

Thesis Abstract

No. _____

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Thesis Title			
Design of Psychological Self-Help Support for Olympic Athletes after Retirement			
Abstract:			
<p>Elite athletes aiming for the Olympics are often nurtured within the sports success framework developed by the sports policies in their own countries. Although some are involved in several Olympic Games, athletes who make it to the Olympics ultimately retire from sports. Multifaceted support is needed to meet various difficulties at retirement, and the National Olympic Committees of each country have begun to develop career support for present and retired athletes. Psychological adjustment difficulties, one type of difficulty at retirement, are identified as continuing for a long time after retirement. However, retired athletes who are no longer registered as athletes in their sports organizations are beyond the scope of existing support. Moreover, previous studies have pointed out that elite athletes have difficulties in seeking support due to their psychological state after retirement. This makes it difficult to observe actual situations of retired athletes.</p> <p>This thesis aims to demonstrate the process of clarifying the psychological difficulties of retired Olympic athletes, and to design tailored support using the case of Japanese career support and Japanese retired Olympic athletes. To achieve this aim, the conceptual model of adaptation to retirement is applied, and each factor in the model is investigated. With regard to the available resources as one of the factors in the model, the current situation of career support is investigated and it is found that Japan's career support has developed occupational support, but psychological support is not provided due to a lack of psychological professionals.</p> <p>To clarify what kind of support Japanese Olympic athletes might need after retirement in Japan's current situation without psychological support, retired Olympic athletes are examined with reference to the factors in the model: the causes of retirement, developmental experiences, and difficulties in adaptation to athletic retirement. For the causes of retirement, 473 retired Olympic athletes are analyzed in groups as follows: male/female participants in the Summer Games (SMO/SFO), and male/female participants in the Winter Games (WMO/WFO). The results show that the percentage of SFOs who retired for psychological reasons was relatively higher than that of SMOs, WMOs, and WFOs. Regarding developmental experiences, through the life story analysis method with a female Olympic medalist, it is revealed that developmental experiences during the athletic career affected the athlete's identity formation and loss of self-confidence after retirement. In addition, regarding types of stressors in adaptation to retirement, a survey of retired female elite athletes from 13 sports highlights both emotional and psychological difficulties.</p> <p>The findings reveal that athletes not only have psychological difficulties, but also have difficulties in seeking help. Based on this fact, psychological Self-Help support for retired athletes</p>			

is designed around the concept of mental health literacy in elite athletes. The purpose of the support is to increase the degree to which athletes are able to seek professional help by improving knowledge about what career support is and what the psychological difficulties in retirement are. The support is evaluated by a study of effectiveness and feasibility, in which 24 retired female Olympic athletes including 19 medalists participated.

This thesis is conducted using a systems engineering approach, and makes an original contribution to the existing conceptual model of adaptation to retirement. The practical contribution of applying the Self-Help support is suggested. In the above points, this thesis contributes further knowledge in the field of psychological self-help support, especially among elite athletes such as Olympic athletes.