



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examination of Self-Esteem in Swimming AthletesEsin Çağla ÇAĞLAR¹, İrem TÜRKMEN², Furkan ÇAMIÇI³, Turgut YILDIRIM⁴, Ali İhsan ÇEBİ⁵^{1,2,3,4} Faculty of Sport Sciences, Hitit University Çorum, Türkiye⁵ T.C. Ministry of National Education, Samsun, Türkiye

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 27, 2024 Accepted: Aug 16, 2024	Sport has diverse and positive effects on self-esteem. Both team sports and individual sports help individuals to feel more valuable, competent and capable, in addition to improving their physical health. Based on this information, the aim of this study was to investigate the self-esteem of swimming athletes. A total of 86 female and 114 male athletes over the age of 18 who had been interested in swimming for at least 5 years participated in the study. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used as the data collection instrument, in addition to demographic information on age, gender, income status, psychological and psychiatric status, general health satisfaction, and the idea of participating in recreational activities. The t-test for independent groups and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for data analysis. The Scheffe test was used for multiple comparisons. According to the results, there is a statistically significant difference between the income groups with regard to the total score for self-esteem. No significant difference was found in multiple comparisons. The mean total self-esteem score of people with psychological problems, psychiatric problems in the family and people in need of psychological support is statistically significant. In summary, psychological problems and the presence of psychiatric problems in the family are important factors that have a negative impact on people's self-esteem. The fact that people who need psychological support have low self-esteem suggests that the difficulties they experience damage their self-confidence. The impact of seeking support can be complex and depends on individual factors. It has been shown that people with higher incomes and those who feel in good general health tend to have higher self-esteem. Participation in leisure activities and gender had no influence on the level of self-esteem.
Keywords	
Self-Esteem Psychological Status Psychiatric Status Swimming	
*Corresponding Author: esincaglacaglar@hitit.edu.tr	

INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is the way a person perceives themselves, who and what they are, and their thoughts about their identity (Yavuzer, 2002). Self-esteem, which expresses the value a person ascribes to their self, is a marker that enables individuals to be psychologically and socially effective and successful (Yüzgeç, 2014). Self-esteem is the degree to which individuals like the situation they reveal according to their self-assessment with the help of various factors. If the individual can evaluate himself correctly, examine the consistency of his behavior and as a result, he can develop a strong self-confidence, it can be said that he has a correct self-esteem (Esen, 2012). Self-esteem is a phenomenon that is briefly defined as how much a person cares about themselves and how they see themselves. It is a phenomenon in which the person objectively answers and evaluates the question "to what extent I love, accept and respect myself as an individual" (Taşgit, 2012). The level of self-esteem affects a person's success and abilities in school and work, effectiveness in coping with stress,

development of friendships and friendship relationships, and level of vitality and enjoyment. Normal healthy people who have a high and consistent level of self-esteem are identified with vitality and energy. These people have a self-confident personality structure (Esen, 2012).

Self-esteem is a set of general positive or negative attitudes that a person has about themselves and plays an important role in their perception of their own self-worth. Many studies show that self-esteem has a major impact on a person's life. In this context, the influence of sport on an individual's self-esteem has become an important research topic in recent years. In addition to improving an individual's physical health, sport also plays a supporting role in mental health. Particularly in adolescence, there is clear evidence that participation in sporting activities increases an individual's self-esteem (Fox, 2003). The positive effect of sport on self-esteem applies to both individual and team sports, and factors such as social acceptance, physical fitness and a sense of achievement contribute to this relationship.

Sport creates opportunities for individuals to adapt to and participate in society; to trust themselves, recognize themselves and improve their self-esteem (Doğan, 2005; Ceylan & Küçük, 2022). Many studies show that sporting activities have a positive impact on mental health and thus on self-esteem. In addition to the positive effects of playing sports on the psychological development of athletes, the type of sport and some of its psychological characteristics (motivation, individual struggle, team spirit, concentration and willingness to perform, etc.) can also have different effects on the psychological and mental state of the athlete (Salar *et al.* 2012; Atan *et al.*, 2018; Köroğlu, 2023).

It is known that practicing sports makes people feel physically more attractive and stronger, which leads to an increase in self-esteem. Regular physical activity makes people feel more confident in their bodies, which contributes to an increase in overall self-esteem. In addition, exercise provides individuals with the opportunity to feel disciplined and determined, which boosts their self-confidence (Bailey, 2006; Atasoy, 2021). Particularly in adolescence, physical fitness, which is an important component of body image, is positively influenced by sporting activities, which boosts self-esteem.

Team sports allow individuals to develop their sense of social acceptance and belonging. Participation in a team allows the individual to see themselves as part of a group, which helps to strengthen social support networks (Weiss, 2004; Ilkim *et al.*, 2021). Social support is an important factor that boosts an individual's self-esteem, and team sports play a crucial role in providing this support. In addition, success in team sports helps to increase self-esteem by helping individuals to feel competent and valuable.

Individual sports, on the other hand, allow individuals to discover their own abilities and capacities. Such sports allow individuals to push themselves to their limits and achieve success through their own efforts. This strengthens the individual's self-confidence and contributes to an increase in self-esteem (Sonstroem & Morgan, 1989; Aydoğan, 2023). While individual sports strengthen the individual's self-perception, they also contribute to the formation of a more sustainable self-esteem by emphasizing inner satisfaction and personal development rather than external achievements.

Sport has a wide range of positive effects on self-esteem. Both team and individual sports help individuals to feel more valuable, competent and capable than just improving their physical health. Therefore, it can be said that sport is an important tool that supports an individual's overall psychological well-being. For young people in particular, the evidence that regular exercise plays a crucial role in the development of self-esteem suggests that sport should be encouraged as part of education and daily life (Fox & Magnus, 2014; Ouyang *et al.*, 2020; Sagat *et al.*, 2021). Based on this information, the aim of this study was to investigate the self-esteem of swimming athletes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Participants

The study involved 86 female and 114 male athletes over the age of 18 who had been interested in swimming for at least 5 years. The average age of the participants was 21.17 ± 1.14 years. The participants were randomly selected. The alpha level (α) for the study was analyzed for significance: Typical significance is 0.05 to 0.85. Based on this result and the literature review, it was decided to include 190 participants (Lawless & Grobbelaar, 2015).

Data Collection Tool

In the study, demographic information on age, gender, income status, psychological and psychiatric status, general health satisfaction and intention to participate in leisure activities was collected from the participants.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Short Form, 1965), which is frequently used in the literature to measure participants' self-esteem, was adapted to Turkish culture by Çuhadaroğlu (1986) and Tuğrul (1994). The 10-item scale with five positive and five negative statements is of the 4-point Likert type. Since self-esteem is accepted as a unidirectional concept (Corwyn, 2000), the total score was used. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient reported in the adjustment study (Çuhadaroğlu, 1986) and in this study was 0.818. After reversing the items, a high value means high self-esteem.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with the SPSS 24 package program and classified as normally distributed. Independent groups t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine differences in total self-esteem scores by gender, income status, psychological and psychiatric status, overall satisfaction with health, and idea of participating in leisure activities. The Scheffe test was used for multiple comparisons.

FINDINGS

The overall self-esteem score of the participants was 31.10 ± 5.68 . Since the highest score that can be achieved on the scale is 40, we can say that the overall self-esteem score of the participants is high at 31.10 ± 5.68 .

Table 1. Self-Esteem Total Score Comparison by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	S.d.	t	p
Self-Esteem Total Score	Woman	86	31.82	5.66	1.562	0.120
	Man	114	30.56	5.66		

The mean total self-esteem score for women was 31.83 ± 5.66 , while the mean score for men was 30.56 ± 5.67 . The mean overall self-esteem score for all participants was 31.13 ± 5.67 . According to the results of the independent samples t-test ($t = 1.562$, $p = 0.120$), there was no statistically significant difference between the genders in terms of the overall self-esteem score.

Table 2. Comparison of Self-Esteem Total Score by Income Status

Income Status	N	Mean	S.d.	F	p
0-4000TL	21	29.23	6.26	2.815	0.027
4001-8000TL	34	30.08	5.61		
8001-12000 TL	33	29.72	5.24		
12001TL-16000TL	38	33.13	4.92		

16000 TL and above	74	31.67	5.83		
Total	200	31.10	5.68		

While the average total self-esteem score of people with an income of 0-4000 TL was 29.24 ± 6.26 , the average score of people with an income of 4001-8000 TL was 30.09 ± 5.61 . The average score of people with an income of 12001-16000 TL was 33.13 ± 4.92 . According to the results of ANOVA analysis ($F = 2.815, p = 0.027$), there is a statistically significant difference between the income groups in terms of total self-esteem score. No significant difference was found in the multiple comparison.

Table 3. Self-Esteem Total Score Comparison According to Psychological and Psychiatric Status

		N	Mean	S.d.	t	p
Do you have psychological problems?	Yes	46	28.52	6.06	-3.617	0.001
	No	154	31.87	5.35		
Are there psychiatric problems in the family?	Yes	26	26.46	4.23	-5.731	0.001
	No	174	31.79	5.55		
Have you received psychological support in the past or currently?	Yes	33	30.66	5.67	-0.550	0.583
	No	166	31.25	5.65		
Do you think you need psychological support?	Yes	66	29.90	5.80	-2.165	0.032
	No	133	31.74	5.54		

The mean total self-esteem score of individuals with mental health problems was 28.52 ± 6.06 , while the mean score of individuals without mental health problems was 31.88 ± 5.35 . This difference was statistically significant. This difference was statistically significant, as shown by the t-test for independent samples ($t = -3.617, p = 0.0001$). The mean score for those with psychiatric problems in the family was 26.46 ± 4.24 and for those without psychiatric problems 31.80 ± 5.56 . This difference was also statistically significant ($t = -5.731, p = 0.000$). The mean score of those who received psychological support in the past or currently was 30.67 ± 5.68 , while the mean score of those who did not receive psychological support was 31.26 ± 5.65 . This difference was not statistically significant. This difference is not statistically significant ($t = -0.550, p = 0.583$). The mean score for those who needed psychological support was 29.91 ± 5.81 and 31.74 ± 5.54 for those who did not. This difference ($t = -2.165, p = 0.032$) is statistically significant.

Table 4. Self-Esteem Total Score Comparison According to Satisfaction with General Health Level

		N	Mean	S.d.	F	p	Post-Hoc (Scheffe)
Are you satisfied with your general level of health?	Not Satisfied at All (A)	25	26.80	6.19	7.847	0.001	A<C A<D B<D
	Not Satisfied (B)	31	29.06	5.42			
	Satisfied (C)	102	31.82	5.03			
	Very Satisfied (D)	42	33.42	5.40			
	Total	200	31.10	5.68			

While the average total self-esteem score of those who were not satisfied with their general health was 26.80 ± 6.19 , the average score of those who were quite satisfied was 33.43 ± 5.40 . According to the results of ANOVA analysis ($F = 7.847, p = 0.000$), there are statistically significant differences between the satisfaction groups in terms of total self-esteem score. According to the post hoc test (Scheffe), a significant difference was found between those who were not satisfied at all (A) and those who were satisfied (C) and very satisfied (D). There is also a significant difference between those who are not satisfied (B) and those who are very satisfied (D).

Table 5. Comparison of Self-Esteem Total Score According to Participation in Recreation Activities

		N	Mean	S.d.	F	p
What are your thoughts on participating in recreational activities?	Positive	122	31.62	5.83	2.235	0.110
	Negative	31	29.22	5.25		
	No Opinion	47	31.00	5.40		
	Total	200	31.10	5.68		

The average total self-esteem score of individuals with positive thoughts about participating in leisure activities was 31.62 ± 5.83 , while the average score of individuals with negative thoughts was 29.23 ± 5.25 . According to the results of the ANOVA analysis ($F = 2.235$, $p = 0.110$), there was no statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of the total self-esteem score.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The difference between the mean self-esteem scores of men and women was not statistically significant ($p=0.120$) (Table 1). These results suggest that sports based on individual performance, such as swimming, may be an area where gender differences are smaller. Both women and men go through similar training processes and their performance is directly related to their personal effort. The fact that there is no difference in self-esteem between the sexes could therefore be due to this egalitarian nature of the sport. When we look at the literature, there are studies with similar results to our study (Çevik ve Atıcı, 2009; Eriş ve İkiz, 2013; Ünver ve ark. 2014; Yüzgeç, 2014; Atan et al, 2018; Atasoy, 2021; Aydoğan, 2023). On the other hand, there are studies that do not agree with the results of our study (Ceviz 2009; Esen 2012; Köroğlu, 2023).

According to the results of our study ($F = 2.815$, $p = 0.027$), there was a statistically significant difference between income groups in terms of overall self-esteem. This indicates that there are differences in self-esteem depending on the income level of the individuals. In particular, the mean score of self-esteem of people with an income level of 0-4000 TL was 29.24 ± 6.26 , while the score of people with an income level of 12001-16000 TL was 33.13 ± 4.92 (Table 2). This indicates that people with higher income levels tend to have higher self-esteem. A review of the literature shows that income level affects self-esteem (Keskin ve Sezgin, 2009; Veselskal et al, 2009; Abbasoğlu ve Öncü, 2013; Aydoğan, 2023). It is therefore assumed that a high income is an important factor that positively influences a person's self-esteem.

The mean self-esteem score of individuals with mental health problems (28.52 ± 6.06) was lower than that of individuals without problems (31.88 ± 5.35) and statistically significant $t = -3.617$, $p = 0.0001$) (Table 3). This shows that mental health problems have a negative impact on people's self-esteem. The fact that psychological problems lead people to perceive their own abilities and values negatively could be one of the main reasons for low self-esteem.

The mean self-esteem score of people with psychiatric problems in the family (26.46 ± 4.24) was significantly lower than that of people without psychiatric problems (31.80 ± 5.56). This difference ($t = -5.731$, $p = 0.000$) is statistically significant (Table 3). This shows that people with psychiatric problems in the family have lower self-esteem than people without such problems. Factors such as psychiatric problems, stress, pressure and insecurity in the family can make the individual feel inadequate or powerless, which has a negative impact on self-esteem.

The mean score of those who had received psychological support in the past or currently (30.67 ± 5.68) was slightly lower than those who had not (31.26 ± 5.65), but this difference was not statistically significant ($t = -0.550$, $p = 0.583$) (Table 3). This could indicate that the use of psychological support does not have a significant influence on self-esteem. The low self-esteem of people who need support could indicate that these people tend to have negative feelings about themselves or that they feel powerless due to their current situation.

The average self-esteem of people who needed psychological support (29.91 ± 5.81) was lower than that of people who did not need support (31.74 ± 5.54). This difference ($t = -2.165$, $p = 0.032$) is statistically significant. This indicates that people who feel in need of support have lower self-esteem than people who do not feel in need of support (Table 3). People who feel they need support may think that they cannot cope with these problems on their own, which can have a negative impact on their self-esteem. According to the study data, the mean self-esteem score of people who were not satisfied with their general health (A) was 26.80 ± 6.19 , while the mean score of people who were quite satisfied (D) was 33.42 ± 5.40 . According to the results of the ANOVA analysis, this difference is statistically significant ($F = 7.847$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that self-esteem also increases with increasing satisfaction with general health. According to the post-hoc test (Scheffe), significant differences were found between people who were not at all satisfied with their general state of health (A) and those who were satisfied (C) and very satisfied (D). There is also a significant difference between those who are not satisfied (B) and those who are very satisfied (D). This indicates that self-esteem increases significantly as overall satisfaction with health increases (Table 4). These results suggest that overall health satisfaction has a significant impact on an individual's self-esteem. People who are satisfied with their general state of health tend to have higher self-esteem. Health plays a crucial role in making the individual feel valuable and competent. Therefore, improving general health should be considered an important factor in increasing an individual's psychological well-being and self-esteem (Fernández-Bustos et al., 2019; Anasari, 2024; Varaona et al., 2024).

The mean self-esteem score of those with positive thoughts about participating in leisure activities was 31.62 ± 5.83 , while the mean score of those with negative thoughts was 29.23 ± 5.25 . However, this difference was not statistically significant according to the results of the ANOVA analysis ($F = 2.235$, $p = 0.110$). This shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the idea of participating in leisure activities and self-esteem (Table 5).

To summarise, psychological problems and the presence of psychiatric problems in the family are important factors that have a negative impact on a person's self-esteem. The fact that people who feel they need psychological support have low self-esteem suggests that the difficulties they experience have damaged their self-confidence. The impact of seeking support can be complex and depends on individual factors. It appears that people with higher incomes and in good general health tend to have higher self-esteem. Participation in leisure activities and gender had no effect on levels of self-esteem.

REFERENCES

- Anasari, N. (2024). The impact of physical self-concept on body image dissatisfaction in female students. *Indian Social Science Journal*, 13(08), 1-10.
- Atan, T., Ünver, Ş., & Allahverdi, E. (2018). Üniversitede öğrenim gören sporcuların ve sedanterlerin benlik saygısı düzeylerinin karşılaştırılması. *CBÜ Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 13(1), 125-135.
- Atasoy, T. (2021). Investigation of attitudes of mentally handicapped individuals towards sports activities according to professional self-esteem levels of special education teachers (Istanbul Sample). *Journal of ROL Sport Sciences*, 2(2), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.29228/roljournal.50671>
- Aydoğan, H. (2023). Investigating life satisfaction levels and self-esteem of sports high school students. *Journal of ROL Sport Sciences*, 4(4), 1488-1502. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8321990>
- Bailey, R. (2006). Physical education and sport in schools: A review of benefits and outcomes. *Journal of school health*, 76(8), 397-401.
- Ceylan, L., & Küçük, H. (2022). Mental toughness comparison of sports science students. *African Educational Research Journal*, 10(4), 394-399.
- Corwyn, R. F. (2000). The factor structure of global self-esteem among adolescents and adults. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 34, 357-379.
- Çevik, G. B., & Atıcı, M. (2009). Lise 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin benlik saygılarının bazı değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 6(1), 399-352.

- Çuhadaroğlu, Ö. (1986). Adölesanlarda benlik saygısı. Yayınlanmamış doktora tezi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Psikiyatri Anabilim Dalı, Ankara.
- Doğan, O. (2005). *Spor Psikolojisi*. Adana: Nobel Kitapevi.
- Eriş, Y., & İkiz, F. E. (2013). Ergenlerin benlik saygısı ve sosyal kaygı düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki ve kişisel değişkenlerin etkileri. *Turkish Studies*, 8(6), 179-193.
- Esen, C. A. (2012). Spor yapan ve yapmayan üniversite öğrencilerinin benlik saygısı ve atılganlık düzeylerinin incelenmesi (Muğla Üniversitesi Örneği). Yüksek lisans tezi, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Muğla.
- Fernández-Bustos, J. G., Infantes-Paniagua, Á., Cuevas, R., & Contreras, O. R. (2019). Effect of physical activity on self-concept: Theoretical model on the mediation of body image and physical self-concept in adolescents. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 1537.
- Fox, K. R. (2003). The effects of exercise on self-perceptions and self-esteem. In *Physical activity and psychological well-being* (pp. 100-119). Routledge.
- Fox, K. R., & Magnus, L. (2014). Self-esteem and self-perceptions in sport and exercise. In *Routledge companion to sport and exercise psychology* (pp. 34-48). Routledge.
- İlkim, M., Özoğlu, F., Şimşek, E., & Keskin, M. T. (2021). Evaluation of happiness and self-esteem levels of individuals with down syndrome who participated in a regular physical activity by parents (The example of Malatya province). *Journal of ROL Sport Sciences*, 2(2), 71-77. <https://doi.org/10.29228/roljournal.49921>
- Koroglu, M. (2023). Investigation of self-efficacy and self-esteem levels of students studying in physical education and sports high school in choosing a specialty branch. *Journal of ROL Sport Sciences*, 760-782. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10034916>
- Ouyang, Y., Wang, K., Zhang, T., Peng, L., Song, G., & Luo, J. (2020). The influence of sports participation on body image, self-efficacy, and self-esteem in college students. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 3039.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Şagát, P., Bartik, P., Lazić, A., Tohänean, D. I., Koronas, V., Turcu, I., ... & Curişianu, I. M. (2021). Self-esteem, individual versus team sports. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(24), 12915.
- Salar, B., Hekim, M., & Tokgöz, M. (2012). 15-18 yaş grubu takım ve ferdi spor yapan bireylerin duygusal durumlarının karşılaştırılması. *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 4(6), 123-135.
- Sonstroem, R. J., & Morgan, W. P. (1989). Exercise and self-esteem: rationale and model. *Medicine and science in sports and exercise*, 21(3), 329-337.
- Taşgıt, M. S. (2012). Üniversite öğrencilerinin benlik saygısı ve karar verme düzeylerinin incelenmesi. Yüksek lisans tezi, Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Karaman.
- Ünver, Ş., Çavuşoğlu, G., & İslamoğlu, İ. (2014). Spor bilimleri ve ilahiyat fakültesi öğrencilerinin benlik saygısı ve psikosomatik belirtilerinin karşılaştırılması. *International Journal of Science Culture and Sport, Special Issue 2*, 261-270.
- Varaona, A., Alvarez-Mon, M. A., Serrano-Garcia, I., Díaz-Marsá, M., Looi, J. C., & Molina-Ruiz, R. M. (2024). Exploring the relationship between Instagram use and self-criticism, self-compassion, and body dissatisfaction in the Spanish population: observational study. *Journal of medical internet research*, 26, e51957.
- Weiss, M. R., & Raedeke, T. D. (2004). Developmental sport and exercise psychology: Research status on youth and directions toward a lifespan perspective. *Fitness Information Technology*.
- Yavuzer, H. (2002). *Eğitim ve gelişim özellikleriyle okul çağı çocuğu*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Yüzgeç, S. (2014). Benlik saygısı ile mistik tecrübe arasındaki ilişki üzerine bir araştırma. Yüksek lisans tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.