



RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Satisfaction with The Life and Self-Esteem of Portuguese Disabilities Elite Athletes of Boccia and Adapted Athletics

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### Abstract

This study is to compare the degree of satisfaction with life and self-esteem of Portuguese elite athletes of adapted sport according to the modality practiced, gender and sport experience. The sample consisted of 30 Portuguese elite athletes, 15 of adapted Athletics and 15 of Boccia, aged between 17 and 54 years ( $31.03 \pm 10.26$ ). The sports experience of these athletes was  $13.33 (\pm 9.0)$  years of practice, in which 20 were male and 10 were female and all these athletes have disabilities. A questionnaire on biographical data, Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), the Self-Anchoring Rating Scale (Cantril, 1965) and the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) translated and adapted by (Bandeira et al., 2005) were applied. The questionnaire to assess subjective well-being (Translate adapted by (Fortes-Ferreira et al., 2006). The t-test was used to compare levels of satisfaction with life and self-esteem according to modality, sex, and years of practice. The results of this study allow us to conclude that Portuguese adapted athletes ( $8,83 \pm 4,71$ ) and bocce ( $5,53 \pm 4,52$ ) present there are statistically significant differences (0.050) in self-esteem between. The lower functional capacity, as well as the severity of Boccia athletes' deficiency, which requires the use of ancillary means, may be a reason to justify the fact that they present lower values of self-esteem than athletes. The same reason may justify a lower level of satisfaction with the lives of athletes with any less more sporting experience ( $25,47 \pm 4,33$ ) than more sporting experience ( $28,85 \pm 4,63$ ) since they are also older athletes.

### Keywords

Athletes, Satisfaction, The Life, Self-Esteem, Disabilities, Boccia, Adapted Athletics

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays nobody questions the importance or benefits of the practice of physical activity and sport for the well-being of everyone including people with disabilities. In recent times there has been a steady increase in the number of sports for people with disabilities, at a competitive level, creating more opportunities for these athletes to

participate in worldwide (Blauwet & Willick, 2012; Phytanza et al., 2023). However, there are few studies that analyze the psychological variables of these athletes, especially at the elite level. The characterization of the psychological profile makes it possible to complement a broader understanding at a physiological and technological level, allowing for a more holistic view of the success of these athletes, and facilitating the optimization of sports performance as well as their well-being (Burhaein et al., 2023; Jefferies et al.,

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2012). Adapted sport is an important mechanism of social connections (Wilhite & Shank, 2009), promoting physical and emotional health, and helping individuals with disabilities to focus on their potential (Demirci & Pinru Phytanza, 2021; Yazicioglu et al., 2012). Adapted sport promotes several benefits to its practitioners, namely about the confidence and self-efficacy of individuals with disabilities (Blauwet & Willick, 2012) and higher levels of quality and satisfaction with life compared with individuals do not practice sport (Burhaein et al., 2022; Phytanza et al., 2022; Yazicioglu et al., 2012). This study is based on the absence of research that compares the psychological advantages of the different modalities for people with disabilities.

Hence, the objective of this study is to compare the degree of satisfaction with life and self-esteem of Portuguese elite athletes of adapted sport according to the modality practiced, gender and sport experience.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participant

The sample consisted of 30 Portuguese elite athletes, 15 of adapted Athletics and 15 of Boccia, aged between 17 and 54 years ( $31.03 \pm 10.26$ ). The sports experience of these athletes was  $13.33 (\pm 9.0)$  years of practice, in which 20 were male and 10 were female. This study followed ethical standards and received approval from the Universitas Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen (UMNU) Kebumen with reference number (070/A/VI/2023). Participant provided informed consent, with the volunteer form covering research details, risks, benefits, confidentiality, and

participant rights. The research strictly adhered to the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki, prioritizing participant's rights and well-being in design, procedures, and confidentiality measures.

### Research Instruments

A questionnaire on biographical data, Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), the Self-Anchoring Rating Scale (Cantril, 1965) and the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) translated and adapted by (Bandeira et al., 2005) were applied. The questionnaire to assess subjective well-being (Translate adapted by (Fortes-Ferreira et al., 2006), can be seen in Figures 2, 3, and 4. The t-test was used to compare levels of satisfaction with life and self-esteem according to modality, sex and years of practice.

## RESULTS

The descriptive analysis of the results shows that elite athletes adapted from Boccia and Athletics present high values of life satisfaction ( $7.65 \pm 1.61$  in the Self-Anchoring Rating Scale and  $29.93 \pm 4.71$  in Satisfaction with Life Scale) and low levels of self-esteem ( $7.23 \pm 4.85$ ). The results of the t-test demonstrate that there were significant differences in self-esteem when comparing the two modalities ( $p = 0.05$ ), with athletes showing values higher than those of Boccia ( $8.93 \pm 4.71$  vs.  $5.53 \pm 4.52$ ). Compared to the sports experience, there were significant differences in life satisfaction ( $p = 0.05$ ), with athletes with less sport experience (<11 years of practice) being more satisfied with life ( $28.85 \pm 4.63$  vs.  $25.47 \pm 4.33$ ). There were no significant gender differences in any of the variables.

**Table 1.** Results – differences between modalities

	Boccia (n=15)	Adapted Athletics (n=15)	P- Value
Satisfaction with life (Seccion B)	26,53±4,76	27,33±4,78	0,650
Your presente life in moment (Seccion C)	7,53± 1,72	7,79±1,53	0,680
Your present life in general (Section C)	27,40±3,40	29,07±3,83	0,218
Self-esteem	5,53±4,52	8,83±4,71	<b>0,050*</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Table 2.** Results – differences between gender

	Female(n=10)	Male (n=20)	p
Satisfaction with life (Seccion B)	26,00±4,99	27,40±4,62	0,468
Your presente life in moment (Seccion C)	7,50± 1,43	7,74±1,73	0,698
Your present life in general (Section C)	29,60±3,78	27,55±3,49	0,169
Self-esteem	8,30±5,91	6,70±4,31	0,459

Source: Primary Data

**Table 3.** Results – differences between years of practice

	Less than 11 years (n=17)	More than 11 years (n=13)	p
Satisfaction with life (Seccion B)	26,00±4,99	27,40±4,62	0,468
Your presente life in moment (Seccion C)	7,50± 1,43	7,74±1,73	0,698
Your present life in general (Section C)	29,60±3,78	27,55±3,49	0,169
Self-esteem	8,30±5,91	6,70±4,31	0,459

Source: Primary Data

## DISCUSSION

Satisfaction with life and self-esteem are important aspects in the life of every individual, including athletes with disabilities (Ida Ayu Dian Pramantik, 2021; Naderi et al., 2016). Although they may face unique challenges and obstacles, many athletes with disabilities have proven that satisfaction with life and positive self-esteem can be achieved through achievement in sports and other activities.

The results of this study allow us to conclude that Portuguese adapted athletes and bocce are satisfied with life. Nonetheless, they present very low levels of self-esteem. The lower functional capacity, as well as the severity of Boccia athletes' deficiency, which requires the use of ancillary means, may be a reason to justify the fact that they present lower values of self-esteem than athletes.

The following are some of the factors that can contribute to satisfaction with life and self-esteem in athletes with disabilities. Sports Achievements, achievements in sports competitions, whether at the local, national, or international level, can provide a sense of accomplishment and pride that enhances an athlete's self-esteem. They can prove their abilities to the world and feel appreciated for their efforts and dedication (Weinberg & Gould, 2019).

Social Support, support from family, friends, coaches, and the community can have a positive impact on the self-esteem of athletes with

disabilities. By feeling supported and acknowledged by those around them, they can develop a positive perception of themselves.

Social Support, support from family, friends, coaches, and the community can have a positive impact on the self-esteem of athletes with disabilities. By feeling supported and acknowledged by those around them, they can develop a positive perception of themselves. Understanding of Disabilities, understanding and accepting yourself and your disabilities is an important step in building strong self-esteem. Athletes who can overcome embarrassment or mistrust regarding their disability tend to have higher levels of satisfaction. Overcome Challenges, the ability to overcome obstacles and challenges in sports and everyday life can increase feelings of accomplishment and self-worth. When athletes overcome obstacles, they feel stronger and more empowered.

Education and Community Awareness, a society that is more inclusive and aware of disability issues can help reduce stigma and discrimination. A supportive and inclusive environment can promote positive feelings of self-esteem for athletes with disabilities. Focus on Potential, developing potential and talent in sports or other fields can provide a sustained sense of accomplishment and boost self-esteem. Focusing on what can be achieved rather than limitations can help athletes see themselves in a positive light.

Mental and Emotional Health, caring for mental and emotional health is important for all individuals, including athletes with disabilities. Psychological support, stress management, and emotional understanding can help maintain satisfaction with life and self-worth.

It is important to remember that everyone's experience is unique, and feelings of satisfaction with life and self-worth can vary. For athletes with disabilities, creating a supportive environment, facilitating opportunities for development, and promoting inclusion can significantly contribute to increasing their satisfaction with life and self-esteem.

### Conclusions

The results of this study allow us to conclude that Portuguese adapted athletes and bocce are satisfied with life. Nonetheless, they present very low levels of self-esteem. The lower functional capacity, as well as the severity of Boccia athletes' deficiency, which requires the use of ancillary means, may be a reason to justify the fact that they present lower values of self-esteem than athletes. The same reason may justify a lower level of satisfaction with the lives of athletes with more sporting experience, since they are also older athletes whose functional capacity deteriorates. Future research suggests the use of instruments that use multidimensional models of self-esteem and satisfaction with life, as well as the use of a control group, without sports practice and with similar sociodemographic deficiencies and characteristics.

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### Conflict of Interest

We declare that this article we wrote is not involved in any conflict of interest.

### Ethics Statement

The writing of this article has gone through all ethical procedures related to the academic realm. All the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki were complied with number ethical clearance is 070/A/VI/2023, with special emphasis on informed consent and the vulnerability of the study population.

### Authors Contribution

Study Design, CCVL and EB; Data Collection, CCVL, EB, DTPP and EC; Statistical Analysis, CCVL, EB, DTPP and EC; Data Interpretation, CCVL and EB; Manuscript Preparation, CCVL, EB, DTPP and EC; Literature Search, CCVL, EB, DTPP and EC. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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