

Conversations with Coaches: Qualitative Study Examining High-School Athletic Coaches' Sensitivities to Student-Athlete Well-being and the Dual Career

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Introduction

Abstract

- A qualitative study that explores how high-school coaches approach student-athlete well-being focusing on considering academic and athletic stressors.
- Uses a phenomenological approach to examine lived experiences and interpretations of well-being through semi-structured Zoom interviews.
- Analyzing data thematically using Taguette with rigor ensured through triangulation and a pilot study.
- Goal is to inform coaches, and findings support use of well-being assessments in youth sports and highlight differences in the perceptions of high-school coaches and athletes and the impact of those differences.

Aims of the Research

Aim 1: Understand the life experiences high-school coaches have regarding high-school student-athlete well-being and the effects of the dual-role.

Aim 2: Understand what high-school coaches do to monitor high-school student-athlete well-being.

Aim 3: Understand what resources coaches need to better recognize the factors that support the holistic well-being of their high-school student-athletes.

Research Questions

R1. How do high-school coaches define student-athlete well-being?

R2. What do high-school coaches perceive their roles are in affecting student-athlete well-being?

R3. How does the requirement to balance school and sport impact the well-being of high-school student-athletes from the coach perspective?

Method

Research Design

This study uses a phenomenological qualitative design to explore the lived experiences of high-school coaches and perceptions of their athletes through an SDT lens. A bracketing approach helped minimize researcher bias, and methodological rigor was enhanced via triangulation between survey data and interview responses, plus a pilot study.

Theoretical Background



Participants

Pilot participants (n = 2) are local male coaches in a soccer program who coach high-school aged girls.

Participants (n = 4) are male, adult, and public high-school athletic coaches who spend 20+ hours total weekly with their teams and coach a team/blended sport. *They go by John, Bryan, Evan, and Mark.*

Coaches represent diverse geographic and sport backgrounds, with a consistency of low-medium socioeconomic status environments.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data are collected in two phases:

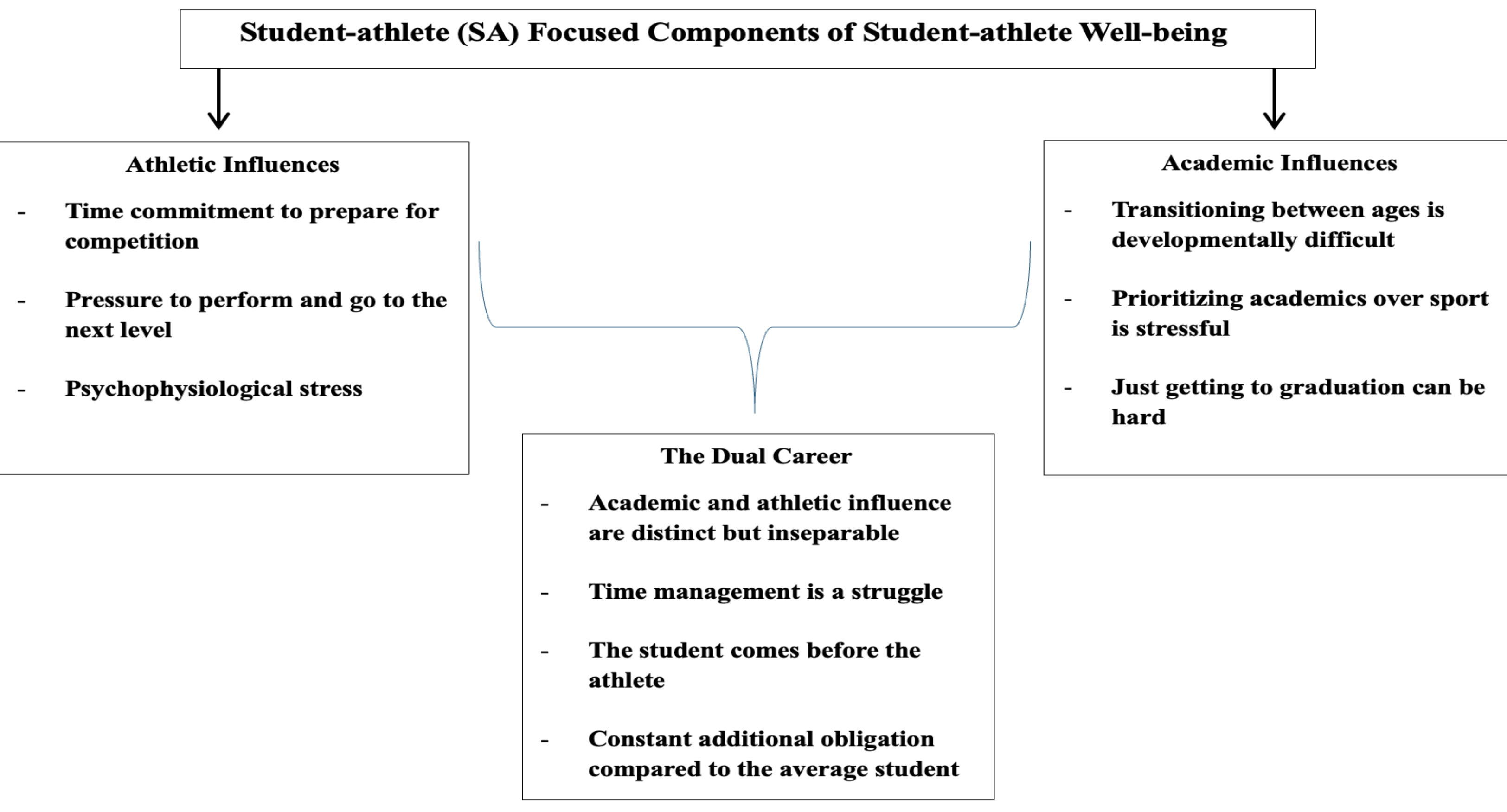
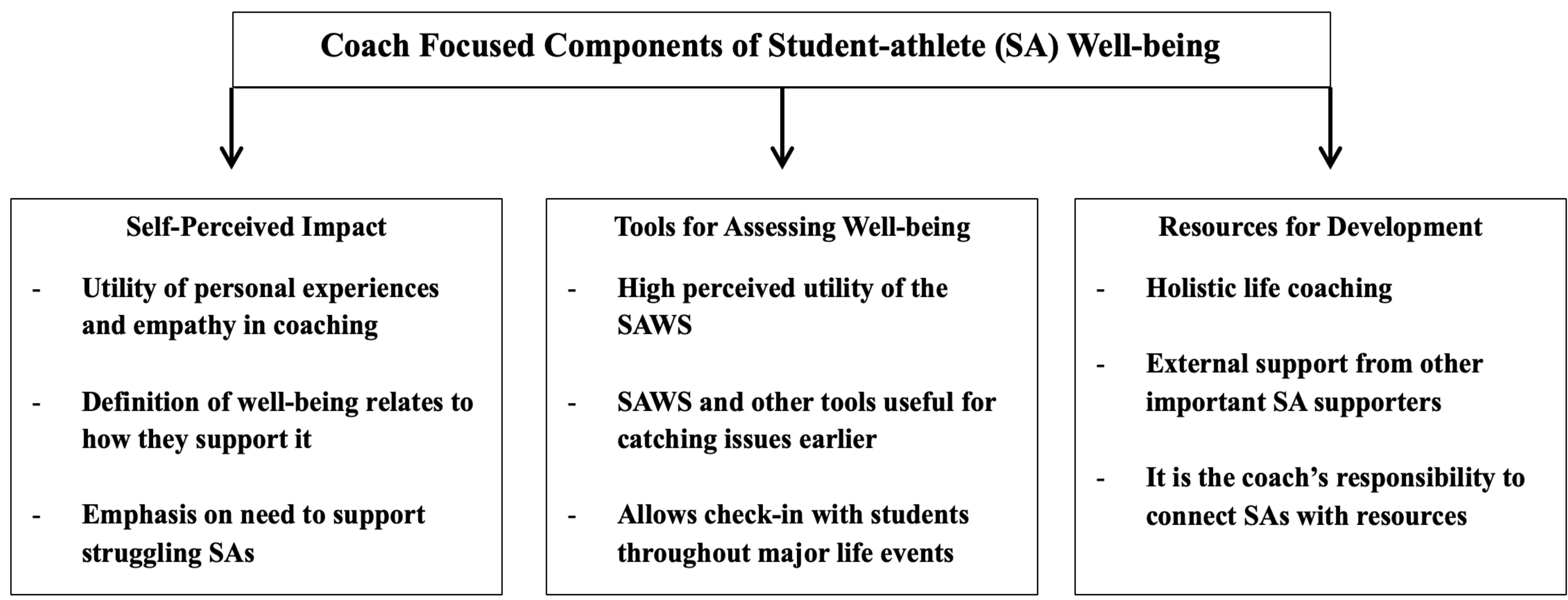
- Survey – gathered demographics, background information, and knowledge of the Student-athlete Well-being Scale (SAWS).

- Semi-Structured Zoom Interviews – 30–45 minutes in length, guided by a grand tour question (R3).

Pilot interviews with the Tallahassee Reckoning soccer program were used to ensure item validity. Inductive constant comparative thematic analysis was employed using Taguette.

Findings

FROM THE HIGH-SCHOOL COACH PERSPECTIVE



Discussion

- This study suggests the need for better integration of psychological health monitorization strategies into coach training programs and athletic departments, especially at the high-school level.
- While coaches are often deeply committed to their athletes' well-being, gaps in knowledge, tools, and resources hinder consistent support.
- The findings support the prominent issues of the dual career, including increased stress, suggesting a need for tailored sport psychology interventions and assessments at the macro and micro levels.

Key References

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PURPOSE
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