



Soccer Players Cultural Capital and Its Impact on Migration

by

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The purpose of this study was to identify factors that constituted the cultural capital among soccer players. We assumed that in the increasingly globalized world of professional soccer, a player's success would often depend on migrating and adjusting to life in other countries. Willingness to migrate and successful adjustment are tied to player's previous attitudes and/or behaviours (habitus), significant support from others, including family members, and previous experiences and success in sports and education. Our hypothesised model of the cultural capital was based on the Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework. It consisted of 26 variables related to three sets of factors: soccer experiences, a family context and support, and educational achievements of the players and their parents. The model was tested using a sample of 79 current soccer coaches who also had been players at the elite level. A factor analysis was used to empirically verify the content of the hypothetical model of the soccer players' cultural capital. Nine latent factors were extracted and together, they accounted for 55.01% of the total model variance. Individual factors obtained showed a sufficient level of substantial connection. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.77 confirmed the internal consistency of the operationalised variables in the hypothetical model. In addition, the impact of these aforementioned life dimensions on the migration of soccer players was studied. The results of the binary logistic regression analysis showed that the first factor of the hypothetical model (F1) had 2.2 times and the second factor (F8) had 3.9 times higher odds for migration abroad. Sociocultural findings using this new assessment approach could help create better "success conditions" in the talent development of young players.

Key words: social cultural factors, soccer, talent development.

Introduction

The structure of today's modern soccer, with all its forms, is much more complex than the idea of a simple soccer game. Both society and culture, as well as contemporary sport, are under the influence of major forces of social change (Nixon, 2008). Due to the existence of these social processes in sports, some interesting questions arise about the socio-cultural profile of contemporary young soccer players. When seeking young talented players, "scouting" and sports diagnostics are most frequently used, by which motor skills such as power, stamina, coordination, speed and agility, are measured (Amonette et al., 2014; Nikolaidis et al., 2014). Although the environment, in which a young athlete develops, is of key importance for an individual's further sports

career (Côté, 1999), sociological factors are mostly neglected.

Feichtinger and Höner (2014) as well as Domingues and Gonçalves (2013) indicated that environmental social facts should now more than ever be considered in the diagnostic evaluation of talented young athletes. Gagné (2010) for example defines in his revised framework, "Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT 2.0 framework)", the environmental impacts as "environmental catalysts", which have significant influence on an individual at both macroscopic and microscopic levels. Taken together, we can say that the aforementioned authors are in line with the Bronfenbrenner's (2001) system theory approach to human development. Therefore, the success of an

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athlete is a multidimensional event that combines physical, mental and social factors.

If social change has an influence on sport, it can be logically concluded that the self-definition and development of a soccer player is influenced by his/her social and cultural environment. As the cultural capital and habitus (the system of interiorised inclinations and tastes) theory of a French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1986), offers many theoretical aspects for the study of an individual soccer player, this research was based on this respected theory. Bourdieu explains that there are three basic forms of a capital: an *economic capital* that can be quickly converted into a monetary form or a property right, a *cultural capital* that can be under certain conditions converted into the economic capital and presented in the form of a professional qualification, and a *social capital* that includes social ties, contacts and relationships. Of these three, the cultural capital seems to be most important when studying success factors for soccer players today.

Bourdieu (1986) classified cultural capital into three subtypes:

- *Embodied cultural capital*: this type of a capital is linked to the body of an individual, such as education, knowledge, behaviour, and attitude;
- *Institutionalised cultural capital*: this capital is defined by its institutional recognition obtained in the form of academic credentials or qualifications on the basis of an individual's education; and
- *Objectified cultural capital*: this capital is defined as ownership of cultural goods and works of art.

The acquisition of the cultural capital occurs as individuals have specific socialization experiences across different life fields. These experiences involve a dual process of social learning and social development (Coakley, 1993). Similar to Bourdieu, Coakley (1993, 2015) described an "internalization model", in which an individual learnt in different ways to use the rules of the society in which he/she lived. Previous studies of the cultural capital among elite athletes have mostly been limited to the description of the globalization processes and research on the characteristics of soccer players' migration. For example, Maguire and Falcous (2011) considered migration in sports as involving a global process of "culture exchange". Lee (2010) interpreted sports migration as a form of labour migration through which elite soccer players sought attractive offers

regardless of the nation from which they came. Due to this economic process, the concentration of the best soccer players in the top five European leagues is found in club soccer (Maguire and Pearton, 2000). In accordance with these economic processes many of the most talented players, including members of the national team from "smaller soccer countries", choose to play in wealthy, high profile clubs (Bundesliga, Germany; Serie A, Italy; Primera Division, Spain) rather than clubs in their own country. In fact, there are many possibilities for initiating a career abroad, and this is what led to our interest in the potential impact of the cultural capital on career success in connection with player migration.

At this time there is no validated instrument for measuring the cultural capital of soccer players, despite the role it may play in overall career success. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to develop a tool to identify the characteristics of the cultural capital among elite soccer players. We assumed that specific embodied and institutionalised forms of the cultural capital were acquired by players through socialization experiences influenced by the social structures that framed their soccer careers and their everyday lives. As such, we focused on the field of the institutionalised and embodied cultural capital (Figure 1) in line with Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) theory.

The composition, in terms of content, of the twenty-six questions in the questionnaire was such that the questions explicitly referred to the hypothetical model of the cultural capital by combining facts of different social spaces in a dialectic manner.

Therefore, we concluded that an individual chose a certain soccer club, additional training, etc. based on his/her own experiences (i.e. embodied cultural capital, Tables 1a and 1b). Thus, the embodied cultural capital described for us, what an individual was doing, due to his/her acquired competencies, skills, sociocultural background and origin (for example the location/place of beginning the soccer career, the competition level of a player's first club, etc). Similar to Poli (2015), who examined the "experience capital" of young players in terms of matches played at different competition levels, we defined the references of a soccer player (i.e. the achieved competition level, accomplishments in terms of winning championships, international and

national team matches), as the institutionalised cultural capital of a soccer player (Tables 2a and 2b). Additionally, we examined the influence of family factors including the encouragement and support of parents as well as the social status of the family, on the players' sports career (Birchwood et al., 2008; Côté, 1999; Domingues and Gonçalves, 2013; Nunomura and Oliveira, 2013; Sanchez-Miguel et al., 2013). School variables (DiMaggio, 1982) were also considered due to their possible influence on the embodied or institutionalized cultural capital in general.

This specific form of the cultural capital produces "specific structural effects" within its social field (Vaugrand, 2001). Our research tried to implement an analysis of the specific cultural capital of a soccer player by seeking biographical parallels among the subjects regarding their practical dispositions and achievements in different social fields. We used Bourdieu's theory (1986) to identify the social factors (Coakley, 1993, 2015; Gagné, 2010) that affected the habituated dispositions and achievements of a soccer player. In the end, we traced the operationalized and structured outcomes (latent factors) of the embodied and institutionalized cultural capital with reference to migration abroad, which we classified as career success of the player.

Material and Methods

Instrumentation

In the study, simple measurable variables were combined to identify a set of cultural characteristics which emerged in connection with specific sociocultural conditions. We anticipated that individual's thinking and attitudes (habitus) were most objectively presented in their past actions (Engström, 2008). Therefore, all items used were assumed to have a mutual influence on each other regardless of the originating source. Finally, all of these influencing variables together produced a specific form of the cultural capital (Figure 1). The questions included in our survey questionnaire had different forms. Some had to be answered using a 5-level Likert type scale: score 1 stood for a less important statement and score 5 for a very important statement. A similar classification for obtaining comparable sample units was used for the variables of the remaining questions (Tables 1a/1b and 2a/ 2b).

Participants and procedure

The study included 79 male soccer coaches between the age of 20 and 51 years ($M = 35.73$; $SD = 6.22$). The participants, current coaches, had completed the soccer coaching licencing course of the Football Association of Slovenia in December 2013 and January 2014 at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport. The subjects either had played or were playing at elite, amateur or professional levels. Participation in the survey was voluntary and the questionnaire ($n = 26$) was completed in writing under the same conditions in the same room. The study followed the ethical guidelines and rules for research with human subjects at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport and was approved by the Ethical Committee of the University. All information obtained in the questionnaire was and will remain confidential and used for research purposes only.

Statistical analysis

The data were processed using IBM SPSS statistics for Windows 22.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, USA). Analysis included descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis. The maximum likelihood method with varimax rotation was applied to discover the latent structure of the cultural capital and to verify the reliability of the measuring instrument.

Quantification points of the items (Tables 1 and 2) were used for the exploratory factor analysis. Only factor loading higher than 0.4 was reported in the results. The number of extracted factors was determined by the size of an individual factor's eigenvalue, which exceeded or was equal to 1 (the Kaiser-Guttman criterion). The internal consistency of the hypothetical model was verified by the calculation of Cronbach's alpha. Binary logistic regression was used to analyse the possible connection of soccer player migration indicators obtained from the factor analysis. The sample of respondents was divided into two groups (players who played soccer abroad and who did not play soccer abroad). The binary logistic regression analysis linked to the departure or non-departure of a soccer player abroad was conducted using the extracted factors from 1 to 9.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the categorized soccer, school and family items are presented in

Tables 1a and 1b (the embodied cultural capital) and Tables 2a and 2b (the institutionalised cultural capital).

Results of factor analysis

The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (0.6) showed marginal adequacy of the

indicators selected in the hypothetical model. The Bartlett's sphericity test (0.0) showed that the performance of the factor analysis was adequate. The internal consistency of the hypothetical model was verified using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.77$).

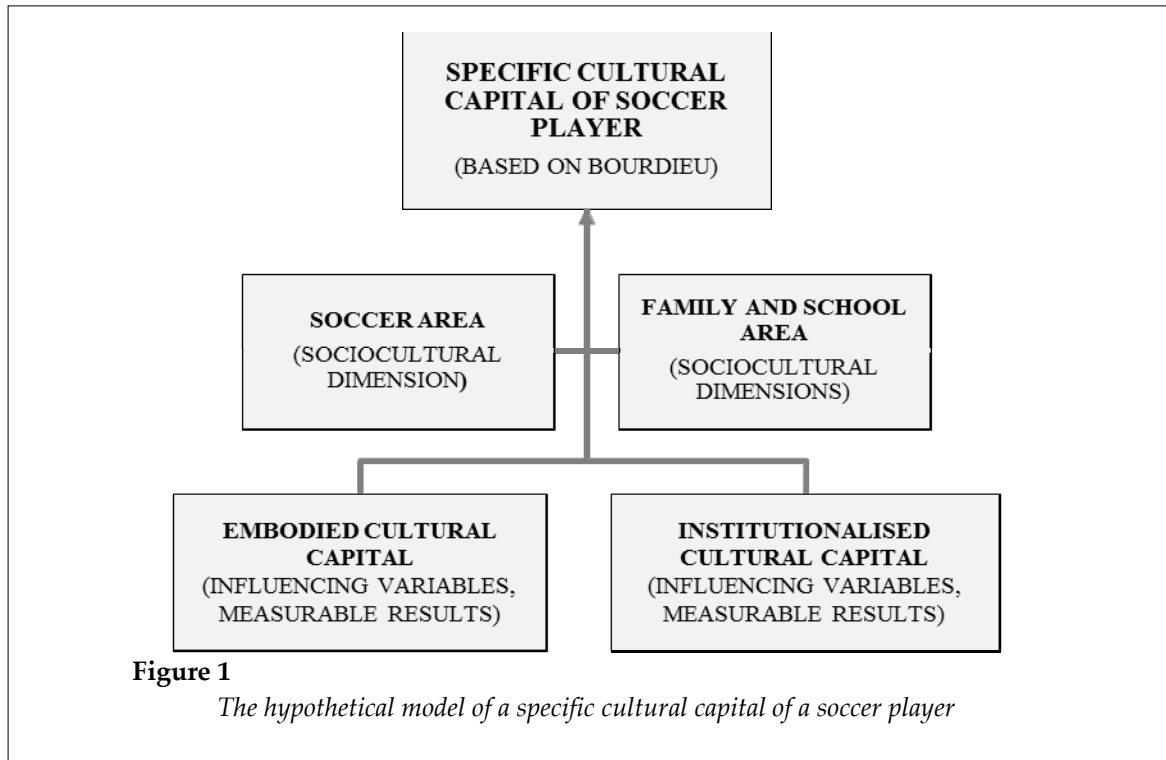


Figure 1
The hypothetical model of a specific cultural capital of a soccer player

Table 1a

Description of the variables of the embodied cultural capital (n = 79)

Item Description	Quantification of Item	Points	Frequency	Percent (%)
(1) Age of the soccer player when he started playing soccer	6 years and younger	5	17	21.5
	at the age of 7	4	18	22.8
	at the age of 8	3	10	12.7
	at the age of 9	2	10	12.7
	10 years and older	1	24	30.4
	Total			79
(2) Location of the first club (town/place)	more than 200,000 inhabitants	5	17	21.5
	more than 100,000 inhabitants	4	4	5.1
	more than 50,000 inhabitants	3	4	5.1
	more than 20,000 inhabitants	2	21	26.6
	up to 20,000 inhabitants	1	33	41.8
	Total			79
(3) Competition level of the first club	first league	5	29	36.7
	second league	4	11	13.9
	third league	3	18	22.8
	lower amateur league	2	20	25.3
	the club had no senior team	1	1	1.3
	Total			79

Table 1b*Continuation Table 1a: Description of the variables of the embodied cultural capital (n = 79)*

Item Description	Quantification of Item	Points	Frequency	Percent (%)
(10) Number of club changes of the soccer player to the age of 17	more than once	3	7	8.9
	once	2	29	36.7
	never	1	42	53.2
	Total		78	98.8
(11) Number of club changes of the soccer player from age 18 onwards	more than once	3	48	60.8
	once	2	6	7.6
	never	1	25	31.6
	Total		79	100
(12) Additional soccer training in youth	yes, often	3	46	58.2
	yes, but rarely	2	18	22.8
	no, never	1	15	19.0
	Total		79	100
(13) Practising another organised sport	yes, often	3	27	34.2
	yes, but rarely	2	21	26.6
	no, never	1	31	39.2
	Total		79	100
(15) Number of primary family members	more than 5 members	5	7	8.9
	5 members	4	13	16.5
	4 members	3	46	58.2
	3 members	2	8	10.1
	2 members	1	2	2.5
	Total		76	96.2
(16) Father's encouragement	great encouragement	5	15	19.0
	good encouragement	4	15	19.0
	moderate encouragement	3	21	26.6
	partial encouragement	2	15	19.0
	slight encouragement	1	13	16.5
	Total		79	100
(17) Mother's encouragement	great encouragement	5	3	3.8
	good encouragement	4	15	19.0
	moderate encouragement	3	19	24.1
	partial encouragement	2	20	25.3
	slight encouragement	1	11	13.9
	Total		79	100
(18) Financial assistance of parents during the career	substantial	5	4	5.1
	high	4	12	15.2
	medium	3	23	29.1
	poor	2	26	32.9
	minimal	1	13	16.5
	Total		78	98.8
(19) Relationship with parents	very good	5	43	54.4
	good	4	24	30.4
	average	3	9	11.4
	poor	2	2	2.5
	very poor	1	1	1.3
	Total		79	100
(20) Mutual encouragement given by parents	fully agree	5	41	51.9
	agree	4	15	19.0
	partially agree	3	13	16.5
	agree to a minimum extent	2	8	10.1
	do not agree at all	1	2	2.5
	Total		79	100
(22) Social class of the family	high class	3	0	0
	middle class	2	71	89.9
	lower class	1	8	10.1
	Total		79	100

Table 2a

Description of the variables of the institutionalised cultural capital (n = 79)

Item Description	Quantification of Item	Points	Frequency	Percent (%)
(4) Index of all national team match appearances = senior team, U 21, U 20, U 19, U 18, U 17, U 16; (U=Under)	played on seven national teams	8	7	8.9
	played on six national teams	7	5	6.3
	played on five national teams	6	2	2.5
	played on four national teams	5	3	3.8
	played on three national teams	4	1	1.3
	played on two national teams	3	3	3.8
	played on one national teams	2	10	12.7
	did not play on national teams	1	48	60.8
Total			79	100
(5) Number of soccer laurels as an Under 16 player (winning national championships)	yes, twice	3	4	5.1
	yes, once	2	7	8.9
	no, never	1	68	86.1
Total			79	100
(6) Number of soccer laurels as an Under 18 player (winning national championships)	yes, twice	3	5	6.3
	yes, once	2	6	7.6
	no, never	1	68	86.1
Total			79	100
(7) Number of soccer laurels as a senior (winning national championships)	yes, more than 3 times	5	1	1.3
	yes, three times	4	2	2.5
	yes, twice	3	8	10.1
	yes, once	2	6	7.6
	no, never	1	62	78.5
Total			79	100
(8) Number of cup laurels as a senior (winning national cup competitions)	yes, three times	4	3	3.8
	yes, twice	3	5	6.3
	yes, once	2	10	12.7
	no, never	1	61	77.2
Total			79	100
(9) Categorisation of the National Olympic Committee of Slovenia (NOC)	world class	6	0	0
	international class	5	5	6.3
	perspective class	4	12	15.2
	national class	3	19	24.1
	junior class	2	12	15.2
	not categorised	1	31	39.2
Total			79	100

Table 2b*Continuation Table 2a: Description of the variables of institutionalised cultural capital (n = 79)*

Item Description	Quantification of Item	Points	Frequency	Percent (%)
(14) Number of played matches in the UEFA cup	yes, more than 20 times	5	3	3.8
	yes, more than 10 -times	4	4	5.1
	yes, 3-9-times	3	8	10.1
	yes, 1-2 times	2	5	6.3
	no, never	1	59	74.7
	Total		79	100
(21) Knowledge of foreign languages (soccer player)	three or more foreign languages	4	37	46.8
	two foreign languages	3	23	29.1
	one foreign language	2	17	21.5
	no foreign language	1	2	2.5
	Total		79	100
(23) Highest level of education – mother	Ph.D.	8	0	0
	Master degree, specialisation	7	3	3.8
	University (VII)	6	9	11.4
	College (VI)	5	10	12.7
	Secondary school (V)	4	25	31.6
	Vocational school (IV)	3	13	16.5
	Primary school	2	13	16.5
	No formal education	1	6	7.6
	Total		79	100
(24) Highest level of education - father	Ph.D.	8	0	0
	Master degree, specialisation	7	2	2.5
	University (VII)	6	5	6.3
	College (VI)	5	10	12.7
	Secondary school (V)	4	31	39.2
	Vocational school (IV)	3	20	25.3
	Primary school	2	10	12.7
	No formal education	1	0	0
	Total		78	98.8
(25) Highest level of education – soccer player	Ph.D.	8	0	0
	Master degree, specialisation	7	3	3.8
	University (VII)	6	13	16.5
	College (VI)	5	19	24.1
	Secondary school (V)	4	36	45.6
	Vocational school (IV)	3	5	6.3
	Primary school	2	2	2.5
	No formal education	1	0	0
	Total		78	98.8
(26) School success of the soccer player	excellent	4	5	6.3
	very good	3	35	44.3
	good	2	30	38.0
	sufficient	1	9	11.4
	Total		79	100

Table 3

Factor structure of soccer, school and family dimensions

Items and factors (F)	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9
F1									
Index of national team match appearances	0.55								
Number of laurels as senior	0.55								
Number of cup laurels as a senior	0.99								
Number of matches played in the UEFA cup	0.76								
F2									
Father's encouragement		0.69							
Mother's encouragement		0.93							
Financial assistance of parents during career		0.47							
F3									
Number of soccer laurels as an Under 16 player			0.83						
Number of soccer laurels as an Under 18 player			0.70						
NOC categorisation			0.40						
F4									
Highest level of education - mother				0.69					
Highest level of education - father				0.89					
Highest level of education - soccer player				0.42					
F5									
Relationship with parents					0.54				
Total encouragement of parents during the career					0.91				
F6									
Age of soccer player - beginning of playing						0.48			
Location of the first club (town/ place)						0.54			
Competition level of the first club						0.59			
F7									
Age of soccer player - beginning of playing							0.46		
Number of club changes to age 17							0.56		
F8									
Number of club changes from age 18 onwards								0.60	
Practising another sport								0.52	
F9									
Number of matches in the UEFA CUP									0.57
% of factor variance before extraction and rotation	18.64	10.26	7.76	7.32	6.83	5.82	5.09	4.24	3.91
Cumulative %	18.64	28.90	36.66	43.98	50.80	56.62	61.72	65.96	69.87
% of factor variance after extraction and rotation	9.49	8.44	7.97	7.05	5.71	5.31	4.63	4.24	2.17
Cumulative %	9.49	17.93	25.9	32.95	38.66	43.97	48.6	52.84	55.01
<i>Note. Maximum Likelihood Method with Varimax rotation. Factor loading below 0.4 was suppressed. The share of explained variance of an individual factor and the cumulative share of variances of all factors are presented.</i>									

Table 4
Results of the binary logistic regression analysis and the impact of the obtained factor regression coefficients on migration abroad

Factors	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
FAC1_1	-1.482	.005	0.227
FAC2_1	-.108	.732	0.898
FAC3_1	-.450	.252	0.637
FAC4_1	.313	.385	1.367
FAC5_1	-.534	.089	0.586
FAC6_1	-.555	.145	0.574
FAC7_1	.384	.302	1.469
FAC8_1	-.932	.019	0.394
FAC9_1	.703	.056	2.020

Nine factors of the cultural capital were determined on the basis of exploratory factor analysis; the factors accounted for 69.9% of the total model variance before extraction and rotation (initial Eigenvalues, Table 3).

Results of the binary logistic regression

The question about playing abroad was answered by 73 respondents out of 79. From those 73 respondents, 34 had played abroad. The logistic regression model was significant (omnibus test result, $p < .05$). The usability of the logistic model was verified by means of the determination coefficient of Cox & Snell R^2 (0.37) and Nagelkerke R^2 (0.50). The results of the binary logistic regression analysis showed that the unit (i.e. standard deviation) change factor (F1) had 2.2 times higher odds and the factor (F8) had 3.9 times higher odds for migration abroad (Table 4).

Discussion

The hypothetical construct of the cultural capital among the coach-players was operationalised in line with Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) ideas. A direct diagnostic of cultural capital's latent factors of all 26 variables was possible; nine characteristic factors were formed, which together accounted for 55.01% of the total model variance after extraction and rotation. All

obtained factors were clearly allocated respectively to their subject matter in terms of the embodied or institutionalised culture capital. The results of the factor analysis revealed that the first obtained factor (F1) was dominant. In terms of content, factor (F1) consisted of four characteristic variables from the field of soccer factors that fell within the institutionalised cultural capital in line with Bourdieu's (1986) theory and underlined the relative importance of gained references of a soccer player concerning his/her sports career (Poli, 2015). Two more latent factors (F3 and F9) were found, of which content corresponded with factor (F1). The second obtained factor (F2) consisted of family factors describing parents' encouragement (Domingues and Gonçalves, 2013; Sanchez et al., 2013) and also family's financial support (Nunomura and Oliveira, 2013) during the sports career. Parental assistance to the sports engagement of their child (Birchwood, 2008; Côté, 1999) seems to be eminently important for child's sports development and its realisation in sports. The fifth obtained factor (F5) also consisted of two variables that well connected to the player's relationship with parents and common encouragement of parents. The fourth factor (F4) consisted of variables that described the education level of the soccer player and his/her parents in

terms of the institutionalised cultural capital (DiMaggio, 1982).

The sixth factor (F6) described the primary embodied soccer characteristics of a player. The first step of a soccer career, including the main decision as to “where and with whom to start the career”, is obviously an important factor for career development. The seventh factor (F7) consisted of variables from the field of the embodied cultural capital. The eighth factor (F8), also including dimensions of the embodied cultural capital, referred to the number of club changes in a soccer player’s career from the age of 18 onwards and whether he practised another organised sport (Malina, 2004).

The results of the binary logistic regression analysis showed a rather anticipated picture regarding the first factor (F1). Soccer accomplishments and honours are by all means a basic criterion for evaluating a player’s career (Poli, 2015). The impact of the other “pure soccer” factor (F8) on the migration of a soccer player was unexpected. The results showed that the two linked “embodied” variables of this factor (F8) had together 3.9 times better prospects for a successful migration abroad. Readiness for multiple club changes seemed to be an important embodied psychosocial characteristic (*habitus*). With respect to the other obtained variable within factor (F8), Malina (2004) explained that practising other sports in childhood (embodied action) was very useful for the development of athlete’s overall motor skills. The combination of these two variables seemed to have an important influence on a soccer player’s career in relation to migration. It is worth taking note that factor (F5), which consisted of the parental relationship and common encouragement of parents indicated an interesting trend for migration abroad.

Conclusion

Bourdieu’s theory on the cultural capital (1984, 1986) is, in terms of content, very extensive. Nevertheless, it helped operationalize the items of our theoretical construct of the soccer player’s cultural capital. Our study represents the first step in identifying the specific elements of the cultural capital for soccer players in line with Bourdieu’s theory. Overall, we succeeded in operationalizing environmental impacts from different dimensions, which Gagné (2010) described as *milieu* (physical,

cultural, social, and familial), persons (parents, etc.), provisions (activities, etc.) and events (encounters, awards, etc.).

Despite the limitations of our sample, we were able to confirm operationalisation of the variables and to implement the first step for validation of the measuring instrument. Although, due to the limitations of our sample, it is difficult to formulate firm assumptions regarding the practical applicability of our approach.

However, we found structural effects (Vaugrand, 2001) inside soccer players’ practical dispositions, accomplishments and family variables, which demonstrated a logical internal composition. Additionally, the obtained factors showed substantive connections in line with our hypothetical model of the cultural capital among soccer players. The two obtained “pure soccer” factors had an impact on migration. Our results provide a basis for further research to confirm these findings. To this end, future research on this topic should include a richer sample comprised of professional players. A verified analytical model of a soccer player’s cultural capital would be useful when creating the basic conditions for the holistic development of a young player’s successful career. Moreover, further research could also implement an enriched and modified questionnaire to enlarge possible findings of the embodied and institutionalized culture capital in regard to soccer players’ careers. We also suggest that measuring specific forms of the cultural capital could assist soccer club officials when assessing and purchasing players. This assessment method would complement “scouting” and “sports diagnostics” when creating a holistic overview of a player and when creating “success conditions” in the talent development of young players.

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