

An examination of emotion regulation skills of undergraduate students studying at the faculty of sports sciences

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Abstract

Emotion regulation skill is an important ability that develops with age and experience and includes the processes of recognizing, understanding, expressing and managing one's emotions. This skill is especially important for undergraduate students. Because it is an inevitable fact that they need to cope with various emotions due to the intensity of academic and sports activities. Managing these emotions effectively positively affects their academic achievement, sports performance and overall quality of life. This study aims to examine undergraduate students' emotion regulation skills and the effects of sport on emotional health. This research has the feature of relational screening model, one of the general screening models. The Athlete Emotion Regulation Scale was used to collect the data. The scale includes questions about sports playing habits. The aim of the study is to understand the relationship between undergraduate students' emotion regulation skills and sports and the effects of sports on emotional health. This study is intended to be a valuable resource for understanding how sports can be used to improve undergraduate students' emotion regulation skills and increase their emotional health. The findings of the study showed that sports habits had a positive effect on students' emotion regulation skills. In addition, it was seen that factors such as duration of doing sports, family members doing sports, and being a professional had a positive effect on emotion regulation skills. In order to increase the positive contribution of sports to the development of emotion regulation skills in children, we can provide children with sports habits from an early age and ensure that they are emotionally healthier when they become adults.

Keywords: Emotion Regulation, emotional health, quality of life

Introduction

Emotions are with us at every moment of our lives. When emotions arise, various chemical activities begin in our bodies. Therefore, it is impossible not to feel emotions, and ignoring these feelings can negatively impact one's mental health. Individuals must recognize what they are feeling, to notice the emotions of others, and to communicate these emotions back to them. This process is critically important in an individual's life. Relationships in which emotions are mutually expressed are strong relationships. Such strong relationships lead individuals to feel understood, which is integral to the process known as emotion regulation.

Emotion regulation skills encompass recognizing, understanding, expressing, and managing one's emotions. Research indicates that these skills increase with age and experience, and they also improve in parallel with technological advancements (Gökkaya et al, 2020). These skills play a crucial role in all aspects of life and are particularly critical for undergraduate students who lead highly demanding lives.

Undergraduate students studying at faculties of sports sciences are engaged in intense academic and athletic activities. It is observed that classes, training sessions, exams, tournaments, and other responsibilities lead to intense emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger, and sadness in these students (Özdemir & Budak, 2019). The inability to effectively manage these emotions negatively impacts their academic success, athletic performance, and overall quality of life. It is evident that emotion regulation affects individuals' abilities to solve social problems, their levels of empathy, and their ability to engage in play. Additionally, individuals with emotion regulation disorders may experience difficulties monitoring, evaluating, controlling, and flexibly modifying their emotional responses (Çakır, 2021). Emotion regulation skills are fundamentally important for both mental and physical health. The fact that these skills can be learned and developed is seen as a significant advantage. Emotion regulation allows individuals to sustain their emotional experiences and life, shaping their overall emotional temperament (Göğer & Aslantürk, 2021). In summary, the development and effects of emotion regulation skills play a crucial role in individuals' social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Emotion regulation skills benefit undergraduate students in many ways, just as they do in every phase of individual life. Students who can effectively manage their emotions tend to focus better in class, experience less distraction, and perform better on exams. Athletes who keep their emotions under control can perform better in stressful situations, maintain their focus, and reduce the likelihood of making mistakes.

Individuals who can express their emotions healthily tend to exhibit more open and understanding communication, enabling them to form and maintain stronger and healthier relationships. Additionally, it has been observed that individuals who manage their emotions are happier, more motivated, and more resilient (Karasar, 2012).

Sports play a significant role in developing emotion regulation skills. In this context, sports help reduce stress, boost self-confidence, teach emotional expression and management, and strengthen social connections. In the ordinary course of life, athletes frequently encounter stress during competitions and matches. However, athletes with emotion regulation skills can apply stress management strategies to remain calm and focused, enhancing their performance positively. These athletes can confidently handle stressful or competitive situations, thanks to their acquired skills, which positively impact their performance. Athletes with emotion regulation skills are more successful in maintaining motivation and staying focused on their goals. Consequently, they can more effectively overcome obstacles and sustain their motivation.

Emotion regulation skills provide numerous benefits to undergraduate students, as they do in every phase of individual life. Students who can effectively manage their emotions tend to focus better on their studies, experience less distraction, and perform better in exams. Furthermore, individuals who can express their emotions healthily exhibit more open and understanding communication, enabling them to form and maintain stronger and healthier relationships. It has been observed that individuals who manage their emotions are happier, more motivated, and more resilient.

Before delving into team sports, it is important to highlight the impact of team sports on emotion regulation. In team sports, emotion regulation skills significantly enhance team communication. Athletes who openly express their emotions establish healthier relationships within the team, which promotes better and more efficient teamwork. Emotion regulation skills contribute to athletes' ability to effectively manage both positive and negative emotions (Laborde et al, 2016).

Cognitive Restructuring

In sports, cognitive restructuring refers to the application of cognitive therapy principles to the athletic domain to enhance athletes' performance and mental health. This technique aims to help athletes identify and modify negative or faulty thoughts by examining their mental processes. By restructuring thoughts that negatively impact performance, athletes can achieve a healthier mental state and more effective performance.

This process typically progresses in steps. First, athletes are encouraged to become aware of their negative thoughts and understand how these thoughts affect their performance. Then, athletes are guided to identify and evaluate these thoughts. Next, support is provided to help athletes restructure their negative thoughts into more realistic, balanced, and positive perspectives. Finally, athletes are encouraged to apply these new thought patterns during training and competitions. Cognitive restructuring is used to improve performance, cope with stress, enhance focus, and renew self-confidence. It also contributes to the prevention of psychological issues and the development of coping skills. Cognitive restructuring is considered a fundamental component of cognitive sports psychology, highlighting the strong relationship between psychology and sports performance (Weinberg & Gould, 2014).

Suppression

Athletes often experience various negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and fear during training and competition. These emotions can negatively affect performance, so athletes use various strategies to control them. Suppression is one such strategy, defined as the conscious effort to control negative emotions or thoughts. This can involve ignoring emotions, pushing thoughts out of the mind, or suppressing emotional reactions.

While suppression may seem effective in the short term, it has many drawbacks in the long term. Suppressed emotions can accumulate in the subconscious, leading to more significant issues. Athletes who suppress their emotions may eventually face problems such as concentration deficits, decreased motivation, lack of self-confidence, and depression. Therefore, emotional awareness emerges as a healthier alternative to suppression. Emotional awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions and their sources. Athletes with high emotional awareness learn to accept and manage their emotions instead of suppressing them. Emotion regulation skills involve strategies used to manage emotions healthily after accepting them. These strategies include methods such as deep breathing, relaxation techniques, meditation, and cognitive restructuring.

Athletes who develop emotional awareness and emotion regulation skills can better manage their emotions, cope more effectively with negative feelings like stress and anxiety, and optimize their performance. In conclusion, developing emotional awareness and emotion regulation skills in sports, rather than relying on suppression, can positively impact an athlete's emotional health and performance (Gross, 2016).

The findings from the study, which measured both sub-dimensions with the relevant scale, indicate that the emotion regulation skills of undergraduate students are related to sports and that sports have positive effects on emotional health. The results of the study suggest that sports should be further encouraged to develop undergraduate students' emotion regulation skills and enhance their emotional health. Additionally, more research is needed to explore the effects of sports on emotional health.

In conclusion, emotion regulation skills play a critical role in enhancing athletes' success and maintaining a healthier mental state. Developing these skills can help athletes perform better and achieve success in their sports careers.

Material & methods

Participants

In this study, the correlational survey model was employed. The correlational survey model aims to determine whether there is a concurrent variation between two or more variables and the degree of this variation. The purpose of this research was to examine the emotion regulation skills of student-athletes studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences. To achieve this objective, the correlational survey model, which is a descriptive research method that reveals the relationship between variables, was utilized (Karasar, 2012). The research was conducted using the survey method. The scale used in this study included questions aimed at evaluating students' emotion regulation skills in relation to their sports habits, participation in sports activities, and the impact of sports on their emotional health.

Procedure

The research group consisted of 120 volunteer student-athletes, randomly selected from undergraduate students enrolled in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching, Coaching Education, Sports Management, and Recreation departments at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Table 1

		N	%
Sex	Girl	61	50,84
	Boy	59	49,16
	Total	120	100,0
Undergraduate Department Enrolled	Physical Education	30	25,00
	Coaching Education	30	25,00
	Sports Management	30	25,00
	Recreation	30	25,00
	Total	120	100
ClassYear Enrolled	1. year	26	21,66
	2. year	36	30,00
	3. year	27	22,5
	4. year	31	25,84
	Total	120	100,0
Active Athletic Status	Professional Athlete	17	14,16
	Amator Athlete	60	50,00
	Not Currently Participating in Sports	43	35,84
	Total	120	100,0
Team Sport / Individual Sport	Team Sport	61	50,84
	Individual Sport	59	49,16
	Total	120	100,0
Is there Another Athlete in the Family?	Yes	50	41,67
	No	70	58,33
	Total	120	100,0

A total of 120 students participated in this study, of which 50.8% (61) were female and 49.16% (59) were male. The distribution of students across different departments was as follows: 25% (30) were enrolled in Physical Education Teaching, 25% (30) in Coaching Education, 25% (30) in Sports Management, and 25% (30) in Recreation.

Regarding the year of study, 21.66% (26) of the students were in their 1st year, 30% (36) in their 2nd year, 22.5% (27) in their 3rd year, and 25.84% (31) in their 4th year.

The student's level of engagement in sports revealed that 14.16% (17) were participating professionally, 50% (60) were engaged in amateur sports, and 35.84% (43) were not participating in sports either professionally or amateurishly.

When examining whether the students were team athletes or individual athletes, it was observed that 50.84% (61) were team athletes and 49.16% (59) were individual athletes. Regarding whether there were other athletes in the students' families, it was found that 41.67% (50) had family members who were athletes, while 58.33% (70) did not have any athletes in their families.

Statistical Analiz

The data for this study were collected from a voluntary sample of 120 undergraduate students from the Departments of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, Coaching Education, Sports Management, and Recreation at the Faculty of Sport Sciences, Gazi University. To measure the emotional regulation skills of athlete students, two scales were utilized: the "Emotion Regulation Scale" originally developed by Gross and John (2003) and adapted to Turkish by Eldeklioğlu and Eroğlu (2015), and the "Emotion Regulation Scale in Sports" adapted for athletes by Ekiz and Tingaz (2021). Additionally, the researcher prepared a "Personal Information Form" to gather general information about the student-athletes participating in the study.

SPSS 27.0 software package was utilized for data analysis in this research. Within the study, both within-group and between-group arithmetic means, standard deviations, and measurement values were determined using the T-test and One-Way ANOVA test methodologies. Three distinct testing methods were employed in the study. The primary tests conducted were the One-Way ANOVA Test, T-Test, and Scheffe Test. Specifically, the One-Way ANOVA Test and Scheffe Test were applied together. T-tests were employed for each sub-dimension to identify significant differences between groups such as gender (male-female), team sport versus individual sport, and family sports history. The One-Way ANOVA Test was utilized to test for statistically significant differences among the means of independent groups, while the Scheffe Test was employed to determine which specific groups exhibit statistically significant differences in mean values. The Scheffe Test is based on the F distribution and can be used to perform all possible pairwise comparisons among population means equal to the number of procedures (i). Apart from multiple comparisons, this test is commonly used for estimating confidence intervals of means (Yıldız & Bircan, 1991). Unlike Tukey's method, which calculates a single critical range value for all comparisons, the Scheffe Test provides individual confidence intervals for each comparison.

Result

Table 2 presents information regarding the participants' views on their emotional regulation skills, including arithmetic means and standard deviations according to the sub-dimensions of the scale.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Students' Views on Emotional Regulation Skills According to the Sub-Dimensions of the Scale

Item	N	\bar{X}	S
Cognitive Reappraisal	120	22,19	3,61
Suppression	120	17,41	4,62

$p \leq 0,05$

As seen in Table 2, the sub-dimension with the highest mean score regarding students' views on their emotional regulation skills is "Cognitive Reappraisal" ($\bar{X} = 22.19$, $S = 3.61$). In contrast, the sub-dimension with the lowest mean score is "Suppression" ($\bar{X} = 17.41$, $S = 4.62$).

SPSS 27.0 software package was utilized for data analysis in this research. Within the study, both within-group and between-group arithmetic means, standard deviations, and measurement values were determined using the T-test and One-Way ANOVA test methodologies. Three distinct testing methods were employed in the study. The primary tests conducted were the One-Way ANOVA Test, T-Test, and Scheffe Test. Specifically, the One-Way ANOVA Test and Scheffe Test were applied together. T-tests were employed for each sub-dimension to identify significant differences between groups such as gender (male-female), team sport versus individual sport, and family sports history. The One-Way ANOVA Test was utilized to test for statistically significant differences among the means of independent groups, while the Scheffe Test was employed to determine which specific groups exhibit statistically significant differences in mean values. The Scheffe Test is based on the F distribution and can be used to perform all possible pairwise comparisons among population means equal to the number of procedures (i). Apart from multiple comparisons, this test is commonly used for estimating confidence intervals of means (Yıldız & Bircan, 1991). Unlike Tukey's method, which calculates a single critical range value for all comparisons, the Scheffe Test provides individual confidence intervals for each comparison. Table 3 presents the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of the students' perspectives on emotion regulation skills, categorized according to the sub-dimensions of the scale.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Students' Perspectives on Emotion Regulation Skills According to the Sub-Dimensions of the Scale

Item	N	\bar{X}	S
Cognitive Reappraisal	120	22,19	3,61
Suppression	120	17,41	4,62

$p \leq 0,05$

As seen in Table 3, among the students' perspectives on their levels of emotion regulation skills, the sub-dimension with the highest mean is "Cognitive Reappraisal" ($M = 22.19$), while the sub-dimension with the lowest mean is "Suppression" ($M = 17.41$). The scale is observed to have a normal distribution.

The findings related to the factor analysis are as follows: Given that an item-factor loading should be above .30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), items 1 and 3, which had factor loadings below .30, were removed from the scale. Thus, the 10-item form was evaluated as an 8-item form. It was found that there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The first factor (eigenvalue=2.831, total variance=35.383%) and the second factor (eigenvalue=1.463, total variance=18.282%) together explain 53.665% of the total variance. Additionally, the scree plot also supported a two-factor structure (Figure 1). The first factor was named "Cognitive Reappraisal" and the second factor was named "Suppression," as in the original form of the scale. After the rotation, the factor loadings for items in the Cognitive Reappraisal factor ranged from .720 to .771. For the Suppression factor, the factor loadings ranged from .630 to .770. The item-scale correlation values ranged from .341 to .562. The scale is evaluated using a 7-point Likert type (1=Strongly disagree, 4=Neutral, 7=Strongly agree).

Table 4. Factor Analysis Results After Varimax Rotation

	Item	Item-Scale Correlation	Item Factor
Cognitive Reappraisal	3.I try to think in a way that will help me stay calm when faced with a stressful situation in a competition or during practice.	0.503	0.720
	5. When I want to feel more positive emotions during a competition or practice, I change the way I think about the situation.	0.517	0.771
	6. I control my emotions during a competition or practice by changing the way I think about the situation.	0.552	0.732
	8. Müsabakada ya da antrenmanda daha az olumsuz duygu hissetmek istediğimde durumla ilgili düşünme biçimimi değiştiririm.	0.562	0.732
Suppression	1. I keep the emotions I experience during a competition or practice to myself.	0.484	0.770
	2. When I feel positive emotions during a competition or practice, I make an effort not to express them.	0.477	0.630
	4. I control my emotions during a competition or practice by not expressing them.	0.447	0.643
	7. f I feel negative emotions during a competition or practice, I make sure not to express them.	0.341	.715

In this section of the research, the findings from the analysis of data obtained from participants are presented. According to the scale results, the majority of undergraduate students studying at the faculty of sports sciences regularly engage in sports activities. Most of these students reported that sports have a positive effect on stress management. Additionally, they indicated that sports increase their self-confidence and help them express their emotions more effectively. These findings provide significant insight into the positive impacts of sports on undergraduate students. The t-test results regarding the emotion regulation skill levels of athlete students studying at the Gazi University Faculty of Sports Sciences, according to their gender, are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. T-Test Results Regarding Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression Dimensions of Female and Male Students Studying at Gazi University Faculty of Sports Sciences Who Participated in the Test

Dimensions	Sex	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	P
Cognitive Reappraisal	Girl	61	22,52	3,73	118	-1,026	0,631
	Boy	59	21,84	3,50			
Suppression	Girl	61	17,75	4,77	119	-0,816	0,018*
	Boy	59	17,06	4,48			

$p \leq 0,05$

Considering the analysis results presented in Table 5, it was found that there is no significant relationship in the "Cognitive Reappraisal" dimension of the scale based on the gender of athlete students studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Gazi University. However, a significant relationship was found in the "Suppression" dimension. Accordingly, female students ($M=17.75$) have a higher mean score in the "Suppression" dimension compared to male students ($M=17.06$). This finding indicates that female students have higher emotion regulation skills than male students. The t-test results regarding the emotion regulation skill levels of students studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Gazi University, according to whether they participate in individual sports or team sports, are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. T-Test Results for Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression Sub-Dimensions of Students Engaged in Individual or Team Sports at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University

Dimensions	Sport	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	P
Cognitive Reappraisal	Individual Sport	59	21,83	4,25	118	1,07	0,23
	Team Sport	61	22,54	2,86			
Suppression	Individual Sport	59	17,47	5,21	119	0,142	0,018*
	Team Sport	61	17,35	4,02			

$p \leq 0,05$

Considering the analysis results presented in Table 6, it was found that there is no significant difference in the "Cognitive Reappraisal" dimension of the scale between students engaged in individual sports and those

engaged in team sports at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University. However, a significant difference was found in the "Suppression" dimension. Accordingly, students engaged in individual sports (M=17.47) have a higher mean score in the "Suppression" dimension compared to students engaged in team sports (M=17.35). This finding indicates that students engaged in individual sports have higher emotion regulation skills than those engaged in team sports. The t-test results regarding the emotion regulation skill levels of students studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Gazi University, according to the sports history of their family members, are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. T-Test Results for Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression Sub-Dimensions of Athlete Students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, According to the Sports History of Their Family Members

Dimensions	Sport	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	P
Cognitive Reappraisal	Yes	50	22,50	3,21	118	0,78	0,43
	No	70	21,97	3,88			
Suppression	Yes	50	17,68	4,00	119	0,53	0,01*
	No	70	17,22	5,03			

p≤0,05

Considering the analysis results presented in Table 7, it was found that there is no significant relationship in the "Cognitive Reappraisal" dimension of the scale among athlete students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, based on the sports history of their family members. However, a significant relationship was found in the "Suppression" dimension. Accordingly, students whose family members have a history of sports (M=17.68) have a higher mean score in the "Suppression" dimension compared to students whose family members do not have a history of sports (M=17.22). This finding indicates that students whose family members have a history of sports have higher emotion regulation skills than those whose family members do not have a history of sports.

The one-way ANOVA results regarding the emotion regulation skill levels of athlete students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, based on the undergraduate departments they are enrolled in, are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA Results for Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression Sub-Dimensions of Students Enrolled in Undergraduate Departments at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University

Dimensions	Source	Ss	sd	Ms	F	P	Scheffe
Bilişsel Yeniden Düzenleme	Intergroup	53,593	4	21,198	1,647	0,182	-
	Within groups	1492,998	116	12,871			
	Total	1556,592	120				
Bastırma	Intergroup	35,064	4	12,021	0,556	0,645	-
	Within groups	2531,275	116	21,635			
	Total	2567,339	120				

p≤0,05

When examining Table 8, it can be observed that there is no significant difference in both the Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression dimensions based on the undergraduate departments of students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, according to the one-way ANOVA test results.

The one-way ANOVA results regarding the emotion regulation skill levels of students studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, based on their academic year, are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. One-Way ANOVA Results for Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression Sub-Dimensions of Students Enrolled in Academic Years at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University

Dimensions	Source	Ss	Sd	Ms	F	P	Scheffe
Cognitive Reappraisal	Intergroup	46,870	4	15,623	1,200	0,313	-
	Within groups	1509,721	116	13,015			
	Total	1556,592	120				
Suppression	Intergroup	18,748	4	6,249	0,287	0,835	-
	Within groups	46,870	116	21,783			
	Total	1509,721	120				

p≤0,05

When examining Table 9, it can be observed that there is no significant difference in both the Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression dimensions based on the academic years of students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, according to the one-way ANOVA test results.

The one-way ANOVA results regarding the emotion regulation skill levels of athlete students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, based on their engagement in sports as professionals or amateurs, are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. *One-Way ANOVA Results for Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression Sub-Dimensions of Students Enrolled in the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Gazi University, Based on Their Engagement in Sports as Professionals or Amateurs*

Dimensions	Source	Ss	sd	Ms	F	P	Scheffe
Cognitive Reappraisal	Intergroup	102,899	2	51,450	4,141	0,018*	1-2
	Within groups	1453,692	118	12,425			
	Total	1556,592	120				
Suppression	Intergroup	2,660	2	1,330	0,061	0,941	-
	Within groups	2564,679	118	21,735			
	Total	2567,339	120				

p≤0,05

Upon examining Table 10, significant differentiation was observed in the Cognitive Reappraisal dimension among students enrolled in the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Gazi University based on their engagement in professional or amateur sports [F(2,198)=4.14, p<.05]. However, no significant differentiation was found in the Suppression dimension. To determine which groups contributed to this differentiation, Scheffe test was conducted. As a result of the Scheffe test, it was found that in the Cognitive Reappraisal dimension, students engaged in professional sports exhibited higher levels of emotion regulation skills compared to those engaged in amateur sports.

Discussion

This study indicates that undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Sports Sciences generally exhibit high levels of emotion regulation skills. Regular exercise has been found to enhance these students' abilities to cope with stress and strengthen their emotional well-being. However, it emphasizes the need for more comprehensive studies and the provision of specific support to enhance students' emotion regulation skills more effectively. These findings underscore measures that can be taken to improve emotion regulation skills among undergraduate students further.

When the findings of the study are considered overall, it is observed that the Turkish version of the Athlete Emotion Regulation Scale meets acceptable standards of reliability and validity. According to the reliability results, it is statistically significant that both the sub-dimensions and the overall scale exhibit internal consistency. While the highest internal consistency coefficient pertains to the total scale score, the sub-dimensions also indicate acceptable levels of internal consistency. Furthermore, the reliability values obtained from this study generally align with findings from a series of studies examining the original form's psychometric properties. Additionally, item-total correlations further support the reliability of the Turkish version of the scale. Upon examining the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions, it is evident that the highest values are obtained for the cognitive reappraisal dimension.

A review of the literature on children's emotion regulation skills reveals that emotion regulation is considered a developmental achievement that should be acquired in early childhood (Cole et al, 2021). It is also associated with the acquisition of social competence during the preschool period (Saarni, 2020). This underscores the importance of emotion regulation skills and highlights their necessity for children's development.

As indicated by the emphasis on developmental processes in the relevant literature, emotion regulation skills are described as abilities that increase with age, in parallel with cognitive development. As individuals progress from childhood to adulthood, their life experiences also increase. However, the most notable differences in the developmental flow occur during the transitions between developmental stages. During the preschool period, children expand upon the emotion regulation skills they acquired during infancy by gaining new experiences. The subsequent school period marks a new phase where children acquire concrete operational skills and encounter more complex emotional experiences, a process that continues through adolescence and adulthood.

Although emotion regulation skills are related to age, the lack of significant differences according to age in this research can be explained by individual differences in emotion regulation skills. While emotion regulation is associated with age, it can also vary due to characteristic traits such as temperament (Altan, 2006) external factors like parenting and culture and individual differences (Eisenberg & Zhaou, 2000). Consequently, although the development of emotion regulation skills is predominantly linked to age, the literature presents inconsistent findings. Some studies suggest that emotion regulation changes with age during the preschool period, while others indicate no significant differences based on age (Vatan & Oruçlular, 2018).

Concolution

According to the study findings, emotion regulation skills show a significant difference based on the students' gender. However, contrary to this finding, the literature on emotion regulation indicates that boys and girls exhibit different emotion regulation skills due to varying socializations (Eisenberg et al , 1998). Considering the gender roles present in the culture, there is greater tolerance for emotional expression in girls, whereas boys are relatively more restricted in their emotional expression. A prime example of this is the saying "boys don't cry." Indeed, the literature includes findings that support this notion (Yağmurlu & Altan, 2010).

Several reasons can be considered for the discrepancy between the findings of this study and the literature. Firstly, the increase in educational level, awareness among parents, and preschool education might have reduced the impact of the aforementioned gender distinctions. With the ease of access to technology and information, parents and teachers, who are the closest environment to children, may be socializing them without these distinctions. Another reason could be the high socioeconomic status of the sample group in this study. Finally, it is encouraged that athletes apply these new thought patterns during training and competition processes. This technique is used to improve athletes' performance, manage stress, refresh focus, and enhance self-confidence. It has also been found to contribute to the prevention of psychological issues and the development of coping skills. Cognitive reappraisal is considered a fundamental component of cognitive sports psychology, emphasizing the strong relationship between psychology and sports performance (Hardy et al, 1996).

In conclusion, this study provides an initial examination of the psychometric properties of the Athlete Emotion Regulation Scale. Based on these findings, the Turkish version of the scale is considered reliable and valid. Additionally, emotion regulation skills are likely to be influenced by sociodemographic factors such as age and education. Given that this study was conducted with a sample of university students with a high level of education and a narrow age range, the generalizability of the findings may be limited. It is anticipated that the findings could be enriched by using the Athlete Emotion Regulation Scale with samples that have a wider range of age and education levels and particularly those with different psychological symptoms. Moreover, future studies could benefit from providing evidence for predictive validity to support these findings further.

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