

## THE SPORT COMMITMENT MODEL: COMMITMENT AND OUTCOME BEHAVIOURS OF AGE-GROUP TRIATHLETES

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of specific factors that influence commitment for adults in the sport of triathlon. Secondary purposes were to examine whether levels of commitment predict training behaviours and to evaluate and compare two different models of sport commitment. Sport commitment has been identified as “the psychological state representing the desire or resolve to continue sport participation” (Scanlan et al., 1993, p. 6). Scanlan and colleagues’ Sport Commitment Model has been used to describe and identify factors that predict levels of sport commitment in athletes (Scanlan et al., 1993). These factors include social constraints, personal investment, involvement opportunities, attractive alternatives, enjoyment and social support (Carpenter & Coleman, 1998; Scanlan et al., 1993). There has been little investigation of the sport commitment model in endurance sports such as triathlon (swim, bike, run). The sample consisted of 144 female ( $n=75$ ) and male ( $n=69$ ) age-group adult triathletes ( $x = 36.89$  years). In addition to variables in the sport commitment model tested in previous research (Carpenter et al., 1993; Sarason et al., 1987; Scanlan et al., 1993a, 1993b; Wilson et al., 2004) we also assessed training behaviours. Participants were recruited at local triathlon races, triathlon expos, and club practices. Individuals received pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelopes with the questionnaire pack to fill out at their personal convenience.

We tested a direct effect model and a mediational model (Weiss et al., 2001). The direct effect model predicts that sport commitment would be positively correlated to enjoyment, social support, personal investments, involvement opportunities, and negatively correlated to involvement alternatives and social constraints. The mediational model predicts enjoyment to mediate the effects of the other five variables on sport commitment. We also tested whether sport commitment positively predicted actual behaviour.

When examining the total sample, the results showed that sport enjoyment ( $r = .42$ ), personal investments ( $r = .51$ ), involvement opportunities ( $r = .57$ ), social support ( $r = .20$ ) and alternative ( $r = -.60$ ) were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) correlated to sport commitment. Social constraint ( $r = -.097$ ) was not significantly correlated. A weak significant correlation exists between sport commitment and training behaviour ( $r = .222$ ). Regression analysis did not provide support for the mediational model, but did support a direct effect model of sport commitment. Five predictors explained 57% of the total variance of sport commitment. However, there were gender differences. For males, enjoyment ( $\beta = .25$ ), opportunities ( $\beta = .24$ ), attractive alternatives ( $\beta = -.27$ ) and investments ( $\beta = .28$ ) predicted sport commitment. For females, only opportunities ( $\beta = .31$ ), attractive alternatives ( $\beta = -.48$ ) and investments ( $\beta = .23$ ) were significant predictors. For males ( $\beta = .64$ ) and females ( $\beta = .46$ ), investments were the primary predictor of training behaviour.