

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

A Systematic Review of Professional Identity in Sport Psychology

Alessandro Quartiroli*

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

University of Portsmouth

Christopher R. D. Wagstaff

Daniel R. F. Martin

University of Portsmouth

David Tod

Liverpool John Moores University

*Corresponding Author: Alessandro Quartiroli, Psychology Department, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, La Crosse, Wisconsin, WI, USA. Email: aquartiroli@uwlax.edu

24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

Abstract

The establishment of a strong professional identity (PI) among sport psychology practitioners (SPPs) has the potential to increase the likelihood of individual ethical working, awareness of professional roles, and ultimately, support of a more effective and lasting career. Nevertheless, there is currently no global consensus regarding a definition of sport psychology professional identity, which is imperative for ongoing advances in professional formation, training and practice. In this study, we conducted a systematic review of literature with the aim of developing an understanding of existing sport psychology professional identity knowledge. Following the PRISMA guidelines, we initially identified 4,393 research records, which we screened and assessed for eligibility reducing the sample of articles fitting our inclusion criteria to 25 manuscripts. We analyzed these articles by engaging in an inductive thematic analysis aimed at identifying patterns within the data and forming an organized, rich, and detailed description of the data. This analysis led to the development of four main themes: Formation of Professional Identity; Embodying Professional Identity; Influences on Professional Identity, and Challenges to Professional Identity. These data are discussed in terms of their implications for professional bodies and educational programs and their contribution to potential future research.

Keywords: Effective practice, Professional training, Professional development, Professional formation.

41 **Professional Identity in Sport Psychology: A Qualitative Review of the Literature**

42 Since the 1890s, the field of sport psychology (SP) has gained increasing levels of visibility within
43 the scholarly and professional communities of sport and exercise science and psychology; as well as in the
44 media and in society (Kornspan & Quartiroli, 2017). Initially, this field developed as a sub discipline of sport
45 and exercise science, but more recently sport psychology has experienced a shift toward a greater presence of
46 psychological knowledge, theoretical frameworks, and perspectives (Tod et al., 2014). Associated with these
47 developments, scholars have noted the growing number of professionals around the globe start engaging in
48 applied SP practitioners, leading many educational and training pathways to focus on credentialization via
49 accreditation, qualification and licensure (e.g., Cremades et al., 2014; Sly et al., 2019).

50 While much of the early SP professional development research reflected a primary focus on
51 psychological phenomena in sport (Terry et al., 2021), more recently, SP professional literature better
52 represented scholarly work focused on the interventions used by sport psychology practitioners and the
53 psychological concepts that inform such delivery tools (Tod et al., 2017). Despite growing attention being
54 devoted to the profession, Tod (2017) argued that the existing scholarly literature focused on sport
55 psychology practitioners (SPPs) may provide the superficial idea of a clear profession, wherein practitioners
56 offering applied psychology services introduce themselves using a variety of titles and credentials; presenting
57 widely diverse educational and professional backgrounds. This range of professional qualification, titles,
58 background, educational and training paths, may be the by-product not just of the variety of labels used to
59 define the science and study of thoughts and behavior underlying human performance (e.g., exercise, sport,
60 dance, music), but also to the complexity characterizing the legal, social, political, and contextual issues
61 characterizing the world of sport (Cremades et al., 2014). This wide variety of professional requirements and
62 training across countries, industries, and organizations can lead to professional confusion and lack of
63 regulation in service provision, whether in sport or in other performance areas, which could lead to unethical,
64 unprofessional, an ineffective service delivery.

65 The exploration of the characteristics of professionals delivering sport psychology services has a
66 long history (e.g., Orlick & Partington, 1987), with researchers delineating the characteristics and
67 qualities of an effective sport psychology practitioner from the perspectives of coaches, athletes and
68 support staff (e.g., Chandler et al., 2014) as well as from the perspective of practitioners themselves
69 (e.g., Cropley et al., 2010). Further, researchers have explored the career maturation process of SPPs
70 with regards to changes in service delivery (e.g., McEwan et al., 2019; Tod et al., 2011), their
71 engagement in learning activities facilitating professional growth (e.g., Hutter et al., 2017; Stambulova
72 & Johnson, 2010), their professional philosophy and orientation (e.g., Collins et al., 2013;
73 Poczwadowski et al., 2014) as well as the positive and effective long lasting career (e.g., Hings et al.,
74 2019; Quartiroli et al., 2019a). While this body of work has helped to advance the identification of
75 professional characteristics, as well as development and training knowledge, one topic that has received
76 little research attention is that professional identity of these SPPs (Tod et al., 2017). Professional identity
77 (PI) refers to practitioners' understanding of their roles, group memberships, and specific characteristics
78 as sport psychologists, and is a cognitive structure helping them to successfully negotiate environmental
79 demands to carve out a career in the profession (Tod et al., 2020). Further, drawing on postmodern and
80 poststructuralist thought, professional identity is a social construction (Brunner, 2004; Burke & Stets,
81 2009) that evolves across the career lifespan. Researchers in sport and exercise psychology may have
82 not examined professional identity much because of the diverse backgrounds, training, education, and
83 professional credentials that exist among practitioners. Despite various professional credentials,
84 backgrounds, education, training and development pathways, and discipline specialisms around the
85 world (cf. Cremades et al., 2014) and the decades-long debate about the nature of the profession (cf.
86 Kornspan & Quartiroli, 2019), in recent years a renewed effort has been dedicated to identifying and
87 raising awareness of a shared PI for the SP profession. To date, only a few studies have explicitly
88 addressed SPPs' PI (see Portenga et al., 2017; Tod et al., 2017; Williams & Andersen, 2012). For

89 example, Portenga and colleagues (2017) attempted to define sport and performance psychology to
90 create a core identity and sense of purpose among SPPs. Elsewhere, scholars (Tod et al., 2020; Wagstaff
91 & Quartiroli, 2020) have argued that the future of the SP profession depends on professionals clearly
92 defining an identity for this profession. Despite these initial forays into the exploration of PI, this
93 construct remains undefined and unconceptualized within SP. Nevertheless, PI has received some
94 attention from scholars in other disciplines of psychology. For example, within counselling psychology
95 and the counsellor education literature, scholars have aimed to define what PI is and how it develops
96 among professionals (e.g., McLaughlin & Boettcher, 2009; Woo et al., 2014). In addition, in an attempt
97 to support the development of the profession (Woo et al., 2014), scholars have also stressed the
98 importance for trainees to develop a clear sense of identity prior to the completion of their graduate training
99 programs (Hieber et al., 1992) and to explore how they identify with the profession (Gibson et al., 2010).
100 Woo et al. (2014) concluded that the absence of a clear PI may lessen the ability of professionals to
101 provide acceptable standards of ethical care. A clear PI has also been identified as a way to establish the
102 profession alongside established professions (Woo et al., 2014), which might also be observed within
103 the SP field regarding credentialing pathways (cf. Sly et al., 2019).

104 **Review aims**

105 Although different in their professional training and scope of practice, counselling and sport
106 psychology professions also have several similarities including, but not limited to, commonality regarding
107 phases of professional development (Tod, 2007). While some aspects of transference from one discipline
108 of psychology might be possible, it would appear important to explore the PI of the SP profession to
109 develop a distinct understanding of PI among SPPs. To the authors' best knowledge, no previous review
110 of the literature focused on PI exists within the SP literature. Therefore, our aim was to systematically
111 explore the current status of the SP literature and inductively understand how scholars have empirically
112 approached PI. In doing so, we aim to provide a foundation for empirical work on PI in SPPs. The value

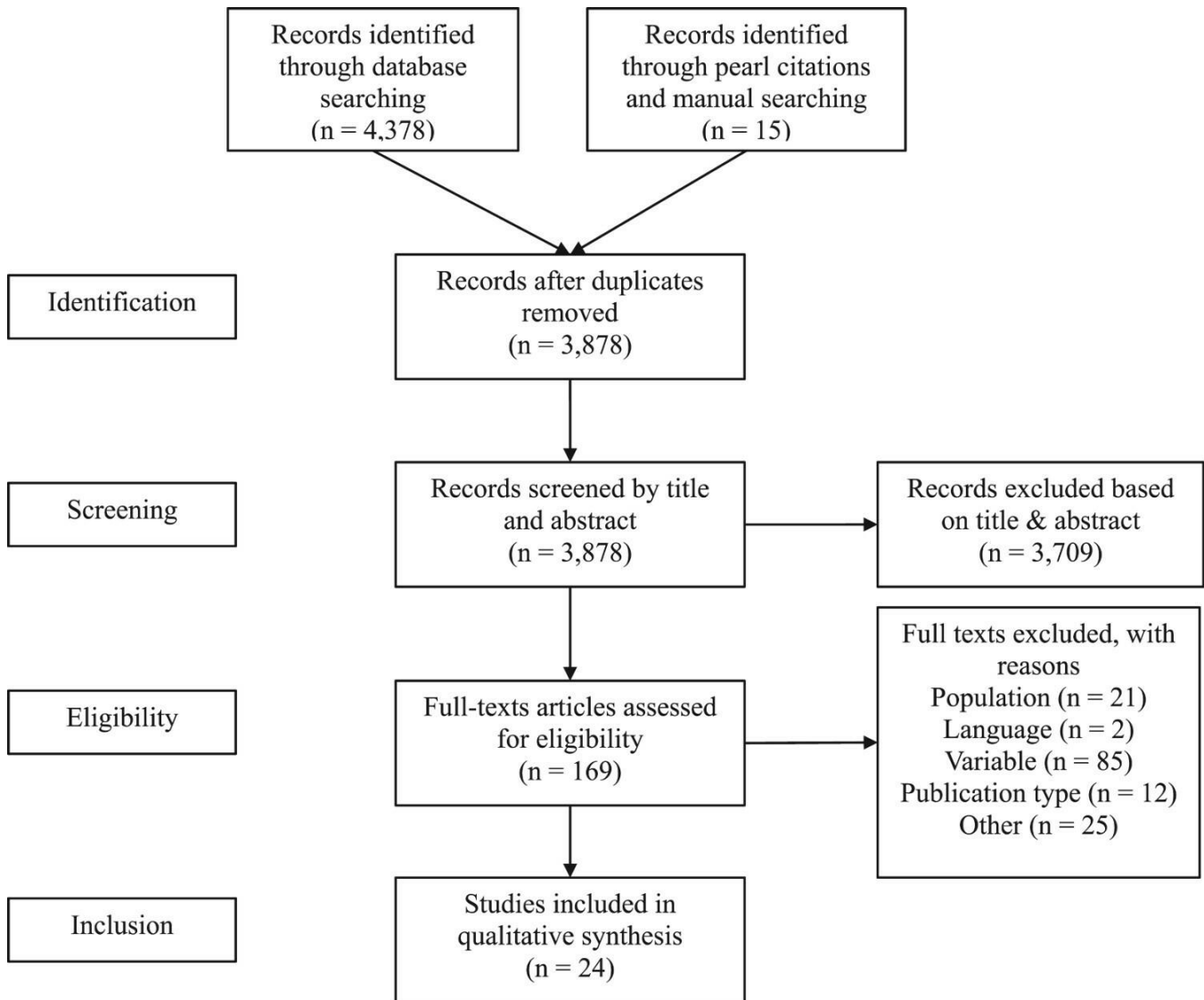
113 of this work lies in the importance of providing clarity to the public and to those we serve about the
114 factors encompassed within the professional identity of SPPs, supporting training programs and
115 educational pathway development and design, and informing professional credentialization. In turn, such
116 clarity will enhance the ability of SPPs to provide acceptable standards of ethical care and help to establish
117 and situate the sport psychology profession alongside other more established professions (cf. Woo et al.,
118 2014).

119 **Methods**

120 **Protocol**

121 Throughout this systematic review we conformed to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic
122 Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al. 2015; see Figure 1).

123



124

125 Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram.

126

127 **Eligibility criteria**

128 The criteria to include manuscripts in this systematic review were defined in accordance with the

129 Cochrane guidelines for conducting systematic reviews (Higgins et al., 2019). The criteria for inclusion

130 and exclusion were decided a priori and following the initial selection process of studies, three authors

131 (AU1, AU2 and AU3) independently completed the eligibility assessment by screening the titles and

132 abstracts. To be eligible, manuscripts had to meet the following inclusion criteria: (1) Language –

133 published in English, (2) Population – accredited/qualified or in training to become accredited/certified
134 SPPs, (3) Variables – focused on professional identity of SPPs, (4) Publication type – peer reviewed
135 articles, thesis and dissertations, (5) Design – qualitative, quantitative and mixed method experimental
136 designs were considered.

137 **Literature search strategy and information sources**

138 Several strategies were used to identify peer reviewed published studies to be included in the
139 review: (a) an online search of computerized databases such as Academic Search Ultimate, E-Journals,
140 Psychology of Behavioral Sciences, PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, Open dissertation, Google Scholar,
141 SportDiscus, PubMed and Web of science, (b) manual searching of discipline-specific journals, and (d) a
142 manual review of reference lists of included studies for potentially relevant articles that could have been
143 missed during the database search. The phrases used for the database search were: *Ethical considerations,*
144 *Sport psychologist, Sport psychology, Sport psychology practitioner, Sport psychology, Professional,*
145 *Consultant, Mental performance coach, Mental performance trainer, Mental coach, Performance coach,*
146 *Performance psychologist, Mental trainer, Identity, Professional (Profession*), Development (Develop*),*
147 *Maturity, Philosophy (Philosoph*), Professional Orientation, Values, Attitude, Professional Attitude,*
148 *Attitude toward the profession, Professional Values, Knowledge, Knowledge of the profession,*
149 *Professional knowledge, Professional role, Professional clarity, Professional activities, Professional*
150 *behav*, Professional behave*, Professional practice, Service delivery, Ethics, Ethical consideration.*

151 **Study selection**

152 All empirical research articles, theses, and dissertations focused on the variable of interest and
153 written in English were included in the search. When the title and abstract of an article did not provide
154 enough information to assess its relevance to the review, the complete article was obtained and read, to
155 ensure that the paper met the primary inclusion criteria. Papers that did not empirically investigate
156 variables relating to the PI of SPPs or did not include qualified/accredited SPPs within their sample were

157 excluded from consideration in the review. Letters to the editor, commentaries, reflections, conference
158 abstracts and literature reviews were excluded as not assessable and/or critically appraisable. Most studies
159 excluded from the review based on the appraisal of titles and abstracts ($n = 3,709$). A series of manuscripts
160 were excluded based on the population of interest ($n = 21$), the language of the manuscript ($n = 2$), the
161 main variable of interest ($n = 85$), the type of publication ($n = 11$), and other criteria ($n = 25$).

162 **Quality assessment**

163 We assessed qualitative reporting standards (see Table 1) using the tool developed by Lorenc et
164 al. (2014; see also Hawker et al., 2002). This assessment process was based on nine questions aimed at
165 assessing the relevance, appropriateness, rigor, and quality of the different aspects of each manuscript:
166 (1) abstract and title, (2) Introduction and aims, (3) methods and data, (4) sampling, (5) Data analysis,
167 (6) Ethics and bias, (7) Results, (8) Transferability and generalizability, and (9) Implication and
168 usefulness. All manuscripts were scored from 1 (very poor) to 4 (very good) using a 4-point scale,
169 leading to a potential score range of 9-36 points. In line with the Lorenc et al., each numerical
170 manuscript score was then categorized as (A) high quality (scores between 30-36 points), (B) medium
171 quality (24-29 points), or (C) low quality (9-24 points).

172 *[Table 1 near here]*

173 To promote good practice, we also completed a review of the included manuscripts using the
174 qualitative Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
175 (CASP) UK, n.d.). In Table 2 we indicate whether papers met individual CASP criteria. While most of
176 the included manuscripts meet most of CASP criteria, several issues were detected. For example,
177 authors provided a description of the appropriateness of their participants for the study in only 42% of
178 the included papers and in only 17% was there a clear description of the recruitment process. Another
179 issue we identified was that in less than half the included studies (42%), did authors critically examine

180 their own role, potential bias and influence during the formulation of the research questions or provide
181 descriptions of how the project was explained to the participants.

182 *[Table 2 near here]*

183 **Data extraction and synthesis**

184 A qualitative synthesis was deemed the most appropriate method of assessment given that the
185 modest number of studies ($n = 24$) which met the inclusion criteria were qualitative in design. The 24
186 articles were subjected to a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) with the aim of analyzing and reporting
187 patterns within the data (Braun et al., 2016) and to form an organized and detailed description of them
188 (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The RTA approach was deemed most appropriate as it provides great
189 theoretical and paradigmatic flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In the current study, the flexibility,
190 alongside the time effective processes of RTA in comparison to other qualitative analysis tools (e.g.,
191 grounded theory, Braun & Clarke, 2021) were the two primary reasons why the RTA framework was
192 employed to extract and analyze data. Following familiarization with the content of the manuscripts,
193 potentially interesting features of the data were extracted to generate codes from the dataset. After
194 reviewing the codes, grouping data into further themes, a thematic map was developed to be able to
195 explore the alignment of themes and sub-themes. Finally, after further refinement of each theme, clear
196 definitions and labels were created, and specific and compelling extracts were selected to relate the
197 analysis back to the research questions and sport psychology literature.

198 Certain measures and processes were established in order to facilitate and ensure a rigorous
199 analysis process. To best mitigate the effects of our backgrounds, biases and research intentions as
200 authors in the analysis process, we, the first three authors, engaged in ongoing reflective exercises as a
201 group and individuals, throughout the analysis process. Herein, we acted as critical friends (Smith &
202 McGannon, 2018; Levitt et al., 2018) to one another throughout the analysis process. We encouraged
203 each other to openly challenge our preconceived notions of professional identity and our biases toward

204 the research area as well acknowledge any existing formal hierarchies among us and the impact of these
205 factors upon our analysis of data and final development of themes. Moreover, we also engaged in a
206 series of additional processes to ensure the credibility and rigor of our review methodology. Specifically,
207 we completed an assessment of qualitative reporting standards according to the guidelines developed by
208 Lorenc et al. (2014) and a review of the included manuscripts using the qualitative CASP checklist
209 (CASP) UK, n.d.).

210 *[Table 3 near here]*

211 **Results**

212 The analysis of these studies led us to construe four main themes and a total of 18 related sub-
213 themes. The main themes were: The formation of a Professional Identity; Embodying a Professional
214 Identity; Influences on Professional Identity, and Challenges to Professional Identity. These themes are
215 presented following a chronological narrative (see Table 4).

216 *[Table 4 near here]*

217 **Theme 1 - Formation of Professional Identity**

218 The first theme relates the development of the PI of a practitioner and includes four sub-themes:
219 (a) Training and educational pathways, (b) Developing competence and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
220 (KSAs) for practice, (c) Developing the role and purpose of a SPPs, and (d) The ‘self’ as a performer.

221 ***Training and educational pathways***

222 Scholars concerned with the professional development of SPPs have indicated the influence of
223 both training pathways and continuing education on the formation of their PI (Cropley et al., 2010;
224 McCormick & Meijen, 2015; McEwan et al., 2019; Ploszay, 2003; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011;
225 Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2009; Winter & Collins 2015). Based on our analysis it is possible to
226 delineate how the educational and training journey of each practitioner represents the starting point for
227 their exploration of their PI. It appears that practitioners see their training journey as the beginning of

228 their professional development since it is during this process that they must typically explore and
229 develop their professional philosophy and implementation style (Poczwadowski & Sherman, 2011).
230 The influence of such training pathways on identity extended and changed throughout the practitioner's
231 career (Ploszay, 2003), with the experience of learning not occurring within a linear manner (McEwan et
232 al., 2019). One of the key characteristics of this process was the SPPs' need to learn from their own
233 practice through reflection and their supervisors' guidance (Cropley et al., 2010; Tod et al., 2009; Tod &
234 Bond, 2010). Further, a theory-centric educational approach appeared at times to be inadequate to equip
235 SPPs with the skills required to successfully navigate the challenges of their profession (McCormick &
236 Meijen, 2015; Winter & Collins, 2015).

237 *Developing competence and KSAs*

238 Our analysis led us to identify the development of competence and KSAs relevant to the
239 profession as one aspect of developing a PI (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015; Cropley et al., 2007; 2010; Friesen
240 & Orlick, 2010; Hutter et al., 2017; Lindsay, 2007; McCormick & Meijen, 2015; McDougall et al., 2015;
241 McEwan et al., 2019; Pack et al., 2014; Poczwadowski & Sherman, 2011, Stambulova & Johnson,
242 2010; Tod & Bond, 2010, Tod et al., 2009).

243 Cropley et al. (2010) and Pack et al. (2014) distinguished between SPP competence and
244 theoretical knowledge, with the former reflecting the skill or ability to implement the latter ethically.
245 Specifically, consultant effectiveness was also delineated as a SPPs' ability to apply and adapt their
246 knowledge to a specific practice context and client (Pack et al., 2014). Elsewhere, scholars described
247 how the primary opportunities for experimentation and reflection exist within SPP's interactions with
248 their clients (Cropley et al., 2007; Tod & Bond, 2010). Much of this process occurs within the training
249 phases of a SPP's career (Hutter et al., 2017; Stambulova & Johnson, 2010, Tod et al., 2009), unfolding
250 through a process of trial-and-error learning whereby a SPP progresses toward an understanding of what
251 works for them (Lindsey et al., 2007; Tod & Bond, 2010). Through an experiential approach to

252 competency development, SPPs can use their service delivery experiences and subsequent reflections to
253 develop a range of KSAs to be used across several dynamic contexts (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015; Friesen &
254 Orlick, 2010; McDougall et al., 2015). As a result, SPPs can enhance their confidence and identity as
255 competent caregivers (McEwan et al., 2019) and in doing so better recognize their limitations in applied
256 settings (Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011).

257 *Defining the role and purpose of a SPP*

258 In addition to the development of competence and KSAs, the provision of a clear definition
259 concerning a SPP's role and purpose is facilitative to the formation of a PI (Cropley et al., 2010; Lindsay
260 et al., 2007; Pack et al., 2014; Simons & Andersen, 1995; Tod et al., 2009). While several scholars
261 debated the mechanisms of effective SP service delivery (Cropley et al., 2010; Simons & Andersen,
262 1995), limited attention has been put on developing a clear understanding of the purpose that a SPP
263 serves. Through the reporting of SPP reflections and critical discussions of the profession, Lindsay et al.
264 (2007) and Pack et al. (2014), highlighted the importance of identifying and exploring the fundamental
265 core of SPPs work. These authors have explored questions such as "Who am I doing this for?" (Pack et
266 al., 2014, p. 16) and considered how SPPs may reflect upon the most important aspects of their work and
267 interactions with their clients (Lindsay et al. 2007). Finally, from the perspectives of experienced SPPs,
268 Simons and Andersen (1995) summarized that the awareness of professional boundaries served to
269 reinforce a SPPs' understanding of their purpose within applied settings.

270 *The 'self' as a performer*

271 Across several publications, scholars have drawn attention to the importance of SPPs viewing
272 themselves as performers (Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Ploszay, 2003; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011;
273 Williams & Andersen, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2008). To elaborate, Poczwardowski and Sherman (2011)
274 noted that the delivery of SP services is a challenge in itself and can be viewed as performance. Scholars
275 also discussed how SPPs work across various contexts with many different clients, all whilst occupying

276 a myriad of roles (Williams & Andersen, 2012), which led experienced SPPs to feel like “more than a
277 technician” (p. 522) within their role, identifying that “everything but pathology” (p. 522) was a topic of
278 consultation (Poczwadowski & Sherman, 2011). In facilitating SPP performance across a wide
279 spectrum of service delivery contexts, Friesen & Orlick (2010) discussed the importance of a wide
280 knowledge base and the flexibility to articulate several psychological approaches, as being key to
281 optimal SPP performance. Elsewhere, it has been highlighted how the interpretation of athlete feedback
282 can affect levels of anxiety and confidence for the novice practitioner (Woodcock et al., 2008). As a
283 performer, an SPP needs to be in control of these affective states in front of clients and to manage them
284 to assure their effectiveness (Poczwadowski, 2019). Similarly, Ploszay (2003) argued that the SPP’s
285 performance, often measured in outcomes, is the key to gaining and retaining clientele. SPPs are
286 required to deliver effective and competent services to clients in the face of a changing service delivery
287 landscape while continuing to meet their clients’ needs (Poczwadowski, 2019; Wagstaff & Quartiroli,
288 2020). By identifying themselves as a performer, SPPs may better sustain their performances through
289 the implementation of similar psychological techniques used with clients.

290 **Critical Summary.** These results are interpreted to align with the recent commentaries focused
291 on PI within the SP context (e.g., Tod et al., 2020; Wagstaff & Quartiroli, 2020). The development of
292 key KSAs related to service delivery may help to formulate PI, particularly in trainees, whose
293 professional development is influenced by their learning experiences in applied contexts (Tod & Bond,
294 2010; Hutter et al., 2017). While scholars have identified several competencies by which practitioner
295 effectiveness can be measured (Cropley et al., 2010, Tod et al., 2020), as the profession continues to
296 diversify and the contexts in which SPPs operate expand (see Sly et al., 2019; Wagstaff & Quartiroli,
297 2020), so have the competencies by which SPPs might be measured. Therefore, while the development
298 of SPP competence may form part of the formation of PI; there are still advances to be made by
299 conceptualizing and operationalizing a shared PI (Portenga et al., 2017). Such advances may emerge

300 from a better delineation of SPPs' roles and the necessary competencies they should possess (Portenga
301 et al., 2017; Wagstaff & Quartiroli., 2020). It seems paramount that SPPs and those who they serve
302 develop a better understanding of 'what' services a SPP can provide, 'why' they may be of benefit, and
303 'how' particular KSAs are used to assure their ethical and competent provision (Poczwardowski et al.,
304 2011; Wagstaff & Quartiroli, 2020; Tod et al., 2020). This theme also shows the importance for SPPs to
305 identify themselves as 'performers' (Poczwardowski, 2019), focusing on their ability to effectively
306 support those who they serve while taking care of themselves (Quartiroli et al., 2019b).

307 **Theme 2. Embodying Professional Identity**

308 The second theme developed within this analysis relates to the ways in which a SPPI may be
309 'lived' and includes four sub-themes: (a) Immersion in the profession, (b) Demonstrating self-
310 awareness, (c) Authenticity and congruence between philosophy and practice (d) Developing and
311 maintaining a clear model of practice.

312 ***Immersion in the profession***

313 Practitioners have described that by being immersive and purposefully active within the
314 profession they can better embody their PI (Champ et al., 2020; McEwan et al., 2019; Ploszay, 2003;
315 Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011; Wadsworth et al., 2020). Indeed, this immersion was reported to
316 occur through two mechanisms: enjoyment and critical moments. Enjoyment and satisfaction were
317 derived from SPPs roles when they were able to operate competently as practitioners within
318 environments that supported their values and service delivery styles (McEwan et al., 2019; Ploszay,
319 2003; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011). This identification was clear for one participant in Ploszay's
320 (2003) study who said "it's something I have never gotten tired of doing. It's been something that I have
321 really loved. I guess that's why I have stayed intimately involved for this long" (p. 65). Similarly,
322 Poczwardowski and Sherman (2011) described how consultants reported immersion in the profession,
323 often through full involvement with their clients, as a source of satisfaction with their profession role.

324 Finally, McEwan et al. (2019) observed that concentrated periods of practice (e.g., training camps)
325 provide opportunities to experience greater immersion in and increased opportunities for service
326 delivery. Other scholars have described how critical moments served as professional experiences which
327 occurred as a result of immersion in applied practice (Wadsworth et al., 2020; Champ et al., 2020). Such
328 moments provided opportunities for SPPs to challenge their standing assumptions and beliefs, leading
329 them to shape a more congruent and aligned PI that is a reflective of their lived experiences.

330 *Demonstrating self-awareness*

331 Numerous scholars have reported how exhibiting self-awareness was salient for SPPs in
332 embracing their PI (Collins et al., 2013; Cropley et al., 2007; Cropley et al., 2010; Friesen & Orlick,
333 2010; McCormick & Meijen, 2015; McDougall et al., 2015; Pack et al., 2014; Simons & Andersen,
334 1995; Wadsworth et al., 2020). SPPs reported that increases in their self-awareness allowed them to
335 have a better understanding of what was required of them to enhance their relationships with clients and
336 the effectiveness of their applied practices (Cropley et al., 2007; Simons & Andersen, 1995). Based on
337 these observations, two main ways to develop self-awareness were identified: reflective practice and
338 exposure to various environments. Primarily, SPPs attributed increases in their self-awareness to their
339 engagement in reflective practice (Collins et al., 2013; Cropley et al., 2010; McCormick & Meijen,
340 2015; Pack et al., 2014;), within which SPPs reported developing an increased appreciation of their own
341 thoughts, feeling and shortcomings, affording them clarity of their strengths and weaknesses as
342 practitioners. Similarly, elaborating on the reflections of experienced SPPs, McDougall et al. (2015)
343 reported the benefits that an exposure to various sporting environments had on the development of
344 practitioner self-awareness. Importantly, both of these mechanisms for developing self-awareness
345 require deliberate action from the practitioner and are not achieved passively.

346 *Congruence between philosophy and practice*

347 In addition to demonstrating self-awareness, our results also highlight the importance for SPPs to
348 work toward congruence between their philosophical beliefs and their service delivery practices (Collins
349 et al., 2013; Cropley et al., 2007; 2010; Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Lindsay et al., 2007; McCormack et al.,
350 2015; McCormick & Meijen 2015; McDougall et al., 2015; Pack et al. 2014; Poczwardowski &
351 Sherman, 2011; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2011; Wadsworth et al., 2020). Exploring SPPs'
352 professional philosophy, Friesen and Orlick (2010) noted the perceived value of SPPs representing
353 themselves authentically in providing holistic services. Indeed, when authentic with their clients SPPs
354 are liberated to share their true thoughts and opinions ethically while also eliciting a sense of humility
355 which helps in connecting with clients (McCormick & Meijen, 2015). Further, McDougall et al. (2015)
356 described how practitioner's congruence was not stable, but rather constantly evolving and influenced
357 by both internal and external factors, especially for trainees, whose development of a philosophy-
358 practice congruence has been presented as an ongoing journey (Lindsay et al., 2007; Tod & Bond, 2010;
359 Tod et al., 2011). The participants in Poczwardowski and Sherman's (2011) interview study highlighted
360 the pivotal importance of a clear professional philosophy, describing it as the most important aspect of
361 their practice and underpinning everything they do. Yet, SPPs must consistently and intentionally reflect
362 on their assumptions to become aware of their values and beliefs (Cropley et al., 2007; Cropley et al.,
363 2010; McCormack et al., 2015; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011; Wadsworth et al., 2020). In doing so
364 practitioners are better able to align their philosophical beliefs and service delivery styles in pursuit of an
365 authentic way of being.

366 *A clear model of practice*

367 From our analysis, developing and maintaining a model of practice can support SPPs to embody
368 a PI (Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Lindsay et al., 2007; McCormack et al., 2015; McCormick & Meijen,
369 2015; McDougall et al., 2015; Simons & Andersen, 1995; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2009; 2011).
370 Scholars highlighted how the evolution of a clear model of practice is a process starting and primarily

371 attended to early on in SPPs' careers (Simons & Andersen, 1995; Tod et al, 2009; 2011). Simons and
372 Andersen (1995) described how a SPP may implement their reflections and service delivery experiences
373 to guide the development of a model of practice which suits their values and beliefs. This development
374 was exemplified by McCormack & Meijen (2015) who demonstrated the need for SPPs to regularly
375 revisit their practice model and processes of practice through critical reflection and evaluation. Finally, a
376 clear model of practice will be rooted in a clear set of values and beliefs from which a SPP can flexibly
377 develop interventions that will ethically and competently meet each client's need (Tod & Bond, 2010).

378 **Critical summary.** Our second theme reflects an internal focus on how SPPs may maintain their
379 PI. This includes working toward congruence between practitioner philosophy and service delivery
380 practices (Lindsay et al., 2007) and demonstrating self-awareness with regards to one's values, beliefs
381 and practices as a SPP (Friesen & Orlick, 2010) within a clear model of practice (McCormick et al.,
382 2015). These notions are also well documented within the counselling psychology, where scholars have
383 identified that one aspect of successful professional development comes from congruence between a
384 practitioners personal and professional values (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Moreover, counselling
385 scholars have identified that engagement behaviors can serve to make a practitioner feel involved within
386 a profession and facilitate a sense of professionalism (Woo et al., 2014).

387 Sport psychology scholars have described a process of individuation as a dynamic and continual
388 process by which SPPs develop their PI (Champ et al., 2020; McEwan et al, 2019; Tod, 2017; Tod et al.,
389 2020). Based on this process, an individual's PI is founded in the personalization of one's service-
390 delivery experiences and aligned with professional values and beliefs (McEwan et al., 2019).
391 Throughout the individuation process (Tod, 2017; McEwan et al., 2019), a SPP might begin to
392 understand their philosophical viewpoints as they begin to reflect on their service delivery experiences
393 and better understand the values and beliefs they hold regarding their practice. Subsequently, through a
394 deliberate process of sensemaking, SPPs typically begin to articulate their PI as a result of alignment

395 between their philosophical beliefs and service delivery styles. Finally, through the process of
396 individuation, SPPs develop a self-awareness regarding the strengths associated with their PI, as well as
397 the limitations by which they are constrained (Tod, 2017). It follows that this development of
398 competence and identity as non-linear and intermittent in nature (McEwan et al., 2019). To summarize,
399 this theme encapsulates the ways in which SPPs reportedly embrace and maintain their PI. As identified,
400 the processes of forming and embodying a PI are not linear with SPPs encountering supporting and
401 inhibiting factors throughout their careers.

402 **Theme 3. Supporting influences during the formation and embodiment of a Professional Identity**

403 The third theme relates to the influences which support PI and includes 4 sub-themes: (a) Peer
404 support, (b) Supervisor support, (c) Lessons learned from other professionals, and (d) Reflection.

405 *Peer support*

406 The presence of positive and adequate peer support can facilitate the SPPs' PI formation and
407 embodiment (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015; Cropley et al., 2010; McCormack et al., 2015; McCormick &
408 Meijen, 2015; Pack et al., 2014; Stambulova & Johnson, 2010; Tod & Bond, 2010). Following the
409 cessation of their formal training, and throughout their professional development SPPs used peer support
410 to continue challenging their own assumptions, share experiences (McCormick & Meijen, 2015;
411 Stambulova & Johnson, 2010; Tod & Bond, 2010) and process their emotional responses to challenging
412 applied experiences (Pack et al., 2014). SPPs also spoke to the importance of using different peer
413 support groups to cultivate a variety of perspectives to facilitate reflective practices (Cropley et al. 2010)
414 and assist with emotional support and service delivery issues (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). The value of peer
415 support has been highlighted across SPPs' development, with experienced practitioners highlighting the
416 importance of formal (e.g., counselling, formal peer groups) and informal (e.g., family, friends, informal
417 peer groups) peer support toward their formation and embodiment of PI (McCormack et al., 2015).

418 *Supervisor support*

419 As with other disciplines of psychology, the importance of ongoing supervision is apparent
420 across the professional formulation and identity literature (Cropley et al., 2010; Hutter et al., 2017;
421 McCormack et al., 2015; McCormick & Meijen, 2015; Tod et al., 2009; Tod et al., 2011; Woodcock et
422 al., 2008). Tod et al. (2011, p. 105) noted that “supervision gives you the insight into how to learn stuff
423 from clients because it gives you the necessary self-evaluation, and also evaluation of skills and
424 questions and so forth”. Supervisor support was also reported as a valuable space in which to discuss
425 casework or co-formulate intervention ideas (Tod et al., 2009; McCormack et al., 2015) as well as
426 receive feedback (Woodcock et al., 2008), which can allow SPPs to become self-aware of their strengths
427 and limitations as professionals. Elsewhere, Hutter et al. (2017) illustrated the contribution of
428 supervision when discussing treatment plans, role confusion, ambiguity, and boundary issues. Other
429 scholars have reported supervisors’ support to be useful for embedding reflective and critical practices
430 within a professional framework (Cropley et al., 2010) and providing SPPs with a “central anchor point”
431 (McCormick et al., 2015, p. 5) from which they can explore their philosophical assumptions, service
432 delivery styles and personal values.

433 *Lessons learned from other professions*

434 The value of learning from other psychology disciplines was evident across several SPPs’
435 reflections (Cropley et al., 2007; McCormick & Meijen, 2015; McEwan et al., 2019; Tod & Bond, 2010;
436 Tod et al., 2009; Tod et al., 2011; Wadsworth et al., 2020). Scholars have described how SPPs refer to
437 conferences, professional development opportunities and specialized literature from other psychology
438 disciplines to foster their awareness of existing gaps in their theoretical knowledge and applied skills
439 (McCormick & Meijen, 2015; Tod & Bond, 2010). Indeed, Cropley et al. (2007) reported that drawing
440 on paradigms and perspectives from other psychology disciplines were perceived by practitioners to be
441 useful for understanding their philosophical orientation and beliefs. Moreover, professionals have noted
442 how engaging in personal therapy allowed them to gain an appreciation for the ‘other side’ of service

443 delivery, leading them to reflect on and implement new knowledge into their service delivery (Tod et al.,
444 2009; 2011). Similarly, SPPs spoke of the influence that other helping professionals (e.g., clinical
445 psychologists) and major events in their lives have in shaping them as a person and a practitioner
446 (McEwan et al., 2019; Wadsworth et al., 2020).

447 *Reflection*

448 Scholars highlighted the reflective practice as fundamental to developing their PI (Collins et al.,
449 2013; Copley et al., 2007; 2010; Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Hutter et al., 2017; Lindsay et al., 2007).
450 McCormack & Meijen, 2015; Pack et al., 2014; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011; Tod et al., 2009;
451 Woodcock et al., 2008). Copley et al. (2010) noted how reflective practice assists SPPs in appreciating
452 the nuances and complexities of their work, particularly the grey areas of service delivery. Other
453 scholars indicated how reflecting on their professional development can assist SPPs to identify their
454 values (Collins et al., 2013; Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Tod et al., 2009; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011)
455 as well as the philosophical beliefs and world views which underpin their practice (e.g., McCormick &
456 Meijen, 2015; Lindsay et al., 2007). Finally, through reflection, SPPs can also become more aware of
457 how to articulate their philosophical views and develop a model of practice that is authentic (Copley,
458 2007; Hutter et al., 2017; Pack et al., 2014).

459 **Critical summary.** Tod et al. (2020) presented three resources from which SPPs can grow their
460 PI: relationships, reading and writing, specifically highlighting the value of relationships with peers,
461 supervisors and clients in helping a SPP to reflect on their developmental journey. It is important to
462 reinforce the importance of peers' and supervisors' support for SPP's professional development and the
463 development of PI. Of particular importance is the provision of safe environments, which SPPs may use
464 to reflect on their development with the guidance of supervisors and through experience sharing with
465 peers (McCormick & Meijen, 2015; Pack et al., 2014). In their systematic review, Woo et al. (2017)
466 identified how counselling supervisors contributed to the development of their supervisees' PI by

467 conveying their own PI as a position from which to start. It is also important that SPPs do not limit their
468 sources of support and reflection exclusively to the SP community and literature, and instead they find
469 support and sources for self-reflection from other helping professionals and within other disciplines. In
470 sum, this theme showcases the main influences reported to support the formation and maintenance of a
471 SPPI. While such influences enhance the SPPI development process, many others inhibit this.

472 **Theme 4. Challenges regarding the formation and embodiment of a Professional Identity**

473 The fourth theme we developed focuses on the challenges to the formation and embodiment of
474 PI and includes 4 sub-themes: (a) Anxiety and self-doubt, (b) Demands of the profession, (c)
475 Experiencing multiple identities, and (d) Having naïve expectations of the profession.

476 *Anxiety and self-doubts*

477 As in other disciplines of psychology, SPPs encounter challenges to their PI due to anxiety and
478 self-doubt regarding their effectiveness and competence as practitioners (Collins et al. 2013; Cropley et
479 al., 2007; Lindsay et al., 2007; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2009; 2011; Williams & Andersen, 2012;
480 Wadsworth et al., 2020; Woodcock et al., 2008). Often these challenges are manifest in self-critical
481 questioning and uncertainty regarding ‘getting it right’ and replicating ‘clean’ textbook-style service
482 provision (Tod et al., 2009; 2011; Tod & Bond, 2010; Wadsworth et al., 2020). Indeed, through frequent
483 negative self-talk and doubt during applied practice (Williams & Andersen, 2012), SPPs often question
484 their ability and service delivery style (Lindsay et al., 2007). Scholars have reported how SPPs create
485 self-doubt by focusing on the weaknesses of their practice and limited consideration of their strengths
486 which may provide them with confidence in their abilities (Collins et al., 2013; Woodcock et al., 2008).
487 Indeed, SPPs often reported experiencing anxieties regarding client expectations and self-doubt
488 associated with being unable to meet such expectations (Cropley et al., 2007).

489 *Demands of the profession*

490 SPPs face challenges to their PI due to the professional contexts in which they work (Arnold &
491 Sarkar, 2015; Champ et al., 2020; Friesen & Orlick, 2010; McDougall et al., 2015; Pack et al., 2014;
492 Ploszay, 2003; Simons & Andersen, 1995; Tod & Bond 2010; Tod et al., 2009; 2011). Some SPPs have
493 described how the unconventional nature of the working conditions and settings in which they practice
494 and the associated demands represent a major challenge to their professional journey (Tod & Bond,
495 2010; Tod et al., 2011; McDougall et al., 2015). Moreover, the contextual constraints SPPs often face in
496 their practice seem to compromise their ability to provide effective and competent services, and in turn,
497 also lead many to experience self-doubt about their own professional role (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015;
498 Simons & Andersen, 1995). Some of these demands were rooted in a perceived need to quickly and
499 consistently meet stakeholders' expectations and the associated emotional burden of this labor, which
500 can make the practice a lonely pursuit (Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Pack et al., 2014; Ploszay, 2003).
501 Champ et al. (2020) described the negative impact of working as the only female in a male dominated
502 environment, leading her to "questioning every aspect of my identity" (Champ et al., 2020, p. 9).
503 Finally, infrequent work and the value stakeholders have for the profession lead to financial threat for
504 some SPPs, with some questioning the feasibility of their professional journey (Tod et al., 2009).

505 *Experiencing multiple identities*

506 Within the practice environment, SPPs are often required to "muck in" and assume roles that are
507 seemingly very different to what one might expect is the traditional work of a psychologist, leading
508 them to experience multiple identities (Champ et al., 2020; Friesen and Orlick, 2010; McCormack et al.,
509 2015; Williams & Andersen, 2012). The varied roles assumed by practitioners often lead to a blurring of
510 the boundaries of SPPs practices, which is particularly prevalent during extensive periods of service
511 delivery, such as competition, where the boundaries of the client-practitioner relationship are challenged
512 (Williams & Andersen, 2012). The adoption of multiple identities can also lead to a sense of inauthentic
513 and misaligned service delivery and the creation of context-driven personas, not reflecting the values

514 and beliefs of the SPP (Friesen & Orlick, 2010). Champ et al. (2020) discussed how a desire to ‘survive’
515 within the sport as a female SPP in a male dominated context, led her to cultivate a version of herself to
516 better align with the masculine identity of the environment, thus posing a challenge to the development
517 of an authentic and aligned PI.

518 *A naïve view of the profession*

519 The SPPs’ pre-determined expectations of service delivery and their professional role presented
520 another challenge to PI (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015; McCormick & Meijen, 2015; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod
521 et al., 2009). SPPs described how their perceptions of ‘good’ SPP were characterized by fast results and
522 led them to seek immediate solutions (Tod et al., 2009) or quick fixes (Tod & Bond, 2011; McCormick
523 & Meijen, 2015) for their clients. Scholars have also shown how SPPs are challenged by their need to
524 prove their own professional worth and to embrace a ‘rigid’ – assumed to be effective – approach to
525 service delivery (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). SPPs also discussed how their desire to provide competent
526 and comprehensive services, combined with a pre-conceptualized view of what a SPP is and does, often
527 lead them to only engage in material that fit their preconceived notions of service delivery (McCormick
528 & Meijen, 2015; Tod et al., 2009).

529 **Critical summary.** The SPPs’ experience of unique professional challenges and demands
530 associated with the profession are well documented. Scholars have described the challenges associated
531 with the uniqueness of the profession (e.g., Collins et al., 2013; Ploszay, 2003; Stapleton et al., 2010),
532 and how they can lead SPPs to experience emotional labor trying to fit within professional environments
533 that do not always allow a full genuine expression of their own emotions (Hings et al., 2017). The
534 prominent challenges to the formation and embodiment of a PI relate to issues of anxiety and self-doubt
535 regarding SPPs’ competencies, which are often rooted in a rigid view of what a SPP *is, should be,* and
536 *does* (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015) and the way one *must* implement their services (Tod & Bond, 2010).
537 Among trainee SPPs, service-delivery anxiety emanates from high levels of cognitive activity

538 experienced early in their career and can be disruptive to internal processes (Tod, 2017). It is noteworthy
539 that scholars across the psychology disciplines have often described such feelings as a part of
540 practitioner development (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003; Tod, 2007). These challenging experiences not
541 only limit the formation and embodiment of the PI, but may jeopardize SPPs' entire professional
542 experience (Quartiroli et al., 2019a) and self-care (Quartiroli et al., 2019b). While these experiences do
543 not necessarily lead to practitioner impairment they serve as valuable warnings (Barnett et al., 2007).

544 **Conclusion**

545 In this review we aimed to examine and qualitatively analyze the available literature on PI. Until
546 recently (see Eubank et al., 2021), professional identity was a construct that had received only sporadic
547 and superficial attention within a siloed body of wide-ranging and disparate work. Hence, the integration
548 of these lines of work here has allowed us to develop a rich understanding of the extant literature
549 relevant to PI which will provide a foundation for future research and practice. Indeed, one of the salient
550 observations emanating from this review is the existence of a diverse body of scholarly work bringing to
551 life a range of different elements encompassed in the PI construct. Nevertheless, these elements hitherto
552 collectively lacked conceptual connection or coherent integration among regarding a unifying SPPI.
553 Such processes have already been explored by the counselling profession and unfolded with the premise
554 of a "unity through diversity" (Woo et al., 2014, p. 2).

555 With this systematic review we have identified and connected disparate lines of research from
556 which scholars might develop a conceptual framework, definition, and characterization of SPPI.
557 Importantly, in this review, we have been able to highlight the strong connections between factors
558 underlying the identity of professionals, which in turn, has been noted as being fundamental to both
559 educational pathways and applied practice (Tod et al., 2017). Concurrently, we have highlighted how
560 some of the challenges highlighted in the literature as obstacles to the "how to" of the profession also
561 appear to limit SPPs' ability to explore and define their own PI. Our synthesis of the available research

562 on PI characterization, formation and maintenance significantly advances knowledge in this area, and
563 yet, to further support the future of the profession and clearly delineate of work of SPPs, in addition to
564 this first description of the factors encompassed within the professional identity of SPPs, ongoing work
565 is needed toward the development of a commonly shared definition of a SPPI (Wagstaff & Quartiroli,
566 2020). This line of work can have a substantial impact on the future development of professionals and
567 educational pathways. Sport psychologists are performers in their own right (Poczwardoski, 2019), and
568 hence, it is important to understand what the profession *is*, who SPPs *are* as professionals, and *how they*
569 *fit* within the profession, to perform at their best. With this systematic review, we have provided an
570 initial integration of PI-relevant literature, which will be a fundamental cornerstone to support such
571 development of professionals as well as theoretical frameworks within this area.

572 **Applied Implications**

573 Despite the nascent stage of this research, several prospective training and development
574 opportunities exist. To elaborate, SP professional societies might develop and disseminate resources for
575 professionals that develop an awareness of PI and offer opportunities for trainee and early career
576 professionals to build a professional network by connecting them with other professionals and use this
577 network to facilitate reflection on their professional identity with others. This might serve to provide
578 support during an individual's professional formation while also connecting them to a network of fellow
579 practitioners who are also developing their own PI. In time, this network will develop and foster a
580 shared understanding of the profession. Further, membership to a professional society may allow for a
581 greater sense of professionalism and allegiance to the profession, offering greater opportunities to be
582 immersive in professional behaviors such as networking, continuing education, and mentoring.

583 The present study highlights the importance of professionalized education and training programs
584 for supporting trainees and early career SPPs given the early formation of their own SPPI. To elaborate,
585 structured professional pathways to practice that offer a critical stimulation and ultimately a greater

586 understanding of one's SPPI will enable early career SPPs to better situate themselves professionally
587 among peers and other healthcare professionals. Hence, the professionalization of education and training
588 programs may help SPPs to develop their own SPPI, and in turn, understanding of their professional
589 roles regarding 'what' services they can provide, 'why' they may be of benefit, and 'how' particular
590 knowledge, skills, and abilities might promote ethical and competent practice. These programs may also
591 support SPPs to identify their values and beliefs and the likelihood of congruence of their personal and
592 professional self via engagement with peers, supervisors, and professional organizations. As part of this
593 developmental process, supervisors may be able to support their students' and trainees' development by
594 sharing their own SPPI and developmental experiences. Finally, such programs might support early
595 career SPPs to remain open to and accepting of experiences of anxiety and self-doubt that typically
596 characterizes the nascent SPPs' professional journey. By better preparing and supporting neophyte SPPs
597 to meaningfully "sit with" these experiences, encouraging them to engaging with the body of literature
598 detailing personal reflections on such experiences, and sharing personal experiences, we might better
599 support early career SPPs with a foundation to develop their own sense of self in the profession.

600 While the themes developed here will help scholars to take stock of the existing knowledge
601 regarding practitioners' PI, several opportunities exist to expand this knowledge through programs of
602 research. For example, it would be valuable for researchers to explore how practitioners develop,
603 sustain, and experience their PI over the course of their careers and whether there are common
604 milestones or narratives shared during this formation. Researchers might also adapt and better integrate
605 knowledge from other psychology disciplines relating to PI (e.g., Woo et al., 2014) when developing
606 SPP resources.

607 In this review we provide a sense of the developmental nature of SPPI while also illuminating
608 how PI is grounded in the competencies needed to practice, the development of philosophical beliefs and
609 values as well as experiences through involvement in the profession. Concurrently, we have highlighted

- 610 how some of the developmental challenges highlighted in the literature as obstacles to service delivery
- 611 may also limit the ability of the SPPs to explore and define their own PI.

612
613
614
615
616
617
618
619
620
621
622
623
624
625
626
627
628
629
630
631
632
633
634
635
636
637
638
639
640
641
642

References

- Andersen, M. B. (2020). Identity and the elusive self: Western and Eastern approaches to being no one. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 1-11. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/fjqj>
- Arnold, R., & Sarkar, M. (2015). Preparing athletes and teams for the Olympic Games: Experiences and lessons learned from the world's best sport psychologists. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 13(1), 4-20. <http://doi.org/dn55>
- Barnett, J. E., Baker, E. K., Elman, N. S., & Schoener, G. R. (2007). In pursuit of wellness: The self-care imperative. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38(6), 603-612. <https://doi.org/dwpd3j>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In B. Smith & A. Sparkes (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of qualitative research methods in sport and exercise* (pp. 191-205). Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis?. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/fgmh>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 21(1), 37-47. <https://doi.org/ghf388>
- Champ, F., Ronkainen, N., Tod, D., Eubank, A., & Littlewood, M. (2020). A tale of three seasons: a cultural sport psychology and gender performativity approach to practitioner identity and development in professional football. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/fjqk>
- Collins, D., & Kamin, S. (2012). The performance coach. In S. M. Murphy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of sport and performance psychology* (pp. 692-706). Oxford University Press.
- Collins, R., Evans-Jones, K., & O'Connor, H. L. (2013). Reflections on three neophyte sport and exercise psychologists' developing philosophies for practice. *The Sport Psychologist*, 27(4), 399-409. <http://doi.org/dn56>
- Cremades, J. G., Tashman, L. S., & Quartiroli, A. (2014). Initial considerations: Developing the pathway to become a sport, exercise, and performance psychology professional. In J. G. Cremades & L. S. Tashman (Eds.), *Becoming a sport, exercise, and performance psychology professional: A global perspective* (p. 3-11). Psychology Press.
- Critical Appraisal Skills Programme UK. (n.d.). *CASP checklists*. Retrieved from <https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists>.

- 643 Cropley, B., Hanton, S., Miles, A., & Niven, A. (2010). Exploring the relationship between effective and
644 reflective practice in applied sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 24(4), 521-541.
645 <http://doi.org/dm5c>
- 646 Cropley, B., Miles, A., Hanton, S., & Niven, A. (2007). Improving the delivery of applied sport psychology
647 support through reflective practice. *The Sport Psychologist*, 21(4), 475-494. <http://doi.org/dm5b>
- 648 Eubank, M., Ronkainen, N., & Tod, D. (2021). New approaches to identity in sport. *Journal of Sport*
649 *Psychology in Action*, 11(4), 215-218. doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2020.1835134
- 650 Friesen, A., & Orlick, T. (2010). A qualitative analysis of holistic sport psychology consultants'
651 professional philosophies. *The Sport Psychologist*, 24(2), 227-244. <http://doi.org/dn57>
- 652 Gibson, D. M., Dollarhide, C. T., & Moss, J. M. (2010). Professional identity development: A grounded
653 theory of transformational tasks of new counselors. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 50(1),
654 2-79. <https://doi.org/fx5zx7>
- 655 Hawker, S., Payne, S., Kerr, C., Hardey, M., & Powell, J. (2002). Appraising the evidence: reviewing
656 disparate data systematically. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(9), 1284-1299. <https://doi.org/bkfqg6>
- 657 Higgins, J. P., Thomas, J., Chandler, J., Cumpston, M., Li, T., Page, M. J., & Welch, V. A. (Eds.). (2019).
658 *Cochrane handbook for systematic reviews of interventions*. John Wiley & Sons.
- 659 Hings, R. F., Wagstaff, C. R., Anderson, V., Gilmore, S., & Thelwell, R. C. (2019). Better preparing sports
660 psychologists for the demands of applied practice: The emotional labor training gap. *Journal of*
661 *Applied Sport Psychology*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/fjqm>
- 662 Hutter, R. I., Oldenhof-Veldman, T., Pijpers, J. R., & Oudejans, R. R. D. (2017). Professional development
663 in sport psychology: Relating learning experiences to learning outcomes. *Journal of Applied Sport*
664 *Psychology*, 29, 1-16. <https://doi.org/dn54>
- 665 Kornspan, A. S., & Quartiroli, A. (2019). A brief global history of sport psychology. In M. H. Anshel, T.
666 A. Petrie, & J. A. Steinfeldt (Eds.), *APA handbooks in psychology series*. *APA handbook of sport*
667 *and exercise psychology*, Vol. 1. Sport psychology (p. 3-16). American Psychological Association.
668 <https://doi.org/fk9n>
- 669 Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018).
670 Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed
671 methods research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board task force
672 report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1), 26-46. <http://doi.org/gctpzh>

- 673 Lindsay, P., Breckon, J. D., Thomas, O., & Maynard, I. W. (2007). In pursuit of congruence: A personal
674 reflection on methods and philosophy in applied practice. *The Sport Psychologist*, 21(3), 335-352.
675 <http://doi.org/dn58>
- 676 Lorenc, T., Petticrew, M., Whitehead, M., Neary, D., Clayton, S., Wright, K., ... & Renton, A. (2014).
677 Crime fear of crime and mental health: Synthesis of theory and systematic reviews of interventions
678 and qualitative evidence. *Public Health Research*, 2(2), 1-398. <https://doi.org/fjn5>
- 679 McCormack, H. M., MacIntyre, T. E., O'Shea, D., Campbell, M. J., & Igou, E. R. (2015). Practicing what
680 we preach: investigating the role of social support in sport psychologists' well-being. *Frontiers in*
681 *Psychology*, 6, 1854-1860. <http://doi.org/f74d4q>
- 682 McCormick, A., & Meijen, C. (2015). A lesson learned in time: Advice shared by experienced sport
683 psychologists. *Sport & Exercise Psychology Review*, 11(1), 43-54. Retrieved from
684 <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/47555/>
- 685 McDougall, M., Nesti, M., & Richardson, D. (2015). The challenges of sport psychology delivery in elite
686 and professional sport: Reflections from experienced sport psychologists. *The Sport*
687 *Psychologist*, 29(3), 265-277. <http://doi.org/f7xbzh>
- 688 McEwan, H. E., Tod, D., & Eubank, M. (2019). The rocky road to individuation: Sport psychologists'
689 perspectives on professional development. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 45, 101542.
690 <http://doi.org/dn59>
- 691 McLaughlin, J. E., & Boettcher, K. (2009). Counselor identity: Conformity or distinction? *Journal of*
692 *Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, 48, 132-143. <https://doi.org/fz23ds>
- 693 Moher, D., Shamseer, L., Clarke, M., Ghersi, D., Liberati, A., Petticrew, M., ... & Stewart, L. A. (2015).
694 Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015
695 statement. *Systematic Reviews*, 4(1), 1-9.
- 696 Orlick, T., & Partington, J. (1987). The sport psychology consultant: Analysis of critical components as
697 viewed by Canadian Olympic athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 1(1), 4-17. <https://doi.org/fmcb>
- 698 Pack, S., Hemmings, B., & Arvinen-Barrow, M. (2014). The self-practice of sport psychologists: Do they
699 practice what they preach?. *The Sport Psychologist*, 28(2), 198-210. <http://doi.org/f6bsbq>
- 700 Ploszay, A. J. (2003). *The experience of providing expert sport psychology consultation: An existential*
701 *phenomenological investigation* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The University of Tennessee
702 Knoxville. Retrieved from https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/5173

- 703 Poczwadowski, A., & Sherman, C. P. (2011). Revisions to the sport psychology service delivery (SPSD)
704 heuristic: Explorations with experienced consultants. *The Sport Psychologist*, 25(4), 511-531.
705 <http://doi.org/dn6b>
- 706 Poczwadowski, A., Aoyagi, M. W., Shapiro, J. L., & Van Raalte, J. L. (2014). Developing professional
707 philosophy for sport psychology consulting practice. In A. G. Papaioannou & D. Hackfort (Eds.),
708 *International perspectives on key issues in sport and exercise psychology. Routledge companion to*
709 *sport and exercise psychology: Global perspectives and fundamental concepts* (pp. 895-907).
710 Routledge.
- 711 Portenga, S. T., Aoyagi, M. W., & Cohen, A. B. (2017). Helping to build a profession: A working
712 definition of sport and performance psychology. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 8(1), 47-59.
713 <https://doi.org/ggc455>
- 714 Quartiroli, A., Etzel, E. F., Knight, S. M., & Zakrajsek, R. A. (2019). The multifaceted meaning of sport
715 psychology professional quality of life. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 13(4), 645-667.
716 <https://doi.org/dtxr>
- 717 Quartiroli, A., Etzel, E. F., Knight, S. M., & Zakrajsek, R. A. (2019b). Self-care as key to others' care: The
718 perspectives of globally situated experienced senior-level sport psychology practitioners. *Journal of*
719 *Applied Sport Psychology*, 31(2), 147-167. <https://doi.org/dzgm>
- 720 Rønnestad, M. H., & Skovholt, S. M. (2013). *The developing practitioner: Growth and stagnation of*
721 *therapists and counselors*. Routledge.
- 722 Smith, B., & McGannon, K. R. (2018). Developing rigor in qualitative research: problems and
723 opportunities within sport and exercise psychology. *International Review of Sport and Exercise*
724 *Psychology*, 11(1), 101-121. <http://doi.org/ggc2qq>
- 725 Simons, J. P., & Andersen, M. B. (1995). The development of consulting practice in applied sport
726 psychology: Some personal perspectives. *The Sport Psychologist*, 9(4), 449-468. <http://doi.org/dn6c>
- 727 Sly, D., Wagstaff, C. R. D., & Mellalieu, S. D. (2019) "It's psychology Jim, but not as we know it!": The
728 changing face of applied sport psychology practice', *Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology*,
729 9(1), 87-101. <https://doi.org/ggkbbq>
- 730 Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From*
731 *process to product*. Routledge.
- 732 Stambulova, N., & Johnson, U. (2010). Novice consultants' experiences: Lessons learned by applied sport
733 psychology students. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11(4), 295-303. <http://doi.org/b3jcpw>

- 734 Stapleton, A. B., Hankes, D. M., Hays, K. F., & Parham, W. D. (2010). Ethical dilemmas in sport
735 psychology: A dialogue on the unique aspects impacting practice. *Professional Psychology: Research
736 and Practice, 41*(2), 143-152. <https://doi.org/bgpzv3>
- 737 Terry, P. C., Parsons-Smith, R. L., Quartiroli, A., & Blackmore, S. (2020). Publishing trends in the
738 *International Journal of Sport Psychology* during the first 50 Years (1970–2019), with a particular
739 focus on Asia and Oceania. *International Journal of Sport Psychology, 51*(5), 493-513.
740 10.7352/IJSP.2020.51.493
- 741 Tod, D. (2007). The long and winding road: Professional development in sport psychology. *The Sport
742 Psychologist, 21*, 94-108. <https://doi.org/dt86>
- 743 Tod, D. (2017). Performance consultants in sport and performance psychology. In O. Braddick (Ed.),
744 *Oxford research encyclopedia of psychology*. Oxford University Press. <http://doi.org/dm69>
- 745 Tod, D., & Bond, K. (2010). A longitudinal examination of a British neophyte sport psychologist's
746 development. *The Sport Psychologist, 24*(1), 35-51. <http://doi.org/dn6d>
- 747 Tod, D., Andersen, M. B., & Marchant, D. B. (2009). A longitudinal examination of neophyte applied sport
748 psychologists' development. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 21*, S1-S16. <http://doi.org/ctc9sd>
- 749 Tod, D., Andersen, M. B., & Marchant, D. B. (2011). Six years up: Applied sport psychologists surviving
750 (and thriving) after graduation. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 23*, 93-109.
751 <https://doi.org/b5dxw4>
- 752 Tod, D., Eubank, M. R., & Andersen, M. B. (2014). International perspectives: Training and supervision in the
753 United Kingdom and Australia. In J. G. Cremades & L. S. Tashman (Eds.), *Becoming a sport, exercise,
754 and performance psychology professional: A global perspective* (pp. 324-330). Psychology Press.
- 755 Tod, D., Hutter, R. V., & Eubank, M. (2017). Professional development for sport psychology practice.
756 *Current Opinion in Psychology, 16*, 134-137. <https://doi.org/dq34>
- 757 Tod, D., McEwan, H., Chandler, C., Eubank, M., & Lafferty, M. (2020). The gravitational pull of identity:
758 professional growth in sport, exercise, and performance psychologists. *Journal of Sport Psychology
759 in Action, 1-16*. <https://doi.org/fjqn>
- 760 Wadsworth, N., McEwan, H., Lafferty, M., Eubank, M. R., & Tod, D. (in press). Stories of critical
761 moments contributing to the development of applied sport psychology practitioners. *The Sport
762 Psychologist*. Advanced online publication.
- 763 Wagstaff, C. R., & Quartiroli, A. (2020). Psychology and psychologists in search of an identity: What and
764 who are we, and why does it matter?. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action, 1-12*. Advanced online

- 765 publication. <https://doi.org/fdn9>
- 766 Williams, D. E., & Andersen, M. B. (2012). Identity, wearing many hats, and boundary blurring: The
767 mindful psychologist on the way to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. *Journal of Sport Psychology*
768 *in Action*, 3(2), 139-152. <http://doi.org/dn6f>
- 769 Winter, S., & Collins, D. (2015). Why do we do, what we do?. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 27(1),
770 35-51. <http://doi.org/dn6g>
- 771 Woo, H., Henfield, M. S., & Choi, N. (2014). Developing a unified professional identity in counseling: A
772 review of the literature. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, 1(1), 1-15.
773 <https://doi.org/gf4bxw>
- 774 Woodcock, C., Richards, H., & Mugford, A. (2008). Quality counts: Critical features for neophyte
775 professional development. *The Sport Psychologist*, 22(4), 491-506. <http://doi.org/dn6h>
776

777 **Tables**778 **Table 1. Report of quality standards**

Study	Abstract & Title	Introduction & Aims	Method & Data	Sampling	Data Analysis	Ethics & Bias	Results	Generalizability	Implications	Total	Grade
Arnold & Sarkar (2015)	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	28	B
Champ et al. (2020)	4	4	4	1	3	3	4	3	4	30	A
Collins et al. (2013)	4	3	2	1	1	1	4	3	4	20	C
Cropley et al. (2007)	3	4	4	1	2	4	4	3	4	28	B
Cropley et al. (2010)	4	4	4	4	1	3	4	3	4	31	A
Friesen & Orlick (2010)	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	27	B
Hutter et al. (2017)	3	3	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	29	B
Lindsay et al. (2007)	4	3	4	1	1	3	4	3	3	24	B
McCormack et al. (2015)	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	30	A
McCormick & Meijen. (2015)	1	2	2	2	1	1	4	2	4	19	C
McDougall et al. (2015)	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	25	B
McEwan et al. (2019)	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	32	A

Study	Abstract & Title	Introduction & Aims	Method & Data	Sampling	Data Analysis	Ethics & Bias	Results	Generalizability	Implications	Total	Grade
Pack et al. (2014)	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	26	B
Ploszay (2003)	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	27	B
Poczwardowski & Sherman (2011)	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	2	3	25	B
Simons & Andersen (1995)	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	20	C
Stambulova & Johnson (2010)	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	25	B
Tod et al. (2009)	2	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	27	B
Tod & Bond (2010)	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	3	3	28	B
Tod et al. (2011)	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	3	3	28	B
Wadsworth et al. (2020)	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	33	A
Williams & Andersen (2012)	2	2	2	1	1	4	4	3	3	22	C
Winter & Collins (2015)	2	3	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	27	B
Woodcock et al. (2008)	3	3	2	1	3	2	4	3	3	24	B

779 **Table 2. Critical appraisal**

CASP criteria	Number of papers meeting criteria (%) (n = 24)
Is there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	
What was the goal of the research, its importance and relevance?	24 (100)
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	
Consider if the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and / or subjective experiences of research participants	24 (100)
Was the research design appropriate to address the research aims?	
Did the researcher justify the research design (e.g. did they discuss how they decided which methods to use)?	23 (96)
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	
Did the researcher explain how the participants were selected?	16 (67)
Did the researcher explain why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study?	10 (42)
Were there any discussions around recruitment (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)?	4 (17)
Were the data collected in a way that addressed the research aims?	
Was the setting for data collection justified?	16 (67)
Was it clear how the data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc.)?	24 (100)
Did the researcher justify the methods chosen?	16 (67)
Did the researcher make the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews were conducted, did they use a topic guide?)	23 (96)
If the methods were modified during the study, did the researcher explain how and why?	0

CASP criteria	Number of papers meeting criteria (%) (n = 24)
Is the form of data clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material)?	22 (92)
Did the researcher discuss saturation of data?	0
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	
Did the researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during the formulation of the research questions?	10 (42)
Did the researcher discuss how they responded to events during the study, including the implications of any changes in the research design?	0
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	
Were there sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained?	10 (42)
Did the researcher discuss ethical issues raised by the study (e.g. confidentiality, informed consent, the effect of the study on the participants)?	7 (29)
Was approval sought from an ethics committee?	21 (88)
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	
Was there an in-depth description of the analysis process?	13 (54)
If thematic analysis was used, was it clear how the categories / themes were derived from the data?	5 (84) ^a
Did the researcher explain how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process?	11 (46)
Were sufficient data presented to support the findings?	23 (96)
Were contradictory data taken into account?	11 (46)
Did the researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation?	11 (46)
Is there a clear statement of findings?	

CASP criteria	Number of papers meeting criteria (%) (n = 24)
Were the findings explicit?	23 (96)
Was there adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments?	22 (92)
Did the researcher discuss the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)?	13 (54)
Were the findings discussed in relation to the original research questions?	23 (96)
How valuable is the research?	
Did the researcher discuss the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. did they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research-based literature?)	24 (100)
Did the researcher identify new areas where research is necessary?	18 (75)
Did the researcher discuss whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or consider other ways the research may be used?	6 (25)

780 ^a This question was only applicable to six studies

781

782 **Table 3. Articles included in the review**

Author(s)	Research design	Participant information	Main results
Arnold & Sarkar (2015)	Cross-sectional interview study.	15 practitioners (12 M and 3 F) with a combined 228.50 years consulting with Olympic athletes and teams ($M = 15.23$ years, $SD = 8.83$).	Analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed 28 themes within 5 categories: Olympic stressors, success and failure lessons, top tips for neophyte practitioners, differences within one's own consulting work, and multidisciplinary consulting.
Collins et al. (2013)	Cross-sectional autoethnography, vignettes and self-reflections.	Three trainee practitioners.	Describes how personal reflection on beliefs and values, behavior, sport and change underpinned their development as trainee sport psychologist practitioners.
Cropley et al. (2007)	Cross-sectional autoethnographic reflective narrative.	One BASES trainee sport and exercise psychologist	Presents themes such as personable skills, provision of good practical service, good communicator, applying theory to practice, approach to sport psychology and exhibiting skills to developing effectiveness.
Cropley et al. (2010)	Cross-sectional focus group (n=2) study.	Six (3 M and 3 F) BASES registered sport psychologists, between 26 and 46 years of age ($M = 32.5$, $SD = 7.1$). 34 participants used to validate definitions formed within the focus groups	Generated a working definition of effective practice, which was validated by 34 practitioners. This definition was multi-faceted including reflection-on-practice as a key part. Reflective practice was deemed to be a key part of developing effectiveness as participants intrinsically linked reflection to service delivery and experiential learning.
Friesen & Orlick (2010)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Five practitioners purposefully sampled due to the acknowledgement of their service delivery style.	Concluded that holistic consulting can be interpreted as meaning: managing the psychological effects to the athlete's performance from non-sport domains, developing the core individual beyond the athletic persona; and recognizing the dynamic relationship between athletes' thoughts, feelings, physiology, and behavior.
Hutter et al. (2017)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Fifteen participants (8 M and 7 F; $M = 35$ years, $SD = 7.5$) with an average of 231 h ($SD = 214$) of applied practice post-graduation.	Results suggested that Learning experiences are most useful for development on know how topics. Know-how can further be developed and extended through the application of theory and reflection. Regarding t professional development, gaining experience in the field and undertaking reflective activities were deemed as being most valuable. Professional development topics were less associated with traditional learning environments.
Lindsay et al. (2007)	Autoethnographic reflections.	A recently qualified British Chartered Psychologist.	The reflective account of the primary author provides important implications for those looking to engage in reflective practice. For example, there is a clear need to identify opportunities to reflect, practitioners to ask questions relating to their

Author(s)	Research design	Participant information	Main results
			philosophy of practice as well as reflect upon the foundations of their applied work and strategies which may help to facilitate reflection.
McCormack et al. (2015)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Thirty practitioners (18 M and 12 F) certified by a relevant organization currently working within a high-performance environment.	Results showed that burnout among sport psychologist practitioners was a frequently experienced phenomena despite high levels of work engagement. The sources of social support used by practitioners' difference between those experiencing high burnout versus low burnout, similarly, so was reference to the dimensions of work engagement.
McCormick & Meijen. (2015)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Fourteen UK Chartered Psychologists. Thirteen registered with the Health and Care Professions Council, eight had experience supervising and five as assessors.	Conversations with 14 sport psychologists created five takeaway messages for early career sport psychology practitioners. For example, it is encouraged for stage two candidates to be mindful of what they would like a supervisor to offer them and find a supervisor that can meet those needs. It is advised to early career psychologists to develop their listening skills to be open-minded to what various psychological literature can offer them, to be patient when providing psychological assistance, and to be cognisant of how valuable supervision can be in their development as a sport psychologist practitioner.
McDougall et al. (2015)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Six (4 M and 2 F) experienced practitioners with a mean 16.7 years of experience between them.	Four main themes were presented: Challenges to congruence, a broader role: managing multiple relationships, the influence of elite sport cultures, and surviving and thriving. These themes were discussed in relation to how practitioners manage them was trying to maintain an effective service.
McEwan et al. (2019)	Longitudinal qualitative interview study.	9 UK trainee in study one. In study two and 5 psychologists with a 15+ years consulting experience.	Participant development was found to exist in aspects of individuation for example interaction with peers and the broadening of inferences external to training. Professional development was viewed by participants as being non-linear and intermittent due to the nature of the profession.
Pack et al. (2014)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	12 (10 M and 2 F) practitioners with a range in service delivery experience from 4 to 23 years.	All participants revealed engaging in a form of self-practice for a multitude of reasons. For example, helping to manage the self, bridging the gap between theory and practice, legitimizing the own cognitive interventions. Challenges towards engaging in self-care what identified such as a lack of time. It was concluded that self-practice may help practitioners understand themselves better as a person and as a practitioner.
Ploszay (2003)	Cross-sectional qualitative phenomenological interview study.	Eleven purposefully sampled expert practitioners with AASP certification.	Six main themes regarding practitioner's Experiences of delivering sports psychology to athletes. These were enjoyment, learning, challenges, collaboration, knowledge and relationship.

Author(s)	Research design	Participant information	Main results
Poczwadowski & Sherman (2011)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Ten experienced sport psychology practitioners (7 M and 3 F). No info about accreditation.	Following analysis of interviews with experienced sport psychology practitioners, new elements were added to the heuristic. These included: consultant-client relationship, the consultant variables, the client variables, immersion and the goodness of fit.
Simons & Andersen (1995)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Eleven experienced consultants. No info about accreditation.	A multitude of experiences were discussed by consultants, a common theme among them was to 'know thyself' as a practitioner and to ask critical questions regarding your strengths and weaknesses, why you are in the profession and what you get from working with athletes as a practitioner.
Stambulova & Johnson (2010)	Content analysis of student case study reports.	Thirty-seven applied sport psychology students (23 M and 14 F).	Inductive and deductive analyses of student intervention reports resulted in 33 main themes and four categories which were: professional tools, consultant-client relationship, learning process and experience, and professional philosophy.
Tod et al. (2009)	Longitudinal qualitative interview study.	Eight Australian trainee sport psychologists (3 M and 5 F; age range 22–32 years).	Results showed that during initial service delivery experiences, trainees adopted a rigid, problem solving approach to helping clients. As professional development continued, trainees evolved into a more client-led approach to service delivery, a finding in agreement with early career development literature.
Tod & Bond (2010)	A longitudinal autoethnographic approach.	A British female practitioner in private practice.	Anna reported increases in the coherence between her broadening theoretical orientation and service delivery practices. Anna's detailed a more client-led service delivery style and focused on long-term growth rather than short-term problem fixing. Further, decreases in anxiety and increases in confidence were reported.
Tod et al. (2011)	A longitudinal autoethnographic approach.	Three male and four female Australian registered psychologists employed in applied psychology positions.	Participants reported that since leaving higher education they felt their service delivery style had evolved where more congruence existed between their behaviors and beliefs as a result of facing service delivery challenges. Further, decreases in anxiety and increases in confidence were reported.
Williams & Andersen (2012)	Case notes, a self-reflective logbook, and supervision sessions over two years.	A neophyte sport and exercise psychologist from the UK.	It emerged that Olympic practitioners can remain calm and approachable for their athletes through mindful practices to help them remain grounded. Themes surrounding the multiple roles, both official and unofficial, that sport psychologist practitioners may engage in when supporting athletes at the Olympics.
Winter & Collins (2015)	Cross-sectional qualitative interview study.	Nine (5 M and 4 F) UK-based sport and exercise psychology practitioners.	Three main themes emerged: literature underpinning professional practice, the importance of the sport setting and context, and the need for professional judgment. These were discussed in relation to practitioners' behaviors and how this can affect the ways in which practitioners operationalize and apply their knowledge.

Author(s)	Research design	Participant information	Main results
Woodcock et al. (2008)	Practitioner reflective diary.	A postgraduate sport and exercise psychology trainee.	Phenomenological analysis of reflective accounts identified 11 themes, 8 of which were contextualized in 3 self-narrative accounts, including the working environment, anxiety, confidence, being a performer, being a learner, relationships, feedback and practical content. Supervisor commentary on the primary authors reflections support the 11 themes.

783

784

785 **Table 4. Constructed themes**

Themes	Sub-themes
Formation of Prof ID	Training and education pathways
	Dev. competence & KSA's for practice
	Defining the role and purpose of a SPP
	The 'self' as a performer
Embodying Prof ID	Immersion in the profession
	Demonstrating self-awareness
	Congruence between philosophy and practice
	A clear model of practice
Supporting influences on Prof ID	Peer support
	Supervisor support
	Lessons learned from other professionals
	Reflection
Challenges to Prof ID	A naïve view of the profession
	Anxiety and self-doubts
	Demands of the profession
	Experiencing multiple identities