
Sports Psychology in Brazil: Review in Psychology Journals

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Abstract. The aim of this study was to systematically review the literature issues on sports psychology in journals of psychology. Electronic search in SciELO (Human Science area) and PePSIC databases was performed. As descriptors, the terms Sports Psychologist, sport, and athletes were used. For the selection it was not established period of time. Among the 84 index journals in Human Science in the SciELO database, 14 journals took part in the sample. In the PePSIC database 66 journals were found and 8 were included in the study. Altogether, 66 articles were selected. However after meeting the inclusion criteria only 39 were analyzed. The findings showed that despite the increase of production in the area between 2010 and 2012 very little is produced on the sports psychology. Understanding the scientific production of sports psychology in journals of psychology enables tracing the profile of the published studies, identifying future directions to the area.

Keywords: Sports psychology; literature review; psychology.

Psicologia do Esporte no Brasil: Revisão em Periódicos da Psicologia

Resumo. O objetivo do presente estudo foi realizar uma revisão sistemática de literatura sobre a psicologia do esporte em periódicos da psicologia. Foram realizadas buscas eletrônicas nas bases de dados SciELO (na área das ciências humanas) e PePSIC. Como descritores, utilizaram-se os seguintes termos: psicologia do esporte, esporte e atleta. Não se estabeleceu período para a seleção dos artigos. Entre os 84 periódicos indexados na área das ciências humanas dentro da base de dados SciELO, fizeram parte da amostra 14 revistas. Na base de dados PePSIC foram encontradas 66 revistas e oito foram incluídas. No total, foram 66 artigos selecionados. Após os critérios de inclusão, 39 fizeram parte da análise. Os resultados evidenciam que, apesar do aumento da produção relacionada ao tema entre 2010 e 2012, ainda se produz pouco sobre o tema psicologia do esporte, concentrando-se em alguns periódicos. Conhecer a produção científica de psicologia do esporte em periódicos da psicologia possibilita traçar o perfil dos estudos publicados, identificando futuros direcionamentos para a área.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia do esporte; revisão de literatura; psicologia.

Psicología del Deporte en Brasil: Revisión en los Periódicos de Psicología

Resumen. El objetivo de este estudio fue revisar sistemáticamente la literatura acerca de la psicología del deporte en revistas de psicología. Las búsquedas electrónicas se realizaron en las bases de datos SciELO (en el área de las Ciencias Humanas) y PePSIC. Como descriptores, se utilizaron los siguientes términos: psicología del deporte, deporte y atleta. No se ha establecido período para la selección de los artículos. Entre las 84 revistas indexadas en el área de las ciencias humanas dentro de la base de datos SciELO, formaron parte de la muestra 14 revistas. En la base de datos

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PePSIC se encontraron 66 revistas y se incluyeron ocho. En total fueron 66 trabajos seleccionados. Después de los criterios de inclusión, 39 formaron parte del análisis. Los resultados muestran que a pesar del aumento de la producción relacionada con el tema entre 2010 y 2012 aún se produce poco sobre el tema de la psicología del deporte, centrándose en algunas revistas. Comprender la producción científica de la psicología del deporte en revistas de psicología permite trazar el perfil de los estudios publicados, identificando futuras orientaciones para el tema.

Palabras-clave: Psicología del deporte; revisión de literatura; psicología.

The expansion of scientific knowledge in Brazil has led to assessments of the studies and research being developed in several areas, demonstrating the importance of these analyses in the process of knowledge building and development (Virtuoso, Haupenthal, Pereira, Martins, Knabben, & Andrade, 2011). Upon a historical analysis of the investigations and research into sport, a prevalence of biological sciences is detected. Nevertheless, the emotional aspects resulting from sport cannot be neglected, particularly mental health and the need for these aspects in athlete preparation (Allen & De Jong, 2006; Rimmele et al., 2007).

According to Virtuoso et al. (2011), studies are necessary to evaluate literary production on several different subjects, in order to indicate knowledge gaps and direct future works. In sport psychology applied to high performance, this assessment is important to show the focus of research in the field, the main topics being studied and the greatest needs identified in this field.

Sport psychology (SP) is the science that investigates emotional aspects in the context of sports (Gouveia, 2001), drawing from Psychology and Sport Sciences. In the United States, Sport and Exercise Psychology was established as a field by the American Psychological Association (Division 47) in 1986, focusing on professional and research issues. Since then, the field has apparently evolved, but the impact on the profession has shown little significance (Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2012).

Fletcher & Wagstaff (2009) indicate that one of the needs of SP is to effectively apply theoretical studies and research into sports practice. In Europe, the European Federation for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (FEPSAC) has also focused on the challenges of applied sport psychology (Wylleman, Harwood, Elbe, Reints, & Caluwé 2009). In Brazil, SP is regulated and bound to the Federal Council of Psychology (resolutions no. 014/00 and 02/01). Nevertheless, in a recent study, Vieira, Nascimento Jr & Vieira (2013) investigated the state of the art of scientific production on sport psychology in Brazil and identified that the largest share of studies is found in periodicals on physical education. Vieira, Vissoci, Oliveira & Vieira (2010) contextualize sport psychology as an emerging area for psychology in the professional field. Lo Bianco, Almeida, Koller & Paiva (2010) cite the monitoring of specificities found in publications from the different subareas of psychology as one of the necessary actions to internationalize graduate psychology programs, profiling these field in the specific periodicals. Given that sport psychology is a recent subarea, it becomes necessary to profile the article published in psychology periodicals, the focus of the studies, the evolution in the volume of published works, what sport is most studied, and the state of origin of these studies.

As such, the objective of this study was to examine the scientific production on the topic of sport psychology in Brazil, in Psychology periodicals.

Method

This study is a systematic literature review in which articles were searched in the SciELO electronic database, in Human Sciences periodicals, and the PePSIC database. These databases were selected because they index a large share of psychology periodicals in Brazil and are highly accessible – published articles are made available for free. The only periodicals included were those that include the word *Psicologia* and its variants in English (Psychology) and *psico*; furthermore, only periodicals rated B3 or higher in WEBQUALIS in evaluation field 37 – psychology, were included.

Three terms were selected for research: sport psychology, sport and athletes. They are in accordance with Psychology Terminology in the Virtual Library of Health-BVS. The survey of studies

was carried out in the month of August 2014. The search was made by two independent researchers, and in cases of disagreement a combined analysis was carried out to reach a final decision. It was decided not to establish a period of time to verify the evolution in the production of articles related to the theme.

Results

Among the 84 periodicals indexed in the field of human sciences within the SciELO database related to Psychology, seven periodicals had articles on sport psychology: *Estudos de Psicologia* (Campinas); *Estudos de Psicologia* (Natal); *Psico-USF*; *Psicologia & Sociedade*; *Psicologia em Estudo*; *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*; *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*. In the PePSIC database, of the 66 journals, eight had articles pertaining to the theme: *Boletim de Psicologia*; *Ciências & Cognição*; *Estudos e Pesquisas em Psicologia*; *Psicologia em Pesquisa*; *Psicologia: Teoria e Prática*; *Revista Brasileira de Terapia Comportamental e Cognitiva*; *Temas em Psicologia*; and *Revista Brasileira de Terapias Cognitivas*.

Using the three terms selected for the article search in the periodicals, 15 periodicals were found to publish articles dealing with sport psychology, with a total of 66 articles. Following the selection criteria, 27 articles were excluded for not dealing with sport psychology. As such, 39 studies comprised the sample (see Appendix 1).

Figure 1 shows the quantitative distribution of articles in the investigated periodicals that featured studies on sport psychology. The journal *Psicologia: Teoria e Prática* was the periodical that featured the highest number of articles (seven), followed by *Revista Brasileira de Terapia Comportamental e Cognitiva*; *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão* and *Estudos de Psicologia* (Campinas), with four articles each.

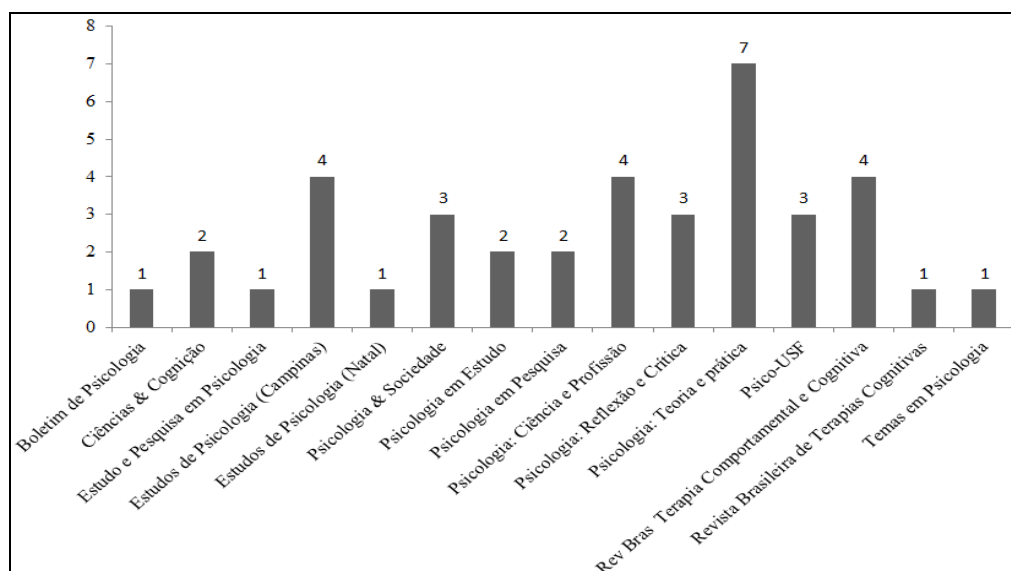


Figure 1. Number of published articles on sport psychology per psychology periodical indexed in SciELO and PePSIC.

The first published article found in the review was from the year 1999. An increase is detected in published articles pertaining to sport psychology in recent years in the selected databases, particularly in the years 2010 and 2012, with five articles (Figure 2).

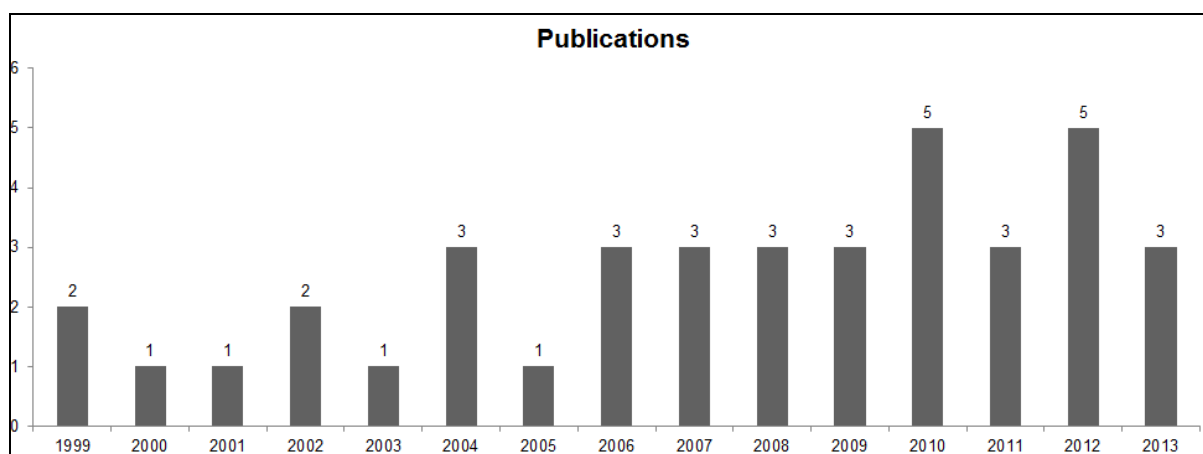


Figure 2. Number of published articles, by year, pertaining to sport psychology in psychology periodicals indexed in SciELO and PePSIC.

A majority of studies published in psychology journals indexed in SciELO and PePSIC, featuring the terms sport psychology, sport and athletes and pertaining to sport psychology, are concentrated in the South and Southeast regions of Brazil. The state with the highest number of published articles on sport psychology was São Paulo (41.02%) followed by Paraná, with 12.82% (Figure 3). Four articles (10.25%) found had been produced in Portugal.

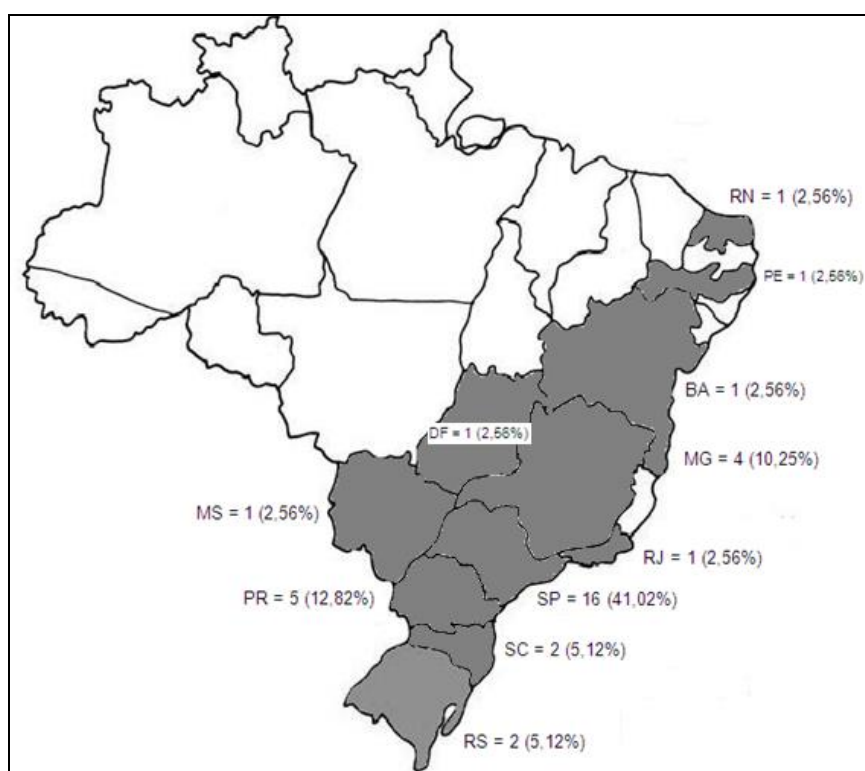


Figure 3. Number (n and %) by state of origin of studies pertaining to sport psychology found in psychology periodicals indexed in SciELO and PePSIC.

The most investigated sport was soccer/futsal with seven studies, followed by volleyball and tennis with two studies each. Sailing and swimming were investigated in one study each.

Among the most studied categories and variables, it was observed that leadership was investigated in four studies, followed by anxiety and parent influence on their children's practice of sports – each of which was present in three of the selected studies. Bonding, satisfaction, personality, mood states,

motivation and aggression are themes of sport psychology and were investigated, with one study each. Stress and burnout were investigated in one study. The remaining studies investigated various different themes, such as behavioral intervention for coaches, conflicts experienced by athletes, ethics, history and the field of sport psychology (Appendix 1). A majority of studies were descriptive of literature reviews.

Discussion

This research was limited to investigating articles published in Psychology periodicals in the field of Human Sciences indexed in the SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) and PePSIC (Psychology Electronic Periodicals Portal) databases. SciELO is a virtual library that comprises a selected collection of Brazilian science periodicals. It is an application of a project by the São Paulo State Research Support Foundation (Fapesp), in a partnership with Latin America and Caribbean Center for Health Science Information – BIREME (Ohira & Prado, 2002). The Psychology Electronic Periodicals Portal (PePSIC) is a source of the Health Virtual Library (BVS) and currently published titles from 11 countries.

Overall, science periodicals have three functions: to record knowledge, a social purpose, and a purpose of disseminating information. As such, a science periodical fulfills the purpose of a public official registry through an editor-evaluator system, making it a source for scientific knowledge (Hayashi, Hayashi, Lima, Silva, & Garrutti, 2006; Suehiro, Cunha, Oliveira, & Pacanaro, 2007).

The fact that sport psychology is a relatively new area (Gouveia, 2001) justifies the fact that only 39 articles were found featuring the terms: sport psychology, sport and athletes related to sport psychology at two databases of great importance to the field. In addition, according to Costa & Yamamoto (2008), the Brazilian scene of science periodicals in Psychology has undergone changes, resulting from the growth of the scientific community and the qualification of graduate programs, which is also a recent endeavor in Brazil (Tourinho & Bastos, 2010).

A growing trend is observed in the increase in the number of published articles in recent years (Berberian, Ferreira, Corteletti, Azevedo, & Marques, 2009); indeed, publishing scientific works has become more than only a requirement by regulating agencies, but rather a commitment by those who choose science as a profession (Boggio, 2009). This fact may justify the expanding scientific production pertaining to sport psychology in recent years. This information corroborates the data in the evaluation document for the field of Psychology by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Brazil, 2013). Graduate programs in area 37 (Psychology) are distributed in all regions of the country, with a higher number of programs in the Southeast region (37/50.7%), followed by the Northeast (13/17.8%), South (10/13.7%), Center-West (9/12.3%) and North (4/5.5%). A higher concentration is also observed in published articles pertaining to sport psychology in the south and southeast regions, which is justified given that these regions feature a larger number of *stricto sensu* graduate programs in this area.

The present study corroborates the result found in a review study of the scientific production in Sport Psychology carried out by Vieira, Nascimento Jr. & Vieira (2013), in which the largest number of articles was published between the years 2009 and 2012, justified by the intent by graduate programs to meet the scientific production requirements set by CAPES.

Sport Psychology is a multidisciplinary field (Wylleman et al., 2009) that comprises psychological fundamentals, processes and consequences of psychological regulation of activities related to sport (Hanin & Stambulova, 2004). To Hanin & Stambulova (2004), this is a dual-nature field. On one hand, it is part of psychology; on the other, its knowledge base is related to sport sciences. These two sources of knowledge help to better understand the person, the environment and the fundamental aspects in sports practice.

Most studies that comprised the study sample are descriptive or reviews. This is similar to the study by Gomez, Coimbra, García, Miranda & Barra Filho (2007), who showed a predominance of this type of research in Brazilian and international studies on Sport Psychology, with observations and descriptions of phenomena.

Certain themes within sport psychology have a greater research tradition. We observed in the investigated studies a trend towards the themes of leadership, anxiety, parental influence, motivation, mood, and bonding. The most investigated theme pertaining to Sport psychology found in Physical Education and Psychology periodicals indexed in SciELO and Scopus was motivation, with highlight to production between the years 2009 and 2012 (Vieira, Nascimento Jr. & Vieira, 2013).

Final Considerations

Review studies that aim to survey previously produced knowledge make it possible to trace the identity of the field under investigation, contributing to fill existing gaps, consolidating an area that increasingly shows its importance in practice.

According to the result of the present study, it is evident that the production of knowledge on sport psychology in Brazil follows the logic of the distribution of graduate programs in Physical Education and Psychology recommended by CAPES. A strong policy of support for graduate programs seems to be an essential path to leverage research in the field, as the same time there is a need for self-analysis, in order to raise the quality and number of graduate programs, resulting in stronger periodicals with more and better articles.

The knowledge produced in sport psychology is strengthened in some areas and incipient in others; this must serve as a basis to direct solid knowledge in the various area of knowledge in sport psychology. The results of this study reveal the need for broad dissemination of sport psychology, its research needs and relevance, given that is theme is little explored within psychology journals.

The strengthening of theories related to sport psychology can possibly contribute to the professional practice in the area, bearing fruit in sports results as well as greater quality of life and mental health for the population that practices sports and physical activities.

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APPENDIX 1

List of Selected Articles (Sample)

- Barros, J. C. T. S., & Rose Júnior, D. (2010). Relação entre objetivos e conflitos psicológicos e suas influências no desempenho de uma nadadora. *Psicologia: Teoria e Prática*, 12(2), 217-232.
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