

Resistant personality and coping strategies in Mexican World Cup and Olympic athletes in a pandemic

Personalidad resistente y estrategias de afrontamiento en deportistas mexicanos mundialistas y olímpicos en pandemia

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Abstract

The objective is to identify the existence of the relationship between the Resistant Personality (PR) variables and the variables of the Approach to Coping in Sport (DAA) construct. The sample was 21 selected Mexican national athletes of world and Olympic level currently retired; the age of the participants ranges between 23 and 64 years (M = 38.43, SD = 10.01), of which 11 are men (52.4%) and 10 women (47.6%). The athletes answered two instruments, the first is Resistant Personality in Central American and Caribbean Athletes and the second is the Approach to Coping in Sport Questionnaire. The methodology, empirical associative, simple correlation and cross-sectional. Descriptive analyzes, reliability and Spearman correlations were performed with SPSS 25. The results showed an internal consistency greater than .70 in most of the variables and the correlations of the Resistant Personality, Challenge variables, were positively related and significantly with the variables of Approach to coping in the Sport of Emotional Calm and Risk Behaviors. In conclusion, high-performance athletes use the skills learned in sport as coping strategies in the face of challenges with emotional control and push themselves to the maximum to achieve their goals.

Sport, Stress, Challenge

Resumen

El objetivo es identificar la existencia de la relación entre las variables de la Personalidad Resistente (PR) y las variables del constructo de Aproximación al Afrontamiento en el Deporte (AAD). La muestra fueron 21 deportistas seleccionados nacionales mexicanos de nivel mundial y olímpico actualmente retirados, la edad de los participantes oscila entre los 23 y 64 años (M = 38.43, DT = 10.01), de los cuales 11 son hombres (52.4%) y 10 mujeres (47.6%). Los atletas contestaron dos instrumentos el primero es de Personalidad Resistente en Deportistas Centroamericanos y del Caribe y el segundo es el Cuestionario de Aproximación al Afrontamiento en el Deporte. La metodología, empírica asociativa, de correlación simple y de corte transversal. Se realizaron análisis descriptivos, de fiabilidad y correlaciones de Spearman con SPSS 25. Los resultados, mostraron una consistencia interna mayor a .70 en la mayoría de las variables y las correlaciones de las variables de la Personalidad Resistente, el Desafío, se relacionó positiva y significativamente con las variables de Aproximación al afrontamiento en el Deporte de Calma Emocional y Conductas de Riesgo. En conclusión, los deportistas de alto rendimiento utilizan las habilidades aprendidas en el deporte como estrategias de afrontamiento ante los desafíos con control emocional y se exigen al máximo para conseguir sus objetivos.

Deporte, Estrés, Desafío

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Introduction

Sport contributes to personal development and offers an important contribution to improving the quality of life of society in general (Romero, García-Mas and Brustad, 2009) and, in turn, high-performance sport inspires the great masses to start a physical activity and sport as a systematic activity reflecting a healthier community (Bauman, Bellew, and Craig, 2014). The Resistant Personality (Jaenes, Godoy, and Román, 2008; 2009) as well as the coping strategies (Carrasco et al, 2010) are skills that athletes must develop since they provide tools for control, overcoming adversity and control of stress due to the various competencies to which they have participated (Márquez, 2004).

The Resistant Personality is a concept referred to the capacity of resistance to the stress of the people and the way in which the people with a high resistant personality, usually take the difficulties in opportunities of personal development. Initially, this instrument was created by Salvatore Maddi and Suzanne Kobasa (Maddi, 2002), among the scholars of this concept in that period, it raised curiosity since stress was only exhausting some people, and on the contrary, it empowers others, so some made them better, Kobasa, Maddi and Puccetti published (1982) a study of how exercise serves as a buffer between stress and illness. Finally, they created the Hardiness Institute in 1984 in California (Khoshaba, and Maddi, 1999) as a place for the specific study of this phenomenon.

Coping strategies are useful problem-solving tools in difficult situations and in this research the Approach to Coping in Sport was used, which is a concept promoted by various researchers (Kim, 1999; Kim, Duda and Ntoumanis, 2003; Márquez, 2006).

Márquez (2006) defines this concept as the various responses that arise in stressful situations, which are used in order to control and / or neutralize the situation. Therefore, the strategies would be the different psychological resources that everyone presents to deal with situations that are considered stressful. However, the use of these does not guarantee success, but rather they serve to avoid or reduce conflicts in people or athletes (Macías, Madariaga, Valle and Zambrano, 2013).

Both concepts have been little studied in the area of sport, in the case of the Resistant Personality, it has been studied in countries such as Spain () and Mexico (), and in the case of the Approach to Coping in sport in countries like Chile () and Spain () and no studies have been found that relate both concepts, much less at this sporting level, such as World Cup and Olympic athletes.

The objective of this study is to identify the existence of a relationship between the Resistant Personality variables and the variables of the Approach to Coping in Sport construct, in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic.

Description of the method

The design of this research is empirical associative, simple correlation and cross-sectional (Ato, López-García, & Benavente, 2013), in this research 21 selected Mexican national athletes of world and Olympic level participated currently retired, the age of the participants ranged from 23 to 64 years old ($M = 38.43$, $SD = 10.01$), of which 11 were men (52.4%) and 10 were women (47.6%)

For this study, tools were used, the first assessment instrument is the resistant personality with the Resistant Personality questionnaire in Central American and Caribbean Athletes (PRDCC; Ponce, 2017; Ponce-Carbajal et al. 2015); This questionnaire is made up of 18 items, and has three variables: commitment, control, and challenge of 6 items each. This questionnaire in other investigations has been used as a global RP, it has been described as a unifactorial concept (Kobasa, 1979; Kobasa, Maddi and Kahn, 1982), and also in a trifactorial way (Jaenes, Godoy-Izquierdo and Román, 2008), usually in both cases the properties are adequate ($\alpha > 0.7$) so it is used in both ways. The response scale is of the Likert type from 0 to 3 where 0 is "totally disagree" and 3 is "totally agree".

The second instrument is the Approach to Coping in Sport Questionnaire (ACSQ-1), this questionnaire has been developed by Kim and Duda (1997) and was translated into Spanish by Kim, Duda, Tomás and Balaguer (2003).

This questionnaire is made up of 5 variables, Emotional Calm (7), Active planning / cognitive restructuring (6), Mental withdrawal (6), Risk behaviors (4), and Search for social support (5), through 28 items, with 5-point Likert format, where 1 takes the value of “never” and 5 the value of “always”. This scale has evidence of validity based on the internal structure of the test and its relationship with other variables, as well as adequate levels of reliability ($\alpha > 0.7$) (Kim, Duda & Ntoumanis, 2003).

The Procedure consisted of creating a battery of digital tests in google forms, and this was sent through various social networks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to collect responses with the support of trainers from various sports. The coaches were informed about the importance of sending the form to an athlete of a very high sporting level such as World Cup players and who had participated in the Olympic Games, so they supported us by sending the tool to various athletes who met the requirements and to athletes prior informed consent, that the responses were completely anonymous and voluntary and that they could be withdrawn from the study at any time.

The statistical analyzes performed were descriptive, mean frequencies, standard deviation and normality of the data by means of kolmogórov-smirnov, reliability of Cronbach's alpha (α) and bivariate correlations with Spearman's correlation coefficients, with the statistical package Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

Results

Table 1 describes the frequencies of the participants' sports.

Sport	Frequency	Valid percentage
Athletics	2	9.5
Box	1	4.8
Cycling	1	4.8
Dived	3	14.3
Gymnastics	1	4.8
Weightlifting	5	23.8
Judo	1	4.8
Karate	1	4.8
Modern pentathlon	1	4.8
Taekwondo	1	4.8
Volleyball	4	19.0
N	21	100.0

Table 1 Sports frequencies of participating athletes

In the evidence shown after the analyzes regarding the verification of the internal consistency of the unifactorial and trifactorial resistant personality, it is verified with values above α of .70 and in the case of approach to coping in sport only in the Risk behaviors variable has a moderately acceptable value of α of .50, the rest meet the reliability values, see Table 2.

Variable	Alpha
Control	0.70
Commitment	0.78
Challenge	0.86
Prglobal	0.90
Emotional calm	0.83
Cognitive restructuring	0.83
Mental return	0.71
Risk behaviors	0.50
Search for social support	0.80

Table 2 Reliability of the variables of the Resilient Personality and Approach to Coping with Sport questionnaires

The results found in the Spearman correlations showed that of the resistant personality variables there are positive and significant relationships in the challenge variable, with emotional calm of $r = .499$ ($p < .05$) and challenge with risk behaviors of $r = .470$ ($p < .05$).

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Conclusions

The action of overcoming the various challenges to which athletes and society in general are subjected, especially in this time of pandemic, athletes used as a strategy the control of emotions and made use of all their skills developed through Past experiences, which, although they were great challenges, allowed us to learn skills that allowed us to emotionally overcome stress and adapt to new and superior conditions.

World-class athletes have great resistance to stress, control of their emotions, commitment and taste for challenges, which they apply in their current life and help them with the various situations that arise, solving problems in a better way, for therefore, sport helps the development of skills and strategies to cope with life in general.

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