



## A Systematic Review of Psychological Focus and Attention in Soccer

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### Abstract:

Sports psychology uses the psychical principles in sports contexts. The psychological preparedness, as a component of sport training takes from basic processes, therapies, and strategies of diagnostic and intervention of athletes. Based on that conception, this study conducted a search related to the diagnostic of focus of attention in soccer, in indexed electronic journals. Methods like mapping, indexing, analysis-synthesis, and induction-deduction were used to conduct information search, analysis, and processing. This paper aims to conduct a theoretical characterization and systematization of focus of attention in soccer.

**Keywords:** Sports Psychology; focus; attention

## Introduction

Sports psychology is the science that uses psychic principles within the context of sports and fitness activity. However, this undisputable branch deals with the physical



performance of athletes, and it is a vehicle for the benefit of humans that when properly used brings the results expected by people. (Cox, 1941; Amaro, Russell, & González, 2018)

Psychological preparedness is a component of sports training directed to the mental side of athletes. It will help strengthen, motivate, and produce greater performance with enhanced sports results, which correspond to the emotional and intellectual development of athletes. (Zarco, Blanca, & Mora, 2001; Valdés, 2002)

Attention and focus are among the psychological factors that permit higher athlete preparedness during training and competition. Authors like (Zarco, Blanca, & Mora, 2001; Del Monte, 2017; Gaspar, 2017; Gonzáles, Valdivia, Cachón, Zurita, & Romero, 2017; Areas, Monteiro, Alvarenga, Assis, & Monteiro, 2019; Mera, 2019) consider that these factors enable athletes to analyze, interact, and execute sport actions with a greater level of optimization. Attention deals with extrinsic stimuli received by a person, who obtains and selects important information from the environment, and discards insignificant data, whereas focus has to do with stability in face of external stimuli, activity, or set task.

The integration of psychological processes of attention and focus in soccer were assessed by González, Valdivia, Cachón, & Romero (2016), who conceive it as "... a psychological skill linked to the phases of the motor process in any sports development, since it influences the codification of external and internal stimuli, the selection and organization of motor response and its execution." (p.78)

This study aims to study the existing theoretical rationale for the diagnostic of focus of attention in soccer, based on assumptions made on psychological preparedness in sports and the influence of the focus of attention processes on the results of the game during training and competition, in general.

## **Materials and Methods**

This investigation relies on a bibliographic vision about the psychological diagnostic of focus of attention during soccer training, which used the mapping and indexing



methods. According to Hernández, R., Fernández, C. & Baptista, M. (2014), mapping consists in “... designing a conceptual map and using it to conduct in-depth analysis of the literature and development of the theoretical rationale.” (p.76)

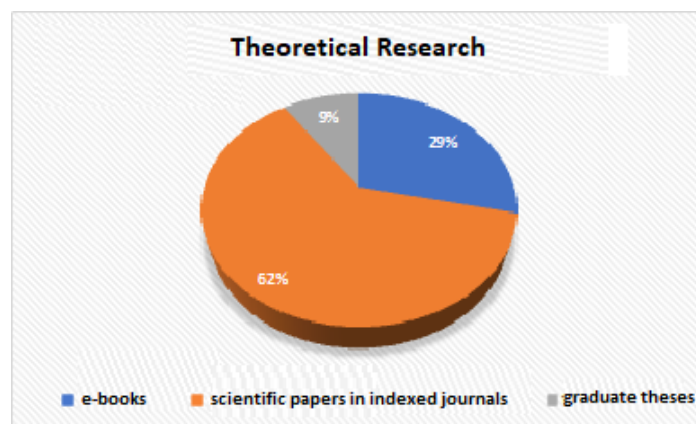
Indexing enables researchers to establish a chronological order of the main related topics, subtopics, and terms to conduct theoretical systematization. This method was defined by Hernández *et al* (2014) as follows:

It consists in the development of a tentative index (overall or general). Then it can be fine-tuned until it becomes highly specific, and the information is added (references) in the corresponding site within the scheme. This operation can be called “*vertebration*” of the of the theoretical perspective frame (generating the backbone). (p.78)

The implementation of these methods was fundamental for the theoretical systematization of focus of attention, as well as related psychological aspects, which are essential for sports training. Accordingly, the review of six electronic books, 13 scientific articles from electronic indexed journals, two graduate theses, one postgraduate thesis, and two doctoral theses were reviewed. This information permitted the creation of tools like bibliographic and content cards. (Alazraki, 2007)

## Results and Discussion

In the process of information systematization, a number of significant research studies were accessed via scientific papers published in indexed journals.





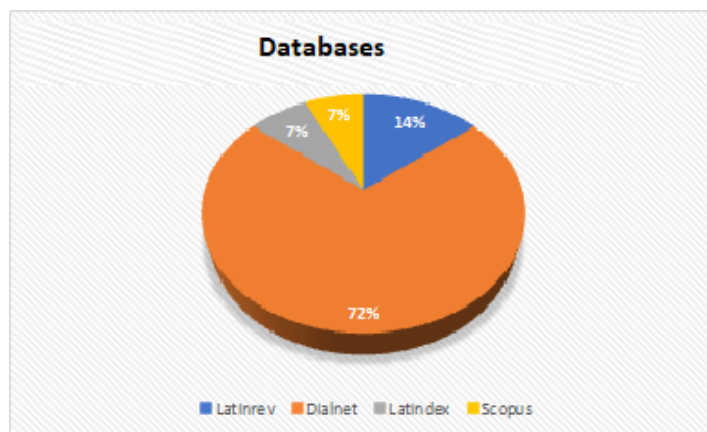
### Graph 1 Theoretical search

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The search for electronic information relied on descriptors like sports psychology, psychological preparedness, attention, focus, focus of attention in soccer, which permitted the review of articles from journals in databases such as Latinrev, Latindex, Dialnet, and Scopus.

An analysis of the percentage of databases used for the information search revealed that Dialnet is the most frequently used source to gather information needed for this study.

### Graph 2 Database

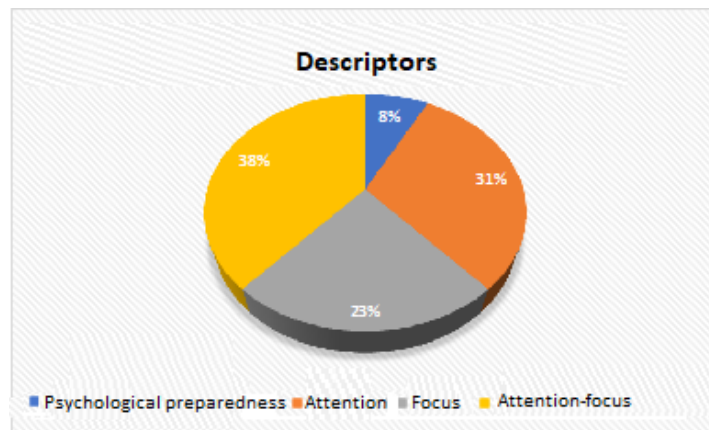


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The search for relevant related scientific articles used various descriptors, in which the application percentages can be observed.



Graph 3 Descriptors



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A number of 13 papers were selected according to their valuable information, and their empirical and bibliographic appropriateness to back up this study.

Table 1. Search of scientific articles

| No. | Database | Title of the article   | Journal    | Descriptor                 |
|-----|----------|--|------------|----------------------------|
| 1   | Latinrev | Fundamentos teóricos - metodológicos de la preparación psicológica del luchador. | DeporVida  | Psychological preparedness |
| 2   | Dialnet  | Los efectos de la práctica de Slackline en la atención concentrada.              | Efdeportes | Attention                  |



|   |          |   |   |                 |
|---|----------|---|---|-----------------|
| 3 | Latindex | La concentración de la atención en el entrenamiento de altura. Experiencias en su diagnóstico e intervención.                   | Revista Cubana de Medicina del Deporte y Cultura Física           | Focus           |
| 4 | Scopus   | Influencia del control del estrés en el rendimiento deportivo: la autoconfianza, la ansiedad y la concentración en deportistas. | RETOS Nuevas Tendencias en Educación Física, Deporte y Recreación | Focus           |
| 5 | Dialnet  | La motivación y la atención-concentración en futbolistas: revisión de estudios.   | Revista Euroamericana de Ciencias del Deporte                     | Attention-Focus |
| 6 | Dialnet  | Atención-concentración como entrenamiento para la mejora del rendimiento deportivo en jugadores profesionales de fútbol.        | Revista de psicología del deporte                                 | Attention-Focus |
| 7 | Dialnet  | Entrenamiento de la atención y concentración. Una propuesta para fútbol   | Efdeportes  | Attention-Focus |
| 8 | Dialnet  | La atención-concentración en el deporte de rendimiento  | Educación Física y Deporte  | Attention-Focus |



|    |         |  |                                     |                     |
|----|---------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 9  | Dialnet | La importancia del entrenamiento de la concentración en el fútbol: Base una perspectiva aplicada                                     | Cuadernos de Psicología del Deporte | Focus               |
| 10 | Dialnet | El papel de la atención en el ámbito deportivo: una aproximación bibliométrica de la literatura recogida en la base de datos psyclit | Revista de psicología del deporte   | Attention           |
| 11 | Dialnet | Atención y concentración en baloncesto: ¿como aumentar la posesión del balón?  | Educación física y deportes         | Attention and focus |
| 12 | Dialnet | Entrenamiento en el mantenimiento de la atención en deportistas Y su efectividad en el rendimiento                                   | Acta Colombiana de Psicología       | Attention           |
| 13 | Dialnet | Test de Toulouse-Pieron aplicado a jugadores de fútbol profesional Club El Porvenir, años 1996/98                                    | Efdeportes                          | Attention           |

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Theoretical methods like analysis-synthesis, and induction-deduction were used to complete the procedure and systematization of the previously mentioned bibliographic sources, which produce the major characteristics, manifestations, regularities, and tendencies of psychological diagnostic of focus of attention in soccer. This analysis will continue in detail in the next phases of this article.



## Conclusions

The information search was exclusively based on databases and indexed journals using the previously detailed descriptors.

Summaries were made of all the articles to gather the necessary information about the topic dealt with.

The information was analyzed using several theoretical methods, to make a final selection of 13 papers, according to their scientific suitability.

Every article contains information about the methodological concepts of psychological diagnostic regarding attention and focus.

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Conflict of interests:

The author declares there is no conflict of interests in relation to this manuscript.