

# Burnout among Junior Athletes' in relation to their Perceived Progress Academically in School and in Sport<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> Running head: BURNOUT AMONG NORWEGIAN JUNIOR ATHLETES

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**Abstract:** This article looks at whether lower levels of perceived satisfaction with own progress academically in school and in sport, were associated with higher levels of Athlete Burnout among junior athletes attending different high schools specialized for sports. In order to explore this, we investigated junior athletes' perceptions of their own feeling regarding the different dimensions of Athlete Burnout, and how these perceptions related to their own satisfaction with their progress academically in school and in sport during the last year. The Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ) measures three dimensions of Athlete Burnout, Accomplishments, Exhaustion and Devaluation. Our hypothesis was partly confirmed as the results revealed that lower levels of perceived satisfaction with progress academically in school were associated with higher Athlete Burnout. This result applies for the dimensions Exhaustion and Devaluation as well as the sum of Athlete Burnout. The athletes who reported to be very dissatisfied with their progress academically reported that they frequently felt exhausted and devaluated their sports. However, only the dimension Accomplishments was associated with Athlete Burnout when satisfaction with own progress in school was analysed.

**Keywords:** Athlete Burnout, junior athletes, sport schools.

## Introduction

Athlete burnout is found to be a considerable concern in sport due to the potential negative consequences burnout has for athletes' performances and welfare (Coakley, 1992; Cresswell & Eklund, 2005; Goodger, Gorely, Lavalley & Harwood, 2007; Gould, Udry, Tuffey & Loehr, 1996; Silva, 1990). Burnout in sport is manifested by a shift in an athlete from a passionate and self-determined engagement in the sporting activity, to low or no motivation at all (Ryan & Solky, 1996). Thus, burnout is viewed as an experiential state from the subjective point of view, ranging from low to high levels, and lack of motivation is the most common consequence from high levels of burnout (Goodger, et al., 2007). Interestingly, the number of athletes who are suffering from burnout is discussed to be on the rise, and this tendency is discussed to be a possible result of an increasing amount of competitive and training stress (Gould & Dieffenbach, 2002). However, is this completely true?

Athlete burnout appears to be a complex interaction of multiple stressors, inadequate recovery and frustration from unfulfilled expectations (Goodger, et al., 2007; Gustafsson, Hassmén, Kenttä and Johansson, 2008). In particular, young athletes who

are undertaking high school education at specialized sport schools are exposed to several stressors as most of them have ambitions both academically in school subjects and in their sports. Possible unfulfilled expectations academically or within sports, might soon become a contributor for higher levels of burnout (Gustafsson, 2007; Gustafsson, Kenttä, Hassmén & Lundqvist, 2007). As a result, athletes might drop out of their sport due to the burnout experience. It is well documented that unfulfilled expectations within sports might lead to burnout (Goodger, et al., 2007; Gould & Dieffenbach, 2002). However, it would be interesting to investigate how different levels of athletes' satisfaction with their progress both academically in school and in their sports contribute to Athlete Burnout. This study aims to investigate this question.

## Theoretical background

The definition of athlete burnout has derived from the predominant conceptualization of burnout employed in the human service and organizational psychology literatures (e.g., Maslach & Goldberg, 1998; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Based on this framework athlete burnout is viewed as a multidimensional construct that consists of three central dimensions:



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1) Emotional and physical exhaustion, 2) Reduced sense of accomplishment, and 3) Sport devaluation (Raedeke & Smith, 2009).

Emotional and physical exhaustion is characterized by feelings of emotional and physical fatigue stemming from the emotional, mental and physical demands associated with performance, training and competitions. The exhaustion dimension consists of both an emotional and a physical component. The physical component is associated with the intensity and duration in training and competitions, whereas the emotional component is associated with the psychosocial stressors that an athlete experiences.

In principle, training and competitions are meant to challenge an athlete's homeostatic balance in order to elicit bodily adaption and performance development (Main & Landers, 2012). However, when stress responses from psychosocial and physical demands are overloaded, the process of adaptation might be challenged. Since the earliest accounts of burnout there has been nearly unanimous agreement that burnout is a reaction to an overload of stress, where exhaustion is the result from the chronic demands made on an athlete's resources (Cherniss, 1980; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; MacNeil, 1981). The emotional and physical exhaustion dimension is the most widely accepted dimension in burnout (Raedeke & Smith, 2009).

Reduced sense of accomplishment is characterized by an athlete's feeling of inefficacy and a general tendency to evaluate him or herself negatively in terms of his or her sport performances and accomplishments. The dimension is related to an athlete's perception of his or her skills and abilities. An athlete who is experiencing this state is unable to achieve personal goals or performs below his or her own and other's expectation. This dimension is concerned about an athlete's subjective perception of own performance and accomplishments within sports. This dimension is debated among researchers and scholars (Cox, Tisserand & Taris, 2005; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). However, for an athlete in sport performance is the central concern, as he or she continually is being evaluated by him- or herself, or by others. Therefore, it appears important to address this dimension associated with the burnout syndrome among athletes in sport (Raedeke & Smith, 2009). Reduced sense of accomplishments might be a major stressor for athletes.

Sport devaluation is defined as a negative, detached attitude toward the sport, reflected by a lack of concern about the sport itself and the performance quality. This is the most accepted dimension in burnout measurements following exhaustion. According to Raedeke (1997) this dimension is

concerned with an athlete's feeling of reduced value related to the personal effort that he or she has, or is willing to invest in order to reach his or her goals within sport. While exhaustion depicts the ability to expand effort, devaluation represents the willingness to expand effort.

Thus, the degree of athlete burnout is in general viewed as an experiential state seen from an athlete's subjective point of view. In a 25-year review of the burnout literature Schaufeli and Buunk (2003) outlined five categories of symptoms associated with the construct: affective symptoms as depressed mood, cognitive symptoms as feeling helpless, physical symptoms as feeling exhausted or ill, behavioral symptoms as impaired performance, and motivational symptoms as the lack of enthusiasm and engagement in the sport. These symptoms are also found in sport as well as the implications to the athletes' performances (Goodger, et al., 2007). Athlete burnout is obviously a syndrome that coaches in sport should pay attention to because of the negative consequences that come from burnout.

Junior athletes who are studying at specialized sport schools are exposed to several stressors in their environment; in particular they are exposed to demands both academically as well as in their sports. It is found that athletes' favor their sports at high school compared to their school subjects (Bishop, 2008). Research also shows that students combining high school with their sports outperform students who are not participating in sports academically (Stegman, 2000; Whitley, 1999; Zaugg, 1998). Interestingly, research also shows that athletes have higher general self-concept than their student peers who are not participating in sports (Brooks, 2007). This is explained by the impact their sports have on their general self-concept because of the importance of psychological centrality on a person's self (Rosenberg, 1968). Research also claims that burnout is a possible result of an increasing amount of competitive and training stress for an athlete (Gould & Dieffenbach, 2002). Based on this research there is reason to believe that athletes who are studying at specialized high schools for sports and are experiencing low level of satisfaction with their progress in sport, should be in danger of experiencing burnout. Compared to their satisfaction with progress in school, sport should have a more significant impact on an athlete's level of burnout. Therefore, an interesting question to investigate is how different levels of perceived satisfaction with own progress academically in school and in sport are associated with athlete burnout. Hypothesis 1: Lower levels of satisfaction with progress academically in school and in sport are associated with higher burnout among Norwegian junior elite athletes, whereas

higher levels of satisfaction are associated with lower burnout.

## Method

Participants in the present study were 114 high school athletes who voluntarily participated in an online questionnaire that measured psychological variables concerning their thoughts, feelings and actions within sport at their schools. They were all students at different high schools for sports in the middle Norway region. The athletes were from age 16 to 20, with an average age of 17. The athletes were competing in sports such as football, volleyball, handball, ice hockey, biathlon, cross country skiing, ski jumping, nordic combined, alpine skiing, ice skating, shooting, orienteering, track and field, and bicycling.

### The Athlete Burnout Questionnaire

The first author translated the 15 item Athlete Burnout Questionnaire into Norwegian using a double Translation-Back-Translation technique (Raedeke & Smith, 2009). The stem for each question was: "How often do you feel this way?" Athletes were requested to rate the extent to which the items refer to their participation motives on a five-point Likert scale anchored by (1) "Almost Never" and (5) "Almost Always". The ABQ has three five-item subscales assessing three key dimensions of burnout: (1) Reduced sense of accomplishment, (2) Emotional and physical exhaustion, and (3) Devaluation of sport participation. Examples of items covering the different dimensions are respectively; "*It seems that no matter what I do, I don't perform as well as I should*"; "*I feel so tired from my training that I have trouble finding energy to do other things*", and "*The effort I spend participating in my sport would be better spent doing other things*". A total summed score for the ABQ is achieved by averaging all three subscale scores.

### Perceived satisfaction with progress in sport and academically in school

Performances in sport are often measured as results in different competitions. However, such measurements are contaminated by different variables such as random chance and opponent's outstanding performance (Courneya & Chelladurai, 1991). The use of athletes' satisfaction with their own performances is a way to avoid this pitfall (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1997). However, it might be difficult to separate these two variables because of the athletes' affective reactions regarding their actual performance (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998). In this study we chose to use athletes' satisfaction with their own progress in sport during the last year

as an outcome variable. This was done to avoid short-term affective reactions regarding results in competitions, and to include experienced progress in daily training sessions.

The athletes in this study were asked to consider how satisfied they were with their own progress academically in school and in sport during the last year on a 7-point scale. The levels of perceived satisfaction with progress in sport are ranging from: Level 1) Extremely dissatisfied, Level 2) Very dissatisfied, Level 3) Dissatisfied, Level 4) Either...or, Level 5) Satisfied, Level 6) Very satisfied, Level 7) Extremely satisfied.

### Data Analysis

To explore the impact of perceived satisfaction with progress academically in school and in sport, and Athlete burnout (ABQ), analyses was conducted by means of descriptive statistics and one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) using the SPSS 20 software. ANOVA was employed to investigate whether the means between the different groups (levels of athletes' perceived satisfaction 1-7) were equal or not. In general, when conducting ANOVA the observed variance in a particular variable is partitioned into components attributable to different sources of variation. ANOVA conducts a statistical test of whether or not the means of several groups are all equal, and therefore generalizes the t-test to more than two groups (Pallant, 2010; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Since ANOVA is useful when comparing three or more means, this analytic approach was chosen to explore our research questions.

### Results

Table 1 shows correlations between the study variables as well as the number of items for each dimension of the ABQ and the sum of ABQ, statistical means of the sum score, standard deviations, and the Cronbach's alphas.

Table 1  
Correlations between the variables and descriptive statistics

Variable	1	2	3	4
<i>ABQ</i>				
1. Accomplishments	-	.41**	.44**	.72**
2. Exhaustion		-	.72**	.87**
3. Devaluation			-	.89**
4. ABQ sum				-
Number of items	5	5	5	15
Mean	11.93	11.33	10.76	34.03
Standard deviation	4.08	4.61	4.94	11.32
Cronbach's alpha	.80	.89	.85	.91

Note. \*\*Correlations are significant at  $p < .001$ ,  $N=114$ .

The zero order correlations between the study variables vary from moderate to strong. All variables had satisfactory Cronbach's alphas. The mean values of the sum scores of the different dimensions were not high, indicating that these athletes in general almost never or rarely experience reduced accomplishments, exhaustion or devaluation. The strongest correlation is found between Exhaustion and Devaluation, with a coefficient of .72.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the different dimensions of the ABQ and the sum of ABQ, sorted by the different levels of athletes' satisfaction with their progress in school during the last year.

Table 2  
*The dimensions of ABQ and each level of satisfaction with progress academically in school*

		N	Mean	SE
ABQ Accomplishments	very dissatisfied	6	15.50	4.14
	dissatisfied	15	13.13	3.20
	either..or	34	11.82	3.60
	satisfied	44	11.36	4.60
	very satisfied	12	11.67	4.05
	extremely satisfied	3	9.33	1.15
ABQ Exhaustion	very dissatisfied	6	20.00	5.55
	dissatisfied	15	13.53	4.31
	either..or	34	9.79	3.36
	satisfied	44	11.11	4.52
	very satisfied	12	10.25	2.73
	extremely satisfied	3	8.00	1.73
ABQ Devaluation	very dissatisfied	6	21.50	2.88
	dissatisfied	15	12.07	5.05
	either..or	34	9.53	3.74
	satisfied	44	9.89	4.63
	very satisfied	12	11.08	3.68
	extremely satisfied	3	8.33	0.58
ABQ Sum	very dissatisfied	6	57.00	10.95
	dissatisfied	15	38.73	9.76
	either..or	34	31.15	7.75
	satisfied	44	32.36	11.61
	very satisfied	12	33.00	7.64
	extremely satisfied	3	25.67	3.06

Note. No athletes reported that they were extremely dissatisfied with their progress academically in school.

In general, the mean values of the sum scores of the different dimensions at the different levels of perceived satisfaction academically are not high. However, the athletes who are very dissatisfied with their progress academically report high scores on the dimension Exhaustion and Devaluation (Mean=20.00 and 21.50, respectively), and the sum score of Athlete Burnout (Mean=57.00). In fact,

these results are indicating that these athletes frequently experience exhaustion and devaluation.

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the different dimensions of the ABQ and the sum of ABQ, sorted by the different levels of athletes' satisfaction with their progress in sport during the last year.

Table 3  
*The dimensions of ABQ and each level of satisfaction with progress in sport*

		N	Mean	SE
ABQ Accomplishments	extremely dissatisfied	3	13.67	4.51
	very dissatisfied	5	13.20	4.21
	dissatisfied	15	15.53	3.85
	either..or	16	14.88	3.88
	satisfied	38	11.53	3.61
	very satisfied	24	9.75	2.51
	extremely satisfied	13	8.46	2.60
ABQ Exhaustion	extremely dissatisfied	3	11.00	3.61
	very dissatisfied	5	9.40	3.65
	dissatisfied	15	12.87	4.32
	either..or	16	12.06	5.81
	satisfied	38	11.55	5.08
	very satisfied	24	10.79	4.20
	extremely satisfied	13	9.85	2.82
ABQ Devaluation	extremely dissatisfied	3	8.67	1.53
	very dissatisfied	5	11.60	5.27
	dissatisfied	15	12.87	5.26
	either..or	16	11.63	5.94
	satisfied	38	10.68	5.25
	very satisfied	24	9.08	2.90
	extremely satisfied	13	10.77	5.36
ABQ Sum	extremely dissatisfied	3	33.33	3.06
	very dissatisfied	5	34.20	9.01
	dissatisfied	15	41.27	10.48
	either..or	16	38.56	12.99
	satisfied	38	33.76	12.25
	very satisfied	24	29.63	8.20
	extremely satisfied	13	29.08	9.48

In general, the mean values of the sum scores of the different dimensions at the different levels of perceived satisfaction in sport are not high. The results indicate that the athletes in general, across the different levels of perceived satisfaction, almost never or rarely experience reduced accomplishments, exhaustion or devaluation.

lower scores on the different dimensions of the ABQ and the sum of ABQ. However, this trend does not apply consequently. Accordingly, there seems to be a trend that lower levels of athlete satisfaction within sport is associated with higher scores on Accomplishments and the sum of ABQ. However, this trend does not seem to apply to the other dimensions (Exhaustion and Devaluation).

According to the scores in Table 2 and 3 the majority of the athletes are satisfied or either or, with their own progress academically in school (68,4 %, N= 44 and 34, respectively), and satisfied or very satisfied with their own progress in sport (54,4 %, N= 38 and 24, respectively). There seems to be a trend that higher satisfaction with own progress academically in school is associated with

The ANOVA analysis was conducted to explore possible significant differences between the groups in their mean scores on the different dimensions of the ABQ and the sum of ABQ. The groups were based on their level of satisfaction with progress academically in school and in sport (as in Table 2 and 3). The results are presented in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4  
*Summary of ANOVA where school performance is the factor*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
ABQ Accomplishments	Between Groups	133.75	5	26.75	1.65
	Within Groups	1747.69	108	16.18	
	Total	1881.44	113		
ABQ Exhaustion	Between Groups	653.36	5	130.67	8.06**
	Within Groups	1751.97	108	16.22	
	Total	2405.33	113		
ABQ Devaluation	Between Groups	821.69	5	164.34	9.19**
	Within Groups	1930.92	108	17.88	
	Total	2752.61	113		
ABQ	Between Groups	4124.86	5	824.98	8.60**
	Within Groups	10366.05	108	95.99	
	Total	14490.92	113		

\*\*p < 0.01

Table 5  
*Summary of ANOVA where sport performance is the factor*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
ABQ Accomplishments	Between Groups		5	104.55	8.92**
	Within Groups		108	11.72	
	Total		113		
ABQ Exhaustion	Between Groups		5	16.74	0.78
	Within Groups		108	21.51	
	Total		113		
ABQ Devaluation	Between Groups		5	27.15	1.72
	Within Groups		108	24.20	
	Total		113		
ABQ	Between Groups		5	317.20	2.70*
	Within Groups		108	117.64	
	Total		113		

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

The results of the analysis indicate that there are statistically significant differences at the  $p < .001$  level between the mean scores on all of the dimensions of ABQ and satisfaction with progress academically in school, except from the dimension Accomplishments. Accordingly, statistically significant differences were found at the  $p < .001$  level between the mean scores on the dimension

Accomplishments and the sum of ABQ, and satisfaction with progress in sport. In order to gain a clearer picture of which groups that differ, multiple comparisons post-hoc tests were conducted. The Tukey HSD test was chosen to explore which levels of satisfaction with progress within school and sport that differed from each other. The results of the post-hoc tests are presented in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6  
*Tukey HSD Comparison of Athlete burnout and perceived level of satisfaction academically in school*

Dimension	Comparisons	Mean Difference	SE	95% CI	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ABQ Exhaustion	Level 2 vs. Level 3	6.47*	1.95	0.82	12.11
	Level 2 vs. Level 4	10.21**	1.78	5.03	15.38
	Level 2 vs. Level 5	8.89**	1.76	3.80	13.97
	Level 2 vs. Level 6	9.75**	2.01	3.91	15.59
	Level 2 vs. Level 7	12.00**	2.85	3.74	20.26
	Level 3 vs. Level 4	3.74*	1.25	0.12	7.36
ABQ Devaluation	Level 2 vs. Level 3	9.43**	2.04	3.50	15.36
	Level 2 vs. Level 4	11.97**	1.87	6.54	17.40
	Level 2 vs. Level 5	11.61**	1.84	6.27	16.95
	Level 2 vs. Level 6	10.42**	2.11	4.28	16.55
	Level 2 vs. Level 7	13.17**	2.99	4.49	21.84
ABQ	Level 2 vs. Level 3	18.27**	4.54	4.54	32.00
	Level 2 vs. Level 4	25.85**	4.34	13.27	38.44
	Level 2 vs. Level 5	24.64**	4.26	12.27	37.00
	Level 2 vs. Level 6	24.00**	4.90	9.79	38.21
	Level 2 vs. Level 7	31.33**	6.93	11.23	51.43

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

Table 6 shows that there are significant differences among several of the levels of satisfaction with progress academically in school at the p < .01 level and the p < .05 level. In general, the results indicate that the lower levels differ significantly from the higher levels (level 2 vs. level 3,4,5,6 and 7 for the

two dimensions and the sum of ABQ, and level 3 vs. level 4 for exhaustion). A trend is that the lower levels of perceived satisfaction have a mean value that is significantly higher than the higher levels (indicating higher levels of burnout).

Table 7  
*Tukey HSD Comparison of Athlete burnout and perceived level of satisfaction with progress in sport*

Dimension	Comparisons	Mean Difference	SE	95% CI	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ABQ Accomplishments	Level 3 vs. Level 5	4.01**	1.04	0.87	7.14
	Level 3 vs. Level 6	5.78**	1.13	2.40	9.17
	Level 3 vs. Level 7	7.07**	1.30	3.17	10.97
	Level 4 vs. Level 5	3.34*	1.02	0.28	6.42
	Level 4 vs. Level 6	5.13**	1.11	1.80	8.45
	Level 4 vs. Level 7	6.41**	1.28	2.57	10.26
ABQ	Level 3 vs. Level 6	11.64*	3.57	0.91	22.37

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

Table 7 shows that there are significant differences among several of the levels of satisfaction with progress in sport at the p < .01 level and the p < .05 level. In general, the results indicate that the lower levels differ significantly from the higher levels (level 3 vs. level 5, 6 and 7, and level 4 vs. level 5, 6 and 7 for the dimension Accomplishments, and level 3 vs. level 6 for the sum of ABQ). A trend is that the lower levels of perceived satisfaction have a mean value that is significantly higher than the

higher levels. However, this trend is not true for the athletes who are extremely and very dissatisfied with their progress in sport.

### Discussion

It is claimed that possible unfulfilled expectations academically or within sports might become a contributor for higher levels of Athlete Burnout (Gustafsson, 2007; Goodger, et al., 2007). The main purpose of this study was to explore how different

levels of perceived satisfaction with own progress academically in school and in sport are associated with Athlete Burnout (ABQ). In order to explore this question, we investigated junior athletes' perceptions of items that are measuring the different dimensions of Athlete Burnout, and how these perceptions relate to their own satisfaction with their progress academically in school and in sport during the last year.

Our hypothesis was that lower levels of satisfaction with progress academically in school and in sport were associated with higher levels of burnout among Norwegian junior elite athletes, whereas higher levels of satisfaction are associated with lower levels of burnout. Our hypothesis was partly confirmed as the results revealed that lower levels of perceived satisfaction with own progress academically in school and in sport were associated with higher Athlete Burnout than higher levels of perceived satisfaction with own progress (see Table 6 and 7). This result applies for the two dimensions Exhaustion and Devaluation of Athlete Burnout, and the sum score of Athlete Burnout, when perceived satisfaction with progress academically was the factor (see Table 4). Interestingly, the athletes who were very dissatisfied with their progress academically reported an alarming high level of Athlete Burnout (see Table 2). When perceived satisfaction with progress in sports was the factor (see Table 5), only the dimension Accomplishments applied such a trend. However, this is not a result that supports the expectation in this study. An athlete's feeling of accomplishment should reflect this athlete's perceived satisfaction with own progress in sport at different levels. They are more or less the same measure. Since these junior athletes study at specialised high schools in sports, one should expect that sport is an area that is psychological central among the athletes and in their environment. A possible explanation to this result might be that sport is a volunteer activity, and that the athletes have the opportunity to end their careers if they want, while school is not a volunteer activity. Especially in Norway, it seems to be a culture pressure to finish higher education and achieve academically results in different school subjects (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2005). Thus, these results indicate that the athletes' and the environment's academic expectations might be a greater stressor than their expectations in sport. However, in order to fully understand these results further research is needed.

The results in this study indicate that the impact from perceived satisfaction with own progress in sport on Athlete Burnout is less than the impact from perceived satisfaction with own progress academically in school. There is a trend that lower levels of perceived satisfaction with own progress academically significantly differ from higher levels of perceived satisfaction on Athlete Burnout scores. Interestingly, the mean scores for junior athletes who are very dissatisfied with their perceived progress academically show that these athletes frequently feel emotional and physical exhausted, and frequently devalue their sports. This is an important finding that both coaches and theoreticians should notice. A possible explanation to this finding can be found in theories concerning psychological centrality (Rosenberg, 1968; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2005). Areas that are psychologically central to a person is claimed to determine the affect this area has on his or her self.

Thus, academic performance in school seems to be an important area for young athletes in these specialized high schools for sports and a highly dissatisfaction with own progress within the academic area seems to be an important contributor to Athlete Burnout. As a consequence, it seems to be important that both coaches and athletes favour athletes' academic work as well as their sports at specialized high schools for sports.

Research also shows that sport is an area that has significant impact on an athlete's general self-concept (Brooks, 2007). Thus, it was expected that dissatisfaction with own perceived progress in sport should contribute to significant higher levels of Athlete Burnout than higher levels of satisfaction with own progress. However, this was not the case which was a surprise. Only the dimension Accomplishments applied such a trend. However, this is not a result that supports the expectation in this study. An athlete's feeling of accomplishment should reflect this athlete's perceived satisfaction with own progress in sport at different levels. They are more or less the same measure. Since these junior athletes study at specialised high schools in sports, one should expect that sport is an area that is psychological central among the athletes and in their environment. A possible explanation to this result might be that sport is a volunteer activity, and that the athletes have the opportunity to end their careers if they want, while school is not a volunteer activity. Especially in Norway, it seems to be a culture pressure to finish higher education and achieve academically results in different school subjects (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2005). Thus, these results indicate that the athletes' and the environment's academic expectations might be a greater stressor than their expectations in sport. However, in order to fully understand these results further research is needed.

## Conclusion

This main finding in this study indicates that frustration from unfulfilled expectations academically in school among junior athletes attending high school education at specialised schools for sport might be a contributor for higher levels of Athlete Burnout. These results might indicate that to fully meet the psychosocial and physical demands associated with training and competitions, an athlete must be satisfied with his or her perceived progress academically in school. Accordingly, when academically progress is not satisfactorily, an athlete might start to develop a detached attitude toward the sport that is reflected by a lack of concern about the sport itself and his or her performance quality.

However, the present study has several limitations. Sample size may have influenced the results.



Studies with larger number of participants are therefore called for in future research, as well as a more solid and causal design. Moreover, one should note that the collected data is constituted by self-reporting measures and one do not know to which extent these self-reports accurately reflect the variables under study.

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