



Coping with stress and self-confidence in athletes: A review

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Coping With Stress and Self-Confidence in Athletes: Review

Abstract

Due to the rapidly changing and developing living conditions, it is inevitable for a social being to react differently when the physical and spiritual limits of the human being are challenged and to try to adapt to these changes. The concept of stress is one of the psychological concepts that society learns quickly. Stress, which is an important part of daily life, arises as a result of the individual's reaction to events arising from his environment. The concept of stress, which was not very common in the past centuries, has become one of the words we use frequently in our daily lives, these days when living standards have increased compared to the last century and people are more knowledgeable and richer. The ability to cope with stress in athletes is a factor that greatly affects their sports performance. Self-confidence is one of the main characteristics of personality and is an important factor affecting the behavior of the individual. On the other hand, Self-confidence is the ability of an athlete to believe that he is mentally and physically sufficient. An athlete who does not trust himself and does not believe in his abilities cannot reflect his potential to his performance. While self-confidence represents being able to do the target behavior, trying, responsibility, pleasure, and enthusiasm, not self-confidence brings with it fear, worry, anxiety and pain. Self-confidence is a feature that can be differentiated with the effect of variables such as family, environment, and school, which are shaped as the individual gets older. In short, self-confidence is not an innate feature, it has a dynamic compilation structure. Self-confidence is also an interesting factor in athletes because it does not allow the success of athletes to be negatively affected. In the light of this information, coping with stress and self-confidence in athletes are presented in this review.

Keywords: Self-Confidence, Sports Self-Confidence, Stress, Coping with stress

Sporcularda Stresle Başa Çıkma ve Özgüven: Derleme

Özet

Hızla değişen ve gelişen yaşam koşulları nedeniyle, bir sosyal varlığın, insanın fiziksel ve ruhsal sınırlarının zorlanıp tehdidi ile farklı tepki göstermesi ve bu değişikliklere uyum sağlamaya çalışması kaçınılmazdır. Stres kavramı, toplumun hızlıca öğrendiği psikolojik kavramlardan bir tanesidir. Günlük yaşamın önemli bir parçası olan stres, bireyin çevresinden kaynaklanan olaylara tepkisinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yaşam standartlarının geçtiğimiz yüzyıla göre arttığı ve insanların daha bilgili ve daha zengin olduğu bu günlerde, geçmiş yüzyıllarda çok yaygın olmayan stres kavramı günlük yaşamımızda sık kullandığımız kelimelerden biri haline gelmiştir. Sporcularda da stresle başa çıkabilme spor performanslarını oldukça etkileyen bir faktördür. Özgüven, kişinin temel özelliklerinden biridir ve bireyin davranışlarını etkileyen önemli bir faktördür. Diğer yandan; özgüven, sporcu bireyin kendini zihinsel ve fiziksel yönden yeterli olduğuna inandırabilmesidir. Kendine güvenmeyen, yeteneklerine inanmayan sporcu birey sahip olduğu potansiyeli performansına yansıtamaz. Kendine güven, hedef davranışı yapabilmeyi, denemeyi, sorumluluğu, hazzı ve coşkuyu temsil ederken, kendine güvenmemek ise korku, edişe, kaygı ve acıyı da beraberinde getirmektedir. Özgüven, bireyin yaş aldıkça şekillenen aile, çevre ve okul gibi değişkenlerin etkisiyle farklılaşabilen bir özelliktir. Kısaca özgüven doğuştan kazanılan bir özellik değil dinamik derleme de bir yapıya sahiptir. Özgüven sporcu bireylerde de ilginç bir etken olarak yer alır çünkü sporcuların başarılarının olumsuz yönde etkilenmesine müsaade etmez. Bu bilgiler ışığında sporcularda stresle başa çıkma ve Özgüven bu derlemede sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özgüven, Sportif Özgüven, Stres, Stresle

Introduction

The level of athletic self-confidence in athletes is one of the most important factors that indirectly affects sports performance, the functionality of sports, and the diversity of emotions and thoughts in the athletic context. Confident individuals tend to be more capable of completing assigned tasks and overcoming obstacles than others. They also use cognitive resources required for athletic success more effectively (Hays et al., 2009). On the other hand, individuals with low self-confidence, regardless of their success in dealing with daily life problems, do not believe that they have the power and belief to cope with these problems. These individuals do not engage in love-based relationships with others due to fear of rejection and not being valued, and constantly feel dependent on others (Soner, 2013).

To increase an individual's level of self-confidence in the athletic context, they must become familiar with their surroundings, communicate with different people, maintain personal control, and motivate themselves with calm behavior (Sevim, 1997). Athletes who do not have enough confidence in themselves to achieve athletic success experience difficulties in transforming their existing abilities into performance due to fear, anxiety, and pain (Biçer, 2018). If athletes are aware of their abilities within environmental conditions and have enough confidence in themselves, their level of athletic success will inevitably become a certain truth that rises in the same proportion (Thomas et al., 2011). Stress, an important part of daily life, arises as a result of an individual's reaction to events from their environment. In these days when living standards have increased compared to the past century and people are more knowledgeable and wealthier, the concept of stress, which was not very common in previous centuries, has become one of the words we use frequently in our daily lives (Tarhan, 2014).

According to Yıldırım (1991), stress is defined as a situation that arises from the organism's perception and the physical and mental boundaries that emerge against any situation or event. Stress is described as negative psychological reactions that disturb the emotional and psychological happiness of individuals. This means the body's response to an uncomfortable situation. Aggression is a hostile behavior aimed at intentionally causing harm, insult or domination over a normal person or rival (Bayram, 2012). In other words, it is the collection of violent and hate-filled behaviors that a person performs to cause physical or mental harm to their opponent. It is actions that cause suffering and material losses to the person, directly or indirectly (Şahin, 2003). Both physical strength and psychological resilience are important in all sports. The relationship between these factors is especially important in individuals who participate in sports on the road to success. It is seen that individuals who engage in sports have

high levels of self-confidence and high success rates. In addition, one of the benefits of sports is that it is effective in releasing negative behaviors such as irritability, tension, and aggression that can accumulate in individuals and prevent these behaviors from becoming harmful. As a result, exercising is a factor that enables individuals to be physically and mentally healthy, live in harmony with their surroundings, and achieve success in life (Şeker, 2020).

Method

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Stress

The word "stress" in Turkish language carries meanings such as pressure, tension, strain, hardship, and agony. It originates from the Latin word "Estrica" and the Old French word "Estrece". Over the years, the word "stress" has been used with different meanings. In the 17th century, it meant words such as disaster, trouble, calamity, affliction, and grief, while in the 18th and 19th centuries, it was used for words that meant pressure, difficulty, and hardship related to an individual, object, or mental structures. When considering translations made in the Turkish language, it can be understood that it mostly carries meanings of "loading and straining". Stress can also be used as resistance against pressure, difficulty, or force applied to an individual or object (Baltaş and Baltaş, 2002).

Stress occurs to adapt the body's response to any kind of external stimuli without looking at the result for the individual (Allen, 2003). In other words, it refers to the effort shown by the body and psychological elements to use all the available resources and sometimes even exceed the possibilities to cope with the events that occur in the physical or social framework that an individual encounters, especially in negative or incompatible positions (Cüceloğlu, 1994). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that the occurrence of stress is a result of an individual's physical and mental limits being pushed. In other words, stress is defined as an interaction between an individual and their environment that threatens the individual's positive mental state, exceeds their limits, and diminishes their capacity. Two conditions are necessary for the occurrence of stress factors. The first condition is that the individual must interact with their environment. The second condition is that the individual must identify the events and people around them as sources of stress after the interaction. However, if the individual does not view events and people around them as sources of stress, it does not mean that there is no stress (Çakır, 2006).

The term "stress response process" (SRP) refers to the general definition that describes the reaction created by a real, imaginary, or symbolic stimulus that threatens an individual's life. In this case, the body produces a physical reaction to reduce the effects of the stress that the individual is experiencing. The body's response to stress aims to restore homeostasis, the body's balance, and to adapt to the new situation (Kılıç and Esel, 2002). The most critical point in the occurrence of stress factors is the relationship and interaction between the individual and the situation they are facing (Baltaş and Baltaş, 1990).

Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) is a three-dimensional response that individuals give to stressful situations. The stages are the alarm phase, the resistance phase, and the exhaustion phase. The alarm phase activates the autonomic nervous system and sends signals to the glands, initiating the release of adrenaline and noradrenaline into the bloodstream. The resistance phase continues with the maintenance of high levels of adrenaline and noradrenaline in the blood. The final phase is the exhaustion phase, where the organism, which is constantly on alert, collapses as a result of excessive use of energy reserves (Tiryaki, 2000; Arsan, 2007). An increase in anxiety levels does not require the existence of a visible object or situation (Arsan, 2007). One of the most critical features of stress is that it is manageable and controllable. This allows individuals to take action (Durna, 2006).

Coping with Stress

When coping with stress, it is interpreted as a constantly changing cognitive and behavioral effort that regulates the capacity the individual uses, considering the situation that exceeds the individual's available resources (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Coping encompasses a dynamic and continuous process related to internal (beliefs, values, goals) and external (situational) conditions (Lazarus, 2000). Coping with stress involves behaviors that affect person-environment interactions, motivated by the desire to regulate emotions that will be carried into the past, present, or future (Thompson, Toner, Perry, Burke, and Nicholls, 2020). In the BMI theory, which defines stress as arising from person-environment interactions, coping with stress, which encompasses cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage stress, also plays an important role (Lazarus, 2000).

Roth and Cohen (1986) examined coping techniques under two headings: approach and avoidance. In the approach-oriented coping technique, the individual engages in behaviors to manage the situation when under stress. In the avoidance-oriented coping technique, the focus is on the effect of stress on the individual, and the individual controls their behavior to avoid the impact of the stressful event (Roth and Cohen, 1986). Lazarus (2000) expressed coping with

stress as cognitive and behavioral efforts related to managing and regulating emotions and categorized coping techniques into three subheadings: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance-focused. Problem-focused coping technique is the behavior used to render the stress-causing event ineffective or reduce its effects. It is a problem-focused coping technique to determine how to deal with situations that cause stress or plan how to eliminate the stress-causing event. For example, an athlete tries to increase their skill capacity to cope with the fear of losing to their opponent (Robazza, 2006). Emotion-focused coping technique encompasses behaviors that focus on gaining control over the emotions and thoughts caused by the stressful event. To gain control over stressful events, it is a coping technique that reduces the emotions caused by stressful situations in individuals. For example, an athlete uses techniques such as emotion regulation or cognitive reappraisal to change their thoughts about the importance of competitions (Robazza, 2006). Avoidance-focused coping technique is the behavior of trying to distract oneself from the situation that causes stress while in it. This type of coping technique can lead to behaviors such as denial and substance use (Gaudreau and Blondin, 2002).

There is a debate whether coping techniques for dealing with stress are constantly present or situation specific (Gaudreau and Blondin, 2002). From a different perspective, coping techniques are said to be relatively stable in individuals (Anshel et al., 2001). This suggests that the types of behavior that an individual exhibits in stressful situations are constant. However, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that the reactions or coping techniques displayed in stressful situations may vary depending on the situation. When evaluating these different approaches, it is important to distinguish between coping techniques and coping strategies for dealing with stress (Anshel et al., 2001). Coping styles are a constant structure that shapes an individual's responses to similar situations. Coping strategies, on the other hand, are not a constant structure and are specific to situations perceived as stressful, containing behavioral and cognitive actions related to stress-inducing situations (Anshel et al., 2001). Türküm (2002) developed a stress coping scale and identified coping strategies as social support seeking, problem-focused coping, and avoidance coping. Additionally, Senol-Durak, Durak, and Elagöz (2011) adapted a stress coping strategies scale and identified coping strategies as planned problem solving, self-distraction, social support seeking, avoidance, acceptance of responsibility, fatalism, and belief in supernatural powers - superstitions. These studies, which can be evaluated under the heading of coping strategies, distinguish between coping strategies used in adult samples in Turkey (Türküm, 2002; Senol-Durak et al., 2011).

The phenomenon of coping with stress is one of the common topics in sports. Sports competitions consist of activities that contain stress, which test the individual's physical and psychological abilities, and coping with stress is crucial for athletes to manage their psychological reactions while being in a stressful situation (Cerin et al., 2000; Nicholls and Polman, 2007). Gaudreau and Blondin (2002) conducted research on coping with stress in the sports field and found that the coping strategies identified for this area did not include the stress responses experienced by athletes. They developed a scale to evaluate coping strategies for stress in sports. The coping strategies they described for sports include task-oriented coping, such as thought control, visualization, relaxation, effort, mental analysis, and seeking support; withdrawal-oriented coping, such as expressing unpleasant emotions and social withdrawal; and distraction-oriented coping, such as mental confusion and withdrawal, which were categorized under three main headings (Gaudreau and Blondin, 2002).

Thought control: The path that an individual draws to transfer their thoughts positively towards a stressful situation that has been experienced or will be experienced.

Mental imagery: The path that an individual draws to mentally rehearse tactical, technical, or mental conditions for a stressful situation that has been experienced or will be experienced.

Relaxation: The position that an individual finds to get out of physiological, muscular, or mental tension.

Effort expenditure: The path that an individual draws to directly control a stressful situation by utilizing their physical and mental capabilities.

Logical analysis: The effort that an individual puts into evaluating or defining internal or external factors that would be effective for a stressful situation that has been experienced or will be experienced.

Seeking support: Behavioral action that involves seeking advice, feedback, emotional support, or external assistance.

Venting of unpleasant emotion: The path that an individual draws to reflect or attempt to express negative emotions they feel towards stressful situations that they have experienced.

Social withdrawal: The path that an individual draws to stay away from social interaction for a while.

Mental distraction: The path that an individual draws to intentionally focus their attention on unrelated or irrelevant topics to their sporting achievements.

Disengagement/resignation: The path that an individual draws to avoid the actions that need to be taken to achieve performance goals.

Gaudreau and Blondin (2002) proposed coping strategies for dealing with stress, and adaptations for Turkish athletes were made by Arsan and Koruç (2009) based on their work.

Coping with Stress in Sports

Stress is inherent in sports. The level of importance of upcoming competitions, the reactions of coaches, the reactions that may come with failure, and the decisions made by competition referees are some of the stressors. Psychological changes caused by stress can have a physiological effect on individuals. Increased heart rate, sweating, and breathing problems can cause athletes to tire more quickly. Additionally, the ability of the athlete to make judgments decreases and problems may arise in planning (Alderman 1974, Hardy et al. 1996, Çetin 2009).

Stress limits the potential of individuals to perform their best, so coping techniques are aimed at minimizing stress and maximizing athletes' performance, as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle before and after competition (Anshel and Anderson 2002).

Reactions to stress vary from person to person. The methods that athletes use to cope with stress vary depending on the type of reaction to stress. Coping techniques minimize the damage to athletes' physical and psychological conditions and their performance during competitions. In case of injury, these techniques allow for a more comfortable and faster rehabilitation process (Michelle 2007).

Stress management techniques that focus on the problem often provide benefits when the source of stress is perceived. These practices plan to overcome stress more directly than emotion-focused techniques. Problem-centered strategies are active and put into action as soon as possible. They aim to prevent athletes from experiencing negative situations. For example, athletes may contact their psychologist or coach to deal with inconsistent ideas they may have during competitions and to approach them within a logical framework in order to prevent failures (Konter 1996, Kimball and Freysinger 2003).

Compared to problem-focused stress management methods, it is seen that emotion-focused stress management follows a more detailed path. It is generally more beneficial in negative events. These plans are passive and try to prevent individuals who exercise from carrying psychological wounds after negative events. By looking at the negative situations from a brighter perspective, they can add positives for athletes in future competitions. For example, a competitor who has lost a race can find a source of motivation by thinking that he/she will

achieve better results in the upcoming matches by using the experiences gained after the match, or he/she can focus on their thoughts differently during the competition and succeed in getting rid of or minimizing stressors (such as scoreboards, decisions made by referees, the opponent athlete or athletes) in front of them (Crocker and Graham 1995, Konter 1996, Michelle 2007).

Self-confidence

Ekinci (2013) defines self-confidence as strengthening one's self-esteem in a desired and constructive way by identifying their strengths and weaknesses in dealing with problems that arise throughout their life.

Self-confidence is expressed as the confidence and belief one has in oneself by understanding their own judgment, thoughts, and abilities, without being influenced by negative situations and criticism that have happened in the past (Carter, 2020). Generally, the concept of self-confidence is described as an individual's ability to control their self-esteem and abilities, value themselves, and stand up for their own feelings based on the reinforcement of positive emotions (Kukulu et al., 2013). Self-confidence is generally considered as a specific concept for certain tasks. It is strengthened by the individual's belief and mastery of themselves (Pasaribu, 2011). Confidence is related to how a person sees themselves, how they think, evaluate, and finally, how confident they are in themselves. Self-confidence involves knowledge, experience, discipline, and effort. The more positive feelings an individual has about themselves, the happier and more successful they can be with that positivity (Pettinelli, 2012; Can, 2019).

Self-confidence is an emotional quality expressed as the psychological necessity of basic experiences that make an individual feel valuable enough (Lindenfield, 2004). All individuals need the approval and admiration of others. This need can be divided into two groups. The first group is to be a character and personality that other people will trust as a strong, successful, and capable person. The second group consists of needs such as being important, being appreciated, and being respected (Kasatura, 1998).

If an individual can establish dominance and experience the feeling of control in their own world, they will begin to gain self-confidence. As a result of this dominance, the individual begins to perform internal and external controls in their world. These controls can create positive or negative reflections in the individual's world. The point to remember is that life requires struggle. The individual must confront all the negative situations in their life, accept all aspects of their experiences, and fight to build a happy, peaceful, and successful future (Göknar, 2007).

Terms Related to Self-Confidence

To fully understand the concept of self-confidence, it is necessary to also know and understand the concepts of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Kaya and Taştan, 2020).

Self (Ego)

Self is the dynamic process that forms according to the way a person perceives their world and experiences. As the individual grows and develops, they begin to discover their self-awareness and find their place and role in society by interacting with their environment. To create the concept of self-confidence, there must be communication and respect between parents and children, and the individual must have developed a sufficient level of self-esteem. If the family supports the child's ideas within the framework of respect, the child begins to cultivate positive thoughts about themselves and tries to understand their self. Therefore, the self-factor takes shape in the individual depending on how other individuals perceive and evaluate them. In summary, we can define the act of evaluating oneself as "self" (Kasatura, 1998; Kurtuldu, 2007). Although the self-factor is expressed as a concept that takes on a confident state after the individual gains achievements (Sheldrake, 2016a), this concept is formed by combining the individual's values, goals, and ideals. The essence of the self-concept is not shaped by the process of how others perceive the individual and how they form their perceptions, but rather by the individual's feeling of self-worth (Sheldrake, 2016b; Özoğlu, 2019). The self is formed and molded within the bodily, psychological, and social process. As the process continues in a healthy manner, individuals create their own balanced personalities (Kaya and Taştan, 2020).

Self-esteem (Self-Respect)

The concept of self-esteem is expressed as an individual's approach to their own set of values and qualities with respect. This phenomenon arises from the individual's evaluation and appreciation of themselves. Self-esteem is not one of the innate qualities an individual possesses. It develops as a result of the individual's interactions with their environment and family. To gain high self-esteem, the individual must have control over their emotions related to themselves. A person with high self-esteem stands out with their physical and mental resilience, enjoys their own choices, has immunity to stress, is confident, and avoids conflicts in their lives (Bojanic et al., 2019). Self-esteem, which is a part of the emotional dimension of the concept of self, is related to the individual's ability to recognize themselves as well as their ability to judge their emotions related to who they are (Yıldız, 2006). An individual may feel lacking in their sense of self, may compare themselves to others, or may think they are perfect.

However, it is not necessary for an individual to have exceptional abilities or be different from others in order to have self-love. Within the general framework of self-esteem, it is important for the individual to see themselves as they are. Individuals with high self-esteem see themselves as valuable and useful for their societies and as individuals worthy of love and respect (Yörükoğlu, 2007).

Self-esteem is the desire of a person to be happy with themselves. A person with high self-esteem carries qualities of being loving, peaceful with their surroundings, and capable of feeling their abilities. The level of a person's ability to feel their love and skills will be a factor that affects every aspect of their future life (BalkışBaymur1994). Some researchers have emphasized the critical importance of the evaluation of an individual's characteristics by other people in terms of self-esteem, and have emphasized that it is necessary for the individual to find their role and value in the society they are a part of. People who are valued in society reflect the qualities of a person with high self-esteem through their achievements, confidence, ability to fulfill their given missions, and ability to achieve their self-determined goals (Kelecsenyi, 2018).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to the belief that an individual has in their ability to successfully complete the missions they undertake and achieve their future goals (Sheldrake, 2016b). Self-efficacy, which becomes the predictor of an individual's behavior, is expressed as the belief in their ability to plan the tasks they begin. Self-efficacy does not depend on being capable of carrying out the action plans required to achieve results, but rather on the individual's sense of accomplishment and confidence. This fact is valued by gaining experience from difficult situations that may be encountered when an action is organized in a planned manner. An individual with a high level of self-efficacy, in the event of failure of the action plan implemented, will seek the problem in their methods and strategies rather than in themselves (Dzewaltowski et al., 2007; Yıldırım and İlhan, 2010).

One of the fundamental qualities of individuals who have a predetermined level of self-efficacy is that they know themselves quite well. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and act consciously on whether or not to take action. They are constantly striving to improve themselves and to show their peak performance. These individuals are satisfied and fulfilled only by the effort and struggle they put forth on the road to success, as they achieve more success in every situation they face. Individuals with a low level of self-efficacy, on the other hand, are inclined to give up in the face of the first difficult situation they encounter and do not

want to make an effort. The main reasons that cause anxiety, mistakes, and psychological pressure in these individuals are the most formidable enemies of these individuals, as they show resistance against external forces (Özkan, 2019).

Types of Self-Confidence

There are two different dimensions in which self-confidence is examined: internal self-confidence and external self-confidence. Internal self-confidence is related to individuals being at peace with themselves and reflecting their feelings and thoughts that they have identified with themselves. External self-confidence, on the other hand, is expressed as the external expression of internal self-confidence. That is, it is the ability of an individual to reflect their feelings and thoughts that they are satisfied, positive, and confident with to their surroundings (Akagündüz, 2006). Lindenfield (2004) has categorized the qualities of internal self-confidence under four subheadings: self-knowledge, self-love, setting clear goals, and positive thinking ability. Individuals who know themselves create their own value judgments, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and benefit from criticisms and feedback. Individuals with high communication skills, who have developed themselves, do not hesitate to be part of the society and can express their opinions fluently. Additionally, individuals who can express themselves well are the ones who can best demonstrate their physical and self-worth values. Moreover, these individuals successfully fight all negative emotions such as jealousy, anger, disappointment, fear, and anxiety with the confidence they have in themselves.

Sports Confidence

Believing that they possess the potential, physical and mental abilities necessary to achieve success, reflects sports confidence in individual athletes. Therefore, athletes with high levels of confidence are successful people who try to think positively, control their anxiety levels, try to maintain their composure even when stressed, and remain loyal to their goals (Ekinçi et al., 2014).

According to studies conducted on the confidence phenomenon, which is quite common in sports, researchers have believed that confident individuals have the physical and mental qualities to put forward the potential required to achieve the concept of success, even more importantly, the concept of success itself (Yıldırım, 2013). Jones and Swain (1995) have determined that athletes with high levels of confidence have a harder time worrying than other athletes and can also more easily focus on positive thoughts. It is stated that the confidence

factor supports and contributes to the effort, desire and continuity qualities of athletes (Hanton et al., 2004).

Athletes realize that they are improving over time and must learn to wait patiently while going through this period. As a result of these developments, they can achieve some successes in the sport they are engaged in. Successful athletes taste victory and want more of it, realizing that they are capable of achieving what they want and thus building confidence. If individuals engaged in sports behave in a controlling, ambitious, and confident manner, continuity and success levels will be at a high level, and as a result, they can fight against problems such as stress, depression, and anxiety, and achieve the desired goals. Therefore, confidence enables athletes and sportspeople to control themselves, manage their anxiety levels and affect their achievements (Vealey, 2009).

Confident athletes can achieve a higher level of motivation, and this self-confidence stands out in their battles against difficult situations and problematic days (Ramazanoğlu and Çoban 2004). In a study, competitors participated in a wrist-wrestling experiment, and by convincing them that their opponent was weaker than they appeared, they managed to defeat their superior opponent with the gained self-confidence. This situation can also be valid in team sports. Athletes who have high levels of self-confidence in the team tend to show a better performance than others. In a rugby match held among universities at Twickenham Stadium in 2004, Oxford University managed to defeat Cambridge University. Before the match, individual athletes were asked to write what they admired the most. These writings, which were placed in separate envelopes for each player, were opened three hours before the match, and a high expectation level was found for the team to achieve successful results in most of the opened papers. The match, which was 11-7 at halftime, ended with a score of 18-17 (Karageorghis and Terry 2010).

Results

Sports psychology has emerged as a multidisciplinary field of study in today's world. Concepts related to athletic performance are researched both in sports sciences and psychology. While physical factors are compared to the hardware of a computer, psychological factors can be compared to its software. The best performance is seen as an output that can be achieved by athletes who have developed both hardware and software (Moran, 2016). Among the topics studied in the field of sports psychology to improve athletic performance are motivation, stress, self-confidence, arousal, and emotional concepts such as anxiety and excitement (Németh & Balogh, 2020). Lazarus (2000) stated that stress is one of the main concepts that affect athletic

performance. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) treated stress as a special experience within the person-environment interaction and focused on stress evaluations and coping strategies in their model. In sports, stress and stress-related concepts should be studied to improve performance. Because athletic competitions are stressful events that reveal athletes' physical and psychological capacities, coping strategies are used by athletes to manage their psychological responses in stressful situations (Cerin, Szabo, and Hunt, 2000; Nicholls and Polman, 2007). Positive or negative emotions are felt depending on how a person evaluates stress (Lazarus, 1991). Investigating the relationship between stress evaluations, coping strategies, functional and dysfunctional emotions in athletes can help us understand stress-related factors that may affect performance (Martens, Vealey, and Burton, 1990). Another factor that affects success in sports is self-confidence. Self-confident athletes are observed to work harder, produce more, cope with difficulties, achieve set goals, and have high levels of motivation compared to athletes who lack self-confidence. Thus, it has been suggested that self-confidence factor affects making accurate decisions and providing high-level concentration (Vealey, 2009).

Author Contribution

Güneş, E. (Conceptual framework, review), Yetim, A. A. (Conceptual framework, review)

Conflict of Interest

All authors must declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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