.83	.13*	.46**								
4. Emotional Exhaustion	.71	-.18**	-.19**	-.28**							
5. Depersonalization	.80	.02	.08	-.11	.32**						
6. RPF*		.74	-.22**	-.48**	-.38**	.22**	.09				
7. Total Burnout	.81	-.19**	-.28**	-.37**	.75**	.68**	.63**				
8. Vigor	.75	.24**	.44**	.28**	-.33**	.08	-.33**	-.28**			
9. Absorption	.75	.20**	.42**	.27**	-.26**	.09	-.45**	-.42**	.54**		
10. Dedication	.74	.34**	.41**	.40**	-.40**	-.03	-.29**	-.22**	.67**	.64**	
11. Total Engagement	.90	.30**	.49**	.37**	-.38**	.05	-.42**	-.36**	.86**	.84**	.89**

Note: \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ . \* RPF: Reduced Personal Fulfillment

Table 2. Correlation and internal consistency analysis.

## Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the relationships between basic psychological needs, burnout and engagement in Spanish soccer players of the third division, because players at this level are still amateur or semi-professional, whereas in higher categories they have already turned professional. Moving up from the third to the second division B represents a qualitative step forward in the sports career of any soccer player and the team he belongs to, as it entails evolution in his career.

Two factorial models where basic psychological needs were potential predictors of athlete burnout and engagement were tested. Due to a certain level of empirical instability in the depersonalization factor of the burnout construct, a three-factor model of burnout (Model 1) and a bidimensional model (Model 2) were tested. In the latter, the depersonalization (D) factor was excluded.

The results indicate that the three basic psychological needs significantly and positively predict engagement factors while they negatively and significantly predict the symptoms of athlete burnout. These results find theoretical support in the postulates of SDT (Deci and Ryan, 2002) that contend that where there is perceived satisfaction of basic psychological needs there is an increase of subjective and eudaimonic well-being (Ryan and

Deci, 2001); whereas, the frustration of these needs are associated with growing ill-being (i.e. athlete burnout symptoms).

Another premise of SDT that finds strong empirical support in the present study is the predictive power shown by the need for autonomy. In our study, the perceived autonomy was a significant predictor of both burnout (ill-being) and engagement factors (well-being). When the soccer players realize that they have an active part in the decisions related to their sports activity perceiving an internal locus of causality, they are less likely to experience symptoms of athlete burnout. The Spanish third division soccer players who perceive a greater freedom to express their ideas, who express their feelings that it is important for their trainer to them and for them to see themselves as active people, and who feel they have autonomy to choose when they practice sport, can feel greater engagement with their activity and experience greater positive psychological states such as engagement. From the study we can conclude that autonomy, and in particular the reduced personal fulfillment symptom, was the psychological need that best predicted the burnout symptoms in third division players, specially the reduced personal fulfillment symptom. Soccer players who perceive few meaningful achievements in their sports career could be influenced by the type of support the coach gives them. Therefore, trainers must pay special attention when designing their training to the opportunities they offer to their players to express their feelings.

Moreover, trainers must bear in mind the importance of players' active participation in the decisions related to their sports practice.

Additionally, perceived autonomy accompanied by a certain level of volition may lead the athlete to stronger engagement with his or her sport and, in consequence, to experiencing a positive psychological condition.

As regards the hypothesized models, both were found to have acceptable fit indexes. We decided to support Model 1 (burnout three-dimensional model) due to the large difference between the

degrees of freedom of the two models. However a theoretical revision of the depersonalization factor is suggested.

In our study we used only male soccer players from Division 3. Perhaps the model would have a different fit and different predictive strength with female players or with players from Division 1 or 2, or with younger players.

As a predictive model has been used, another limitation is that it is not possible to determine cause-effect relationships, as it would be with an experimental study.

#### *NECESIDADES MOTIVACIONALES DE LOS ATLETAS RESPECTO AL BURNOUT Y EL COMPROMISO*

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Fútbol, Teoría de la Autodeterminación, Necesidad de satisfacción, Compromiso, Burnout.

**RESUMEN:** Este estudio analizó la relación entre las necesidades motivacionales básicas, burnout y compromiso en futbolistas con el propósito de encontrar una explicación de por qué los deportistas permanecen comprometidos o se queman. Los participantes fueron 227 futbolistas de la tercera división española, entre 18 y 32 años ( $M = 23.36$ ;  $DE = 3.63$ ), los cuales completaron cuestionarios para medir la Autonomía percibida, Competencia percibida y la Necesidad de relacionarse con el fin de examinar las necesidades motivacionales básicas. Los deportistas también completaron cuestionarios para analizar el burnout y el compromiso. Los futbolistas informaron de una moderada satisfacción de las necesidades psicológicas para la competencia, la autonomía y la relación y niveles de bajos a moderados en síntomas de burnout como agotamiento emocional, baja realización personal y despersonalización, así como de moderados a bajos en la apreciación global de los factores de burnout. En lo que respecta a los factores de compromiso se informó de niveles de moderados a altos en vigor, dedicación y absorción. Los resultados del modelo de ecuaciones estructurales mostraron predicciones positivas y negativas de las necesidades psicológicas básicas acerca del compromiso y el burnout, respectivamente. La necesidad de autonomía es la variable que predice mejor el síntoma de burnout deportivo y compromiso en futbolistas españoles de tercera división. Por último, los síntomas de reducida realización personal fue la necesidad psicológica que mejor predijo los síntomas de burnout.

#### *NECESSIDADES MOTIVACIONAIS DOS ATLETAS A RESPEITO DO BURNOUT E DO COMPROMISSO*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Futebol, Teoria da Autodeterminação, Necessidade de satisfação, Compromisso, Burnout.

**RESUMO:** Este estudo analisou a relação entre as necessidades motivacionais básicas, burnout e compromisso em futebolistas, com o propósito de identificar uma explicação sobre o porquê dos atletas permanecerem comprometidos ou padecerem de burnout. Os participantes foram 227 futebolistas da terceira divisão espanhola, com idades compreendidas entre os 18 e os 32 anos ( $M = 23.36$ ;  $DP = 3.63$ ), os quais completaram os questionários para medir a Autonomia percebida, Competência percebida e a Necessidade de se relacionar, visando examinar as necessidades motivacionais básicas. Os atletas completaram também questionários para analisar o burnout e o compromisso. Os futebolistas revelaram uma moderada satisfação das necessidades psicológicas para a competência, autonomia e relação, bem como níveis baixos e moderados na apreciação global dos factores de burnout. No que concerne aos factores de compromisso, verificaram-se níveis moderados e altos relativamente ao vigor, dedicação e envolvimento. Os resultados do modelo de equações estruturais revelaram predições positivas e negativas das necessidades psicológicas básicas acerca do compromisso e do burnout, respectivamente. A necessidade de autonomia é a variável que prediz melhor o sintoma de burnout desportivo e o compromisso em futebolistas espanhóis da terceira divisão. Por último, a reduzida realização pessoal foi a necessidade psicológica que melhor predizou os sintomas de burnout.

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