

The Effect of Psychological Characteristics on Performance in Athletes



Hayrettin Gümüşdağ^{1*} and Aydın İlhan²

¹Department of Sport Sciences, Yozgat Bozok University, Turkey

²Department of Sport Sciences, Pamukkale University, Turkey

Submission: January 24, 2022; **Published:** January 31, 2022

***Corresponding author:** Hayrettin Gümüşdağ, Department of Sport Sciences, Yozgat Bozok University, Turkey

Abstract

Success in sports is defined not only by physical and motor skills, but also by many psychological characteristics. It is known that changes in psychological characteristics affect performance positively or negatively. The psychological characteristics of the athletes have a great influence on the performance. The effect of psychological characteristics of athletes on performance depends on many factors. These psychological factors are motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, psychological preparation, concentration, goal setting, imagery, and mental toughness. Trainers and athletes need to be prepared for these psychological situations. Because with the development of these psychological characteristics, the performance of the athletes can be increased. The psychological characteristics of the athletes show some differences according to age, gender, education, attitudes of the coaches, the city they work in and the environment. Increasing and developing psychological characteristics can facilitate athletes to achieve high-level performance results.

Keywords: Psychological characteristics; Athlete; Performance

Introduction

Although physical and motor skills have been an important performance indicator for athletes recently, they are not considered sufficient for athletes to achieve higher performance results. One of the important determinants of sportive performance is psychological characteristics. In order to achieve a high level of performance, it is necessary to develop psychological characteristics. Therefore, there are many studies on sports psychology [1-9].

The importance of psychological characteristics is increasing day by day. Athletes who try to maximize the level of performance support their performance by doing psychological skill training. There are many studies on the development of psychological characteristics [10-24]. It has been emphasized by sports psychologists that psychological skill training plays an important role in the development of the psychological characteristics of athletes. It is seen that some basic factors come to the fore in the development of basic psychological characteristics. These factors are; Motivation, Self-confidence, Anxiety, Psychological preparation, Concentration, Goal setting, Imagination and Mental toughness [25-28]. Motivation is stated as the direction and intensity of a person's efforts [29]. A movement is the force

behind it. When the motivation levels of the athletes are low, their performance may be adversely affected. A high level of motivation affects performance positively [30]. Self-confidence is self-confidence. It is the sum of a person's self-confidence and beliefs. Low or high self-confidence gives the person the freedom to do what they want. It enables the person to decide whether to take action or not [31]. There is a linear relationship between high achievement expectation and self-confidence. They stated that self-confident athletes have physical and mental skills to be successful [32].

Psychological preparation is one of the parameters that are effective in reaching high performance. The psychological characteristics of the athletes show that psychological preparation is extremely important as a result of the studies. Athletes' physical and psychological readiness defines them as people away from stress [33]. Anxiety is another psychological feature that affects athlete performance. High levels of anxiety often cause athletes to underperform. Anxiety affects performance negatively [34]. Concentration is seen as the key to success throughout the competition. If it is sustained for a long time and uninterrupted, it has the chance to be so successful in its skill [35]. Concentration has been defined as how long an individual can maintain his/her

attention while performing any skill without being disrupted or interrupted [36].

Goal setting is defined as a cognitive motivation situation that makes athletes more effective [37]. Goal setting shows where the athlete is in terms of performance and what his condition is towards the goal. Goal setting is the presentation of what is being achieved as a process at the cognitive level [38]. Imagery is one of the most used psychological skills by athletes. It is among the skills required to win games in sports. Imagination is to recreate an experienced or unexperienced event in the mind [39]. It means imitation, it is a simulation. It's just that the event takes place in the mind. It is visualizing the skill as if you were actually practicing it. It plays an important role in increasing the performance of athletes [40].

Mental toughness is thought to be an important psychological feature related to successful performance [41,42]. The basic elements of mental resilience are self-confidence, responsibility, motivation, success in competitions, challenge, recovery, focus, patience, and maintaining control under pressure [41]. It has been revealed that athletes with mental resilience cope with difficult conditions more than others [43].

Literature Studies

When the literature on the subject is examined, it has been seen that there are many studies on the psychological characteristics of athletes. And there are many studies in which the contribution of psychological characteristics to performance is extremely important.

The findings of some studies are as follows;

a) Investigation of the Effect of Sports-Specific Achievement Motivation Level on Competition Performance in Young Tennis Players: It has been determined that sports-specific success motivation level is a parameter affecting performance in young tennis players [44].

b) Investigation of the Effect of Task and Ego Orientation Goals of Elite Level Tennis Players on Achievement Motivation: There is a significant relationship between task and ego orientation and achievement motivation in tennis players according to demographic variables, there is a significant relationship between task and ego orientation and achievement motivation. [45].

c) Examining the Self-Confidence Levels of Mountaineers in Terms of Various Variables: the high level of self-confidence of the mountaineers, the experience of high risk, adrenaline, challenge and adventure characteristics inherent in this sport, however, despite the intense fear, the desire of the athletes to perform the action leads them to a greater sense of self. It has been determined that it takes them away and increases their self-confidence [46].

d) The Relationship Between Pre-Competition Anxiety Levels and Performances of Elite Female Basketball Players: A

significant difference was observed between the anxiety levels and performances of the teams [47].

e) Investigating the Effect of Goal Setting in Sports on Penalty Shots: It has been determined that goal setting studies performed with soccer training have a positive effect on penalty shootouts, and it has been concluded that target setting significantly increases performance. Thus, it has been demonstrated that not only physical but also psychological factors are important to increase sportive performance [48].

f) The Effect of Imagery Practices on Problem Solving in Footballers: It has been determined that imagery practice programs have positive effects on the problem-solving skills of football players [49].

g) Mental Endurance in Sports: An Analysis in Taekwondo Athletes: It has been determined that the mental endurance score of taekwondo athletes is at an average level and the mental endurance of the athletes can change in terms of the number of weekly trainings [50].

Conclusion and Recommendations

Psychological characteristics have a great impact on the performance improvement of athletes. Many studies support this. While planning the work of the athletes, the trainers should also apply psychological skill training that improves their psychological characteristics. Top level performance can only be achieved with training integrity. Because performance depends on the delicate balance between physical and psychological skills.

As a result, reaching a high level of performance in athletes; In addition to doing a good physical training, it is also about the development of psychological skills. Increasing and developing psychological characteristics can facilitate the achievement of high-level performance results for athletes.

References

1. Mooris T (2000) Psychological Characteristics and Talent Identification in Soccer. *J Sports Sci* 18(9): 715-726.
2. Nicholls AR, Polman RC (2007) coping in sport: A systematic review. *J Sports Sci* 25(1): 11-31.
3. Bois JE, Sarrazin PG, Southon J, Boiche JSC (2009) Psychological Characteristics and Their Relation to Performance in Professional Golfers. *The Sports Psychologist* 23(2): 252-270.
4. Mondrono C, Guillen F (2011) Anxiety Characteristics of Competitive Windsurfers: Relationships with Age, Gender and Performance Outcomes. *Journal of Sport Behavior* 34(3): 281-294.
5. Faubert J, Sidebottom L (2012) Perceptual-Cognitive Training of Athletes. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology* 6(1): 85-102
6. Gevorki H, Gevorki E, Samadi H (2013) Comparing of Mental Toughness and Mental Health of Professional and Amateur Athletics. *International Journal of Basic Sciences & Applied Research* 2(6): 583-588.
7. Berengüí R, García-Pallarés J, López-Gullón JM, Garcés de EJ, Caravaca EC, et al. (2013) Fundamental psychological skills in Olympic Wrestling *Cuadernos de Psicología del Deporte* 12(2): 19-22.

8. Yarayan YE, Yıldız AB, Gülşen DBA (2018) Examination of mental toughness levels of individual and team sports players at elite level according to various variables. *Journal of International Social Research* 11(57): 992-999.
9. Yarayan YE, Yıldız AB, Gülşen DBA, İlhan L (2020) Is football player level a determinant of prosocial and antisocial behaviors? *Spormetre. Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences* 18(4): 125-133.
10. Mahoney MJ, Gabriel TJ, Perkins TS (1987) Psychological skills and exceptional athletic performance. *Sports Psychologist* 1(3): 181-199.
11. Mahoney MJ (1989) Psychological Predictors of elite and non-elite performance in Olympic weightlifting. *International Journal of Sports Psychology* 20: 1-12.
12. Grossarth-Matiček R, Eysenck HJ, Rieder H, Rakić L (1990) Psychological factors as determinants of success in football and boxing: the effects of behavior therapy. *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 21(3): 237-255.
13. Meyers MC, LeUnes AD, Bourgeois AE (1996) Psychological skills assessment and athletic performance in collegiate rodeo athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior* 19(2): 132-146.
14. Elferink-Gemser MT, Visscher C, Lemmink KAPM (2008) Differences in psychological skills between elite and sub-elite youth athletes. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences* 4: 95-105.
15. Altıntaş A, Akalan C (2008) Mental Training and High Performance. *SPORTMETRE Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences* VI (1): 39-43
16. Kulak A, Kerkez FI, Aktaş Y (2011) The effect of mental training program on some motor characteristics of football players aged 10-12. *Journal of Sport Sciences* 22(3): 104-114.
17. Özdal M, Akcan F, Abakay U, Dağlıoğlu Ö (2013) The effect of video-assisted mental training program on shooting skill in football. *Journal of Sport and Performance Studies* 4(2): 40-46.
18. Aslan Ö (2015) The effect of mental training practices on the learning process of putt kicking in Golf Beginners (13-15 Ages).
19. İlhan A (2017) The relationship between resilience, optimal performance mood and motivation of exercise participants.
20. Ekmeççi R (2017) *Mental Training in Sports*. Ankara, Detail.
21. Cankurtaran Z (2020) The Effect of Mental Training Skills Used by Archers in Competition on Ranking Shooting Scores. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research* 6(1): 13-29.
22. Rye E, Kaya M (2021) The Effect of Mental Revitalization on Dart Shooting Performance According to Circadian Rhythm. *Journal of Physical Education Sports Science* 15(1).
23. Kaplan E, Andre H (2021) Investigation of the Relationship between Mental Training and Sports Injury Anxiety. *Turkish Journal of Sport and Exercise* 23(1): 1-8.
24. Karaca R, Gündüz N (2021) Investigation of the Relationship between Mental Training and Performance in Orienteering Athletes. *Spormetre Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences* 19(1): 99-115.
25. Weinberg RS, Gould D (2003) Introduction to psychological skills training. *Foundation of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. 3rd ed. USA: Human Kinetics, pp. 241-262.
26. Krane V, Williams JM (2010) Psychological characteristics of peak performance. In: Williams JM, ed. *Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth Peak Performance*. 6th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, USA, pp. 169-220.
27. Cox RH (2012) Psychological skills training. *Sports Psychology. Concepts and Applications*. 7th ed. NY New York: McGraw-Hill, USA. Pp. 297- 298.
28. Galic B, Protic I, Zvan M, Kondric M (2014) Psychological Characteristics of Young Tennis Players; Correlation With Feedback And Coaching Leadership Style. *Gymnasium, Scientific Journal of Education, Sports, and Health* 15(2): 39-45
29. Weinberg R, Gould D (2015) *Personality and sport. Foundations of sport and exercise psychology*. London: Human Kinetics, UK, p. 640.
30. Pelletier LG, Tuson KM, Fortier MS, Vallerand RJ, Briere NM, et al. (1995) toward a new measure of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and motivation in sports: The sport motivation scale (SMS). *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 17(1): 35-53.
31. Kelsey R (2014) *Would You Have A Little More Confidence? Translation: Erdemli FC*. Kahve Publishing, Turkey.
32. Yıldırım F (2013) *Adaptation of the Sportive Continuous Self-Confidence Sub-Scale and Investigation of the Sportive Continuous Self-Confidence in Secondary School Students in Terms of Various Variables*, Master Thesis, Mersin University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Physical Education and Sports, Mersin, Turkey.
33. Anshel, Mark H (1997) *Sport Psychology from Theory to Practice*. In: (3rd edn). Arizona: Gorsuch Scarlsbrick, Turkey.
34. Karageorghis IC, Terry CP (2015) *Sports Psychology*. In: E Demir (Eds.), Ankara: Nobel, Turkey.
35. Çolakoğlu M, Tiryaki S, Morali S (1993) The effect of concentration studies on reaction time. *Hacettepe University Journal of Sport Sciences* (4)4: 32-47.
36. Wilson VE, Peper E, Schmid A (2006) Training strategies for concentration. In: Williams JN (Eds), *Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance*, 5th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, USA, pp. 404-422.
37. Locke EA, Latham GP (1985) The application of goal setting to sports. *Journal of Sport Psychology* 7: 205-222.
38. Burton D, Naylor S (2002) The Jekyll Hyde nature of goals: Revisiting and updating goalsetting in sport. In: Horn TS (Ed.), In: (2nd edn), *Advances in Sport Psychology*. Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, USA, pp. 459-496.
39. Smith LH, Kays TM (2010) *Sport psychology for Dummies*. John Wiley, Sons, Canada.
40. Weinberg RS, Gould D (2014) *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 6E. Human Kinetics, Turkey.
41. Jones G, Hanton S, Connaughton D (2007) A framework of mental toughness in the world's best performers. *The Sports Psychologist* 21(2): 243-264.
42. Connaughton D, Wadey R, Hanton S, Jones G (2008) The development and maintenance of mental toughness: Perceptions of elite performers. *J Sports Sci* 26: 83-95.
43. Gucciardi DF, Gordon DF, Dimmock JA (2008) Towards an understanding of mental toughness in Australian Football. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 20(3): 261-281.
44. Aydogdu C, Şahan A, Erman KA (2017) Investigation of the effect of sport-specific success motivation levels on competition performance in young tennis players. *Abant İzzet Baysal University Faculty of Education Journal* 18(2): 655-666.
45. Balkis A (2019) *Investigation of the Effect of Task and Ego Orientation Goals on Achievement Motivation of Elite Level Tennis Players*. Master Thesis. Physical Education and Sports Education Department, Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University, Turkey.

46. Bostancı Ö, Karaduman E, Şebin K (2018) Investigation of Mountaineers' Self-Confidence Levels in Terms of Various Variables. Ataturk University Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences 20(3): 145-154.
47. Cerit E, Gümüşdağ H, Evli H, Şahin S, Bastık C, et al. (2013) The Relationship Between Pre-Competition Anxiety Levels and Performances of Elite Female Basketball Players. NWSA-Sports Sciences 8(1): 16-34.
48. Toros T, Bayansalduz M, Duvan A (2010) Investigation of the Effect of Target Setting on Penalty Shots in Sports. Niğde University Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences 4(3): 165-171.
49. Aldemir GY, Biçer T, Kale EK (2014) The Effect of Imagery Practices on Problem Solving in Football Players. Journal of Sport and Performance Studies 5(2): 37-45.
50. Sarı I, Right S, Demir AP (2020) mental endurance in sports: A review in taekwondo athletes, Atatürk University Journal of Physical Education and Sports Sciences 22(4): 131-147.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License
DOI: [10.19080/PBSIJ.2022.18.555986](https://doi.org/10.19080/PBSIJ.2022.18.555986)

Your next submission with Juniper Publishers will reach you the below assets

- Quality Editorial service
- Swift Peer Review
- Reprints availability
- E-prints Service
- Manuscript Podcast for convenient understanding
- Global attainment for your research
- Manuscript accessibility in different formats
(Pdf, E-pub, Full Text, Audio)
- Unceasing customer service

Track the below URL for one-step submission

<https://juniperpublishers.com/online-submission.php>