

Relationships between internet addiction and coping strategy use in junior athletes

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Abstract:

This study empirically examined and theoretically supported the factors associated with Internet addiction in relation to coping strategy use among junior athletes. **Methods.** The sample comprised junior male and female athletes participating in individual and team sports across age groups U-15, U-17, U-19, and U-21, aged 14–20 years ($M = 18.23$; $Me = 18.00$; $SD = \pm 2.98$). Participants attended sports schools of the Olympic Reserve for children and youth in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Kherson (the institution had been relocated). They were affiliated with professional football, mini-football, and handball academies. The sample's gender distribution was as follows: male athletes ($n = 54$; 43.20%) and female athletes ($n = 71$; 56.80%). Valid, reliable, and representative methodologies, which relevantly reflected and captured the measurements of the main research variables, were applied. **Results.** It was established that the examined junior athletes with manifestations of Internet addiction of a moderate level and mild symptoms of depressivity showed emphasis on choosing behavioral strategies related to intense reaction to negative experiences in stressful situations. It was found that severe symptoms of depressivity and moderate manifestations of Internet addiction in the examined junior athletes significantly prevent them from implementing the cognitive component of coping behavior in stressful circumstances within the framework of coping strategies focused on assessing the situation and opportunities for its constructive transformation. It was established that moderate manifestations of Internet addiction and mild symptoms of depressivity in the examined junior athletes do not significantly impair the average capacity for reflective assessment of their subjective resources for coping with stress. It was noted that this result is associated with a high level of junior athletes' self-control. **Discussion and conclusions.** It was substantiated that Internet addiction correlates in junior athletes' coping strategies are considered coping behavior patterns that junior athletes use in stressful situations to manage their emotions and solve learning, training, competitive, and rehabilitative problems. It was recommended that the results of the research into Internet addiction correlates in the coping strategies of junior athletes with a propensity for Internet addiction and depressivity symptoms should be implemented in the learning and training process at sports schools of the Olympic Reserve for children and youth.

Key words: depressivity, defense mechanisms, mental health, mental state, escape-avoidance, confrontation, stress.

Introduction

Junior athletes' coping strategies are a set of methods, techniques, behavior patterns, and defense mechanisms that they use to overcome stress and difficulties related to extreme conditions of sports activities. Adolescence is the period when the junior athlete's personal and professional development occurs, their worldviews are formed, and value orientations are stabilized. It is at this age that creating and improving mechanisms of coping behavior arouse particular interest. Effective use of coping strategies usually helps junior athletes maintain a psychological balance, improve the results of learning and competitive activities, and successfully adapt to constant challenges. Learning and training activities require regular work on oneself and training self-regulation and the nervous system to cope with increasing mental and physical exertions. In adverse conditions of sports activities, not everyone can permanently maintain a focus on constructive coping, such as problem-solving. Some individuals are prone to escape, confrontation, and distancing. Sociogenic challenges and

societal transformations accompanied by military conflicts, constant changes in the conditions of competitive activity, and commercialization and professionalization of junior sports lead to the creation of a competitive space with a rapid pace that borders on human capacity. On the one hand, the aforementioned conditions of social reality encourage individuals to search for new methods and forms of reliable coping behavior. On the other hand, they provide the favorable grounding for the growing rates of juniors' Internet addiction, depressivity, and other destructive manifestations of the present. For junior representatives of individual and team sports, a pronounced propensity for Internet addiction and regular manifestations of depressivity can have negative consequences in individual sports performances and slow down or ruin a sports career.

Modern studies and empirical research into defense mechanisms conducted on junior samples (Plokhikh et al., 2025) demonstrate that psychological defenses conceptually determine the manner of adaptive response to current threats. In adolescents, current threats are characterized by general acceptance of reality and partial content inadequacy regarding the impacts of extreme circumstances, manifested in eliminating or weakening the effects of emotionally difficult, undesirable, or psycho-traumatic information. Researchers V. Plokhikh and S. Akimov (2014) consider projection, rationalization, and compensation the most pronounced defense mechanisms. Another study by W. Lin et al. (2025) examined the impact of social networks on junior athletes' negative emotions. It was established that dependence on social networks exacerbates negative psycho-emotional states. To prevent this, researchers recommend introducing effective strategies for managing the use of social networks and implementing techniques for healthy body image and methods for improving sleep quality.

It is obvious that the dominant mental state of Internet addiction is accompanied by a mental disorder characterized by the obsessive desire to use the Internet and inability to control time spent online. Such juniors are late for classes and training and have a low motivation for doing exercises, which has negative consequences for real life. Real life is replaced by virtual life. The loss of control or "getting stuck" on the Internet causes isolation and reduces physical activity. The dominant mental state with frequent manifestations of depressivity is primarily characterized by a persistent low mood and the loss of interest in sports activities, which previously brought pleasure. Other signs of this state include the loss of energy, constant fatigue, and exhaustion (Kokun, 2024). Such individuals usually have difficulty concentrating and making decisions (Black et al., 1999; Shapira et al., 2000). Athletes' emotional and volitional potentials ensure the necessary fullness, depth, structure, realism, and completeness of the volitional act in the time continuum. The combination of emotional and volitional potentials with diligence, self-control, and mental stability contributes to optimal competitive outcomes. The effect of "incomplete action" was recorded in less effective athletes immediately after the competition. Obviously, a propensity for Internet addiction and manifestations of depressivity will not contribute to psychological wholeness and the development of emotional and volitional potentials. Researchers F. Lebrun et al. (2019) studied the coping strategies used by elite athletes who face clinical depressivity. It was found that conversations, seeking professional aid, and social support were the most effective strategies on the path to high sports results. Numerous modern empirical studies allow us to state that adolescence is characterized by intense mental development, the active formation of ideals and value orientations, the differentiation of self-awareness and self-determination components, and worldview formation. In this period, the transition to independence and searching for the meaning of life is completed. This period is also referred to as a crisis period since it is accompanied by the adaptation to new social roles and an intense desire for personal responsibility. The search for professional self-determination and personal and professional identity sometimes pushes adolescents towards trials, heroic challenges, and mobility. Notably, junior athletes can be taught effective ways to cope with stress. Since many novice athletes have a stereotype that strong individuals do not need support, psycho-correction interventions should be started with these athletes. Juniors should not be ashamed to seek psychological support in significant others – mentors, coaches, and parents. On the contrary, this may indicate not weakness but high psycho-emotional maturity and well-formed psychological culture. The effectiveness of coping strategies can change depending on the athlete's individual characteristics and the specific situation, the level of performance, and the quality of applications that are systematically used (Fiedler et al., 2024).

Internet addiction correlates in junior athletes' coping strategies are considered coping behavior patterns used by junior athletes in stressful situations to manage emotions and solve learning, training, competitive, and rehabilitative problems. Defensive behavior patterns can be conscious or unconscious, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions. In the context of Internet addiction and depressivity, juniors can use adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies. Junior athletes' understanding of the relationship between constructive coping strategies and the signs of a propensity for Internet addiction with manifestations of depressivity is essential for providing them with effective psychological support. It is important to remember that overcoming Internet addiction and depressivity effectively requires a comprehensive approach that combines the junior athlete's constructive attitude with timely psychotherapeutic interventions, support from significant others, and the development of healthy habits.

Hypothesis. Internet addiction correlates will determine the prevailing content loads of junior athletes' coping strategies.

Aim. To empirically study and theoretically substantiate the results of the research into Internet addiction correlates in junior athletes' coping strategy implementation.

Methods

The methodology for examining Internet addiction correlates in junior athletes' coping strategy implementation involves interpreting concepts, using various psychological methods and tools to study and analyze how junior athletes cope with stress and challenges in a sports environment. We have considered modern and empirical studies on the following issues: psychophysiological patterns of adolescents engaging in sports (Cretu et al., 2021; Kozin et al., 2022; 2023); junior athletes' age-related and individual characteristics; patterns of creating a developing educational environment (Kremen & Ilyin, 2020; 2022; Lokshyna & Topuzov, 2021; Topuzov et al., 2022); the athlete's psycho-emotional potential; the features of learning and training (Nosov et al., 2020; Popovych et al., 2019), and competitive activities, and other contemporary innovative studies related to our research subject (Kokun & Bakhmutova, 2020; Zinchenko et al., 2021).

Participants. The sample consisted of male and female athletes engaging in individual and team sports and representing teams U-15, U-17, U-19, and U-21. The junior athletes were aged 14 to 20 ($M = 18.23$; $Me = 18.00$; $SD = \pm 2.98$). They attended sports schools of the Olympic Reserve for children and youth located in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Kherson (the institution was relocated). They belonged to sports academies of professional football, mini-football, and handball clubs. The gender distribution of the sample was as follows: male athletes ($n = 54$; 43.20%) and female athletes ($n = 71$; 56.80%). The juniors' sports qualification titles ranged from the first junior qualification to the Master of Sports. None of the participants had long breaks (more than six months) in sports activities, except for rehabilitation periods.

Procedures and instruments. To measure the values of the research variables, three valid, reliable, and representative psychodiagnostic tools tested in numerous empirical studies on junior samples were used (Celik & Haney, 2023). The variable "Propensity for Internet Addiction" was measured using the "Internet Addiction Test" (IAT) by K. Young (1998), adapted for the Ukrainian sample by M. Khovrych and A. Mekshun (2021). The test form contained twenty statements, each being assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 to 5 (very seldom/never – 1 point; sometimes – 2 points; often, very often – 4 points; always – 5 points), with a maximum score of 100. The test is designed to diagnose the level of the individual's Internet addiction. It determines whether excessive Internet use negatively affects various areas of life. The given test is an adapted version for use in adolescents' groups. The test effectiveness lies in its structure and focus on quantitative measurement of pathological Internet use, which allows for identifying the stages of addiction development: initial (fondness), intermediate (risk development), pronounced (propensity for addiction), and no addiction (norm). The test adaptation for a junior sample increases its sensitivity to age-related characteristics related to the increased susceptibility to addictive behavior. The boundaries of the three groups were identified empirically. The Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) was ($\alpha = .987$), which confirmed the high level of the methodology with a single measurement scale. Depressivity symptoms were diagnosed using the single scale methodology "Self-Rating Depression Scale" (STDS) (Zung, 1965), adapted by B. Mikhailov et al. (2014). The methodology combined a series of twenty statements, which respondents assessed on a 4-point scale from 1 to 4 (never or seldom – 1 point; sometimes – 2 points; often – 3 points; almost always or constantly – 4 points), with a maximum score of seventy or more. The main purpose of the methodology is to assess the level of depressive states in respondents quickly. The tool determines the levels of depressivity, from its absence to severe cases, providing the possibility of effective screening and initial diagnosis of psycho-emotional states. The methodology was based on the respondent's self-reports of their emotional states, physical symptoms, and changes in behavioral reactions. The test encompassed various aspects of depressivity, including the mood, energy, appetite, sleep, anxiety levels, feelings of hopelessness, and other psychological symptoms. It allowed for relevant identification of junior athletes' depressivity symptoms. The Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) was ($\alpha = .945$), confirming a sufficiently high level of the methodology with a single measurement scale. Coping strategies were identified using the methodology "Way of Coping Questionnaire" (WCQ) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the version tested in the study by V. Plokhikh et al. (2025). Eight coping strategies were divided into two groups: constructive and destructive. Five strategies were regarded as constructive: problem-solving planning (PSP), self-control (SC), taking responsibility (TR), positive revaluation (PR), and seeking social support (SSS). Three strategies were considered destructive: confrontation (C), distancing (D), and escape-avoidance (E-A). The Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) indicated a medium level (.787) of the empirical data homogeneity.

Organization of Research. The confirmatory research strategy included comparative elements that allowed us to compare the stages of Internet addiction and depressivity symptoms with groups without symptoms and with each other in the context of coping behavior. Empirical data were collected between December 2024 and April 2025. After voluntarily agreeing to participate in the research, the participants received forms in Google Forms and filled them out anonymously. The Ethics Committees and Scientific and Methodological Councils of higher education institutions approved the research topic. Notably, this research was conducted within the framework of the Erasmus+ project (101129379 – BURN – ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CBHE). The research was approved by the administrations of institutions providing the learning and training process for junior athletes. The proposed survey design, confidentiality, and awareness ensured the validity and reliability of empirical materials.

Statistical Analysis. Statistical comparative elements and descriptive frequency characteristics were determined using the computer program "IBM SPSS Statistics", version 29.0.0.0 (241). The primary data were

entered into the empirical matrix generated in “MS Excel”. Statistical parameters traditional for comparative research were used. Differences at the levels of $p \leq .050$ and $p \leq .010$ were considered statistically significant.

Results

The psychodiagnostic tool “Internet Addiction Test” by K. Young (1998) and “Self-Rating Depression Scale” (Zung, 1965) were applied to measure the values of the key parameters – Internet addiction and depressivity. The manifestations of Internet addiction were empirically divided into four levels: normal, initial, intermediate, and pronounced. The manifestations of depressivity were empirically divided into three levels: no depressivity, moderate depressivity, and persistent depressivity. This division was relevant in identifying groups with a propensity for pronounced parameter values. Tabl. 1 shows the levels of junior athletes’ Internet addiction and depressivity.

Table 1. Levels of Internet addiction and depressivity in the research sample (n = 125)

Levels of the parameter	Parameters		
	A	n	%
“IAT” (Young, 1998)			
Normal (no addiction)	20.00 – 33.99	22	17.60
Initial (fondness)	34.00 – 47.42	25	20.00
Intermediate (risk development)	47.43 – 63.33	49	39.20
Pronounced (propensity for addiction)	63.34 – 100.00	29	23.20
“STDS” (Zung, 1965)			
No depressivity	20.00 – 37.14	33	26.40
Moderate depressivity	37.15 – 50.43	64	51.20
Persistent depressivity	50.44 – 70.00	28	22.40

Note: a – range of the parameter values on the measurement scale; n – number of respondents; % – percentage of respondents.

Given the considerable number of research participants with pronounced manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity (Tabl. 1) and the probable combination of these negative mental states, we established statistical relationships between the corresponding parameters. It was found that the levels of Internet addiction and depressivity were significantly correlated in the general group respondents ($r_s = .505$; $p < .001$). Moreover, we established statistical relationships between Internet addiction and depressivity in the general group respondents and their tendency to use various coping strategies in handling stressful situations (Tabl. 2). Additionally, correlations between the participants’ preferences for using specific coping strategies were established (Tabl. 3).

Table 2. Statistical correlations (according to Spearman) between the manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity and the choice of coping strategies among the general group respondents

Parameter	Statistical parameter	Coping strategies							
		C	D	SC	SSS	TR	E-A	PSP	PR
Internet addiction	<i>r</i>	.345**	.081	.016	-.080	-.062	.353**	-.316**	-.282**
	<i>p</i>	.000	.372	.860	.374	.491	.000	.000	.001
Depressivity	<i>r</i>	.220*	.022	.043	-.027	.174	.364**	-.324**	-.223*
	<i>p</i>	.014	.809	.637	.761	.052	.000	.000	.012

Note: * – $p \leq .050$; ** – $p \leq .010$; C – confrontation; D – distancing; SC – self-control; SSS – seeking social support; TR – taking responsibility; E-A – escape-avoidance; PSP – problem-solving planning; PR – positive reevaluation.

Table 3. Statistical correlations (according to Spearman) between the choices of coping strategies among the general group respondents

Coping strategies	Statistical parameter	Coping strategies							
		C	D	SC	SSS	TR	E-A	PR	
D	<i>r</i>	.379**							
	<i>p</i>	.000							
C	<i>r</i>	.062	.356**						
	<i>p</i>	.493	.000						
SSS	<i>r</i>	.192*	.157	.119					
	<i>p</i>	.032	.080	.187					
TR	<i>r</i>	.138	.344**	.439**	.215*				
	<i>p</i>	.125	.000	.000	.016				
E-A	<i>r</i>	.608**	.427**	.295**	.171	.395**			
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.001	.057	.000			
PSP	<i>r</i>	.064	.145	.371**	.284**	.138	-.037		
	<i>p</i>	.478	.106	.000	.001	.126	.683		
PR	<i>r</i>	.225*	.302**	.391**	.397**	.212*	.198*	.620**	
	<i>p</i>	.012	.001	.000	.000	.018	.027	.000	

Note: * – $p \leq .050$; ** – $p \leq .010$; C – confrontation; D – distancing; SC – self-control; SSS – seeking social support; TR – taking responsibility; E-A – escape-avoidance; PSP – problem-solving planning; PR – positive reevaluation.

The boundaries of moderate Internet addiction and mild depressivity divide the general group virtually in half (see Tabl. 1). Given this, to identify research participants with pronounced manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity using cluster analysis (*k*-means method) by the indicators “Internet addiction” and “Depressivity”, the general group of respondents was divided into two specific groups. Group 1 (*n* = 71) mainly included individuals with predominantly mild symptoms of Internet addiction and without depressivity symptoms. Group 2 (*n* = 54) consisted of individuals with moderate symptoms of Internet addiction and mild depressivity. We considered statistical differences between the groups in the indicators “Internet addiction” and “Depressivity” (Tabl. 4) and between the preferences for choosing coping strategies in stressful conditions (Tabl. 5).

Table 4. Statistical comparison (Mann–Whitney U-test) of the manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity in the respondents of Group 1 (*n* = 71) and Group 2 (*n* = 54)

Parameter	Group 1 (<i>n</i> = 71)			Group 2 (<i>n</i> = 54)			Mann–Whitney U-test	
	<i>Me</i>	min	max	<i>Me</i>	min	max	U	<i>p</i>
Internet addiction	46.00	31.00	58.00	64.50	54.00	84.00	33.50	.000
Depressivity	38.00	26.00	55.00	49.00	30.00	61.00	679.50	.000

Table 5. Statistical comparison (Mann–Whitney U-test) of the preferences for coping strategies in the respondents of Group 1 (*n* = 71) and Group 2 (*n* = 54)

Group	Statistical parameter	Coping strategies							
		C	D	SC	SSS	TR	E-A	PSP	PR
1 (<i>n</i> = 71)	<i>M</i>	9.21	9.30	13.45	11.51	7.75	12.73	13.66	13.03
	<i>Me</i>	9.00	9.00	13.00	11.00	8.00	12.00	14.00	13.00
	SD	2.78	3.02	3.30	3.56	2.12	3.84	2.91	3.68
	min	4.00	3.00	6.00	2.00	3.00	6.00	7.00	2.00
	max	18.00	18.00	21.00	18.00	12.00	24.00	18.00	21.00
2 (<i>n</i> = 54)	<i>M</i>	10.91	9.91	13.37	10.89	7.54	15.35	10.56	10.65
	<i>Me</i>	11.00	10.00	13.50	11.00	8.00	16.00	10.00	11.00
	SD	2.54	3.84	3.12	3.54	2.34	4.07	3.76	4.07
	min	6.00	1.00	4.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	2.00
	max	16.00	18.00	20.00	18.00	11.00	23.00	17.00	19.00
Mann–Whitney U-test	<i>U</i>	1224.00	1693.50	1905.00	1709.50	1882.00	1168.50	1005.00	1272.50
	<i>p</i>	.001	.263	.952	.299	.860	.000	.000	.001

Note: C – confrontation; D – distancing; SC – self-control; SSS – seeking social support; TR – taking responsibility; E-A – escape-avoidance; PSP – problem-solving planning; PR – positive reevaluation.

To identify the structure of relationships between the variables characterizing the preferences for different coping strategies of the general group and the manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity, exploratory factor analysis was performed. The analysis using the principal component method with subsequent Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization allowed us to identify three factors accounting for 63.956 % of the accumulated variance, with a good level of Kaiser-Meyera-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (.715) and an acceptable Bartlett’s criterion of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 384.764$; *f* = 45; *p* < .001). The factors contain almost all variables (except for the coping strategy variable “seeking social support”) with a factor loading of at least .500 (Tabl. 6). In addition, an approximation to the criterion level (.500) was established for the variable “Internet addiction” in Factor 2 (loading = -.433) and the variable “Depressivity” in Factor 1 (loading = .438).

Table 6. Matrix of factor loadings of the variables characterizing the preferences for different coping strategies, the manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity in the general group respondents, after rotation (the principal component method; Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization)

Parameter	Component		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Internet addiction	.681		
Depressivity		-.593	
Coping-confrontation	.862		
Coping-distancing			.540
Coping-self-control			.690
Coping-seeking social support			
Coping-taking responsibility			.884
Coping-escape-avoidance	.721		
Coping-problem-solving planning		.807	
Coping-positive reevaluation		.796	

The obtained factors are qualitatively defined according to the cognitive stress theory by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman (1987). The key components of Factor 1 are coping strategies focused on the emotionally driven reflective response to stressful influences without additional in-depth assessment of the situation and subjective resources (emotionally driven response to stress). Factors 2 and 3 present coping strategies focused on active

assessment of the situation and subjective resources, with manageable implementation of coping strategies. Factor 2 combines coping strategies with a more pronounced functional focus on assessing stressful influences (active response to stress with a predominant assessment of the situation), whereas Factor 3 includes coping strategies involving in-depth assessment and actualization of subjective resources for managing stress (active response to stress with a predominant assessment of subjective resources).

Discussion

It is known that junior sports are an extremely stressful stage in the professional athlete's development. The combination of critical physical exertion and numerous competitions accompanied by psychological tension requires high stress resistance, resilience, and motivation from young people (Kokun & Bezverkhyi, 2024; Kokun et al., 2022a; 2022b). Intense training and competitions cause physical fatigue and overload that, in turn, can lead to stress or a search for a comfortable place through isolation, distancing, and confrontation. The aforementioned search for a comfortable space reflects destructive coping strategies (Plokhikh et al., 2025). In part, junior athletes face high expectations regarding their sports potential, which can cause anxiety and insecurity and prevent them from demonstrating even average results.

The very strong statistical correlation between the manifestations of respondents' Internet addiction and depressivity is consistent with the statement about the combined development of these negative states with excessive use of information networks (Kraut et al., 1998; Young Rodgers, 1998). The primary causes of depressivity, which reduce the athlete's emotional and volitional resources, can vary. However, when increasing depressivity manifestations unidirectionally align with changes in irritability, anxiety, emotional imbalance, and disorganization driven by Internet addiction, they mutually reinforce and exacerbate each other, causing distress. As a result, this reduces the athlete's capacities for volitional regulation and worsen their competition results significantly. In this combination, manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity act as correlates in junior athletes' solving complex sports problems.

The combination of manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity has an obvious effect on their relationships with the choice of coping strategies in the general group of respondents (see Tabl. 2). We can establish a direct statistical correlation between these negative states and coping strategies that more focus on the reaction to stressful circumstances caused by negative experience (confrontation and escape-avoidance) and an inverse correlation with the coping strategies involving active conscious responses with a balanced cognitive evaluation of the current situation (positive revaluation and problem-solving planning). This nature of correlations is entirely consistent with the key provisions of the cognitive stress theory (Lazarus, Folkman, 1987). According to the data collected, respondents can be divided by the levels of active conscious assessment of the stressful situation and the subsequent coping organization. Notably, the examined junior athletes' capacities for appropriate self-organization and self-control in competitive situations and the intense training cycle seem extremely important.

Cluster analysis allowed us to divide the sample of research participants into groups not only by the levels of Internet addiction and depressivity, but also by their preferences for using certain coping strategies (see Tabl. 4 and Tabl. 5). In the group of individuals with a predominantly moderate level of Internet addiction and mild depressivity, the emotional component of the response intensifies. We can observe a strong tendency towards the choice of confrontation strategies, which, in the extreme case of an active response in threatening circumstances, corresponds to the principle "fight" and the escape-avoidance strategy based on the principle "run". At the same time, the group of individuals with a slight tendency to use information networks and no depressivity symptoms showed a predominantly high level of using coping strategies involving an active cognitive assessment of stressful situations. The latter is crucial for improving tactical skills for athletes of any profile.

The specificity of preferences in choosing ways to cope with stress in the groups of respondents was reflected in the results of exploratory factor analysis in the content of Factors 1 and 2 (see. Tabl. 6). In this case, manifestations of Internet addiction and depressivity are favorable for a situational reflex response (Factor 1). However, they inhibit an active response with a cognitive assessment of the situation (Factor 2).

We also identified Factor 3, showing that the groups did not statistically differ in the levels of its components. These components mainly characterize respondents' use of the coping strategies of self-control, taking responsibility, and distancing. These coping strategies primarily relate to the individual's self-esteem and active reflection on personal resources. This assessment is extremely important for athletes to determine their capacities for coping with the challenges of the current situation. The latter is also implied in the cognitive stress theory as a necessary component of coping behavior (Lazarus, Folkman, 1987).

Elite athletes usually use various methods to solve current problems. The resource of necessary competencies is activated based on assessing the current situations. The vast majority of coping strategies are presented by junior athletes at medium and high levels in our research (see Tabl. 5). Notably, almost all coping strategies are unambiguously combined in a single complex (see Tabl. 3). In Factor 3, self-control has particular significance for a high level. Notably, a high level of self-control was recorded in both groups of respondents (see Tabl. 5). We argue that junior athletes' trained self-control allows them to resist destruction caused by Internet addiction and depressivity and implement other coping strategies at a relatively high level.

Conclusions

In stressful situations, the examined junior athletes with manifestations of moderate Internet addiction and mild depressivity mainly focus on choosing coping strategies related to intense reaction to negative experiences (the confrontation strategy based on the principle “fight”; the escape-avoidance strategy based on the principle “run”). The junior athletes’ pronounced symptoms of depressivity and moderate manifestations of Internet addiction significantly inhibit the cognitive component of coping behavior in stressful situations within the framework of coping strategies focused on the assessment of the situation and the possibilities for its constructive transformation. The examined junior athletes’ moderate manifestations of Internet addiction and mild depressivity do not significantly impair the average capacity for reflective assessment of their subjective resources for coping with stress (the choice of coping strategies focused on distancing, taking responsibility, and self-control). This result is associated with a high level of self-control in junior athletes.

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