

EAS 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Dual Career of Elite Athletes:
Integrating Sport and Education
for Future Success*

6 – 8 October, 2025, Riga, Latvia



EUROPEAN ATHLETE STUDENT

THE DUAL CAREER NETWORK



UNIVERSITY
OF LATVIA



Books, Boxing, Belonging: The Case of Turkish Female Student-Athlete Duo

Kivanç SEMİZ, MSc, PhD



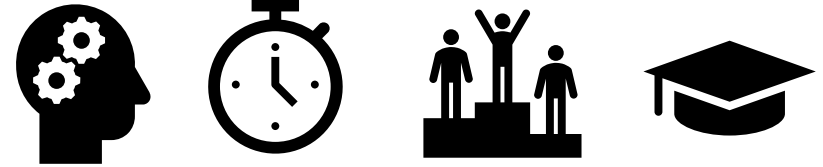
@ksemiz



kivancsemiz@gmail.com

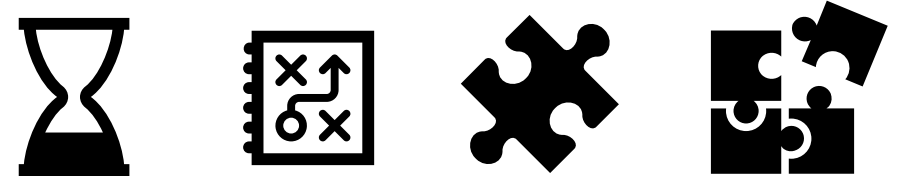


Introduction



- Sports high school students’
 - Motivation in sports stays high regardless of school motivation
(Saarinen et al., 2025)
 - Career adaptability predicts grades and dual-career persistence.
(Ojala et al., 2023)
 - Dual-career success is associated with coordinating automatic habits with deliberate planning to balance sport and school.
(Kuokkanen et al., 2024)

Introduction



- Well coordinated school support boosts youth adaptability; sports-centric models constrain dual career.

(Nikander, Tolvanen & Ryba, 2024)

- Whole-person support and transition environments play important role for ecological view of athlete career

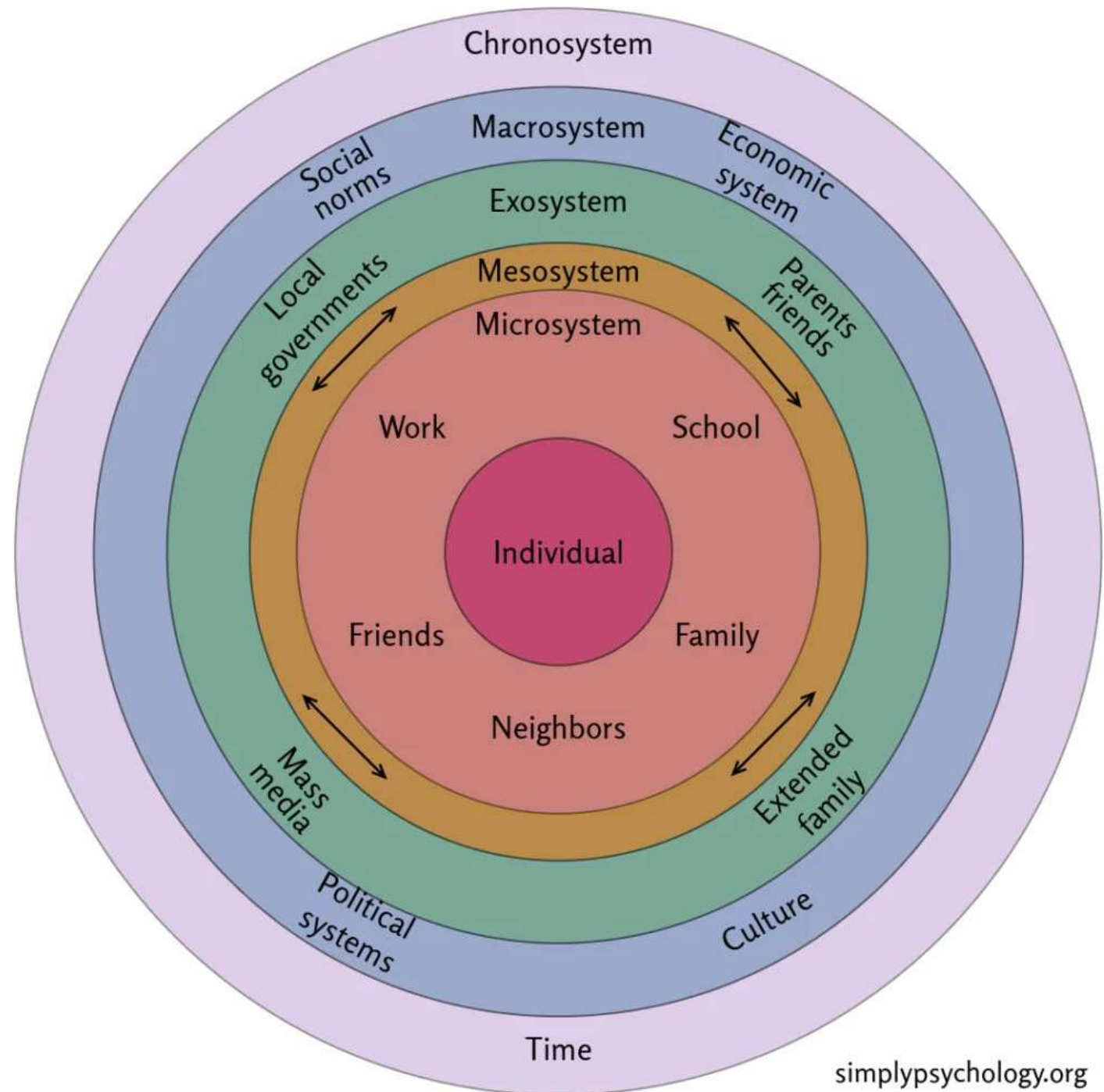
(Henriksen et al., 2024)

- Bridging the Holistic Developmental Approach (focus on the athlete) with the Holistic Ecological Approach (focus on environments)

(Stambulova & Henriksen 2025)

Social Ecological Model (SEM)

Bronfenbrenner (1977)



The cases

- Females, 21- and 18-year-olds.
- Boxing: a sport often culturally linked to working-class masculinities
- Graduates of science high schools
 - Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) students



Purpose

- how SEM layers interact in shaping identities and career orientations of female boxer student athletes?

Methods

- Qualitative case study
- Life-history interviews
- Participant observations
- Thematic content analysis

(Silverman, 2020)



Themes

1. Cultural Decision: Athletes must choose Sport Sciences
2. The Centrality of the Coach: Master–Apprentice Relations
3. The Swept-Under-the-Carpet Reality:
Being a student–athlete in Türkiye



1. Cultural Decision: Athletes must choose Sport Sciences

- «At first, I didn't want to study PETE. The fact that my high-school PE teacher was a former national boxer, together with the policy granting national athletes the right to become teachers or coaches, influenced my decision. In a patriarchal setting, choosing this path was not easy for me.» B1
- «Transitioning from a science high school to PETE was somewhat unconventional and initially surprised those around me. I was looking for a field that would challenge me both physically and mentally. Although boxing is often perceived as purely physical, it is not. The analytical thinking I developed in science high school helped me progress rapidly in the ring.»B2



1. Cultural Decision: Athletes must choose Sport Sciences

- A pragmatic career option
- A compromise between academic potential and sporting passion
- A patriarchal challenge in Türkiye



2. The Centrality of the Coach: Master–Apprentice Relations

- «I needed to pick a school near my coach's place. He was also coaching my high-school friend—who already had medals and titles—so watching them pulled me into the sport. When your training partner is good, you get better too. In the end, we pushed each other forward.» B1
- «My coach persuaded both the school administration and my family. My friend progressed rapidly after me and contributed to my development. As training partners, we pushed each other forward. This sport opened a path for me—both in my journey to find my identity and in my struggle within a patriarchal society, as well as through the solidarity I found in sport.» B2



2. The Centrality of the Coach: Master–Apprentice Relations

- The authority of the trainer in boxing culture
- Mentorship functions as both a disciplinary force and a source of belonging
- Partnership fosters – one for all, all for one



3. The Swept-Under-the-Carpet Reality: Being a student–athlete in Turkiye



- «We spend most of the year at camps and in training. That means my athletic identity has to come first. I'm on campus mostly during exams, trying to get notes from friends—who, not being in sport themselves, don't always get what we're going through.» B1
- «Getting to classes is tough. Even though the Ministry excuses us, missing lectures means we sometimes face bias. Competing professionally makes it really hard to keep up with another major at the same time.» B2



3. The Swept-Under-the-Carpet Reality: Being a student–athlete in Türkiye



- Hidden struggles & time pressures,
- Marginalization of academic identity
- The lack of systemic support for balancing dual careers



Discussion

- Ecological chain of influence
 - Preconditions (resources & context)
 - Processes (daily routines & coordination)
 - Philosophy (shared values guiding action)
 - Athlete development & DC competencies
 - Outcomes (effectiveness of the environment)
 - Dynamic & systemic features (feedback and timescale)

(Henriksen et al., 2020)



Discussion

- Counselor Roles regarding SEM

- Educator (education, literacy, reframing toughness),
- Advocate (norms, policies, equitable access),
- Therapist (embedded services, routine screening, clear referral pathways)

(Reich et al., 2021)



Discussion

- 2-year longitudinal study revealed elite Judo Student-Athletes prioritize sport over education during their first two years in university.

(Hong & Hong, 2024)

- Individual psychological factors have broader effects than ecological influences

(Kovács, 2025)



Discussion

- Socio-emotional support from coaches have high influence on future perspectives and career adaptability of student athletes

(Gamboa et al., 2023)

- Feeling relatedness with peers is connected with dual-career satisfaction

(Linnér et al., 2024)



Discussion

- Career adaptability resources - mainly the self regulation abilities - for dual career pathways in upper secondary school is crucial.

(Ojala et al., 2023)

- Student-athletes in upper secondary school have higher motivation in sports compared to school. Those with low motivation in sports also displayed low motivation in school.

(Saarinen et al., 2025)



Snapshot of the study

- Multi-layered cultural dynamics experienced by young women showed being the dual career student athlete in Türkiye
- Navigating with academically elite backgrounds (science high school) through the sports environment
- Subcultural sporting practices, and gendered expectations (female boxing)



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@ksemiz



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