

# The Correlation Between Mental Health Level and Athlete's Performance

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**Abstract:** Recently mental health is taking a lot of attention and affect among people and athlete's also with no exception, because athlete's demand to show their best performance. In the middle of the training process physical ability and mental ability are the main things that could give effect to an athlete's performance. Many opinions agree about mental health roles in affecting the performance of athlete The objective of this research is to find the relationships in mental health level and athlete's performance. The method that the author used in this research is literature review. The results show that there are contrary opinions, which are points of view that state that level of mental health is the main factor that determines the good or bad performance of athletes, but there are opinions that show vice versa which the level of the athlete's performance that affects the level of mental health. It could determine whether an athlete has good mental health or has a mental health disorder such as anxiety and depression. However, other than that some studies found that the level of mental health could affect the performance of athlete's but not significantly because there are other factors that affect the athlete's performance such as physical and environmental conditions that could affect it too.

**Keywords:** mental health, athlete performance, mental health disorder, sports psychology.

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health has been a topic to be discussed by a lot of people recently, this issue got a lot of people attention in this age of technological development. It is becoming problematic and causing people to have a mental illness (Scott et al., 2017). Recently people easily self-diagnosed that they were having mental health problems, but the common mistakes are that they do not completely understand what mental health is and its indicators that proved their level of mental health. So, what does mental health stand for? Dewi (2012) demonstrates the feasibility of mental health simply its existence and the maintaining of the wellness of mental, mental health not really meant always about how to maintain mental stability, but with the main purpose to analyze mental illness or mental disorders (Dewi, 2012). WHO also states that mental health is a condition where the well-being person could acknowledge his/her potential and could deal with certain levels of life pressure and mature at doing his/her daily routine (World Health Organization, 2005). Mental health has been gaining importance in recent discussions about its relevance through this age of

technological revolution, how it could affect daily life of people, and how to keep mental health in a positive level. Mental health disorders could happen to all types of people, it is not genetic but could be triggered through a certain condition or situation.

We have realized that as a human being we would deal with many problems that end up with struggles. This struggle doesn't only affect ordinary people but also athletes, because based on the past study said that the probability of elite athlete's rates on having mental ill-health such as depression, disorders of sleep cycle, burnout, etc (Gouttebarga et al., 2019). Athlete's words came from Greek word "athlos" that means "performance" or "competition"(Araújo & Scharhag, 2016), and few things that could referred to athlete's such as extraordinary efforts in action or a physiology loads in someone while doing something(McKinney et al., 2019). Most people relate athlete to a paradigm that individuals or groups of many people that do sports put effort on it. Although what is most relevant in the difference between ordinary people and athletes was that athletes are demanded to achieve a certain level of performance that is above what others could reach (Araújo & Scharhag, 2016). Athlete's rate of success only can be calculated by one way which is by their performance or achievements. M.J Slater stated in (Stephen et al., 2023) performance can be defined as the outcome of process-based variables. Another study said that performance is an effort from the physical and mental of an individual or group of individuals to gain victory (Çakiroğlu, 2021). Although during the time of preparation there is progress needed through the training program, following the training program there are principles that could help athletes to reach their maximum potential to achieve the best performance. There are many types of training but one thing about training programs is to push human potential to reach its maximum level and throughout this process body and physics of the athlete's truly being tested, but there is one more important thing that will affect the success of the training it's called mental. When athletes feel the pressure and it causes the individual having issues throughout the training programs regarding mental illness, it could affect the outcomes of the performance since the programs couldn't be run the way it should be.

As mentioned previously there are probabilities that an athlete could experience mental health disorders or a bad mental health level. But there are athlete's which has good level of mental health, and good level of mental health can be defined that individuals are able to recognize their own potential or abilities and could manage the stress that is happening in various ways consciously (Gorczyński et al., 2022). WHO states that a healthy level of mental health can be seen by how people keep being productive and could make contributions for their community or environment

(World Health Organization, 2005). Athlete's also well-known for their abilities to endure pain and pressure, this shows that athlete's need a good level of mental health to keep improving to reach their goal or best performance or to get achievement.

There are good levels of mental health and bad levels of mental health or we could say it as a disorder, there are many indicators and actions or thoughts that show both good and bad levels of mental health (Suldo et al., 2015). Since there are a lot of indicators, authors focus on 2 indicators or actions from bad levels and good levels of mental health. Bad level of mental health limitation only in anxiety disorder & depression on athlete's, good level of mental health restricted in 2 indicators which is self-efficacy and self-confidence. Author currently insists that performance was affected by the level of mental health of the athlete. So, the author seeks to find correlation between the mental health level of athletes that affect the performance of the athlete's, is there any relationship between those topics? This question can be answered.

## METHOD

Literature review being conducted by authors for analysis, using deductive approach. Literature search overview by keywords of 'mental health', 'mental health in athlete's performance', 'mental disorders in athletes', 'Athletes performance', 'mental illness, and 'sports psychology'. Using previous study and research to draw conclusions and correlation in this particular topic.

## RESULTS

Table 1. Selected journal article

Topics	Published Date	Authors	Theory or POV
A conceptual model for mental health and performance of North American athletes: A mixed methods study	12 March 2022	Erin Ayala, Laina Nelson, Matthew Bartholomew, David Plummer	Performance is one of the important aspects of athlete's, this study proved that performance of the athlete cannot only depend on the level of the mental health of the athlete. But there must be balance in physical health, mental health, and environmental demands.

Topics	Published Date	Authors	Theory or POV
Sport-Specific Mental Health Interventions in Athletes: A Call for Optimization Models Sensitive to Sport Culture	January 2018	Yulia Gavrilova and Brad Donohue	Previous study also states that social support, sport psychology services, psychological skills training, etc consistently shown benefits for athlete mental health and their performance. It's likely when athlete's feel a sense of value, belongings, support, etc (social aspects). Those factors could affect the development of athlete's performance
The Role of Athletic Self-efficacy and Athletic Perfectionism in Predicting Athletic Performance of Gazi University Student Athletes	1 December 2021	Temel Çakiroğlu	Physical and mental effort of an individual or groups of individuals is part of factors that affect the athlete's performance. Self-efficacy is defined as the feeling of belief in the abilities of each athlete to perform and the ability to deal with problems through the process to achieve specific outcome in performance. This study proves by a beta coefficient of self-efficacy of 0.54 ( $p < 0.05$ ) that along the way self-efficacy levels increase, it also affects the increasing of athletes' performance.
Occurrence of mental health symptoms and disorders in current and former elite athletes: a systematic review and meta-analysis	14 June 2019	Vincent Gouttebauge, João Mauricio, Castaldelli-Maia, Paul Gorczynski, Brian Hainline, Mary E Hitchcock, Gino M Kerkhoffs, Simon M Rice, Claudia L Reardon	It states that the decreasing performance of current elite athletes was the main factor that triggered or the beginning of mental health disorders such as anxiety, stress, sleep disorder, etc. This study shows that 34% of recently elite athletes

Topics	Published Date	Authors	Theory or POV
			diagnosed or experienced anxiety/depression as mental health disorders.
Mental Health In Elite Athletes: Increased Awareness Requires An Early Intervention Framework to Respond to Athlete Needs	28 November 2019	Rosemary Purce II, Kate Gwyther, and Simon M. Rice	It shows the relevance in achieving high or best performance to an athlete by having mental health and well-being. Anxiety disorder could be triggered by many things such as sport-related injury, performance failure, overtraining, etc.
Effect of brief mindfulness and relaxation inductions on anxiety, affect and brain activation in athletes	12 March 2023	Jui-Ti Niena, Diane L. Gill, Ting-Yin Chouc, Chen-Shuo Liu, Xiaoling Genga, Tsung-Min Hung, Yu-Kai Chang	This study states that anxiety could affect the training and the performance of the athlete during competition.
The Effect of Psychological Well-being on Athletic Performance of Professional Athletes	June 2021	Tayebeh Baniyasi & Mir Hamid Salehian	This study and previous study proved that psychological well-being could predict the performance of professional athletes, but it is not significantly affecting the performance itself. But good physical condition can lead to good mental health.

Topics	Published Date	Authors	Theory or POV
KECEMASAN MEMPENGARUHI PERFORMA ATLET DALAM BERTANDING	10 April 2017	Galih Dwi Pradipta. S.Pd, M.Or	Anxiety could lead to increased muscle tension and fatigue and impairs coordination. Under conditions of high stress, increased muscle tension, fatigue, and coordination problems lead to decreased performance. It also causes a decrease in the level of concentration, since anxiety happening it will narrow the sensitivity of the human body.
Depression in Athletes Prevalence and Risk Factors	January 2015	Andrew Wolanin, PsyD; Michael Gross, MA; and Eugene Hong, MD	This study states that generally depression is stimulated by situations of feelings and thoughts that are not ready or accepted when athletes face a decline in their performance.

### **Anxiety Disorder**

Anxiety simply is about a situation that makes us worry because of the lackness in dealing with current troubles or in the future. Weinberg and Gould states that anxiety disorder can be defined as a form of negative emotion characterized by several things such as worry and fear (Gould & Weinberg, 2007). Anxiety is also said as an action or response due to feeling to be in danger or having a threat (Moss, 2002). Some symptoms that could indicate that people have experienced anxiety disorder could be seen in some aspects like mood swings, way of thinking, behavior, sleep disorder, concentration, etc. Specific action or traits from those aspects such as restlessness or sleeping disturbance, feeling on edged, easily to get fatigue, high muscle tension, and else (Adwas et al., 2019).

### **Depression**

Depression is a mental illness condition that is indicated by sadness, loss of interest, feelings of guilt and low self-esteem, sleep and eating problems, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. Depression can be long-lasting or recurring and can seriously affect your ability to

function at work or school or cope with everyday life. At worst, depression can lead to suicide. Depression could be differentiated into two categories: *major depressive disorder* and *dysthymia*. Major depressive disorder could be stated by some symptoms such as depressive mood condition, loss in interest or enjoyment, energy decreased, etc. Dysthymia happened in mild to chronic level of depression, the difference between major depressive disorder and dysthymia is the duration of dysthymia much longer but with lower intensity (World Health Organization, 2017).

### **Self-efficacy**

A state of belief in an individual's that they are able to organize and carry out the course of action deemed necessary to achieve desired or specific results by realizing their own abilities (Adiputra, 2015). Another study also states that self-efficacy could be defined to the extent to which people develop behaviors that enable them to persevere in potentially stressful situations (Graham, 2022).

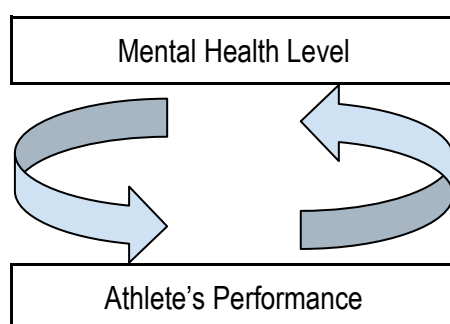
### **Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence could be said as a feeling in each individual's inner self about certainty, certain about who we are and what we are capable of doing or affecting the world. It's also a feeling about self-worth and being valued (Dureja & Singh, 2011). On the other hand, self-confidence states when you also have faith in your own abilities and ability to succeed (Oguntuase & Sun, 2022).

## **DISCUSSION**

The author has mentioned before that there is a relationship between mental health level and athlete's performance, which is performance is the subject that being affected by the condition of mental health level whether the performance is increased or decreased is defined by the good or bad level of mental health that have been experienced by the athlete. Through reviewing some previous study and taking some theory, there are contradictory opinions through each piece of literature. Certain opinions stated that levels of mental health have a big role in affecting athlete's performance (Çakiroğlu, 2021; Gavrilova & Donohue, 2018; Nien et al., 2023). Several previous studies have a different point of view. The results of these studies suggest findings contrary to the authors' initial opinion, where they stated that performance is not the subject that is affected by the mental health level of an athlete. However, the performance of the athletes was the cause of good

or bad mental health level of an athlete, the probability of getting mental health disorder is affected by the decrease in athlete's performance (Gouttebarga et al., 2019; Wolanin et al., 2015). It could be seen by some study that shows anxiety and depression could affect muscle tension, fatigue, sleep disturbance, and many others that could be considered as factors that make the performance of an athlete decreased. The other studies said that mental health level could affect the athlete performance, but it's not the main and only factor they prove that physical condition and environmental condition also have a part in affecting the performance (Ayala et al., 2022; Baniasadi & Salehian, 2021) .Through this review we could see about two to three different points of view about the topics. The author deduces that the mental health level and performance of athletes not only having a one-way relationship but these two things could influence each other.



Picture 1. Correlation of mental health level and athlete's performance

## CONCLUSION

So, the author has final findings about this research based on literature review methods, which the initial hypothesis that states the mental health level of an athlete whether it is good or bad level will affect the performance of an athlete is not totally wrong but it's not complete to define the relationship between mental health level and athlete's performance. Author deduces through many theories and points of view that there is correlation between mental health level and athlete's performance, it is in the forms of two-way relationships that can influence each other. Without excluding several factors such as physical condition and social environment that could give some effect to the mental health level and performance of an athlete.

## Conflict of Interest

The author truly has no conflict of interest in the process of making this paper or in the writing of this paper.



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