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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

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Holistic management of organisational stress, health and exercise in the success of male volleyball players: effects on striving levels

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Abstract

Background: The sports industry has become the center of attention by succeeding in carrying its popularity to its peaks with the effect of growth due to increasing demand. Since this situation brings with it meticulous work to achieve success in every field of sport, there are problems in the management of organizational stress, which is perceived as the reaction of athletes to the events they face while taking steps to achieve their goals. It is argued that the causes of organizational stress, such as finance-management, coach-audience behavior and healthy nutrition, should be identified correctly and intervened in time. It is thought that if these reasons are managed correctly, male volleyball players will successfully carry out their striving for their goals. In summary, the aim of this study was to examine the effect of organizational stress management of male volleyball players on their level of striving for their goals. **Methods**: The research consisted of 121 volleyball players, 121 males who were determined by the convenience sampling method from the teams participating in the interuniversity regional league tournaments held in. The multiple regression model established for this purpose was tested using the Jamovi package program with data collected from male volleyball players through face-to-face questionnaires. **Results**: It was determined that organizational stress management of male volleyball players affects their level of striving for their goals (R^2 = 0.221; p = 0.001). **Conclusions**: A holistic management approach based on the cooperation of stakeholders should be adopted in order to support male volleyball players financially, plan their exercise programmes and have them undergo regular health checks.

Keywords

Organisation; Stress; Management; Striving

1. Introduction

While today's social, technological developments and globalisation phenomenon provide new opportunities on the one hand, on the other hand, it brings important psychological problems such as trauma and stress outside of normal life [1–3]. Stress is often thought to be a factor that causes individuals to give up or react to their needs [4]. Organizational stress (OS), on the other hand, is a reaction resulting from the external environment, situation or event that imposes excessive psychological or physical demands on the individual, which is affected by personal privileges and mental processes expressed in relation to the individual's living space [5, 6], as well as making it impossible for individuals to fulfil their duties and responsibilities by arising from individual and business relations within a society [7].

In terms of sports, OS is one of the areas where human factors are involved in the production of products and services [8]. Therefore, it is imperative to examine stress within the framework of sports organizations and conduct the necessary research [9]. Simpson *et al.* [9] (2024) revealed that it is inevitable that OS factors in sports show their effects at the time of the event, and that these effects usually include behavioral and attitudinal reactions that are uncontrollable [10] and lead to various emotional states [8]. Such reactions cause various problems, such as burnout [11], dissatisfaction and job dissatisfaction [12], and negative emotions [8], which can affect the ability to prepare for and perform in important competitive environments [13]. Arnold & Fletcher (2012a) [14] clarified the conceptual structure of the classification of OS factors in sports, which consists of four categories: leadership and personnel issues, cultural and team issues, logistical and environmental issues, performance issues and personal issues [15]. Athletes may be affected by OS factors at certain intervals and may perceive the situations that put them under pressure as a threat or striving [16].

Striving with or perceiving the current situation as a threat is a consequence of the fact that athletes are exposed to an intense competitive environment both in training and competitions [17]. Challenge perception, a new concept in the sports

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environment, has been the focus of researchers' attention in recent years [18]. It should not be forgotten that the striving attitude emerges in performance situations and is characterized by effort, uncertainty, and a sense of danger [19]. When there is no perception of danger, the probability of an individual experiencing striving is very low [20]. A struggling situation is associated with both positive and negative emotions [21]. Moreover, while emotions are thought to facilitate performance in situations that require a challenge or striving, they are suggested to be detrimental in the case of a threat [17, 22]. Some studies have shown that struggling for goals leads to different behaviors and attitudes [17]. For example, Kristensen *et al.* [17] (2022) found that a threat situation resulted in stagnant movements, including more freezing and avoidance postures, and less smiling compared to a striving situation [23]. Therefore, it has been suggested that a challenging situation may result in superior performance by encouraging task-related movement patterns that are more likely to translate into successful performance [24]. In addition, researchers have suggested that in situations where organizational stressors are managed, lower muscle activity is typically associated with more successful performance [25], leading to better performance by causing the task-related muscles to be less tense in a challenging situation [26]. This makes health and exercise management valuable for sports. In addition to considering health management as a process that aims to empower individuals by ensuring that sports are accessible and aligned with the needs of society [27], sports organizations should embrace an emerging culture in which performance coaching is integrated into a holistic approach to comprehensive health management and decision-making [28]. The secret to a successful performance outcome is to address the athlete's health not only on a pathology-focused level but also on a functional level. This holistic approach includes strategies to reduce the risk of injury and illness as well as the management of existing health problems [29]. Exercise management covers the planning, implementation and evaluation processes of athletes' physical activity (PA) programs [30]. Regular exercise contributes to the prevention of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart diseases and diabetes, while helping athletes adopt healthy lifestyles and creating positive effects on physical and mental health [31, 32]. Taking these details into consideration, the struggle theory in athletes suggests that athletes evaluate competitive stress as either a struggle or a threat, and the competitive environment emerges as a situation to be struggled with in individuals with high levels of self-efficacy and perceived control and who adopt approach goals [33]. On the other hand, threat occurs when self-efficacy is low, control perceptions are low, and avoidance goals are more prominent [34].

Considering the lack of a systematic framework within the scope of male volleyball players regarding the positive or negative situations caused by OS factors in sports competitions towards athletes' perceptions of striving for goals (SFG), it can be said that the study is important in terms of having a unique place in the literature. Especially in branches that involve a competitive environment, athletes' perceptions of managing existing OS factors play an important role in determining whether they are struggling to achieve their goals [35]. In this respect, in this study, it is thought that the OS conditions of male volleyball players may lead to significant differences in their performances by affecting the level of striving they exhibit in the competition environment. Therefore, this study is important in this regard. In this context, the aim of this study was to examine the effect of male volleyball players' OS management on their level of SFG (Fig. 1).

Managing the process by creating a defense force against OS in terms of management finance (MF), coach and spectator behaviors (TA (trainer attitude) and SA (spectator attitude)), healthy eating (HD), and participation in decision-making (DM) increases the continuity of the striving at the point of achieving the goal [36–38]. In the TA sub-dimension of OS, it has been found that one of the most important problems of elite level athletes is that intra-team disagreements and unrest arising from the wrong selection of the coaching staff lead to disconnections in the perception of striving and are negatively affected [39–42]. Woodman & Hardy (2001) [43] stated that if there is no fair distribution while providing financial support to athletes, the threat perception arising from OS occurs in athletes who think that they receive less financial support unfairly and the striving element tends to decrease. In terms of HD, it has been found that the inability to gain healthy eating experiences due to reasons such as lack of education on nutrition, inadequate provision of food, irregular nutrition, and incomplete implementation of the diet activates stress factors and negatively affects combative attitudes [43]. In DM, it has been found that team members often experience conflict of ideas when they spend a long time with each other in a tense atmosphere [44] as well as difficulties such as the integration of new team members into a group that has been together for a long time [43]. Gutkind (2004) [45] stated that when challenging and meaningful tasks are overcome with the right management to minimize the level of OS, it helps develop thoughts, positive emotions and strivings.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Population-sample

In the first phase, 135 data points were proposed. However, 14 data were found to be inconsistent, incomplete and erroneous responses; therefore, it was deemed appropriate to remove them from the study. The research consisted of 121 volleyball players, 121 males who were determined by the convenience sampling method [46] from the teams participating in the interuniversity regional league tournaments held in Van, Ağrı and Trabzon provinces between 05–09 May in the 2023–2024 season. This study aims to reflect the rate of difference between two or more variables among quantitative descriptive models, and if there is a change, take steps to prove how it emerged. This study deals with the relationship between variables within the framework of causality and uses multiple regression analysis to determine the level of influence [46]. The personal information form created by the researcher included questions about the age and sport age of the volleyball players. The voluntary participation of volleyball players in this study was based on an understanding of volunteerism.

2.2 Data collection tools

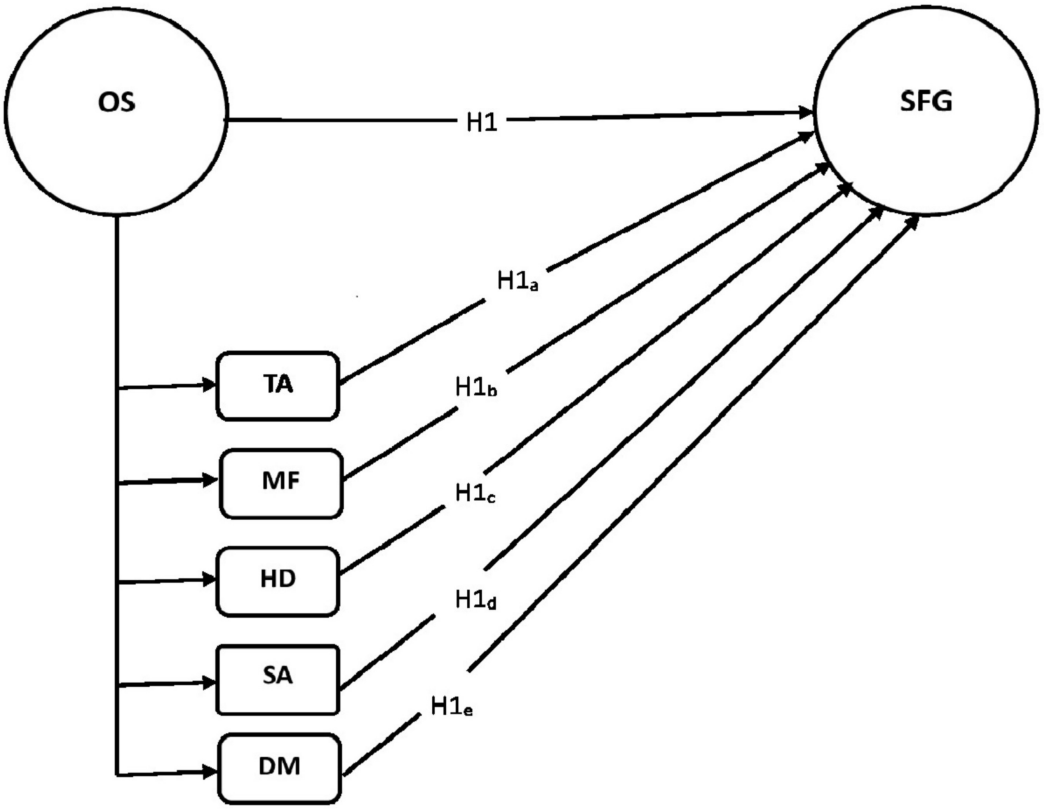

FIGURE 1. Research model. H1: "OS has an effect on SFG". $H1_a$: "TA sub-dimension of OS has an effect on SFG". $H1_b$: "MF sub-dimension of OS has an effect on SFG". $H1_c$: "HD sub-dimension of OS has an effect on SFG". $H1_d$: "SA sub-dimension of OS has an effect on SFG". $H1_e$: "DM sub-dimension of OS has an effect on SFG". OS: Organizational stress; SFG: striving for goals; TA: trainer attitude; SA: spectator attitude; HD: health diet; DM: decision making; MF: management finance.

2.2.1 Elite athlete organisational stress scale

This study used the scale of organizational stress in elite athletes developed by Üzüm (2010) [47]. The Organizational Stress Scale consists of forty-three items in total and 5 sub-dimensions: finance management, spectator behavior, coach behavior, participation in decision-making and health nutrition. The rating of the scale was on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very little–5 = very much). Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was calculated to be $\alpha = 0.95$.

2.2.2 Striving for goal scale

In the scale developed by Eryılmaz (2015) [48], three sub-dimensions, namely attachment to the goal, quitting the striving, and continuing the striving for the goal, consisted of 17 items in total. The reliability of the scale was analyzed using the internal consistency coefficient and test-retest method. The rating of the scale was determined on a 4-point Likert (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was calculated to be $\alpha = 0.83$.

2.3 Data analysis for validity of measures

In this study, age and age at sports were independent variables. The normality of the distribution of the organizational stress scale sub-dimension scores and striving for goals scale scores in male volleyball players was examined using Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients, and it was determined that they showed normal distribution. Pearson's correlation test was applied to reveal the relationship level of the scores obtained from the scales for each sub-dimension. Assumptions for using multiple regression are linearity, multicollinearity and changing variance tests. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between the variables as causality to fully capture the conditions set forth [46].

3. Results

In this part of the study, means, standard deviations, Cronbach's Alphas correlation and regression models are given in tables to examine the relationship and effect in terms of OS and striving for goals and sub-dimensions.

According to Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha values calculated for the internal consistency coefficient of all scales and sub-dimensions are above 0.60 and at an acceptable level [46].

While there was a moderate positive correlation between OS and SFG total scores ($r = 0.470$, $p = 0.001$), there was a moderate positive correlation between OS sub-dimensions TA ($r = 0.433$, $p = 0.006$), MF ($r = 0.467$, $p = 0.001$), HD ($r = 0.461$, $p = 0.002$), SA ($r = 0.420$, $p = 0.010$) and DM ($r = 0.471$, $p = 0.001$) and SFG (Table 2, Ref. [47]).

The first hypothesis of this study, Hypothesis 1 (H1), shows the effect of OS on SFG. The findings of this study confirmed

TABLE 1. Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas values of the variables.

Variables	Mean	sd	Cronbach's Alpha
OS	2.68	0.775	0.955
TA	2.61	0.847	0.923
MF	2.92	0.876	0.792
HD	2.76	0.881	0.782
SA	2.75	0.911	0.775
DM	2.65	0.869	0.772
SFG	2.84	0.533	0.830

sd: standard deviations; OS: Organizational stress; SFG: striving for goals; TA: trainer attitude; SA: spectator attitude; HD: health diet; DM: decision making; MF: management finance.

TABLE 2. Correlation analysis results.

	SFG	OS	TA	MF	HD	SA	DM
r	1.000						
p	—						
OS							
r	0.470	1.000					
p	<0.001**	—					
TA							
r	0.433	0.961	1.000				
p	0.006*	<0.001**	—				
MF							
r	0.467	0.879	0.771	1.000			
p	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**	—			
HD							
r	0.461	0.853	0.760	0.773	1.000		
p	0.002*	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**	—		
SA							
r	0.420	0.828	0.721	0.706	0.684	1.000	
p	0.010	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**	—	
DM							
r	0.471	0.737	0.656	0.622	0.562	0.561	1.000
p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	—

**p < 0.05, **p < 0.001; Weak relationship: $|r| < 0.3$; Moderate relationship: $0.3 \leq |r| < 0.5$; Strong relationship: $|r| \geq 0.5$ [47]. OS: Organizational stress; SFG: striving for goals; TA: trainer attitude; SA: spectator attitude; HD: health diet; DM: decision making; MF: management finance.*

that this effect was significant ($R^2 = 0.221$; $p = 0.001$). Subsequently, Hypothesis 2 ($H1_a$) was validated, demonstrating a positive direct relationship between TA and SFG, supported by significant results ($R^2 = 0.188$; $p = 0.006$).

Hypothesis 3 ($H1_b$) was confirmed, revealing a significant relationship between MF and SFG ($R^2 = 0.219$; $p = 0.001$).

The fourth hypothesis ($H1_c$) suggested that "mediates the relationship between HD and SFG. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive effect in support of this hypothesis ($R^2 = 0.213$, $p = 0.001$)".

Hypothesis 5 ($H1_d$) suggested that "mediates the relationship between SA and SFG. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive effect in support of this hypothesis ($R^2 = 0.177$; $p = 0.010$)".

The last hypothesis, ($H1_e$), suggested that "mediates the relationship between DM and SFG. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive effect in support of this hypothesis ($R^2 = 0.222$; $p = 0.001$) (Table 3)".

4. Discussion

This study was conducted to determine the effect of OS on SFG levels ($R^2 = 0.221$; $p = 0.001$). This study makes theoretical contributions to the existing literature. First, this study showed

TABLE 3. Regressions analysis results.

Model	R	R^2	SE	t	p
OS—SFG	0.470	0.221	0.0147	3.28	0.001**
TA—SFG	0.433	0.188	0.0278	2.77	0.006**
MF—SFG	0.467	0.219	0.0785	3.28	0.001**
HD—SFG	0.461	0.213	0.0929	3.15	0.001**
SA—SFG	0.420	0.177	0.0905	2.60	0.010*
DM—SFG	0.471	0.222	0.1410	3.29	0.001**

*Notes: N = 121, Betas are completely standardized effect sizes. OS: organizational stress; SE: standard error; SFG: striving for goals; MF: management finance; TA: trainer attitude; SA: spectator attitude; HD: health diet; DM: decision making. Bootstrap sample size = 5000, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.*
Source: The findings are derived from the survey conducted for this study.

that OS has a positive effect on SFG levels (R^2 = 0.221; p = 0.001). According to the findings of this study, the positive perception, adequacy or correct management of OS characteristics by male volleyball players contributes positively to SFG (Table 3).

This is supported by similar studies in the literature. Rahmawati *et al.* [36] (2022); ten Brummelhuis & Bakker (2012); DeAngelis (2018) [36–38] that managing challenging and meaningful tasks minimises the level of SA by increasing people's well-being and productivity as it helps to improve their resources, thoughts, positive emotions and participation Gutkind (2004) [45] that goal-oriented striving approaches of professional athletes are negatively related to SA symptoms [49, 50] in particular, athletes who strongly focus on developing their competences and striving with coping with interpersonal difficulties are more resistant and resilient to burnout levels and OS symptoms because they experience more conviction and consistency in their actions [51–54], while elite athletes' effort to perform better leads to higher burnout levels than amateur groups, negatively affecting both individual and in-group OS management [52, 55, 56] (Tables 2,3). In their systematic review, Allen & Hopkins (2015) [57] explained that elite athletes experience a short period of time when they have the highest competitive performance. For this reason, elite athletes are negatively affected by their OS levels due to concerns of recovery or decline, especially because they have reached their peak in their branches. When the TA sub-dimension is analyzed, it has been emphasized that one of the biggest problems in elite-level athletes is that intra-team disagreements and unrest due to the wrong selection of the coaching staff leads to disconnections in the perceptions of SFG [39–42]. To address this problem, Dale & Wrisberg (1996) [58] found that by utilizing performance profiling techniques during a competitive season, coaches and athletes developed a more open atmosphere in terms of communication, and athletes improved in terms of SFG [18]. In the MF sub-dimension, Woodman & Hardy (2001) [43] reported in their study that if there is not a fair distribution when providing financial support to athletes, athletes who think that they receive less financial support tend to have a perception of threat from OS and the SFG element tends to decrease [43] (Table 3). In the HD sub-dimension, it has been determined that the lack of healthy eating experiences due to reasons such as coaches' attitudes, lack of education on nutrition, lack of support after a serious injury, inadequate provision of food, irregular nutrition and incomplete implementation of the diet mobilize OS factors and negatively affect SFG attitude [43]. According to the SA sub-dimension, it has been stated that the protest or bad cheering of spectators during competitions causes demoralization in the team and leads to a decrease in the perception of SFG [43]. In the DM sub-dimension, it has been observed that team members often experience conflicts of opinion when they spend a long time with each other in a tense atmosphere [44], and difficulties such as the integration of new team members into a group that has been together for a long time can cause tension and hinder SFG determination [43, 59]. In general, Pires & Ugrinowitsch (2021) [60] emphasized the importance of understanding how male volleyball players perceive and manage stress during their competitive season, which directly affects their sense of achievement and general well-being. Rebelo *et al.* [61] (2024) found that a positive perception of training stress can lead to better performance outcomes, as athletes who manage their stress effectively are more likely to be successful in achieving their competitive goals.

5. Conclusions

When all the results are evaluated, it can be said that if the OS situation occurring in the environment of male volleyball players is managed at the desired level, the SFG can be positively affected and strengthened. In this case, volleyball players can capture the environment to maximize their performance by protecting themselves both in competition and against external factors. Effective management of organizational stress arising from the environment of male volleyball players can positively strengthen their efforts to achieve their goals and level of struggle. This management will enable volleyball players to be more resilient in competitive environments and develop a better defense against external factors. Effective control of organizational stress will contribute to increasing the individual performance and team success of athletes. Since this study only focused on organizational stress management, health and exercise, other important factors (motivation, intra-team relationships, psychological resilience, environmental

factors, *etc.*) that may affect the success of male volleyball players may be ignored. The fact that the findings are valid only for male athletes may not cover similar situations in female athletes or volleyball players in other branches. Only some of the many factors influencing the success of male volleyball players have been focussed on, which may lead to other external factors being overlooked. It can be argued that cultural and geographical differences may lead to changes in athletes' stress levels, understanding of health and perspectives on exercise. This is because athletes' stress levels, understanding of health and perspectives on exercise may vary according to the culture and geography in which they are located. Analysis of the effects of organizational stress on performance may provide valuable information for the development of stress management strategies in team sports such as volleyball. Concrete data on the effects of exercise on the mental and physical health of volleyball players can be used to make athlete training and health programs more effective. Analyse the effects of changes in stress levels, health status and exercise management of male volleyball players over time. Longitudinal studies can provide an opportunity to observe how the impact of these factors on success is not only momentary but also continuously evolving.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data presented in this study are available on reasonable request from the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

ÜS—designed the research study; carried out the research; provided help and advice on the research; analysed the data; wrote the article. The author contributed to the editorial changes in the manuscript. The author read and approved the final version of the article.

ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

All individuals who participated in our study voluntarily agreed to participate and provided their consent. The ethics committee permission of the article was obtained by Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University/Publication Ethics Board with the decision dated 25.04.2024 and numbered 157.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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