

The Role of Athletic Self-Confidence and Coping Strategies in Predicting the Athletic Success of Trabzon University Athletic students

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Abstract

One of the most important challenges in sports science is the factors that influence the acquisition and maintenance of athletic success. Nowadays, success in sports is not only focused on the quality of an athlete's performance.

The method of this study is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population includes all students from Trabzon University, which are 340 people. Cochran's sample size estimation formula was used to determine the sample size, and the number of samples was equivalent to 181 individuals selected by the simple random sampling method. The following standard questionnaires were used to collect information. Roberts et al. (1998) Athletic Success Questionnaire, Vealey et al. (1988) Athletic Self-Confidence Questionnaire and Gaudreau & Blondin (2002) Coping Strategies Questionnaire were used for data collection. Data were analysed using SPSS software, version 22. Descriptive statistics were presented as mean and standard deviation for quantitative variables and frequency and relative frequency percentage for qualitative variables. The regression coefficient was used to determine the sources of athletic self-confidence and coping strategies in predicting athletic success.

The results show that athletic self-confidence has a significant effect on students' athletic success ($p < 0.01$, $B = 0.54$) and that coping strategies have a significant effect on students' athletic success ($p < 0.01$, $B = 0.59$).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the more athletic self-confidence and coping strategies increase, the greater their athletic success. Encouraging student-athletes to participate in group and team programs can significantly increase their self-confidence, improving athletic success.

Keywords: Athletic self-confidence, Coping strategies, Athletic success.

Introduction

Athletic success in sports competitions is an issue that has attracted the most attention of sports organisations in different countries (Farzi, 2013). One of the most important challenges in sports science is the factors that influence the acquisition and maintenance of athletic success. In today's world, physical activity is no longer the only key factor in athletic success and achieving peak performance and the set goal. In addition to physical, technical, tactical, and special skills and abilities, other characteristics such as psychological traits also seem to influence the athletic success (Ostovar & Amirzadeh, 2009). Athletic success is an active learning process achieved through purposeful practice and the improvement of skills necessary to achieve high levels of athletic performance and success (Vallerand, 2008). Nowadays, success in sports is not only focused on the quality of an athlete's performance. It is now clear that there are several psychological variables that influence and enhance the athletic

success and performance of athletes. Psychological characteristics include these factors, which include variables such as intelligence, mood, ability, morale, and any attitude that is formed throughout a person's life (Haolin et al., 2020).

Observations show that many athletes perform the best in training but react emotionally when faced with competitors, the media, spectators, and other stressful situations (Bernstein et al., 2017)

In stressful situations that lead to athletes' emotional reactions, athletes' sources of confidence can solve the problem and restore athletes' performance on the field. In their study, Magyar & Duda (2000) indicated the importance of environmental sources of athletic self-confidence, such as social support, coach-directed behaviour, and comfort in the environment. Previous studies have shown that the experience of mastery of the skill performed or the successful past performance of the athlete is the strongest sources of confidence for all athletes. (Vealey & Chase, 2008).

Self-confidence is the belief in oneself and one's abilities, regardless of any judgment. This belief leads people to be more powerful in solving the issues and problems in front of them and have more success over others. (Visser, 2017). Athletic self-confidence is the belief or confidence people have in their ability to succeed in sports. Athletic self-confidence is one of the personal factors that some researchers have placed at the top of the advanced ability performance pyramid. It is considered the most important factor that influences athletic performance. (Chelladurai & Quatman, 2019).

High self-confidence in sports allows athletes to fully focus on what they are doing and maintain their excellent performance in the long term until they achieve the right result because endurance and resilience are two very effective factors for athletic success and are among the indicators of the difference between superior and lesser athletes. (Farsi et al., 2014). Another factor that can influence how athletes regulate their emotions in competition is coping strategies. Researchers believe that most people prefer certain coping methods in stressful situations, which together form an individual's coping style (Carver et al., 2020).

Some personality traits have been identified

as determinants of coping strategies in sport (Hill & Curran, 2016), which have been highlighted as predictors of perfectionist orientations in athletes (Hill et al., 2020). Maghsoudi et al. (2018) also concluded in their study that there is a significant relationship between cognitive emotion regulation, problem-oriented and emotion-oriented coping styles and athletic success. Coping strategies can be described as a multidimensional self-regulatory structure that reflects the constant changes in behavioural and cognitive mechanisms used to cope with contextual stressful demands (Rberto et al., 2020).

There are two general coping strategies that a person uses when faced with problems: the problem-oriented coping style and the emotion-oriented coping style. The problem-oriented coping style involves goal-directed and problem-focused actions such as stress management, social skills, mental reorganisation of problems, and attempting to change situations by emphasising, planning, and solving the problem. Problem-oriented coping depends on the appropriate use of cognitive components. In an emotion-oriented coping style, the main goal is to focus on emotions and control emotional distress, which is usually associated with physical exercise, caring, expressing emotions, and seeking social support. (Lane et al., 2018).

According to the research findings, the use of emotion-oriented coping strategies increases negative emotions and the use of problem-oriented coping strategies increases positive emotions in athletes during competition. The use of problem-oriented coping strategies increases goal attainment and athletic performance. In addition, athletes' goal attainment is positively related to coping strategies such as thought control, mental imagery, effort, and seeking support. (Martin et al., 2015).

The presence of stressors such as bad referees during the game, the presence of poor environmental conditions, the reaction of spectators during the game, the desire to win at the expense of deviating from sports ethics, experiencing injuries, witnessing cheating by rivals and the possibility of cheating, to win, make the need for effective coping strategies inevitable to maintain the mental health of the athlete and achieve sporting success, as these skills

influence the inability to deal with stressors in the sporting environment and prevent the influence of disruptive factors (DiFabio & Saklofske, 2014).

Individuals who have equipped themselves with a set of coping skills and competencies are more successful in dealing with problems because the use of effective coping strategies helps them to manage physical and psychological problems, interpersonal relationships, and social and personal conflicts. As a result, these individuals have a better quality of life and mental health (Mathews & Macleod, 2005). Athletic success requires attention to psychological characteristics. On the one hand, paying attention to psychological factors in athletes can improve individual success (Alexandre et al., 2019); on the other hand, paying attention to sport self-esteem variables and coping strategies can improve team success in athletes.

Most studies in athletic success have examined psychological factors such as anxiety, stress, resilience, and fault tolerance; however, these studies have not addressed athletes' athletic self-confidence and coping strategies in particular, which is a major research gap. On the other hand, the importance of these factors in the athletic success of Trabzon University student-athletes has not been investigated before. The present study was conducted because of the importance of psychological skills such as athletic confidence and coping strategies in the field of sport psychology, and especially because of the direct effects of these variables on the performance and athletic success of student-athletes. The purpose of the study is to answer the question of what role athletic self-confidence and coping strategies play in the athletic success of Trabzon University student-athletes.

Method

The method of this study is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population includes all student-athletes of Trabzon University, which are 340 individuals. Cochran's sample size estimation formula was used to determine the sample size and the number of samples was equivalent to 181 subjects selected by the simple random sampling method. The following standard questionnaires were used to collect information.

Athletics Success Questionnaire

The Perception of Success Questionnaire was developed by Roberts et al. in 1998. In the introductory phase of this questionnaire, 48 questions were asked to determine the perception of success. The basis of the questions in the sense of success in sport; these questions were initially developed to determine the motivation for progress in sport; the questions are intended to serve as a measure of whether an athlete is successful. The final version of the Athletic Success Questionnaire consists of 12 questions based on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5). Roberts et al. (1998) demonstrated high internal consistency for this scale with an alpha coefficient of 0.82, and the reliability of the questionnaire was reported to be 0.80 using the test-retest method.

Athletics Self-Confidence Questionnaire

The athletic Self-Confidence Questionnaire (1988) by Vealey et al. was developed to assess the sources of self-confidence in sports (mastery of skills, display of skills, physical and mental fitness, physiological self-expression, social support, leadership, alternative experiences, environmental comfort and desired position). This questionnaire includes 43 questions and 9 dimensions and is structured on a 7-point Likert scale (not at all important = 1 to very important = 7). To obtain the score for each dimension, the sum of the scores for each of the questions in that dimension is calculated. Higher scores in each dimension mean that the dimension has a greater impact on gaining self-confidence during training from the respondents' perspective and vice versa. In the study of Farsi et al. (2014), the content, face and criterion validity of this questionnaire were found to be adequate. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire calculated in the study of Farsi et al. (2014) was estimated to be more than 0.7.

Athletes Coping Strategies Questionnaire

The Athlete Coping Strategies Questionnaire was developed by Gaudreau & Blondin in 2002. This questionnaire is characterised by two dimensions: problem-oriented, including six strategies for thought control, mental imagery, relaxation, effort, logical

analysis, and seeking support, and emotion-oriented, including four strategies for discharging unpleasant emotions, distraction (distraction), social withdrawal (distancing), and athlete surrender/withdrawal. This questionnaire has 10 subscales and 39 questions, so each of its subscales, except for the effort scale, which has three questions, consists of four questions. Thus, the problem-oriented dimension is measured with six subscales and 23 questions. The emotion-oriented dimension is measured with four subscales and 16 questions on a Likert scale with five options (never = 1 to too much = 5). In Hassani et al.'s (2014)

study, the differential validity and structure of the questionnaire were also reported to be good and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.77.

Data were analysed using SPSS software, version 22. Descriptive statistics were presented as mean and standard deviation for quantitative variables and frequency and relative frequency percentage for qualitative variables. The regression coefficient was used to determine the sources of athletic self-confidence and coping strategies in predicting athletic success.

Results

Table 1: Average and standard deviation of Variables

	Success	Coping.Strategy	Self.Confidence
Mean	34.9643	90.1827	118.6862
Std. Deviation	6.01823	13.23125	25.94389

According to the results of the above table, the average athletic success of student-athletes is 34.96, coping strategies is 90.18, and athletic self-confidence is 118.68.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Variables

		Athletic success	Athletic self-confidence	Coping strategy
Athletic success	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	181		
Athletic self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	0.546**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	181	181	
Coping strategy	Pearson Correlation	0.598**	0.395**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	181	181	181

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the results of the above table, there is a significant relationship between athletic self-confidence and athletic success ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.54$), between coping strategies and athletic success ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.59$), and between athletic self-confidence and coping strategies ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.39$).

Table 3: Summary of Regression Model

The effect of athletic self-confidence on athletic success

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig
1	0.546	0.299	0.295	76.211	0.001

According to the results of table (3), the coefficient of determination of athletic success by athletic self-confidence is 0.29. In other words, 0.29 changes in students' athletic success are determined by athletic self-confidence and 0.71 by other variables.

Considering the value of ($f = 76.21$) and the fact that the significance level of the test error is less than 0.05, it can be said that athletic self-confidence can predict the athletic success of student-athletes.

**Table 4: The Results of the Simple Regression Equation
Effect of Athletic Self-Confidence on Athletic Success**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.919	1.764		11.293	0.001
	Athletic self-confidence	0.127	0.015	0.546	8.730	0.001

According to the results of the above table and considering that the significance level of the test error is less than 0.05, it can be said that athletic self-confidence plays a significant role in students'

athletic success, and the beta coefficient shows that athletic self-confidence predicts 0.54 changes in students' athletic success.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Model
The effect of coping strategies on athletic success

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig
1	0.598	0.357	0.354	99.528	0.001

According to the results of table (5), the coefficient of determination of athletic success by coping strategies is 0.35. In other words, it can be said that 0.35 changes in athletic success of student-athletes are determined by coping strategies and 0.65

are determined by other variables. Considering the value of ($f = 99.52$) and the fact that the significance level of the test error is less than 0.05, it can be said that coping strategies can be effective in predicting the athletic success of student-athletes.

**Table 6: The Results of the Simple Regression Equation
Effect of Coping Strategies on Athletic Success**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.444	2.484		4.204	0.001
	Coping strategies	0.272	0.027	0.598	9.976	0.001

According to the results of the above table and considering that the significance level of the test error is less than 0.05, it can be said that coping strategies play a significant role in the athletic success of student-athletes and the beta coefficient indicates that coping strategies predict 0.59 changes in the athletic success of student-athletes.

athletes' athletic success. One of the challenges in understanding the skilful behaviour of athletes is to identify the components and dimensions that are effective in achieving and maintaining athletic success. Recent studies on athletic success show that many factors play a role in the athletic success of athletes. According to the researchers, these factors include exercise, training, internal ability, age, psychological ability, commitment, and enjoyment of exercise (Mousavi et al., 2015). However, athletic self-confidence is one of the most important variables that influence athletic success.

Discussion

Considering the importance of athletic success and identifying the factors that influence it in student-athletes, the present study was conducted to examine the role of athletic self-confidence and coping strategies in predicting athletic success in student-athletes at Trabzon university.

The research findings indicate that athletic self-confidence plays an important role in student

The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of Williamson (2019), Dolatabadi et al. (2017), and Skinner (2013). In their study, Dolatabadi et al. (2017) showed that the source of the favourable situation was a predictor of

gymnasts' achievement level in all three stages. Social support in elementary school and physical self-expression and leadership behaviour of coach in middle school were the predictors of gymnasts' achievement level. The results of this study support Vealey et al.'s (35) conceptual model of athletic self-confidence. According to the results of Williamson (2019), self-confidence has a significant influence on athletic performance, and as self-confidence and its dimensions increase, athletes' athletic performance increases. The findings of Skinner (2013) also show a significant relationship between self-confidence and its components and athletic performance during a competitive season.

Although athletes are aware of the importance of self-confidence, some do not have the skills to control this fundamental psychological trait. They see this trait in other athletes, but they do not see it in themselves. Coaches know that athletes need the self-confidence to win. Psychologists believe that low self-confidence can never achieve significant success (Chelladurai & Quatman, 2019).

From the above, it can be concluded that self-confidence makes athletes feel positive. Indeed, athletes with high self-confidence maintain a high level of calmness and composure while coping with stress and pressure. This mental and physical state enables the athlete to work harder and more seriously. Athletic self-confidence, on the other hand, makes it easier for athletes to concentrate and frees them from inner worries. In conclusion, people with high athletic self-confidence who know their strengths and weaknesses will pursue difficult but achievable goals based on their abilities. If the abilities are equal among people, the athletes who have more confidence in their abilities will win and this will increase athletic success among student-athletes.

The results also show that coping strategies play a significant role in student athletes' athletic success. The use of emotion-oriented coping strategies increases negative emotions, while the use of problem-oriented coping strategies increases athletes' positive emotions during competition, which improves their athletic success. The use of problem-oriented coping strategies increases goal attainment and athletic success. In addition, athletes'

goal achievement is positively correlated with coping strategies such as thought control, mental imagery, effort, and seeking support (Martin et al., 2005).

The findings of the study are in line with the findings of Ariapooran and Abolghasemi (2018) and Maghsoudi et al. (2018) and Di Fabio & Saklofske (2014). In their study, Ariapooran and Abolghasemi (2018) showed a significant relationship between problem-oriented coping strategies and athletic performance in group athletes. Goal orientation has a significant relationship with athletic performance in individual and group athletes. Also, the results of Maghsoudi et al. (2018) showed that there is a significant relationship between cognitive emotion regulation, problem-oriented coping styles, and emotion-oriented coping styles and athletic performance. Also, the relationship between cognitive emotion regulation and problem-oriented coping style with athletic success was positive. Finally, the findings of Di Fabio & Saklofske (2014) indicate that coping strategies play an important role in athletes' athletic success.

Athletes must compete in stressful situations, so stress and anger are common because confronting a potentially stressful situation causes the individual to become agitated in response to that situation.

Accordingly, athletes must employ effective coping strategies to control external factors to ensure sports success. Various external factors such as spectators, stress, referees, and the stadium environment make effective coping strategies imperative to maintaining the athlete's mental health and achieving athletic success. This is because these skills influence the ability to cope with stressors in the sporting environment and prevent disruptive factors (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014).

Therefore, in the above explanation, it can be said that athletes who use effective coping strategies when faced with problems and challenges focus on the problem and try to solve it rather than avoiding problems and experiencing unpleasant feelings. At the same time, they have greater adaptability and flexibility, making them less prone to behavioural problems, and these factors lead to their athletic success.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, athletic confidence and coping strategies play an important role in predicting the athletic success of Trabzon university student-athletes. In other words, the higher the students' athletic confidence and coping strategies are, the greater the students' athletic success. Encouraging student-athletes to participate in group and team programs can greatly increase their self-confidence, improving athletic success. Therefore, leaders of student athletic teams are advised to encourage students to participate in these programs. On the other hand, the support of others, feedback from friends, encouragement from coaches, and the belief of others in the athletes' abilities all increase self-confidence and ultimately success in sports. It is suggested that managers of sports teams consider these aspects when encouraging athletes. Practical findings from this research also include that interventions to improve athletes' coping strategies, including training in these strategies, should be considered to achieve greater athletic success. Sports psychologists and coaches are advised to strengthen athletes' skills to increase self-confidence and coping strategies.

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