

Public Abstract

First Name: Jennifer

Middle Name: Kim

Last Name: Shannon

Adviser's First Name: Glenn

Adviser's Last Name: Good

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title: Physical Self-Concept and Athletic Identity Among Former Collegiate Athletes:  
Examining the Influence on Self

This study examined physical self-concept, global self-esteem, and athletic identity among former collegiate athletes. Although these topics have been studied extensively in current athletes, there is a dearth of information about these phenomena in post-collegiate years. 308 former Division 1 NCAA collegiate athletes participated, providing an interesting profile of former collegiate athletes across the lifespan. Physical self-worth consistently demonstrates a positive relation with global self-esteem in current athletes (Fox, 1997; Fox & Corbin, 1989); these findings were replicated in this sample of former collegiate athletes. Individuals who highly value sport and exercise, placing importance on athletic involvement are viewed as having strong athletic identity. (Brewer et al., 1993). This study demonstrated that athletic identity remains salient even after a formal athletic career has ended. Athletic identity was shown to mediate the relation between physical self-concept and global self-esteem for former collegiate athletes. Athletic identity was also shown to mediate the relation between physical activity and physical self-concept. Athletic identity did not serve as a moderating variable for the entire sample, but was shown to moderate the relation between physical activity and physical self-concept for those who no longer participate in their collegiate sport and those who no longer classify themselves as an athlete. Athletic identity and global self-esteem demonstrated age-related differences. Based on these findings, it appears that for many former collegiate athletes, there is some maintenance of athletic identity, and that identity remains influential in its association with physical self-concept.