

**Hardiness and coping strategies in soccer players****Personalidad resistente y estrategias de afrontamiento en jugadores de futbol soccer**

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**Abstract**

The objective of the present study is to identify the correlations between resistant personality variables and coping strategies in soccer players. Methods: The design of this research was transversal, non-experimental, and correlational, the sample was 72 athletes, aged between 15 and 39 years of age,  $M = 20.29$   $SD = 4.11$ , 53 men (73.6%) and 19 women (26.4%). Hardiness in Central American and Caribbean Athletes (HPCACA; Ponce et al. 2015) instruments were used, composed of 18 items. The second is the Approach to Coping in Sport Questionnaire (ACSQ-1) in Spanish version (Kim et al., 2003), made up of 28 items. The contribution of the research is focused on the training environment closest to the athlete, be it his family, the coach, the administrative staff of the sports institutes of the various states, who can be psychologists, physiatrists, doctors, facility administrators. and even to the athlete himself since this information guides the possible skills to work on or the identification of areas of opportunity.

**Control, Coping, Challenge****Resumen**

El objetivo del presente estudio es identificar las correlaciones entre variables de la personalidad resistente y las de las estrategias de afrontamiento en jugadores de futbol soccer. Métodos: El diseño de esta investigación fue de tipo transversal, no experimental, y correlacional, la muestra fue de 72 deportistas, con edades entre 15 y 39 años de edad,  $M = 20.29$   $DT = 4.11$ , 53 hombres (73.6%) y 19 mujeres (26.4%). Se emplearon los instrumentos de Personalidad Resistente en Deportistas de Centroamericanos y del Caribe (PRDCC; Ponce et al. 2015) compuesto por 18 ítems. El segundo es el Cuestionario de Aproximación al Afrontamiento en el Deporte (Approach to Coping in Sport Questionnaire, ACSQ-1) en versión en castellano (Kim et al., 2003), integrado por 28 ítems. La contribución de la investigación está centrada en el ambiente de formación más cercano al deportista, ya sea su familia, el entrenador, el personal administrativo de los institutos del deporte de los diversos estados, que pueden ser psicólogos, fisiatras, médico, administradores de instalaciones e incluso al propio deportista ya que esta información es orientadora de las habilidades posibles a trabajar o la identificación de las áreas de oportunidad.

**Control, Afrontamiento, Desafío**

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## Introduction

Stress is currently a relevant factor in daily life, since it interferes with people's activities, affecting people's emotions in a negative or positive way (Correa and Crespo, 2022). In the case of athletes, stressful situations can cause injuries to the lower limbs (Molina-Moreira et al., 2022), speaking of the physical part, however, it also affects the emotional part (Mata et al., 2023), affecting the results or enhancing them, which is why some researchers have been interested in studying stress from various aspects of sports psychology, for example in emotional intelligence, resilience (Miranda-Rochín et al., 2023), motivation (Hernández, Hernández, 2023) resistant personality (Jaenes, 2009; Ponce-Carabajal et al., 2015; Ponce, 2017) or coping strategies (Kim et al., 2003; Ponce-Carabajal et al., 2021; Ponce-Carabajal et al., 2022).

Within existential psychology, the concept of Resilient Personality or Hardiness arose as it was called by Kobasa and Maddi in 1974, since they were interested in investigating more deeply with their research (Maddi, 2002), this phenomenon because some people in situations of stress, they presented significant wear and even illness, but some others were healthy and even the challenge of solving a stressful situation or a problem represented an opportunity for personal development and growth and they perceived that as a benefit, as these were two opposite situations. For the team of these researchers, it was interesting and the beginning of a whole line of research that was complemented with the creation of an Institute dedicated to the study of resistant personality (Maddi, 2004).

The concept of the resilient personality is made up of the famous 3 CS Control, Commitment and Challenge, (Mund, 2017). Kobasa, Maddi and Puccetti in 1982, in their publication, mentioned that a stress protector was physical exercise, a fact that shares the interests of research because exercise, physical activity and sports are allies in people's emotional well-being.

In the last decade, the resistant personality has been studied more frequently in sports such as diving (Villarreal-Aranda et al., 2022), soccer players (Sheard and Golby, 2010), crossfit (Vezzani, 2015), marathon (Jaenes, 2009), swimming (Prieto et al., 2014

Coping strategies are a construct that involves the various skills with which individuals face problems or stressful situations where they have the opportunity to use various ways to resolve it (Marques 2006). This situation implies a difficulty for everyone, whether cognitive or behavioral, internal or external that can be perceived in two ways as threatening or as learning to overcome when facing these difficulties, so it is precisely in these situations where various paths or strategies can be used to face this problem.

The way in which problems are faced has two objectives, the first is to control emotions and the second is to ensure that they do not have an effect during any activity. As an example, in sports, in milliseconds or centimeters they can win or lose a competition and this It can lead to failure if not handled properly. Usually in the competitive sports environment, the goal is for the athlete to remain in a state of balance, positive and optimistic (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) in the pursuit of achieving a goal, whether it is a medal or improving their marks.

Coping strategies are a concept considered multilateral and we can identify two aspects, the first is goal-oriented, where the search for change remains through planning and thorough analysis (Smith et al., 2011). , the second is directly connected to emotions where the objective is to balance or regulate them through self-control and seeking support (Poliseo & McDonough, 2012), in sport in particular, stress is present given the natural circumstances of the competition. and constant evaluation, so decision making or choosing strategies to face a problem is almost always present, hence the importance of studying this topic, so athletes will have the possibility of choosing a better option each time.

To provide a solution to any stressful problem, it is clear that providing a solution to what arises is solely in the hands of the person experiencing that problem, their psychological abilities and their emotional strategies so that they can make appropriate decisions (Cantón-Chirivella et al., 2015).

The approach to coping in sport is composed of various variables such as emotional calm, active planning or cognitive restructuring, mental withdrawal, risk behaviors, and search for social support. Currently, coping strategies have been studied by some researchers in sports such as golf (Pinto, 2011; Pinto & Vazquez, 2013), Soccer (Catalá & Peñacoba, 2019) and athletics, boxing, cycling, diving, gymnastics, lifting, weight training, karate, modern pentathlon, taekwondo and volleyball (Ponce-Carbajal et al., 2021).

## Methodology to be developed

### Design

The design of this research was transversal, non-experimental, and correlational, the sample was 72 athletes, aged between 15 and 39 years of age,  $M = 20.29$   $SD = 4.11$ , 53 men (73.6%) and 19 women (26.4%).

### Instruments

The first is from Hardiness in Central American and Caribbean Athletes questionnaire (HPCACA; Ponce-Carbajal et al. 2015; Ponce, 2017) this questionnaire is composed of 18 items, and three variables: commitment (7 to 12), control (1 to 6) and challenge (13 to 18) of 6 items. In some research, resilient personality has been treated as a unifactorial concept since its creation (Kobasa, 1979; Kobasa, Maddi and Kahn, 1982) but it has also been analyzed in a trifactorial way, since this scale is integrated by three variables such as control, commitment and challenge (Jaenes, Godoy-Izquierdo and Román, 2008), generally in both cases this instrument in its reliability analysis properties are adequate ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) so it is used in both ways. This instrument has a Likert-type response scale from 0 to 3 where 0 is "totally disagree" and 3 is "totally agree".

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

It is composed of 5 variables, Emotional Calmness (7), Active Planning/Cognitive Restructuring (6), Mental Withdrawal (6), Risky Behaviors (4), and Seeking Social Support (5), using 28 items, with a 5-point Likert format, where 1 takes the value of "never" and 5 the value of "always". This scale has validity based on its internal test structure and its relationship with other variables, as well as adequate levels of reliability ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) (Kim, Duda and Ntoumanis, 2003).

## Procedure

The procedure began with the design of the digital questionnaire using Google Forms. The link to the test was sent to the coaches and in turn to the active university players. It was made clear to them that participation is completely anonymous and voluntary. And that the study could be reviewed at any time.

## Results

The results found in this study with respect to reliability are that all the variables presented positive and significant values in the case of the resistant personality in the control variable the reliability was .81, in commitment it was .79 and in the .85 challenge.

In the variables of the coping approach questionnaire, values above .70 were found, for example in the variable of emotional calm with .87, active planning or cognitive restructuring with .84, mental withdrawal with .74, and in the risk behaviors .71, and search for social support .80. and in the total resistant personality a .92 which confirms its adequate unifactorial value.

The correlations confirm the relationships between the variables in a three-factorial and one-factorial manner. The most interesting thing is that the control and commitment variables correlated in all the coping approach variables in sport and in the case of total resistant personality they correlated in their entirety.

With the control they correlated emotional calm with a value of .579\*\*, active planning or cognitive restructuring with values of .566\*\*, mental withdrawal with values of .285\* risk behaviors with a value of .397\*\* and search for social support .383\*\*.

The correlations with commitment were presented in emotional calm with a value of .433\*\*, active planning or cognitive restructuring with values of .339\*\*, mental withdrawal with -.318\*\*, risk behaviors with a value of .313\*\*, and search for social support .240\*.

With the challenge they correlated emotional calm.496\*\* active planning or cognitive restructuring with .527\*\* and search for social support .320\*\* and risk behaviors with values of .521\*\*

In a unifactorial way, the results were that the resistant personality correlates with emotional calm with .558\*\*, active planning or cognitive restructuring with values of .565\*\*, mental withdrawal with -.285, risk behaviors with a value of .478\* \* and search for social support .334\*\*.

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### Conclusiones

Soccer players present diverse coping strategies based on adequate control of their emotions, with resistance to stress that they can manage and allow them to analyze and make good decisions in stressful situations.

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