

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING IN ENDURANCE RUNNERS

Introduction

The resilience, anxiety, and social support constructs in endurance runners and how they relate to each other are relevant for achieving optimal sports performance. However, knowledge about how these variables interact and affect runners' performance is still limited. For this reason, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between resilience, competitive anxiety, and social support in endurance runners of different modalities. It also aims to analyze whether there are differences in these variables, depending on gender, socio-educational level, weekly training hours, total years of training, type of terrain where they prefer to compete, and preference to training alone or accompanied.

Resilience is defined as the ability to resist in the pursuit of challenging goals, to cope effectively with difficulties and adverse moments, and to cope with frustrations and stress after an adverse event. Being resilient also means being able to recognize one's limits and accept them and having the strength to look beyond difficulties with optimism (Diotaiuti et al., 2020). Therefore, the development of resilience in runners is crucial in that it predicts lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Drury, 2019). The influence of social support on resilience is also noteworthy. Research by Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) found that among the various factors that protect Olympic champions from the stressors they are subjected to, perceived social support is a psychological factor that influences athletes' resilience.

Anxiety is becoming prevalent in today's society, being a disorder characterized by emotional responses associated with fear, apprehension, worry, and tension in response to a real or perceived threat (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017). Moreover, it is a problem that is part of sport and is suffered to a greater or lesser extent by most athletes. For this reason, it is unsurprising that the question of how anxiety affects performance is essential for both coaches and athletes. Cowden et al. (2014) found that various stressors stemming from high expectations placed on sports performance can cause athletes to perceive competitive situations as threatening and respond to these situations with increased feelings of apprehension and tension.

Methodology

Within this framework, we present this study in which 111 runners participated: men (N=76) - women (N=35). The average age was 33 years, 47.7% of the participants had a bachelor's degree, 51.4% of the runners trained between 5 and 10 hours per week, and 62.1% had more than five years of running experience. Furthermore, 63.1% preferred to train accompanied, and 36.9% preferred to train alone. As for the terrain on which the runners preferred, 21 preferred to compete in road races, 5 in cross-country, 23 in track and field, and 62 in the mountains. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire using the Google Forms platform through different

Whatsapp groups of runners where they responded to the Personal Competence subscale belonging to the Resilience in the Sporting Context Scale (ERCD) by Trigueros et al. (2017), the SAS-2 Competitive Anxiety scale by Ramis et al. (2009) and the Scale of Perceived Social Support scale for athletes by Pedrosa et al. (2012).

Results

On the one hand, results on the relationships between resilience, competitive anxiety, and social support revealed that social support in a positive way, and especially anxiety in a negative way, are related to resilience.

On the other hand, the results on possible gender differences in resilience, anxiety, and social support showed some interesting data. Significant differences in anxiety were found in terms of gender, with female runners showing higher levels of anxiety than male runners. However, there were no significant differences in resilience, anxiety, or social support as a function of socio-educational level, years of training, hours of training per week, or company. However, there were differences in the preferred terrain of competition, showing that athletes who competed on track and field had significantly higher anxiety scores than those who competed in the mountains. In addition, those who preferred to compete in the mountains had significantly higher resilience scores than those who competed in road races.

Conclusion and Discussion

These findings show similarities with those obtained by Lyu et al. (2022) in demonstrating a significantly inverse relationship between anxiety and resilience. Similarities were also found with the results of Fletcher & Sarkar (2012) in the positive correlation between resilience and perceived social support. This helps protect runners from the possible adverse effects caused by sports stressors. Other analyses in this study are also consistent with numerous other research studies in that anxiety is notably higher among female athletes than their male counterparts (Rice et al., 2019; Rocha & Osório, 2018).

On the other hand, the results found according to the runners' preferred type of terrain show a relationship with those of Kirkby and Liu (1999), where athletes in individual sports such as track and field showed higher somatic and cognitive anxiety scores. In addition to this finding, significant differences were found between anxiety levels about the type of terrain on which runners like to compete. In particular, those who prefer to compete in track and field events have higher levels of anxiety than those who prefer to compete in the mountains. It was also observed that resilience levels depend on the terrain on which runners like to compete; in particular, those who prefer to compete in the mountains show differences concerning the resilience levels of those who compete in road races.

Ultimately, endurance runners need to increase the quality of their social relationships as this will help protect them from the stressors that racing can cause. It would also be advisable to initiate psychological procedures that help to increase resilience levels to alleviate the possible effects generated by anxiety. Another cause of reducing anxiety levels is its detrimental effect on maintaining high levels of resilience. Also, it would be interesting to reduce anxiety levels in female runners and also in those runners who prefer to compete in track and field events. Moreover, this study aims to contribute to scientific knowledge in the sports field and offer potential practical applications for improving endurance athletes' preparation and psychological management.

INTRODUCCIÓN

Los constructos de **resiliencia, ansiedad y apoyo social en corredores/as de resistencia** y cómo se relacionan entre sí son relevantes para alcanzar un rendimiento deportivo óptimo. Sin embargo, el conocimiento acerca de cómo estas variables interactúan y afectan al desempeño de los corredores todavía es limitado.

Resiliencia: Es la capacidad de resistir en la persecución de objetivos desafiantes, afrontar con eficacia las dificultades y momentos adversos, además de hacer frente a las frustraciones y al estrés tras un acontecimiento negativo. Además de ser capaz de reconocer los propios límites, aceptarlos, y tener la fuerza para mirar más allá de las dificultades con optimismo (Diotaiuti et al., 2020).

Ansiedad: Trastorno caracterizado por respuestas emocionales asociadas con miedo, aprensión, preocupación y tensión en respuesta a una amenaza real o percibida. (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017)

Apoyo social: Fletcher y Sarkar (2012) vieron que el apoyo social percibido es un factor psicológico que influye en la resiliencia de los deportistas.

MÉTODO

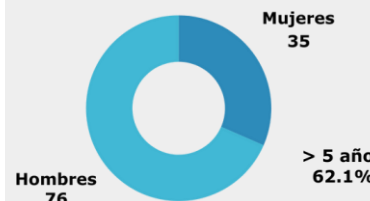


Figura 1. Número de participantes según el sexo

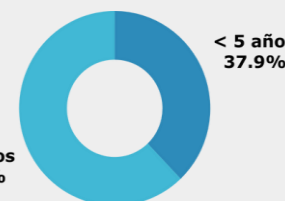


Figura 2. Porcentajes de muestra según años de experiencia

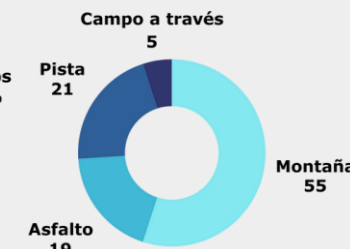


Figura 3. Número de participantes según el tipo de terreno

PROCEDIMIENTO

Recogida de muestra:



Online: Mediante un Cuestionario de Google Forms administrado por diferentes grupos de Whatsapp de corredores

OBJETIVOS

➤ **Analizar la relación** entre la resiliencia, la ansiedad y apoyo social en corredores de resistencia.

➤ **Analizar las diferencias** en los constructos de resiliencia, ansiedad y apoyo social, en función del género, nivel socioeducativo, horas semanales de entrenamiento, años totales de entrenamiento, tipo de terreno de competición y compañía durante la práctica.

HIPÓTESIS

H1. Existe una relación **positiva** entre la resiliencia y el apoyo social percibido y una relación **negativa** entre la resiliencia y la ansiedad.

H2. Existen **diferencias** entre **hombres y mujeres** en ansiedad, siendo en mujeres en quienes se prevén mayores puntuaciones.

H3. Existen **diferencias** en resiliencia, ansiedad y apoyo social en función del género, el nivel socioeducativo, las horas semanales de entrenamiento, los años totales de entrenamiento, el tipo de terreno de competición y la compañía durante los entrenamientos.

MATERIALES

Escala de Resiliencia en el Contexto Deportivo (ERCD) de Trigueros et al., (2017). Alpha de Cronbach = **.882**

Escala de Ansiedad Competitiva SAS-2 de Ramis et al., (2009). Alpha de Cronbach = **.917**

Escala de Apoyo Social percibido de Pedrosa et al., (2012). Alpha de Cronbach = **.919**

RESULTADOS

Tabla 1: Resumen de resultados del análisis de regresión lineal entre resiliencia y apoyo social

VI	VD	R cuadrado ajustado	t	F	Beta estandarizada	Sig.
Apoyo social	Resiliencia	.030	2.109	19.074	.198	.037

Tabla 2: Resumen de resultados del análisis de regresión lineal entre resiliencia y ansiedad

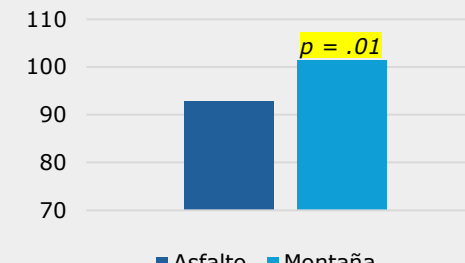
VI	VD	R cuadrado ajustado	t	F	Beta estandarizada	Sig.
Resiliencia	Ansiedad	.141	-4.367	4.448	-.386	.001

Figura 4. **HIPÓTESIS 1:** Relación entre resiliencia y apoyo social y entre resiliencia y ansiedad



Descriptivos Hombres M=30,8 SD= 9,74
Descriptivos Mujeres M=36,2 SD=9,51

Figura 5. **HIPÓTESIS 2:** Diferencia entre hombres y mujeres en ansiedad.



Descriptivos Asfalto M=92,95 SD= 9,74
Descriptivos Montaña M=101,5 SD=13,69

Figura 6. **HIPOTESIS 3:** Diferencias en resiliencia según el tipo de terreno preferido para competir

DISCUSIÓN Y CONCLUSIONES

💡 **Hipótesis 1:** se **acepta**. A mayores niveles de resiliencia mayor apoyo social y menores niveles de ansiedad, confirmando estudios previos (Lyu et al., 2022; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

💡 **Hipótesis 2:** se **acepta**. En línea con estudios previos (Rice et al., 2019; Rocha & Osório, 2018), las mujeres presentan mayores niveles de ansiedad que los hombres.

💡 **Hipótesis 3:** se **acepta parcialmente**. **Sólo** existen diferencias en función del terreno de competición. Los corredores de montaña presentan mayores niveles de resiliencia que los de asfalto. Y los de pista presentan mayores niveles de ansiedad que los de montaña, al igual que el estudio de Kirkby & Liu (1999).

En definitiva, es importante que los corredores de resistencia **augmenten la calidad de sus relaciones sociales** ya que esto les ayudará a protegerse de los factores estresantes que puedan causar las carreras.

Para **investigaciones futuras** se podrían diseñar e implementar programas de intervención destinados a promover la resiliencia y reducir la ansiedad en corredores vulnerables. Disponer de muestras de participantes más amplias y con mayor presencia femenina, permitirá explorar mejor el efecto del tiempo de entrenamiento, el tipo de terreno de competición y la compañía durante los entrenamientos.

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