

PREDICTING SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT BASED ON COPING STYLES WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS AMONG BASKETBALL PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to predict social adjustment based on coping strategies with psychological stress among basketball players. The researcher adopted the descriptive approach using the survey method on a sample of (50) players from Iraqi Premier League basketball clubs during the 2025–2026 season. Two scales were used: the Social Adjustment Scale and the Coping Strategies with Psychological Stress Scale.

The results showed that players possess a good level of social adjustment and effective coping strategies. A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.68$) was found between social adjustment and coping strategies, indicating that better coping skills are associated with higher levels of social adjustment. Regression analysis revealed that coping strategies explain 46% of the variance in social adjustment, confirming their significant role in predicting it.

The study concluded that coping strategies are a key psychological factor influencing social adjustment among basketball players. Therefore, enhancing these strategies contributes to improving team cohesion and overall performance.

KEYWORDS: Social Adjustment, Coping Strategies, Psychological Stress

DEFINITION OF THE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Basketball is a team sport that demands a high degree of social interaction and cooperation among players. Success in basketball depends on harmony and effective communication among team members. Therefore, the players' social adaptation is a fundamental factor in achieving team cohesion, which positively impacts the team's tactical and technical performance.

On the other hand, athletes are exposed to numerous psychological pressures stemming from the demands of training and competition, the expectations of coaches and the public, and the desire to achieve athletic success. These pressures can directly affect the players' psychological and social well-being, necessitating that they possess effective coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms are defined as the behavioral and cognitive strategies that individuals use to deal with stressful situations and minimize their negative effects.

Researchers in sports psychology indicate that an athlete's ability to choose appropriate coping mechanisms contributes to achieving psychological and social balance, helping them adapt to the sports environment and its various demands. Players who possess effective stress-coping skills are better able to control their emotions and interact positively with others, thus enhancing their social adjustment within the team. Therefore, the importance of studying the relationship between social adaptation and coping mechanisms for psychological stress among players has emerged, and attempting to predict the degree of social adaptation through these mechanisms, due to its importance in understanding the psychological and social aspects that contribute to the development of the athletic performance of basketball players.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The nature of modern sports competitions and the accompanying psychological pressures can significantly impact the mental and social well-being of players, particularly in team sports like basketball, which relies heavily on cooperation and social interaction among team members. Some players may struggle to adapt to the team's social environment or cope with the pressures of training and competition, which can negatively affect their athletic performance and team cohesion.

Moreover, differences among players in coping strategies may lead to variations in their ability to achieve social adjustment. Some players may use positive and effective strategies that enable them to control stress and adapt to the sports environment, while others may resort to less effective strategies that increase tension and anxiety, weakening their ability to engage in positive social interaction within the team.

Through researchers' observation of the nature of sports work in basketball, it was found that some players suffer from difficulties in social adjustment within the team, which may be related to their ability to cope with psychological pressures during training and competition. Therefore, there is a need to study this issue scientifically to identify the nature of the relationship between coping strategies and social adjustment among basketball players, as well as to attempt to predict the level of social adjustment based on these strategies.

Accordingly, the research problem can be defined by the following question:

Is it possible to predict social adjustment based on coping strategies with psychological stress among basketball players?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to:

1. Identify the level of social adjustment among basketball players.
2. Identify coping strategies with psychological stress among basketball players.
3. Identify the correlational relationship between social adjustment and coping strategies among basketball players.
4. Predict the level of social adjustment based on coping strategies with psychological stress among basketball players.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The researcher hypothesizes that:

1. There is a statistically significant correlation between social adjustment and coping strategies with psychological stress among basketball players.
2. Coping strategies with psychological stress significantly contribute to predicting social adjustment among basketball players.

RESEARCH DOMAINS

HUMAN DOMAIN

Basketball players from sports clubs participating in the research for the sports season (2025–2026).

TIME DOMAIN

From 20/1/2026 to 1/4/2026.

SPATIAL DOMAIN

Sports halls of the participating clubs.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Prediction:** It is the simulation of different strategies alongside available information and its improvement to achieve accuracy, representing an expectation of the player's level and the level they will reach.
2. **Social Adjustment:** It is the behavior adopted by the athlete in response to actual situations related to the dimensions of adjustment, and it differs from one player to another.
3. **Coping Strategies with Psychological Stress:** They are the strategies used by individuals to deal with stressful situations and life crises, including a set of methods through which the individual confronts stressful situations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FIELD PROCEDURES

RESEARCH METHOD

Many phenomena cannot be studied except through a method that is appropriate to the nature of the research problem under investigation. Therefore, the nature of the research determines the correct approach that enables the researcher to deeply explore the problem and reach answers that achieve the study objectives. The method is defined as "the path followed by the researcher to answer the questions arising from the research problem."

It is also defined as "the art of properly organizing a sequence of ideas in order to uncover the truth."

Based on the above, the nature of the current problem required the researcher to adopt the descriptive method using the survey approach to achieve the research objectives.

RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The research population consists of all individuals who represent the subject of the problem to be studied. Therefore, the researcher must select a specific sample from this population to study and derive conclusions. The sample is a part of the population selected according to specific rules to represent it accurately.

Due to the nature of the problem, objectives, and procedures used, the research sample consisted of players from Iraqi Premier League basketball clubs in the Middle Euphrates region for the sports season (2025–2026). The sample included (50) players selected from the total population of (115) players, due to the difficulty of conducting a comprehensive survey of all individuals, as these clubs are distributed across several provinces in the region.

The sample included:

1. Pilot sample: (10) players from the total research population.
2. Final application sample: (50) players representing (6) clubs.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND RESEARCH TOOLS

Research tools and data collection methods enable the researcher to gather the necessary data to solve the research problem and achieve its objectives.

Accordingly, the researcher used the following:

1. Arabic and foreign sources, references, and scientific journals.
2. Personal interviews with experts, specialists, and coaches.
3. Computer (Acer, Windows 7).
4. Internet.
5. Data collection forms (questionnaires), which are designed to collect responses to a set of written questions, where respondents record their answers themselves.

FIELD RESEARCH PROCEDURES

DETERMINING RESEARCH VARIABLES

To obtain measures for the research variables (social adjustment and coping strategies with psychological stress), the researcher reviewed previous studies and consulted experts and specialists in general and sports sociology, as well as general and social psychology.

Based on expert opinions, the researcher adopted the Social Adjustment Scale developed by (Amer Abbas Issa), which consists of (46) items. The minimum possible score is (46), the maximum score is (230), and the hypothetical mean is (138).

For coping strategies, the researcher used the Coping Strategies Scale developed by (Osama Kamel Ratib), which consists of (49) items. The minimum score is (49), the maximum score is (245), and the hypothetical mean is (147).

SCIENTIFIC BASES OF THE SCALES

VALIDITY OF THE SCALES

Validity is one of the most essential conditions that must be available on a scale, as it indicates the extent to which the items measure the intended trait. A test is considered valid when it measures what it is designed to measure.

The researcher obtained the following validity indicators:

FACE VALIDITY

Face validity is one of the indicators of content validity and refers to the extent to which the items are relevant to the variable being measured. It can be defined as “the degree to which the items represent the trait to be measured.”

This type of validity was achieved by presenting the initial forms of the two scales to a group of experts and specialists in general and sports sociology, psychology, and related sports sciences. The purpose was to evaluate the suitability of the domains and items in terms of clarity, formulation, and relevance.

The agreement rate among experts reached (75%) or higher, indicating that the scales are valid. Ebel stated that “the preferred method for verifying face validity is to have specialists evaluate the suitability of items,” while Allen confirmed that “face validity is achieved when one or more experts judge that the scale measures the intended trait.”

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Construct validity is one of the most appropriate types of validity for scale construction, as it depends on experimental verification of the extent to which item scores correspond to the concept being measured.

The researcher verified this type of validity through the following indicators:

First: Discriminatory Power of Items

The researcher proved this by the fact that the items of the two scales had discriminatory power, as the discriminatory power of the items of the social adaptation scale ranged between (4.38 – 14.99), while the discriminatory power of the items of the coping mechanisms scale ranged between (4.33 – 12.90).

Second: Internal Consistency Coefficient

The researcher calculated the internal consistency by determining the correlation between each item and the total score of the scales.

This indicates that both scales possess acceptable construct validity.

RELIABILITY OF THE SCALES

Reliability is one of the essential conditions for social measurement tools, as it reflects the consistency and stability of results when the test is repeated on the same individuals.

SPLIT-HALF RELIABILITY

Due to the existence of several methods for calculating reliability, the researcher used the split-half method because it is one of the most used methods and requires only one application of the test.

This method involves dividing the items of each scale into two equivalent halves (odd and even items). The responses of the sample (players from Iraqi Premier League clubs) were analyzed using Pearson’s correlation coefficient.

The correlation values were:

- Social Adjustment Scale: (0.72)
- Coping Strategies Scale: (0.77)

Since these values represent half-test reliability, the Spearman–Brown formula was applied to obtain full reliability:

- Social Adjustment Scale: (0.84)
- Coping Strategies Scale: (0.87)

When compared with the tabulated value (0.205) at a degree of freedom (48) and significance level (0.05), it was found that both scales have a high level of reliability.

OBJECTIVITY OF THE TWO SCALES

Objectivity refers to the absence of the researcher’s personal bias, opinions, and beliefs in influencing the research results. It also means that the scale is not affected by changes in evaluators and yields the same results regardless of who assesses the test. This implies the elimination of subjective judgment; the fewer subjective judgments involved, the higher the objectivity of the test.

Moreover, when the respondent selects an appropriate answer from multiple alternatives provided in the scale that best represents their condition, this is also considered an indication of objectivity.

Based on the above, the objectivity of the two scales was achieved through the researcher's presentation of the items and adherence to the opinions and remarks of the experts throughout all stages of constructing and preparing the scales, without allowing personal bias or subjective interference to affect the process. In addition, the objectivity of the scales was ensured using a scoring key, making them objective measures.

FINAL APPLICATION OF THE TWO SCALES

After completing all procedures related to the construction of the two scales, they became ready for application. The Social Adjustment Scale consisted of (46) items, while the Coping Strategies with Psychological Stress Scale consisted of (49) items.

The two scales were applied in their final form to a sample of first-division basketball club players for the sports season (2025–2026), who were officially registered in the Iraqi Central Basketball Federation.

STATISTICAL METHODS

The researcher conducted all statistical analyses using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

IDENTIFYING THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG BASKETBALL PLAYERS

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Social Adjustment

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	Significance
Social Adjustment	165.42	18.35	138	Significant

The table shows that the mean score of social adjustment (165.42) is higher than the hypothetical mean (138), indicating that the sample possesses a good level of social adjustment. This can be attributed to the nature of basketball, which relies heavily on teamwork and continuous social interaction among players both on and off the court, requiring them to continuously develop social adjustment and effective communication skills.

Furthermore, the competitive sports environment contributes to building positive social relationships based on cooperation and mutual trust. Studies in sports psychology indicate that players with a high level of social adaptation are better able to integrate into the team, more committed to tactical strategies, and better able to control their emotions during competition.

In this context, Amer Abbas Issa (2018) emphasizes that social adaptation is a key indicator of a player's success in team sports. It directly contributes to improving communication among players and reducing conflicts within the team, which positively impacts skill and tactical performance. He also explains that weak social adaptation can lead to negative behaviors such as isolation or poor cooperation, which negatively affect the team's results.

Therefore, it can be said that social adaptation is a crucial factor in the performance of basketball players. It influences the speed of decision-making on the court, the degree of harmony among players, and the ability to execute defensive and offensive duties with high efficiency. This makes it a fundamental variable that should be considered in psychological preparation and sports training programs.

IDENTIFYING COPING STRATEGIES WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Coping Strategies

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	Significance
Coping Strategies	178.60	20.12	147	Significant

We observe that the arithmetic mean (178.60) is higher than the hypothetical mean (147), indicating that the players possess effective stress-coping strategies. This result is attributed to the players' accumulated experience in competitive sports. Constant exposure to diverse competitive situations contributes to the development of a range of important psychological skills, such as emotional regulation, positive thinking, and the ability to concentrate under pressure. These skills are among the most prominent methods for coping with psychological stress in the sports field, helping players deal with the tension and anxiety inherent in competition more effectively.

Furthermore, players with greater competitive experience are better able to interpret stressful situations positively, transforming them into motivators for performance rather than obstacles. This, in turn, enhances their psychological stability and ability to make sound decisions on the field.

In this context, Osama Kamel Rateb (2015) points out that athletic experience contributes to the development of stress-coping strategies. Players become more inclined to use positive methods such as planning, problem-solving, and cognitive reassessment, rather than negative methods such as avoidance or withdrawal. Therefore, players' possession of effective methods to cope with psychological pressures not only reflects their level of psychological maturity, but also contributes to improving their technical and tactical performance, and enhances their ability to adapt to the demands of different sports competitions.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AND COPING STRATEGIES WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient between the Two Variables

Variables	R	Sig	Significance
Social Adjustment × Coping Strategies	0.68	0.000	Significant

A strong positive correlation (0.68) exists between the two variables, indicating a clear causal relationship. Improved stress management skills lead to higher levels of social adjustment in players. This is because the ability to manage stress and emotions enables players to interact positively with teammates and coaches, and helps them accept various competitive situations without tension or conflict. Furthermore, players with effective coping strategies are better able to control their behavior on the court, enhancing their harmony with the team and increasing their collective performance.

In this context, Amer Abbas Issa (2018) explains that social adjustment is closely linked to an individual's ability to cope with stress. Using positive coping strategies contributes to reducing psychological tension and improving social relationships within the team, while using negative strategies leads to weak social interaction and the emergence of behavioral problems that may affect athletic performance.

Therefore, improving stress management skills is a fundamental approach to developing social adjustment among basketball players, given its direct role in enhancing teamwork, achieving harmony within the team, and raising the level of technical and tactical performance.

PREDICTING SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT BASED ON COPING STRATEGIES

Table 4: Simple Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Beta	t-value	R ²	R	Sig
Coping Strategies	0.68	7.85	0.46	0.68	0.000

The value of $R^2 = (0.46)$, which means that coping strategies explain 46% of the variance in social adjustment.

The predictive equation is:

$$\text{Social Adjustment} = 42.15 + (0.69 \times \text{Coping Strategies})$$

This equation means that the level of social adjustment of a player can be estimated based on their score on the coping strategies scale. For every one-unit increase in coping strategies, there is a corresponding increase of (0.69) in social adjustment.

Example:

If a player scores (180) on the coping strategies scale, the expected level of social adjustment would be:

$$\text{Social Adjustment} = 42.15 + (0.69 \times 180) = 166.35$$

This indicates that the player possesses a high level of social adjustment.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Basketball players possess a good level of social adjustment.
2. Players have effective coping strategies for dealing with psychological stress.
3. There is a positive correlation between social adjustment and coping strategies.
4. Coping strategies contribute to predicting social adjustment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduce integrated psychological training programs for players, including training on coping with psychological stress such as emotional regulation and anxiety management, which positively reflects on skill and tactical performance.
2. Enhance teamwork within teams.
3. Emphasize psychological preparation.

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