



Graduate Approaches to Psychological Resilience in Sports: A Systematic Mapping of Theses between 2020-2025

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ABSTRACT

Psychological resilience refers to athletes' ability to cope with stress, adapt to adversity, and maintain performance under pressure. As a concept gaining increasing importance in the field of sports psychology, resilience plays a critical role in understanding the impact of mental processes on athletic performance. The growing academic interest in sports sciences in Turkey has led to a notable rise in studies focusing on psychological resilience. In this context, the present study aims to systematically examine postgraduate theses prepared in Turkey between 2020 and 2025 within the theme of psychological resilience in sports. The research was conducted using a systematic review design and was structured in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. A comprehensive search of the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK Tez) database yielded 31 relevant postgraduate theses, which were subjected to content analysis. The selected theses were categorized according to publication year, study type, sample group and size, research method, data collection tools, and key findings. The majority of the theses were conducted at the master's level and employed quantitative research methods. Most samples consisted of university-level athletes, although elite athletes, female athletes, and Paralympic individuals were also included. The most frequently used data collection instruments were the CD-RISC and the Psychological Resilience Scale. The findings indicate that while interest in psychological resilience in sports has grown significantly, there remains a need for increased theoretical depth and a greater number of qualitative studies to broaden the scope of research in this area.

Keywords: *Psychological resilience, sport psychology, athlete*



ÖZET

Psikolojik dayanıklılık, sporcuların stresle başa çıkma, zorluklara uyum sağlama ve baskı altında performanslarını sürdürebilme yetisini ifade eder. Spor psikolojisi alanında önemi giderek artan bir kavram olan dayanıklılık, zihinsel süreçlerin sportif performans üzerindeki etkisini anlamada kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Türkiye’de spor bilimine yönelik akademik ilginin artması, psikolojik dayanıklılık konusuna odaklanan çalışmaların da sayısında kayda değer bir artışa yol açmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Türkiye’de 2020 ile 2025 yılları arasında spor alanında psikolojik dayanıklılık temasıyla hazırlanmış lisansüstü tezleri sistematik olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, sistematik derleme deseninde yürütülmüş ve PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) yönergeleri doğrultusunda yapılandırılmıştır. Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi veri tabanında yapılan kapsamlı bir tarama sonucunda 31 uygun lisansüstü tez belirlenmiş ve bu tezler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Seçilen tezler; yayımlanma yılı, çalışma türü, örneklem grubu ve büyüklüğü, araştırma yöntemi, veri toplama araçları ve temel bulgulara göre kategorize edilmiştir. Tezlerin çoğunluğunun yüksek lisans düzeyinde olduğu ve nicel araştırma yöntemlerinin kullanıldığı tespit edilmiştir. Örneklem gruplarının çoğu üniversite düzeyindeki sporculardan oluşmakla birlikte elit sporcular, kadın sporcular ve paralimpik bireyler de çalışmalara dâhil edilmiştir. En sık kullanılan veri toplama araçları ise CD-RISC (Connor-Davidson Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği) ve Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği olmuştur. Bulgular, spor alanında psikolojik dayanıklılığa yönelik ilginin önemli ölçüde arttığını gösterse de bu alandaki araştırmaların kapsamının genişletilebilmesi için daha fazla kuramsal derinlik ve nitel çalışmaya ihtiyaç olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Psikolojik dayanıklılık, spor psikolojisi, sporcu

INTRODUCTION

Sport is a multidimensional activity that tests not only the physical capacity but also the mental and emotional resilience of individuals. Athletes at all levels, especially high performance athletes, are constantly exposed to stressors such as training loads, competitive pressure, injury risk, performance anxiety, and social environment expectations (Reche García et al., 2022). The ability of the individual to exhibit psychological resilience in the face of such stressors, not to be negatively affected by the difficulties experienced or to recover quickly from these effects is an important factor that makes success in sport sustainable. In this context, resilience has become an increasingly important concept in the sport sciences literature (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

Psychological resilience is defined as the ability of individuals to develop a positive adaptation in the face of traumatic, stressful, or challenging life events (Masten & O'Connor, 1989). In a sport-specific context, this concept is considered a multidimensional construct encompassing an athlete's capacity to maintain psychological stability and recover effectively from setbacks such as performance declines, injuries, and pressure-filled environments. In the literature, resilience is reported to be closely linked with various psychological resources, including self-efficacy, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, social support, and coping with stress (Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). In this regard, research has shown that athletes with high levels of psychological resilience tend to experience better psychological well-being and demonstrate more consistent and sustainable athletic performance over time (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Gucciardi et al., 2015; Tamminen & Holt, 2012). In recent years, psychological resilience has been considered not only as an individual trait but also as a skill set that can be developed. In particular, it has been shown that structured training programs conducted by coaches, sport psychologists, and physical education teachers can increase psychological resilience in athletes (Sullivan et al., 2021). However, various studies have also shown that different

sports branches, age groups, gender, and athletic levels create variability in psychological resilience levels (Çelik et al., 2019; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Reche-García et al., 2022; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). This diversity increases the importance of investigating the contextual characteristics of the psychological resilience phenomenon, thus necessitating a systematic categorization of the information in the literature.

Although the concept of psychological resilience has received increasing attention in Turkey in recent years, international studies reveal that this phenomenon has long been integrated into athlete development programs, talent identification processes, and mental skills training. For instance, in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, resilience training is widely embedded in both elite athlete pathways and collegiate sport programs, supported by structured psychological support systems (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014; Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Reardon et al., 2019). These countries also exhibit a higher frequency of research that adopts mixed and longitudinal designs to explore how resilience develops over time and in response to real-life performance challenges. In contrast, research from developing contexts, including Turkey, is often limited to cross-sectional designs and relatively narrow sample profiles, such as university athletes. Therefore, evaluating Turkish postgraduate research within a broader international framework not only reveals the current state of academic output but also highlights areas that require methodological and theoretical advancement. In Turkey, particularly after 2020, the concept of psychological resilience has attracted growing academic interest and has been frequently explored in postgraduate theses in the fields of sport sciences, educational sciences, and psychology. This trend reflects both the increased emphasis on mental well-being in performance settings and the expansion of research capacity within Turkish universities (Çicek, 2021). These theses have generally been conducted on diverse participant groups, including university student athletes, national athletes, amateur or professional athletes, physical education teachers, and

referees, and have utilized a variety of methodological approaches including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Çiçek, 2025; Ateş, 2023). In most of these studies, reliable and valid measurement tools such as the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), the Psychological Resilience Scale, and the Adult Resilience Scale were employed to assess resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Karairmak, 2010). Additionally, psychological resilience was often analyzed in relation to variables such as coping with stress, self-confidence, academic achievement, social support, motivation, and emotional burnout (Gürsoy, 2022; Duran, 2022).

However, since most of the theses are published in scattered and unsystematic ways, it is difficult to interpret the findings in a holistic framework. Evaluating these studies conducted in different institutions in a common perspective is necessary both to enrich the literature and to provide more functional and guiding information for practitioners. In particular, analyses conducted within the framework of systematic review standards such as the PRISMA protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) provide direction for future studies by revealing trends, gaps and repetitive structures in the literature (Page et al., 2021).

In this context, the main purpose of this study is to systematically analyze postgraduate theses focusing on psychological resilience in sport, which were prepared at various universities in Turkey between 2020 and 2025. Within the scope of the analysis, the methodological characteristics of the theses, the profile of the sample groups, the psychological measurement tools employed, and other variables associated with resilience are evaluated. Based on the findings, the study also aims to offer evidence-based recommendations that contribute to the academic literature and provide guidance for researchers and practitioners working in the field of sport psychology.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a systematic review conducted within the scope of documentary review model. In the study,

postgraduate theses on psychological resilience in the context of sport in Turkish universities between 2020 and 2025 were analyzed. The review process was structured in line with PRISMA 2020 principles and carried out in accordance with a systematic screening, selection and analysis plan (Page et al., 2021).

Research Model

Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Document analysis allows the systematic evaluation of a certain phenomenon by collecting data from existing documents (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In this study, the documents consisted of graduate theses published in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). The data obtained were analyzed by content analysis technique and the findings were presented by descriptive method.

Sample

The sample of the study consists of 31 postgraduate theses published between 2020 and May 2025 and addressing the topic of psychological resilience in sport. These theses were selected from master's and doctoral theses prepared in different universities in Turkey and available in full text in the YÖK National Thesis Center. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of theses; only studies that met certain content and context criteria were included in the analysis.

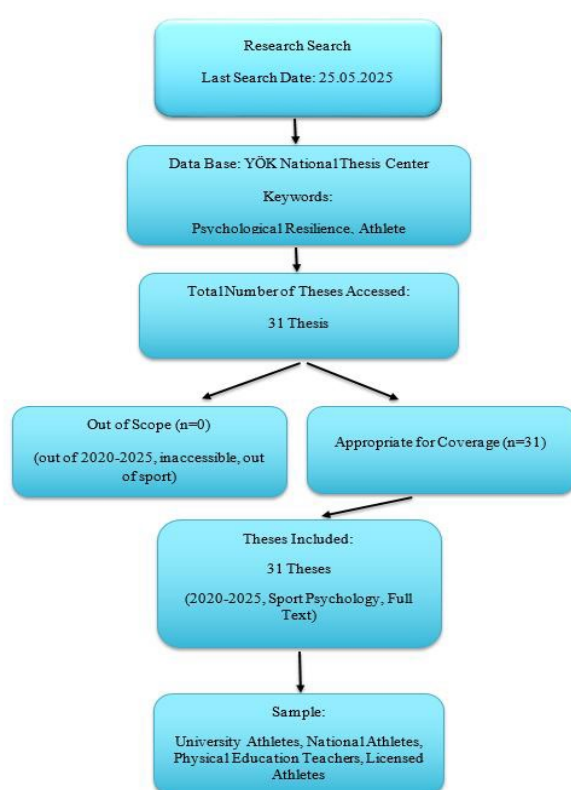
Data Collection Process

The data collection process was carried out between April 1, 2025, and May 10, 2025. An online search was conducted using the YÖK National Thesis Center (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr>). The following keywords were used during the search process: “psychological resilience,” “mental toughness,” “athlete,” “sport psychology,” and “resilience.” In order to focus on the sport-related context, additional filtering terms such as “sport,” “elite athlete,” “soccer player,” “basketball player,” and “physical education” were applied. As a result of the initial screening process, 31 postgraduate theses that met the inclusion

criteria were identified and included in the study. All theses were found to be directly related to the scope of the research; therefore, no exclusions were made.

The study followed the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency and replicability in the selection process. The identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages are illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram below:

PRISMA Flowchart



Data Collection Tool

A thesis review form was developed as a data collection tool. In this form, the following variables were coded for each thesis:

- Year of the thesis, university and institute,
- Thesis type (master's/doctorate),
- Research model and method (quantitative, qualitative, mixed),
- Sample characteristics (sport branch, age group, gender),

- The psychological resilience scale used,
- Other variables associated with resilience,
- Main findings and conclusions.

All theses were systematically analyzed through this structured form.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were evaluated with descriptive analysis and content analysis techniques. The coded variables were categorized according to frequency and percentage values and the findings were supported by graphs. Methodological differences, sample diversity, usage rates of measurement tools and conceptual tendencies were analyzed thematically. Qualitative contents were compared with the theoretical frameworks in the literature and served as the basis for the discussion section.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this systematic review are as follows:

- Only theses published between 2020-2025 were analyzed.
- Only theses written in universities in Turkey and made available for open access in YÖK Thesis Center were included.
- Articles, proceedings and international publications were not included in the study.
- The accuracy of the methods used in the theses is based on the statements of the original authors; the depth of analysis may be limited in this context.
- Only studies conducted in the context of sport were included; general individual contexts of psychological resilience were excluded.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure content validity in the study, the analysis criteria of the included theses were predetermined and each thesis was evaluated according to the same structured form. The coding process was carried out carefully, and descriptive consistency was ensured by examining all theses one-to-one. In addition, a selection process in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 protocol was followed, thus maintaining systematic consistency. Reliability was enhanced through

cross-validations and a high overlap rate was achieved in descriptive categories.

RESULTS

In this section of the study, the findings obtained for the determined research questions, and descriptive and thematic explanations regarding these findings are presented. Thirty-one postgraduate theses on psychological resilience in sport prepared in universities in Turkey between 2020 and 2025 were systematically analyzed according to the inclusion criteria. As a result of the screening process, it was determined that all theses were directly related to the scope of the research and were included in the study without any exclusion. The findings are organized under both descriptive and thematic categories to reflect the trends, methodological approaches, and focal variables identified across the reviewed studies.

When the distribution of theses is examined, it is seen that there were 2 theses in 2020, 5 theses in 2021, 8 theses in 2022, 9 theses in 2023, 5 theses in 2024 and 2 theses in the first five months of 2025, totaling 31 theses. This finding shows that academic interest in psychological resilience increased especially in 2022 and 2023.

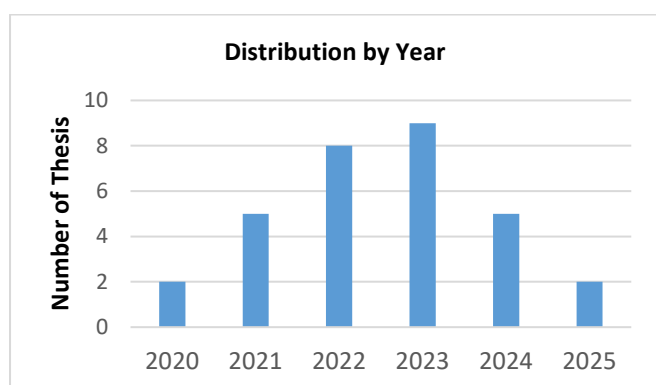


Fig 1. Distribution of Theses by Years

Among the theses, 27 were conducted at the master's level and 4 at the PhD level. Most of the theses were completed at universities located in Istanbul, Ankara, and Konya. Notably, Gazi University, Marmara University, and Selçuk University were among the most frequently represented institutions.

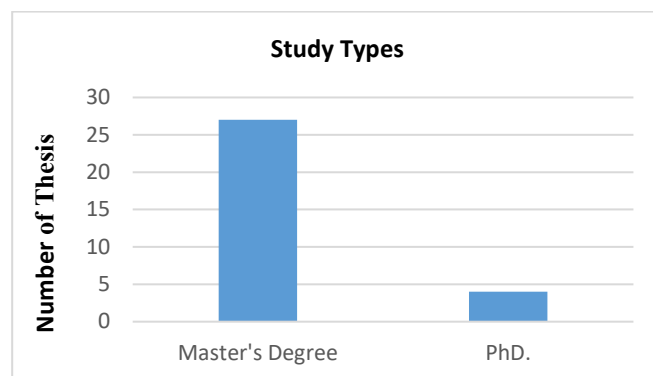


Fig 2. Distribution by Thesis Types and Universities

23 of the theses were prepared using quantitative method, 5 were prepared using mixed method and 3 were prepared using qualitative method. Relational survey model was generally preferred in quantitative studies. Mixed studies were supported by semi-structured interviews to contribute to an in-depth understanding of psychological resilience.

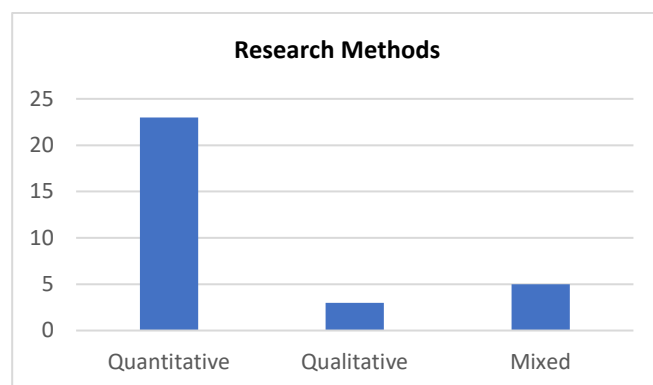


Fig 3. Research Methods

The samples used in theses are mostly composed of university student athletes. Other frequently used groups:

- National level athletes (8 theses)
- Physical education teacher candidates (5 theses)
- Licensed amateur athletes (9 theses)
- Referees, coaches and physical education teachers (4 theses in total)

In terms of sports branches, football (42%), basketball (23%), volleyball (13%), swimming, athletics and combat sports are included.

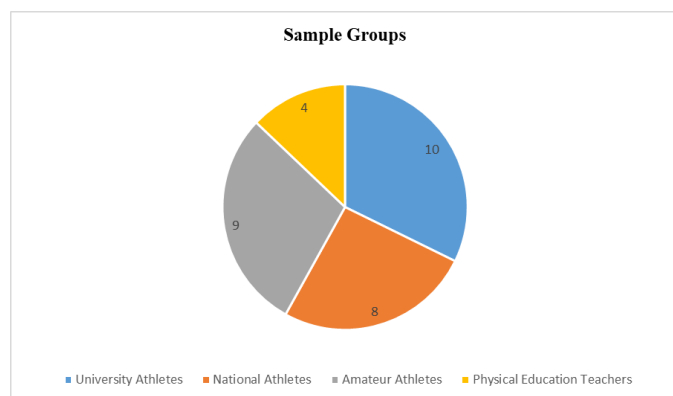


Fig 4. Sample Groups

The sample sizes used in the 31 graduate theses examined within the scope of this research are distributed in different ranges. The most preferred sample range is 101-200 people and there are 10 theses in this group. There are 8 theses in the 201-300 person range, and 5 theses each in the 0-100 person and 301-500 person ranges. There are 3 theses with 500 or more participants.

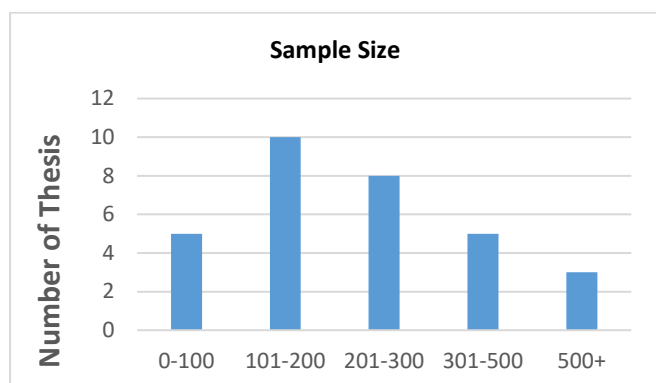


Fig 5. Number of Thesis (Sample Size)

The following scales were used to measure psychological resilience in the majority of the theses:

- Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): Used in 19 theses.
- Adult Psychological Resilience Scale (APRS): Preferred in 7 theses.
- Psychological Resilience Scale: It was included in 3 theses.
- In the remaining theses, scales developed or adapted by the researcher were used.

Valid versions of most of the scales that were adapted into Turkish and tested for their psychometric properties were used.

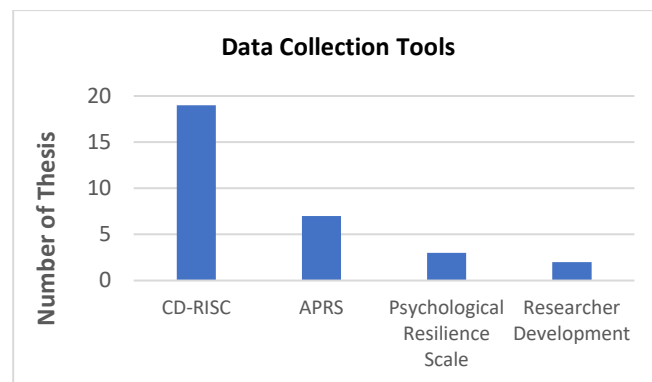


Fig 6. Measurement Tools Used

Variables Related to Psychological Resilience

The main variables analyzed together with psychological resilience in the theses are as follows:

- Self-efficacy (11 theses)
- Coping with stress (9 theses)
- Academic achievement (4 theses)
- Perception of social support (6 theses)
- Self-confidence (5 theses)
- Motivation (3 theses)
- Psychological well-being (2 theses)

In most of the theses, it was found that psychological resilience showed significant positive relationships with these variables. In particular, self-efficacy and coping skills with stress were reported as strong predictors of resilience.

Thematic Findings

The themes that stand out in the theses in the content analysis are as follows:

- Psychological resilience is closely related to mental toughness.
- Female athletes show lower resilience scores than males in some studies; this shows that the gender factor is a controversial variable.
- Psychological resilience increases as the perception of social support increases in individuals practicing team sports.

In Table 1 presents the 31 postgraduate theses included in the study based on the established criteria. Each thesis is

numbered, and its research topic and main findings are briefly summarized.

It has been suggested in some theses that the communication style and leadership skills of coaches have an effect on the level of psychological resilience in athletes.

Table 1. Main Research Topics and Findings of the Analyzed Graduate Theses

No	Topic/Purpose	Results
1	An Investigation of Psychological Resilience and Perceived Stress Among Futsal Players (Abbas, 2020)	Futsal players exhibited higher levels of psychological resilience compared to their perceived stress levels. The gender variable did not produce a statistically significant difference.
2	An Examination of the Role of Perceived Social Support on the Self-Confidence and Psychological Resilience of Combat Sport Athletes (Çoruh, 2020)	As perceived social support increases, combat sport athletes' self-confidence and psychological resilience also improve.
3	An Examination of the Psychological Resilience Levels of Wrestlers in Athlete Training Centers (Köklü, 2020)	The psychological resilience levels of wrestlers vary significantly based on family income, paternal attitude, and years of athletic experience. No significant differences were found with respect to other demographic variables.
4	An Examination of Psychological Resilience and Creativity Levels Among Individuals Participating in Indoor and Outdoor Recreational Activities (Gevişen, 2020)	Individuals participating in outdoor recreational activities exhibit higher levels of psychological resilience and creativity compared to those engaged in indoor activities.
5	An Examination of Psychological Resilience, Emotion Regulation Skills, and Psychological Symptoms in National Swimmers of a Sports Club (Yüce, 2021)	National swimmers demonstrate higher levels of psychological resilience and emotion regulation skills compared to non-athletes. However, they also exhibit higher scores in psychological symptom
6	Correctional Officers' Engagement in Sportive Leisure Activities and Their Levels of Psychological Resilience (Aydın, 2021)	Correctional officers with higher engagement in sportive leisure activities also exhibit higher levels of psychological resilience.
7	An Examination of Psychological Resilience and Decision-Making Styles of Football Referees Based on Their Classification Levels (Ulutaş, 2021)	The psychological resilience and decision-making styles of football referees did not show a statistically significant difference based on their classification levels. However, decision-making skills significantly improved with increasing years of refereeing experience.
8	Relationships Among Internet Addiction, Social Isolation, Psychological Resilience, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Physical Education and Sports Teachers (Çutuk, 2022)	Internet addiction and social isolation among physical education teachers reduce psychological resilience, whereas higher psychological resilience enhances organizational citizenship behavior.
9	An Examination of Psychological Resilience and Decision-Making Levels in Table Tennis Athletes (Kudaybergenova, 2022)	The psychological resilience and decision-making levels of table tennis athletes vary according to factors such as harmful habits, age, educational background, place of residence, and occupation.
10	An Examination of Psychological Resilience Levels in Physically Disabled Individuals Who Do and Do Not Engage in Sports (Gür, 2022)	Physically disabled individuals who engage in sports exhibit higher levels of psychological resilience compared to those who do not participate in sports.
11	An Examination of Job Stress and Psychological Resilience in Physical Education and Sports Teachers (The Case of Ağrı and Iğdır Provinces) (Söğüt, 2022)	Physical education and sports teachers exhibit high levels of psychological resilience and low levels of overall job stress. The challenge dimension is strongly correlated with psychological
12	An Examination of the Effects of Personality Traits and Psychological Resilience on Mood States in Performance Athletes (Çakıroğlu, 2022)	The personality traits and psychological resilience of performance athletes significantly influence their mood states.
13	The Effect of Home-Based Training During the Covid-19 Pandemic on Psychological Resilience and Mental Well-Being in Football Players (Yavuz, 2022)	Home-based training during the Covid-19 pandemic had a positive impact on football players' psychological resilience and mental well-being.
14	The Effect of Psychological Resilience on Academic Achievement Among Students of Faculties of Sports Sciences: A Case Study in the Aegean Region (Günay, 2022)	Students of sports sciences with higher levels of psychological resilience demonstrated greater academic achievement.
15	An Examination of Psychological Resilience and Emotion Regulation Difficulties in Coaches Working in Local Governments During the Covid-19 Pandemic (Aygün, 2022)	During the pandemic, coaches employed by local governments were found to have low psychological resilience and high levels of emotion regulation difficulties.
16	An Examination of Psychological Resilience Among Elite Athletes and Sedentary Individuals During the Covid-19 Pandemic (Urgan, 2022)	During the pandemic, elite athletes exhibited significantly higher levels of psychological resilience compared to sedentary individuals.
17	The Effect of Exercise Addiction on Psychological Resilience in Swimmers (Yıldızdal, 2022)	As exercise addiction increases, swimmers' levels of psychological resilience also rise.
18	The Relationship Between Psychological Resilience and Aggression Tendencies in Sports High School Students (Sakaliuzun, 2023)	Sports high school students with higher psychological resilience demonstrate lower levels of aggression tendencies.
19	An Examination of Mindfulness and Psychological Resilience Levels in Students of Faculties of Sports Sciences (Karadeniz, 2023)	A positive and statistically significant relationship was found between mindfulness and psychological resilience among sports sciences students.
20	An Examination of the Relationship Between Multifactor Leadership Orientations and Psychological Resilience Levels in Physical Education and Sports Teachers (Kurt, 2023)	A significant and positive relationship exists between multifactor leadership orientations and psychological resilience in physical education and sports teachers.

21	An Examination of Psychological Resilience Levels in Volleyball Club Players (Kimsün, 2023)	Volleyball players' psychological resilience levels vary significantly by age, education level, years of sports participation, and income, while no significant differences were found with respect to gender or parental education level.
22	The Effect of State Anxiety Levels on Mental Well-Being and Psychological Resilience in Athletes Participating in the Eurohockey Indoor Club 2022 Men's Tournament (Ceylan, 2023)	As state anxiety levels increase, athletes' mental well-being and psychological resilience decrease.
23	An Examination of Mindfulness and Psychological Resilience Levels in Individuals Engaged in Fitness Activities (Acıbuca, 2023)	As mindfulness increases, psychological resilience decreases. Variables such as gender, age, and duration of fitness participation significantly affect resilience.
24	An Examination of the Relationship Between Psychological Resilience and Self-Esteem in Individuals Engaged in Fitness: The Case of Van Province (Akkuş, 2024)	There is a positive and significant relationship between psychological resilience and self-esteem among individuals who engage in fitness. Differences are also observed based on demographic variables.
25	An Investigation of the Relationships Among Sport Commitment, Athletic Identity, and Psychological Resilience in Track and Field Athletes in Relation to Performance Levels and Event Types (Aslan, 2024)	Significant relationships were found among psychological resilience, sport commitment, and athletic identity in track and field athletes, varying by performance level and event type.
26	A Comparative Study on the Relationship Between Psychological Resilience, Achievement Motivation, and Anxiety Levels in Swimmers (Özdemir, 2024)	Psychological resilience is positively related to achievement motivation and negatively related to trait anxiety. Demographic variables also create significant differences.
27	An Examination of the Effect of Playfulness and Psychological Resilience on Competition Performance in 10–14-Year-Old Orienteering Athletes (İşler, 2024)	Increased playfulness and psychological resilience positively influence competition performance.
28	The Effect of Psychological Hardiness and Mental Training on Perceived Performance in Adolescent Basketball Players Who Engage in Basketball as a Serious Leisure Activity (Özcan, 2024)	Psychological hardiness and mental training positively affect perceived performance in adolescent basketball players.
29	Relationships Between Psychological Resilience, Meaning in Life, and Hope Levels, and Internet and Smartphone Addiction in Students Receiving Sports Education (Dalo, 2024)	Psychological resilience, meaning in life, and hope are negatively associated with internet and smartphone addiction.
30	The Effect of Clinical Reformer Pilates on Menstrual Symptoms and Psychological Resilience (Şahin, 2024)	Clinical reformer Pilates exercises reduce menstrual symptoms and increase psychological resilience.
31	An Examination of Psychological Resilience Levels and Decision-Making Strategies Among Basketball Referees of Different Classifications (Çelik, 2025)	There are significant relationships between basketball referees' psychological resilience levels and their decision-making strategies. Resilience increases with classification level.

DISCUSSION

Within the scope of this systematic review, 31 postgraduate theses conducted in Turkey between 2020 and 2025 were examined. The findings reveal that the topic of psychological resilience has been addressed with increasing interest in the sport psychology literature. The majority of the studies emphasize that psychological resilience is a determinant of athletes' performance, psychological well-being, stress coping capacity, and social relationships. Studies such as those by Galli and Vealey (2008), Gucciardi et al. (2015), and more recent theses (e.g., Demirtaş, 2024; Duran, 2022) show that psychological resilience contributes positively not only to athletic performance but also to intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, and an athlete's intention to persist in sport. These findings are consistent with the work of pioneering researchers, indicating that athletes with high psychological resilience tend to perform more consistently under pressure and recover more effectively from setbacks.

A common trend observed among the reviewed theses is the frequent use of university-level athletes as the main sample group. This approach facilitates easier access to participants and a more manageable research process. However, the limited inclusion of special populations such as elite athletes, Paralympic athletes, and younger athletes is a notable gap. This situation suggests that the diversity of participant profiles in the field is restricted, which in turn limits the generalizability of findings. Thus, future research should aim to involve broader and more varied athletic populations in order to capture the complexity of psychological resilience across different contexts. In terms of data collection tools, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) was identified as the most frequently utilized instrument in the examined theses. This prevalence can be attributed to the scale's well-established validity and reliability. However, an overreliance on a single measurement tool risks constraining the multidimensional understanding of resilience.

Alternative instruments such as the Brief Resilience Scale and the Resilience Scale for Adults can offer different perspectives and contribute to a richer and more comprehensive evaluation of the construct. One of the noteworthy findings is that psychological resilience was generally higher among team athletes than individual athletes. This suggests that the inherently social and collaborative environment of team sports—characterized by shared goals, social support, and a sense of belonging—may foster greater resilience. This interpretation aligns with the findings of Tamminen and Holt (2012), who emphasized the importance of team dynamics in the development of psychological resilience. Therefore, the context of athletic participation (individual vs. team-based) appears to be a relevant factor in resilience-related outcomes. Lastly, the reviewed studies overwhelmingly favored quantitative research methods, indicating a tendency to prioritize objective measurement and statistical analysis. While this approach provides valuable insights, it also presents limitations in understanding the deeper psychological and experiential dimensions of resilience. Given that psychological resilience is a complex and dynamic construct, future studies should increasingly incorporate qualitative and mixed methods designs. These approaches would enable researchers to explore athletes' lived experiences, meaning-making processes, and contextual challenges with greater depth and nuance.

CONCLUSION

In this systematic review, 31 postgraduate theses on psychological resilience in sport were analyzed. The findings revealed that psychological resilience in athletes is significantly associated with several factors such as coping with stress, self-confidence, motivation, self-awareness, and academic achievement. It was observed that university-level individuals constitute the majority of the sample groups, while research focusing on elite athletes and special populations remains limited. Additionally, the psychological resilience levels of team athletes were generally found to be higher than those of individual athletes. Although some

studies reported no significant difference between male and female athletes in terms of resilience, others indicated that gender may be a determining factor. In terms of data collection tools, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) was predominantly used, while the utilization rate of other scales remained quite low. Furthermore, the reviewed theses largely relied on quantitative methods, with qualitative approaches being notably underrepresented. These results collectively underscore the need for more diverse, inclusive, and methodologically varied research to comprehensively understand the multidimensional nature of psychological resilience in athletes.

Based on the findings of this systematic review, several recommendations are offered for advancing research and practice in sport psychology. First, more studies should be conducted on underrepresented groups, such as elite athletes and Paralympic competitors, to ensure broader inclusivity. Incorporating qualitative and mixed-method approaches may yield deeper insights into the development of psychological resilience. Coaches and sport psychologists are encouraged to implement structured interventions to foster resilience. Additionally, using diverse and reliable measurement tools will enhance the multidimensional understanding of the concept. Future research should also explore resilience beyond performance outcomes, including areas like injury recovery, career transitions, and overall well-being. Finally, resilience should be examined not only at the individual level but also within team dynamics and leadership contexts.

Conflict of Interest

There are not any conflict of interest.

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