

Being a SportParent¹: Buffering the Effect of Your Talented Child's Poor Performance on His or Her Subjective Well-Being

NICO W. VAN YPEREN

Department of Psychology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

The focus of this longitudinal study was the process that can explain why poor performance (as assessed by the coach) may lead to less subjective well-being. The participants were 59 young, highly skilled male soccer players (mean age: 15.6 years) attending a prestigious soccer school. In line with previous research, the results suggest that performance was a predictor rather than an outcome variable. As expected, the link between poor performance and psychological health symptoms was mediated by the estimated chance of dismissal. However, a relation between the estimated chance of dismissal and psychological health symptoms was found only for individuals with low scores on perceived availability of parental support (either father's support or mother's support), which underlines the crucial role of SportParents in the development of young athletes.

KEY WORDS: Buffering effect, Parental support, Psychological health symptoms, Soccer, Sport performance, Talent, Well-being

Researchers in the behavioral sciences are traditionally interested in psychosocial factors that enhance (or diminish) performance. However, both outside and inside sports, performance-related variables are more likely to be predictor rather than outcome variables (e.g., Feltz, Lirgg & Albrecht, 1992; Mullen & Cooper, 1994; VanYperen, 1995). The focus of this longitudinal study will be the process that explains why poor performance, as assessed by the coach, may lead to psychological health symptoms, such as losing sleep and confidence.

¹The term «SportParent» is part of the SportParent program generated by the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) out of Human Kinetics (HanLon, 1994).

Address for correspondence: Nico W. Van Yperen, Department of Psychology, University of Groningen, Grote Kruisstraat 2/1, 9712 TS Groningen (The Netherlands).

The participants are young male soccer players (mean age: 15.6 years) attending a prestigious soccer school. Because dismissal is a very realistic and severe threat to these youngsters, the player's estimated chance of dismissal is hypothesized to mediate the link between poor performance and subjective well-being. There is only one team in each age group and each year, almost all the school's teams become champions of the major league for their age groups, which is particularly impressive considering that most players are, on average, one year younger than their opponents («to foster competition»). In other words, players have to perform at the highest level, and if they fail, they will be dismissed. Players know that they are, in principle, members of the school for one year. At the end of each season, a selection takes place of players who can stay for at least one more year and those who have to leave. The latter are replaced by new players who are sought out by scouts. In this highly competitive team sport climate, players continuously receive feedback during and after both training sessions and matches. In addition, they are – as in any other team sport – unequivocally confronted with decisions of the coach regarding the starting lineup and substitutes. This information will be interpreted as evidence of meeting the given standards of performance. Therefore, a strong link can be expected between the performance assessment by the coach and the player's estimated chance of dismissal.

Existing knowledge concerning organizational situations in which continued participation is severely threatened, points out that job insecurity is often accompanied by psychological health symptoms, particularly when individuals attach much value to subjectively important features of the job or the job itself (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Lim, 1996). The latter applies certainly to the young players in the present sample. They all share the dream of becoming a famous professional soccer player. Because they attend the prestigious soccer school that has turned out many players that are (or were) successful at the international level, most of them feel that their dream may come true. Consequently, dismissal would be hard to take for the players, which is also indicated by the fact that there is hardly any voluntary turnover.

Whether uncertainty about one's short-term prospects is related to psychological health symptoms depends on the individual's personal skills for coping with the stressful situation, that is, the ability of the individual to manage or alter the situation that is producing the feelings of uncertainty or the ability to regulate the feelings of uncertainty caused by the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The social environment can be helpful in this respect (Compas, 1987; Lim, 1996). Particularly the *perceived availability of social support* may be effective in reducing health symptoms among individuals

under threat (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Pierce, Sarason & Sarason, 1992). In the case of children and adolescents, parents are supposed to give unconditional support to their child when the need arises (Clark & Mills, 1993). Indeed, anecdotal evidence and empirical research have shown that parents are perceived as playing the most significant role in an athlete's development (e.g. Bloom, 1985; Brustad, 1992; Carlson, 1988; Compas, 1987; Frey & Röthlisberger, 1996; Hill, 1993; Loehr, 1991; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Roberts & Bengtson, 1996; Robinson & Carron, 1982; Rosenfeld, Richman & Hardy, 1989; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988; Valentiner, Holahan & Moos, 1994; VanYperen, 1995). As shown in Figure 1, it is expected that perceived availability of parental support «buffers», or moderates, the link between a high estimated chance of dismissal and psychological health symptoms. Specifically, the relation between a high estimated chance of dismissal and psychological health symptoms becomes more pronounced for individuals with low levels of parental support than for individuals with high levels of parental support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). For example, VanYperen (1995) showed that when the performance of a player was judged as below average by the coach, the player's interpersonal stress (i.e., problems with teammates) was less intense as long as the player had the feeling that he could count on support from his parents. No consistent effect of perceived parental support was found among athletes who performed well.

An interesting question that has received little attention by researchers is *which* parent's support is most critical in helping young athletes cope with uncertainty. The few studies that have addressed this issue suggest that in the

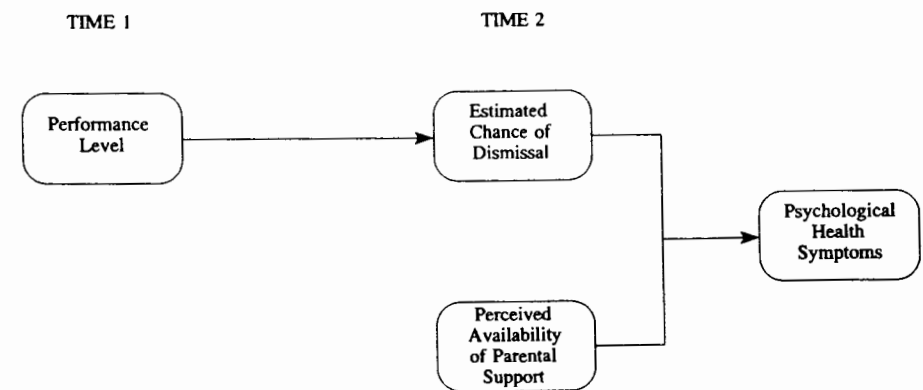


Fig. 1. - The model was tested separately for Perceived father's support and Perceived mother's support as the moderator variable. To remove autocorrelation effects, the prescore of Health symptoms and postscore of Performance level were entered in both path analyses.

case of young *male* athletes, support and encouragement from the father is most important (Hill, 1993; Feltz et al., 1992; McElroy & Kirkendall, 1980; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973; Yang, Telema & Laakso, 1996). This may stem from fathers' more frequent participation and interest in sports, providing a role model for their offspring to observe and emulate (cf. Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973). For example, almost one quarter of young male baseball players in the sample studied by Hill (1993) had fathers who played professional baseball (cf. Overman & Rao, 1981). Robinson and Carron (1982) found that in comparison to sport dropouts, male sport survivors felt that they received more support from their father. Lewko and Ewing (1980) also suggest that the father is the predominant socialization agent for highly involved males. For young female athletes, their fathers' influence was only slightly greater than was mothers' influence. One of the rare studies that examined the impact of their mothers' attitude on young male athletes showed that boys who reported less sport enjoyment perceived more pressure and negative performance interaction from their mothers (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988).

In summary, in line with previous studies it was expected that the performance level at the beginning of the season, as assessed by the coach, would be linked to psychological health symptoms at the end of the season. The estimated chance of dismissal at the end of the season was expected to mediate this link. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the relation between the subjective probability of dismissal and psychological health symptoms would be buffered by perceived availability of support from either the father or the mother, or both (see Figure 1).

Method

PARTICIPANTS

The sample consisted of 59 pupils (all male), divided into four teams, attending a prestigious soccer school (Ajax, Amsterdam).² In 1995, the club's first team became European Champion for the fourth time (previously in 1971, 1972, and 1973), and World Champion for the second time (previously in 1972).

As mentioned earlier, there is only one team in each age group. Consequently, *all* pupils between 14 and 17 years of age participated in this study; two players were 18 years old (M age = 15.6 years). All were in high school.³ The majority (83%) lived with both parents; 17% (ten

subjects) with their mother only (nine mothers were divorced). Some 10% had no siblings, 42% had one sibling, 30% had two, and 18% had three or more. Fifty-six percent of the subjects were white, 30% were black, and 14% were of «mixed» racial origin.

PROCEDURE

In the week before the season started (after three weeks of training: Time 1) and in the last week of the season, seven months later (Time 2), the subjects were asked to fill out the questionnaire during a homework session. The return rate was 100% at both points in time. During the same weeks, the coach of each team was asked to give a performance appraisal of each player on their team. None of the coaches refused to participate.

MEASURES

Performance Level. At both Time 1 and Time 2, the coaches of the four teams were asked to assess the ability of all the players on their own team. A global social comparison measure was used as an index of the performance level of the players. The measure was: «The ability of the player relative to other players of the same age at the same club is: (1) much better – (7) much worse» (cf. VanYperen, 1995). These types of global measures and more process-oriented detailed appraisals are more or less interchangeable: high intercorrelations between both types of measures were found (mean correlation $r = .82$; VanYperen, 1995), as well as similar test-retest correlations (mean correlation $r = .58$; VanYperen, 1995), and similar interrater correlations (mean correlation $r = .74$; VanYperen, 1995). To standardize the mean and the variance of the appraisals of the different coaches, the raw scores were transformed into z-scores.

Estimated Chance of Dismissal. At the end of the season, about two weeks before they were informed about the decision of the technical staff (manager of the school, trainers/coaches and managers of the teams), the subjects were asked to respond to the following item: «I think that the technical staff decided that I have to leave at the end of this season». Response categories ranged from (1) «absolutely not» to (7) «definitely».

Perceived Availability of Father's Support. This scale consisted of three items that were adopted from the perceived parental support scale developed by VanYperen (1995), with parents replaced by father. The items included were: (1) If I have a problem, my father will help me; (2) I get on well with my father; (3) My father supports me in what I do. The items were followed by five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5), strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha was high: .85.

Parental divorce ($M = 3.85$ (divorced) vs. $M = 4.52$ (married); $t(52) = 2.53$, $p < .05$) and the number of siblings covaried with perceived father's support ($r = -.28$, $p < .05$).

Perceived Availability of Mother's Support consisted of the same three items as perceived availability of father's support, with father replaced by mother. Cronbach's alpha was identical: .85. In contrast to father's support, players whose parents were divorced did not perceive less support from their mothers ($t(53) = .88$, n.s.), probably because all subjects with divorced parents lived with their mother. The number of siblings also covaried with perceived mother's support ($r = -.22$, $p < .05$).

² Informed consent was obtained from the club.

³ In The Netherlands, soccer clubs are not affiliated with high schools.

Psychological Health Symptoms were assessed by the 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ; Goldberg & Williams, 1988), an indicator of minor psychiatric morbidity. The Dutch version has been validated by Koeter and Ormel (1991). Subjects were asked to think about how they had been feeling the last six months. Typical examples of the items included in the GHQ are: «Have you lost much sleep over worry?», «Have you felt constantly under strain?», and «Have you felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?» The four responses to these items are: (0) not at all, (1) no more than usual, (2) rather more than usual, and (3) much more than usual. Cronbach's alpha was adequate at both points in time: .86 and .83, respectively.

Results

Table I shows high test-retest correlations of performance level ($r = .73$) and psychological health symptoms ($r = .73$), and a high correlation between perceived availability of father's and mother's support ($r = .87$). The difference in means between perceived father's support and perceived mother's support is significant ($t(56) = 2.09, p < .05$), which can be attributed to the players with divorced parents. These players, who all lived with their mothers, perceived less availability of father's support. No difference was observed among players with married parents ($t(48) = 1.36, n.s.$).

TABLE I
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations ($n = 55$).

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1. Prescore Performance	.73***	-.25*	-.27*	-.48***	-.04	-.04	0	1.00
2. Postscore Performance	-	-.07	-.12	-.58***	.07	.13	0	1.00
3. Prescore Health Symptoms		-	.73***	.24*	-.17	-.13	1.79	.45
4. Postscore Health Symptoms			-	.33**	-.23*	-.17	1.77	.39
5. Estimated Chance of Dismissal				-	-.20	-.21	2.60	1.51
6. Father's Support					-	.87***	4.44	.68
7. Mother's Support						-	4.53	.59

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

With regard to the present model (see Figure 1), important to note are the significant zero-order correlations between: (1) prescore performance and perceived chance of dismissal ($r = -.48$); (2) prescore performance and postscore psychological health symptoms ($r = -.27$); (3) perceived chance of dismissal and postscore psychological health symptoms ($r = .33$). Further-

more, there are primarily nonsignificant links with perceived parental support.

Of great interest is the nonsignificant correlation between prescore psychological health symptoms and postscore performance ($r = -.07$), suggesting that there is no causal link from psychological health symptoms to performance level. On the other hand, the partial correlation between prescore performance and postscore psychological health symptoms, controlling for postscore performance, is identical to the zero-order correlation: $r = -.27, p < .05$ (see Table I). In line with previous research, these results suggest that performance has an impact upon subjective well-being rather than the reverse (see Figure 1).

Except for the correlation between prescore performance level and estimated chance of dismissal ($r = -.48, p < .001$; see Table I), path parameters of the research model (see Figure 1) were calculated by regressing postscore psychological health symptoms on: (1) the prescore of psychological health symptoms and the postscore of performance level, to control the potential bias that might result from autocorrelation effects; (2) Estimated chance of dismissal, parents' support, and the interaction term, separately for perceived father's support (first analysis) and perceived mother's support (second analysis). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a moderator effect is indicated by the significant effect of the interaction term between two independent variables while the main effects of both variables are controlled (see also Cohen & Wills, 1985); (3) the prescore of performance level. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a mediation effect exists when the previously significant correlation between two variables (i.e., prescore performance and postscore psychological health symptoms: $r = -.27, P < .05$; see Table I) is no longer significant when all other paths are controlled.

Table II shows that the only significant predictors of psychological health symptoms at Time 2 were the psychological health symptoms at Time 1 and the interaction between estimated chance of dismissal and perceived availability of parent's support, both father's support and mother's support. As expected, the previously significant relation between prescore performance and postscore psychological health symptoms ($r = -.27$) is no longer significant after controlling for all other paths in the model, which suggests perfect mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Apparently, the best predictor of psychological health symptoms is initial health status. Theoretically more interesting, however, is the strong interaction effect that can explain additional variance of psychological health symptoms after the dependent variable's Time 1 strong influence upon itself ($r = .73$.) as well as the main effect of both variables are controlled for.

TABLE II
Results of Two Regression Analyses with Postscore Psychological Health Symptoms Regressed on Prescore Psychological Health Symptoms, Postscore Performance Level, Estimated Chance of Dismissal, Parents' Support (Father's Support and Mother's Support, respectively), the Interaction Term, and Prescore Performance Level.

	Father's support	Mother's support
	F(6,48) = 13.10***	F(6,48) = 11.97***
	R ² = .62	R ² = .60
	β	β
Prescore Health Symptoms	.62***	.65***
Postscore Performance	.12	.14
Estimated Chance (EC)	.15	.17
Parent's Support (PS)	-.04	.01
EC × PS	-.25**	-.21**
Prescore Performance	-.13	-.12

* $p < .05$.
 ** $p < .01$
 *** $p < .001$

Figure 2 shows the interaction between the Estimated chance of dismissal and perceived father's support on psychological health symptoms. As can be expected on the basis of the results presented in Table II, a similar picture was found for perceived mother's support. In line with the buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), the results show that perceived parental support interacts with the Estimated chance of dismissal so that there is a relation between subjective threat and psychological health symptoms only for subjects with low scores on Perceived availability of parental support.

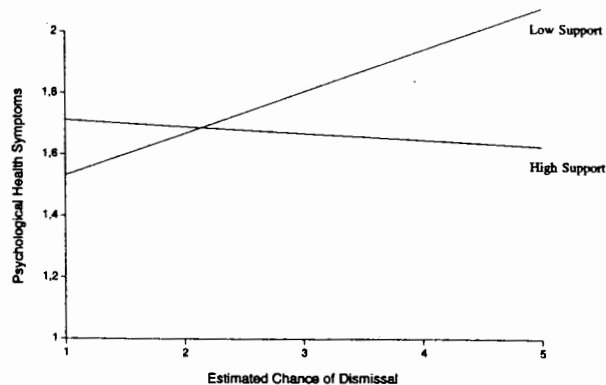


Fig. 2.

Discussion

The major strength of this longitudinal study is that data were collected from both coaches and players. In line with previous studies, the results *do not* suggest that subjective well-being leads to poor performance (as assessed by the coach). Rather, a young athlete's poor performance may lead to psychological health symptoms. The findings further suggest that this link between poor performance and psychological health symptoms is mediated by the estimated chance of dismissal. Specifically, a strong link exists between the «objective» environment (performance assessment by the coach) and the player's estimated chance of dismissal. This makes sense because coaches demonstrate confidence in their players (or do not), make changes in the roster, decide the starting lineup, set priorities for the substitute bench, and so on (VanYperen, 1992). In turn, a high estimated chance of dismissal is accompanied with more psychological health symptoms, but only when there is no perceived availability of parental support.

This latter result was found after first controlling for the strong effect of prior psychological health symptoms and the main effects of both predictor variables. The results unequivocally show that initial health status is the biggest predictor of post-season psychological health status. The high test-retest correlations that are generally found between strain measures can be explained by dispositional affect (i.e., negative affectivity) that correlates significantly with strain measures (e.g., Burke, Brief & George, 1993). That the interaction term can explain additional variance indicates rather strong evidence that the perceived availability of parental support can buffer the potential negative consequences of uncertainty about one's future (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The interaction effect was found for support from either the father or the mother, suggesting that both parents are equally important in this respect. It should be noted that parental divorce covaried with the perception of less available support from the father, probably because all subjects with divorced parents lived with their mothers. Similarly, the number of siblings covaried with less perceived support from both parents. Young athletes from large families have to share their parents' support with their sisters and brothers.

Previous studies suggest that father's support is more important for young male athletes (Hill, 1993; Feltz, Lirgg & Albrecht, 1992; Lewko & Ewing, 1980; McElroy & Kirkendall, 1980; Overman & Rao, 1981; Robinson & Carron, 1982; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973; Yang, Telema & Laakso, 1996), whereas this study shows that perceived support from both parents is equally important. In previous studies, parental support was operationalized as

parental encouragement, parental involvement in sports, or the degree of sport-role socialization by the parents. Fathers probably play a more important role than mothers in that respect. In this study, however, context-free parental support was assessed. Subjects were asked to indicate to what extent their parents helped them if they had a problem, whether they got along well with their parents, and whether their parents supported them in what they did. Unless parents are divorced, subjects apparently do not differentiate between their father and mother in this respect. Both perceived father's and perceived mother's support were successful in protecting the young adolescent against the aversive consequences (psychological health symptoms) of uncertainty about one's short-term prospects (high chance of dismissal). A recent study of Frey and Röthlisberger (1996) among healthy adolescents (mean age 15.7 years) demonstrated that parents at this age are indeed still the most important source for social support. As these youngsters get other, older sources of support (i.e., partner and friends) will become more important.

It is essential for researchers to discern how parental support exerts its effect or what causes youngsters to perceive support from their parents as available. This undoubtedly has to do with the way parents behave toward their children. A recent longitudinal study among college students by Valentin et al. (1994) sheds some light on this issue. Their findings suggest that parental support increases the likelihood that their children will cope effectively with stressors that confront them. Children have to learn that they must rely on active problem solving when there is a potential for actual improvement. When the situation is perceived as inalterable, it is more appropriate to try to control or to manage the emotional response (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Thoits, 1986). From a practical point of view, there are programs to educate parents about their children's participation in sports and their responsibilities as SportParents, such as «encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure», and «understand what your child wants from sports and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals» (Hanlon, 1994, p. 29).

One remarkable finding was the high test-retest correlations of the coaches' appraisals of the players' performance level (see Table I). Furthermore, there was a rather strong link between prescore performance and estimated chance of dismissal at the end of the season. These results suggest that there is not much change over the course of the season. Top-ranked players at the beginning of the season occupied similar positions at the end of the season, and players seemed to be aware of that. The question is, however, whether one's performance level in comparison to teammates is really stable, or whether self-fulfilling prophecies are operating here (VanYperen, 1995).

In conclusion, it has to be emphasized that no magical methods for ensuring the correctness of causal inferences from non-experimental studies are available (Rogosa, 1980; Stone, 1986). However, on the basis of the present data and data-analyses, additional support is obtained that poor performance leads to less subjective well-being rather than the reverse. The main question of this study was how this link can be explained. In this particular sample of young, highly skilled male soccer players involved in a highly competitive team sport climate, the results clearly show that poor performance is related to a higher estimated chance of dismissal. The youngsters are able to cope with this threat to their dream of becoming a professional soccer player as long as they feel that falling back on their parents is possible, which underlines the crucial role of SportParents in the development of young athletes.

REFERENCES

- Baron, R.M. & Kenny, D.A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1173-1182.
- Bloom, B.S. (1985). *Developing talent in young people*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Brustad, R.J. (1992). Integrating socialization influences into the study of children's motivation in sport. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 14, 59-77.
- Burke, M.J., Brief, A.P., & George, J.M. (1993). The role of negative affectivity in understanding relations between self-reports of stressors and strains: A comment on the applied psychology literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 3, 402-412.
- Carlson, R. (1988). The socialization of elite tennis players in Sweden: An analysis of the players' background and development. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 241-256.
- Clark, M.S. & Mills, J. (1993). The difference between communal and exchange relationships: What it is and is not. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19, 684-691.
- Cohen, S. & Wills, T.A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98, 310-357.
- Compas, B.E. (1987). Coping with stress and childhood and adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 101, 393-403.
- Feltz, D.L., Lirgg, C.D. & Albrecht, R.R. (1992). Psychological implications of competitive running in elite young distance runners: A longitudinal analysis. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6, 128-138.
- Frey, C. U. & Röthlisberger, C. (1996). Social support in healthy adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 25, 17-31.
- Goldberg, D.P. & Williams, P. (1988). *A user's guide to the General Health Questionnaire*. Windsor: Nfer Nelson.
- Greenhalgh, L. & Rosenblatt, Z. (1984). Job insecurity: Toward conceptual clarity. *Academy of Management Review*, 9, 438-448.
- Hanlon, T. (1994). *SportParent: American Sport Education Program*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hill, G.M. (1993). Youth sport participation of professional baseball players. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 10, 107-114.
- Koeter, M.W.J. & Ormel, J. (1991). *General Health Questionnaire: Nederlandse bewerking* (General Health Questionnaire: Dutch translation). Lisse: Swets and Zeitinger.

- Lazarus, R.S. & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Lewko, J.H. & Ewing, M.E. (1980). Sex differences and parental influence in sport involvement of children. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 2, 62-68.
- Lim, V. K.G. (1996). Job insecurity and its outcomes: Moderating effects of work-based and nonwork-based social support. *Human Relations*, 49, 171-194.
- Loehr, J.E. (1991). *The mental game*. New York: Penguin Books.
- McElroy, M.A. & Kirkendall, D.R. (1980). Significant others and professionalized sport attitudes. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 51, 645-653.
- Mullen, B. & Copper, C. (1994). The relation between group cohesiveness and performance: An integration. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115, 210-227.
- Ommundsen, Y & Vaglum, P. (1991). Soccer competition anxiety and enjoyment in young boys players: The influence of perceived competence and significant others emotional involvement. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 22, 35-49.
- Overman, S.J. & Rao, V.V.P. (1981). Motivation for and extent of participation in organized sports by high school seniors. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 52, 228-237.
- Pierce, G.R., Sarason, B.R. & Sarason, I.G. (1992). General and specific support expectations and stress as predictors of perceived supportiveness: An experimental study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 297-307.
- Roberts, R.E.L. & Bengtson, V.L. (1996). Affective ties to parents in early adulthood and self-esteem across 20 years. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 59, 96-106.
- Robinson, T.T. & Carron, A.V. (1982). Personal and situational factors associated with dropping out versus maintaining participation in competitive sport. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 4, 364-378.
- Rogosa, D. (1980). A critique of cross-lagged correlation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88, 245-258.
- Rosenfeld, L.B., Richman, J.M. & Hardy, C.J. (1989). Examining social support networks among athletes: Description and relationship to stress. *The Sport Psychologist*, 3, 23-33.
- Scanlan, T.K. & Lewthwaite, R. (1988). From stress to enjoyment: Parental and coach influences on youth participants. In: E.W. Brown & C.F. Brown (Eds.), *Competitive sports for children and youth: An overview of research and issues* (pp. 41-48). Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Books.
- Snyder, E.E. & Spreitzer, E.A. (1973). Family influence and involvement in sports. *Research Quarterly*, 44, 249-255.
- Stone, E. F. (1986). Research methods in industrial and organizational psychology: Selected issues and trends. In: C.L. Cooper & I. Robertson (Eds.), *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (pp.305-334). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Thoits, P.A. (1986). Social support as coping assistance. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 54, 416-423.
- Valentiner, D.P., Holahan, C.J. & Moos, R.H. (1994). Social support, appraisals of event controllability, and coping: An integrative model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 1094-1102.
- Van Yperen, N.W. (1992). Self-enhancement among major league soccer players: The role of importance and ambiguity on social comparison behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22, 1186-1198.
- Van Yperen, N.W. (1995). Interpersonal stress, performance level, and parental support: A longitudinal study among highly skilled young soccer players. *The Sport Psychologist*, 9, 225-241.
- Yang, X., Telema, R. & Laakso, L. (1996). Parents' physical activity, socioeconomic status and education as predictors of physical activity and sport among children and youths - A 12-year follow-up study. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 31, 273-293.