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## Soccer Athlete Resilience: the Impact of Controlling Coaching Style, Humour, and Perfectionism

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### Abstract

Many athletes face difficulties recovering after a low performance, injuries or other setbacks. Despite this, the predictors of resilience are not prominent. The cross-sectional design examined the impact of humour, controllable coaching style, and perfectionism on athletes' resilience. Ninety-eight male soccer players were purposely selected from students who competed in the Vice Chancellor Cup in 2022. Among the 98 individuals, 58.17% belonged to the 18–25 age group. Four instruments were used: the shorter, almost perfect scale, the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and the controlling coaching style scale. The findings showed that humour ( $t=2.774$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) had a positive impact on resilience, whereas a controlling coaching style had an adverse effect ( $t= -2.399$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). It is concluded that coaching style and personality factors jointly interact to predict resilience ( $F= 3.643$   $P < 0.5$ ). The results suggest that coaching style and humour should be considered when developing interventions to promote resilience.

**Keywords:** Controlling coaching, Perfectionism, Humour, Resilience, Athletes.

## 1 | Introduction

Millions of people worldwide play and watch soccer, commonly referred to as football. Soccer players may experience intense physical, mental, and emotional strain, Particularly during competitive games and high-stakes events. While soccer has numerous advantages, athletes may experience negative occurrences, daily difficulties, and increased psychological stress. Though they don't always succeed, athletes strive to win. They sometimes settle a draw, and other times, they settle a loss. The top teams in professional sports may lose up to 40% of games [1]. Even for the few athletes with minor performance setbacks, additional challenges persist, including injuries and strained coach-student relationships. As a result, resilience has become an increasingly important quality for soccer players to develop.

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According to Goodman et al. [2], resilience is the collection of personal competencies that allow one to manage, adapt, and navigate adversity effectively. Resilience refers to an athlete's ability to recover effectively from adversity, tragedy, threats, and outside stressors, such as personal, organizational, and competitive pressures. Low resilience has been associated with detrimental effects, including the induction of somatic and cognitive anxiety, anti-social sports behavior burnout, and athletes' withdrawal in terms of performance [3]. Young athletes may suffer unfavourable developmental outcomes, such as bad coach relationships, negative peer influences, and so on, if they do not learn positive coping mechanisms in the face of adversity in the sports environment.

Scientists are working to figure out why certain people can perform well under duress and overcome life obstacles, especially those related to their sports endeavors. The coaching style coaches employ plays a significant role in shaping the resilience of soccer athletes. Soccer players require the chance to make errors, grow from setbacks, and accept responsibility for their actions. A controlling coaching style may stifle these essential learning experiences, decreasing athlete resilience. When coaches exert too much control over their players' actions and decisions, it can hinder the development of resilience. A controlling coaching style is characterized by excessive micromanagement, strict rules, and a lack of autonomy given to players.

Moreover, dominating coaches frequently use authoritarian, forceful, and threatening techniques to force their beliefs on athletes while downplaying or denying the opinions and feelings of the athletes [4]. As a result, Bartholomaeus et al. [5] concluded that coaches acting domineeringly and disrespectfully toward players can make athletes perform less well and instil a fear of failure. Consequently, a dominating coaching approach may be linked to resilience.

Humour may be crucial in helping athletes build resilience. According to Fritz et al. [6], humour encompasses any stimuli or interaction perceived as funny, enjoyable, or lighthearted. Finding humour in difficult situations can serve as a coping mechanism for athletes facing adversity, as humour can help athletes maintain perspective, stay positive during tough times, and build camaraderie with teammates. Soccer athletes who can laugh at themselves, find joy in the game despite setbacks, and maintain a sense of humour under pressure are better equipped to bounce back from defeats, injuries, or other challenges they may encounter. Accordingly, humour may reduce emotions of fear, anxiety, sadness, rage, and/or [7]. Furthermore, humor has the potential to positively impact interpersonal interactions by promoting positive outcomes and reducing negative emotions. As a result, coaches incorporate humor into their training sessions.

One of the factors that may predict soccer players' resilience is perfectionism. Perfectionism is a multifaceted personality trait defined as possessing extremely high, frequently unreal standards and expectations and working tirelessly to meet them [8]. Additionally, perfectionists have a great need to be approved by others. Inclination to judge oneself too harshly based on how well one believes criteria have been met [8]. On one hand, setting high standards and striving for excellence can drive athletes to improve their skills and performance.

On the other hand, when perfectionism becomes excessive or unrealistic, it may result in unfavourable effects, including anxiety and failure-related worry. The fear of making mistakes or falling short of perfection can undermine confidence and mental toughness on the field. Success likelihood is low in perfectionism as standards are disproportionately high. Assessments can increase evaluations of discrepancy between capability and performance following failure, leading to self-criticism [9]. Perfectionist worries were revealed to predict burnout among university soccer athletes [10]. Perfectionism could crucially affect individuals' resilience.

## **2 | Statement of the Problem**

Resilience is widely acknowledged as a crucial component of athletes' performance, but little research has been done on the subject in the Nigerian setting. Few studies examined how Nigerian elite athletes' resilience to stress affects their ability to recover [11] and the moderating function of resilience in workplace mobbing and referees' perceived stress in south-west Nigeria, the combined prediction of controlling coaching style,

humour and perfectionism on resilience has not been examined in any of the evaluated research. Consequently, these issues must be further investigated to bridge the gap in Nigerian research activities.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the resilience levels of soccer athletes in Nigeria and identifying the factors contributing to their resilience.

The study posed the following research questions:

- I. What is the interactive effect of perfectionism, humour and controlling leadership style on resilience?
- II. What is the difference between defenders, midfielders and attackers on resilience?

### **Hypotheses**

For the aim of the investigation, the following hypotheses were developed and put to the test:

- I. There will be a significant joint prediction of both perfectionism, humour and controlling leadership style on resilience.
- II. There will be significant differences between defenders, midfielders, and attackers regarding resilience.

Our understanding of the complex connections between humour, perfectionism, and resilience in sports will grow due to this study. Coaches and sports psychologists can better assist athletes in developing resilience with more understanding, particularly in physically demanding sports like soccer. The findings can be applied to different sports contexts and could impact more all-encompassing treatments to foster resilience in various situations.

## **2.1 | Concept of Resilience**

Resilience is a multifaceted quality with various definitions. Vitali et al. [12] define resilience as an individual's ability to thrive despite adversity, suggesting it is a stable personal quality that can be observed despite hardships. Fletcher and Sarkar [13] conducted a study to define psychological resilience concerning sports. And defined the concept as the role of mental processes and behavior in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effects of stressors. However, it is vital to acknowledge that demonstrating resilience in one aspect of life does not guarantee it in others. Being resilient is a dynamic process that changes with time rather than a set attribute.

Kegelaers [14] further explains that environmental and situational factors can influence resilience and can be fostered or developed actively. In-depth definitions of resilience in sports are given by Gupta and McCarthy [15], who defines it as the environmentally adaptable, interaction-dominant, dynamic-process trajectory that encompasses a sporting individual's meta-cognitive-emotional-behavioural capacities to maintain a positive equilibrium and successfully adapt to a diverse range of sport-related adversities. This definition emphasizes how an athlete's response to adversities changes over time due to the temporal component of resilience and its interaction with the environment.

This study defines resilience as a person's capacity to recover or continue functioning after encountering stress, including diseases, injuries, poor performance, problems during selection, or interpersonal conflicts.

## **2.2 | Controlling Coaching Style**

A controlling coaching style is typified by authoritarian actions, a lot of pressure, and a lack of athlete autonomy, according to Bartholomew et al. [5]. These include the pressure coaches put on athletes to adopt their viewpoints and agendas, regardless of the athletes' own. This concept is too general and does not provide concrete instances of regulating actions. CCB is defined by Hodge and Lonsdale [4] as a coaching style characterized by the use of coercive, threatening, and authoritarian methods to impose the coach's ideas on athletes while ignoring or dismissing the latter's perspectives and emotions. Although this definition provided instances of potentially controlling behaviors, it ignores nuanced forms of control in favour of negative strategies.

The definition of CCB given by Amorose and Anderson-Butcher [16] is a coaching style that emphasizes external rewards and punishments, restricts athlete choice, and discourages independent thinking. This definition strongly emphasises outside motivators while ignoring the coach's authority over training methods and athlete liberty. Deci and Ryan [17] worked on a study that shows coaching approach that jeopardizes the psychological autonomy, competence, and relatedness that athletes require. This explanation puts more emphasis on internal psychological variables than it does on the coach's overt actions.

Matosic et al. [18] define a coaching style characterized by excessive micromanagement, rigid training plans, and a lack of trust in athletes' decision-making abilities. This definition relies heavily on specific coaching techniques and oversimplifies the concept of control, overlooking the potential good intentions behind some controlling actions, such as ensuring safety.

Controlling coaching does not have a single, widely recognized definition. Within this writing, controlling coaching behavior describes the behaviors and mindsets of a coach who seeks to control, subjugate, or exercise undue influence over their players or athletes. The athletes' general performance, well-being, and coaching relationship may suffer from this behavior. A dominating coach may use material rewards, provide directive input, offer harsh criticism, belittle, micromanage, or even abuse someone verbally or emotionally.

## 2.3 | Controlling Coaching Style and Resilience

On the one hand, controlling coaches can help their players realize their full potential by setting high expectations and providing constant guidance. For athletes who require structure and guidance, they can also help foster the development of a strong sense of discipline and attentiveness. Furthermore, his method frees individual athletes from the pressure of making tough decisions. With less ambiguity, they can focus on their objective and give it their all to meet the coach's goals in the way the coach determines will work best for them. Athletes can perform better if given a defined role and instructions on how to fill it. This allows them to focus on their skills instead of being sidetracked by decisions.

Nevertheless, imposing control over coaching methods has a lot of drawbacks. Athletes' resilience can be hampered by controlling coaches who encourage a sense of dependency, insecurity, and anxiety. This could lead to increased stress and a higher risk of burnout. Overly demanding and stressful environments can be produced by domineering coaches, which can raise anxiety levels. Moreover, Lefever et al. [19] showed that athletes who felt their coach was more controlling had worse performance and higher degrees of burnout and competitive anxiety.

Second, controlling coaches risks undermining athletes' autonomy and natural motivation by enforcing rigid rules and processes. In their 1991 study, Ommundsen and Vaglum [20] examined 233 male soccer players aged twelve to sixteen and discovered a connection between perceived sports competence and enjoyment. According to this study, young people's enjoyment of athletics is primarily influenced by their favourable self-perceptions. Thirdly, domineering coaches may employ severe criticism and unfavourable comments to maintain control, which can lower confidence and self-esteem. Lefever et al. [21] provided empirical evidence to support this claim. They discovered that controlling coaching was positively connected with psychological athlete abuse and harassment, with intimidation showing the strongest connections. This may make it more difficult for athletes to remain optimistic in the face of difficulty. Hu et al. [3] discovered that controlling coaching predicted fear of failure. This implies that athletes are more motivated by the desire not to disappoint the coach for fear of coach criticism.

### 2.3.1 | Humour

For several decades, scholars have been enthralled by the intricate psychological phenomena of humour. Different theoretical frameworks provide different insights into their role in interpersonal dynamics and athletic performance. One well-known hypothesis, put out by Freud [22], suggests that comedy serves as a cathartic release mechanism for impulses that have been repressed. These unconscious urges find a socially acceptable expression in-jokes, especially those with aggressive or sexual overtones. While acknowledging the

possibility of emotional release, this perspective ignores the impact of social and cognitive elements on humour perception in sports situations in favour of the unconscious mind.

Wild [23] presents a more optimistic perspective, defining humour as the ability to identify and share positivity even under pressure. Martin [24] proposes that humour arises from paradox, a situation where expectations are violated. This incongruity triggers mental processes like surprise and a need to resolve the absurdity. Social factors, such as shared knowledge and team dynamics, influence how athletes perceive and appreciate humour.

Building on this foundation, Martin et al. [25] categorize humour styles based on their psychological impact. Affiliative comedy uses humour to create social connections through entertainment, whereas self-enhancing humour encourages a positive viewpoint. On the other hand, aggressive and self-defeating styles are considered maladaptive. Humour that undermines oneself by self-deprecation can be considered self-defeating. Harsh humour is directed at other people, which strains relationships and undermines teamwork.

### **2.3.2 | Humour and resilience**

Soccer athletes face immense pressure to perform, leading to stress. Humour acts as a buffer, lowering cortisol and boosting endorphins [26] for a calmer state. This helps them cope with setbacks and anxiety before games. Humour increases happiness and lessens negativity [27]. Reframing stressful situations, like a missed goal, with humour makes them seem less daunting, boosting resilience.

Moreover, Teammates who laugh together build stronger bonds (citation needed). A funny story or joke can ease tension and offer a fresh perspective [28]. This keeps the team motivated during demanding training sessions and helps them overcome obstacles. Resilient teams, built through humour, can better handle the pressures of the game.

### **2.3.3 | Concept of perfectionism**

According to Hollender [29], perfectionism is an innately bad personality trait that shows up as an excessive demand on oneself or others to do perfectly everywhere and at all times. While excessive pressure for flawless performance can be harmful [30], Hamachek [31] distinguishes between neurotic and normal perfectionism. Neurotic athletes set unrealistic goals and struggle with missed shots or fumbles, while normal athletes adapt better, view missed plays as learning opportunities, and maintain confidence. Ellis [32] suggests perfectionists connect self-worth to achievements, potentially oversimplifying the issue for soccer athletes. Flett and Hewitt [8] define perfectionism as striving for excellence with high standards, categorizing it into three types for soccer athletes. Self-oriented perfectionists focus on personal improvement and mastering skills, potentially enhancing their game [8]. Other-oriented perfectionism emphasizes meeting coaches' or teammates' expectations, while socially prescribed perfectionism stems from external pressure to succeed, leading to stress and anxiety for athletes facing the crowd's expectations [33].

### **2.3.4 | Perfectionist and resilience**

For soccer athletes, social comparisons can be detrimental [34]. Constantly comparing skills to teammates or rivals with perfectionist expectations can lead to feelings of inadequacy and hinder resilience [35]. Perfectionists might experience intense negativity and physical stress after a missed goal or poor performance. This can worsen the impact of stressors, making them more vulnerable. Research shows adaptive perfectionism, which has high standards, but self-compassion positively affects well-being [35]. This implies that one can bounce back from setbacks and maintain happiness with such quality. Perfectionism can even increase resilience by fostering drive, work ethic, and the ability to overcome challenges. Adaptive athletes view setbacks as chances to grow and use problem-focused coping strategies, strengthening resilience [35]. Conversely, maladaptive perfectionists see stressors as threats and use avoidance, hindering resilience [35]. They often have lower self-efficacy, less positivity, and more negativity [36].

### 2.3.5 | Positional demands and resilience

The physical demands placed on soccer players differ, which may affect their resilience. Soccer players' positions could be considered in research because of the variations and variability within each position's locomotor activities. Defenders are taller than midfielders but not appreciably taller than attackers, according to Sutton et al. [37]. Because of the physical demands of their job, Defenders ought to be physically challenging, fight aerial combat, and possess the ability to quickly recover from trying circumstances. Defenders must also be mentally tough to handle the pressure of opposing skilled attackers. Though attackers still need to be resilient, strikers might not be as much in demand as midfielders and defenders. Positioning, goal-scoring possibilities, and managing pressure in front of the goal are more of their priorities. For instance, Kirkcaldy [38] discovered that soccer players who occupied defensive positions exhibited more excellent emotional stability than those who occupied offensive ones. According to playing positions, Mouloud [39] found no statistically significant differences in anxiety among young football players.

Soccer players' positions can also affect their relationships with their teammates and the level of support they receive. Positions like defenders and midfielders, who constantly play close to one another, may have higher levels of support and camaraderie than goalkeepers or forwards. This can help them maintain their fortitude amid challenging games. However, without additional resources, athletes in solitary or less supported positions—such as strikers—may find it challenging to maintain their resilience.

## 3 | Methods

Here, the investigator looked at the influence of humour, controlling coaching style and perfectionism on resilience among soccer athletes at Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. As a result, the study used a cross-sectional approach to gather its data. The independent variables under investigation include humour, controlling coaching style, and perfectionism, while resilience is the study-dependent variable.

### 3.1 | Population and Sampling Technique

The research's target population comprises soccer athletes from Nasarawa, a state university located in Nigeria. Ninety-eight (98) athletes were haphazardly drawn from the tertiary institution athletes. Since only soccer athletes were of interest in this study, a purposive sampling technique was used to select soccer athletes who took part in the vice chancellor soccer competition in 2022. Visitors, staff and non-athletes were excluded from the study

Three of the completed surveys were considered incomplete out of all the gathered surveys. Following the removal of all incomplete surveys, 98 samples were obtained. Regarding the demographic traits, all participants were male; most were between 18 and 25 years old ( $N=57$ , 58.16%). 11 athletes (11.22%) were less than 18. Twenty-six athletes (26.5%) were between 26-33 years of age, while 4 athletes (0.04) were over 34 years old.

## 4 | Instrument

### The Brief Resilience Scale

The tool, which measures bouncing back from stress, was created by Smith et al. [40]. There is a reversal score for items 2, 4, and 6. Items are 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neutral, 4) agree, and 5) strongly agree. Nigeria recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72 [41].

### Coping Humour Scale (CHS)

Lefcourt and Martin [42] developed a seven-item self-report measure to measure the extent to which participants reported using humour as a stress reliever. The statements are self-descriptions like I have often found that my problems have been greatly reduced when I tried to find something funny in them, I often lose my sense of humour when I'm having problems, as well as I can usually find something to laugh or joke about

even in trying situations. All of the items are added together to get the final score. The creators discovered that the CHS's internal consistency was average ( $\alpha = 0.60$  to  $0.70$ ). Cronbach's alpha in this study was  $0.57$ .

### The Controlling Coach Behaviors Scale (CCBS)

This is a 15-item test created by Bartholomew et al. [5] to find out how athletes felt about managing motivational tactics in the context of sports. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement is the questionnaire's instruction, and it starts with the stem in my soccer team. A 5-point rating system, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree, is used to record responses. This study yielded a Cronbach alpha of  $0.75$ , as evidenced by Adeniran's study [43].

### Short almost perfect scale-R

Slaney et al. [44] were the ones who first developed the APS-R. The shortened version was created by Rice et al. [45]. For this study, a Cronbach alpha of  $0.67$  was obtained.

### Procedure

Before any data was collected, all participants provided informed consent. The questionnaires were responded to anonymously and voluntarily and were completed by the participants. During the questionnaire administration, the club's sports director or coach was not present. Participants were urged to give truthful answers and to ask any questions they might have of the on-site investigator.

### Statistical analysis

SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the data. The results were summarized with frequencies and percentages for categorical variables and mean with standard deviations for quantitative variables. Using inferential statistics, hypothesis 1 was analysed using regression, while hypothesis 2 was analysed using ANOVA. Athletes who played as goalkeepers, centre back, full back and wing-back were regarded as defenders and coded 1. Defensive midfielders, central midfielders and attacking midfielders were regarded as midfielders and coded 2. Meanwhile, wingers, supporting strikers, and strikers were regarded as attackers and coded 3.

## 5 | Result

Table 1. Descriptive statistic and correlations among the variables.

Variable	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Resilience	19.76	2.91	1.00									
2 Humour	23.31	3.36	0.22 <sup>**</sup>	1.00								
3 Coaching	46.57	9.09	-0.18 <sup>**</sup>	0.23 <sup>**</sup>	1.00							
4 Reward	11.47	6.16	-0.11	0.25 <sup>**</sup>	0.54 <sup>**</sup>	1.00						
5 Negative	12.22	3.36	-0.24 <sup>**</sup>	0.32 <sup>**</sup>	0.69 <sup>****</sup>	0.20	1.00					
6 Intimidation	11.88	3.84	-0.33 <sup>**</sup>	0.14	0.80 <sup>**</sup>	0.31 <sup>**</sup>	0.44	1.00				
7 Personal control	8.37	2.86	-0.19	-0.072	0.68	0.17	0.37 <sup>**</sup>	0.59	1.00			
8 Perfectionism	29.08	7.60	0.015	0.25 <sup>**</sup>	0.014	0.33 <sup>**</sup>	-0.15	-0.002	-0.085	1.000		
9 Standard	16.00	3.45	-0.001	0.20	-0.034	0.24	0.266 <sup>**</sup>	0.034	-0.130	0.755 <sup>**</sup>	1.00	
10 Discrepancy	13.71	3.51	0.15	0.16	0.041	0.13	-0.044	0.099	0.048	0.727 <sup>**</sup>	0.242 <sup>*</sup>	1.00

\*Note: =  $P < 0.05$  (2 - tailed)

The study variables' inter-correlations and descriptive statistics are shown in *Table 1*. Resilience had a negative correlation ( $r = -0.18$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) with regulating coaching and a positive correlation ( $r = 0.22$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) with humour, as the table illustrates. Perfectionism and resilience were found to have a negligible connection ( $r = 0.015$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Hypothesis 1.** It proposed that strong interactive prediction of coaching and psychological traits would occur (humour, perfectionism and controlling coaching) on resilience among soccer athletes of Nasarawa State University.

**Table 3. Multiple regression analysis summary table demonstrating the combined prediction of resilience among Nasarawa State University soccer athletes based on coaching and psychological traits (humour, perfectionism, and controlling coaching).**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	85.626	3	28.542		
Residual	736.496	94	7.835	3.643	0.016 <sup>b</sup>
Total	822.122	97			

R = 0.323, R-square = 0.104, adjusted R-square = 0.076, standard error = 2.799, significant @ 0.05

Table 3 indicates that the predictor variables positively affect resilience among soccer athletes of Nasarawa State University. The result shows that humour, perfectionism and controlling coaching made a 10.4% prediction of resilience. The standard error of 2.799 indicates that, on average, athletes deviated from the true value by 2.799 limits of that measure. The analysis of variance for the multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio of 3.643, which was significant at  $P < 0.5$ . This result implies combining the three predictor variables (humour, perfectionism, and controlling coaching) predicted resilience among Nasarawa State University soccer athletes.

**Table 4. Multiple regression analysis summary table demonstrating independent prediction of psychological and coaching characteristics (humour, perfectionism and controlling coaching) on resilience among Nasarawa State University soccer athletes.**

Predictive Factors	Unstandardized Coefficient $\hat{\alpha}$	Standard Error SED	Standard Coefficient $\beta$	t	P
Constant	18.135	2.336		7.763	0.000
Humour	0.249	0.090	0.288	2.774	0.007
Coaching	-0.077	0.032	-0.241	-2.399	0.018
Perfectionism	-0.020	0.039	-0.053	-0.524	0.602

Dependent variable: resilience

Table 4 above illustrates that employees' humour and controlling coaching style substantially contributed to resilience prediction. While controlling coaching style had a negative effect ( $R^2 = -0.241$ ,  $t = -2.399$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), Humour had a significant positive effect ( $R^2 = 0.288$ ,  $t = 2.774$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, perfectionism did not significantly predict resilience ( $R^2 = -0.053$ ,  $t = -0.524$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ).

**Hypothesis 2.** There will be significant positional differences in resilience in Table 5.

**Table 5. Resilience scores by soccer athlete position.**

Variable	Types	N	Mean	S.D	F	P	Significance
Position	Defender	41	4.05	1.06	2.42	0.09	Insignificant
	Midfielder	43	3.72	0.89			
	Attacker	14	3.43	1.09			

The mean of resilience scores differed in the context of the soccer athlete position. Defenders showed higher resilience ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $S.D = 1.06$ ) than midfielders ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $S.D = 1.09$ ) while attackers showed the lowest resilience ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $S.D = 1.09$ ). However, the difference was not significant as the p-value was greater than 0.05 (0.09).

## 6 | Discussion

The current study on the impact of perfectionism, controlling coaching style and humour on student athletes' resilience. The findings indicate a positive connection between the predictor variables of resilience (humour, perfectionism, and controlling coaching). This implies that the relationship between coaching style and personality factors affects resilience. Other investigations have supported this conclusion. For instance, according to Weinstein and Ryan [46], a statistically significant variation was seen in the sport performance of young athletes when it came to management, coaching style, extrinsic motivation, and antisocial behavior.

This study found that humour significantly impacted resilience, suggesting that athletes who use humour as a coping mechanism are more likely to achieve higher resilience scores. Humour aids in coping by allowing



individuals to distance themselves from the distressing things that happen during a game. These findings are consistent with those of deCruz-Dixon [47], who found that self-defeating and affiliative humour were associated with resilience.

In this study, controlling coaches may cause athletes to feel that outside forces govern their behaviors and that they are required to participate in the sport rather than out of a passion for the game, leading them to feel that they must rather than want to play the game. According to Schmidt and Stein [48], those who do sports out of obligation typically report lower enjoyment and higher effort costs. This is consistent with research by Hu et al. [3], which showed that a controlling coaching style was associated with a negative correlation with fundamental psychological needs and that athletes' fear of failure was influenced indirectly by these requirements and a controlling environment. This confirms research demonstrating how teaching strategies that promote students' autonomous motivations—such as their needs, interests, preferences, and personal objectives—can effectively elicit students' participative behaviours [49].

In this study, perfectionism did not significantly influence resilience. This contrasts with research by Johnson [50], who discovered that perfectionism among athletes negatively correlated with PWB and could also be used to predict particular aspects of PWB. This also differs from the results of Raeis et al. [51], who discovered that perfectionism reduced the resilience of the students under investigation. The contrasting relationship directions that imply the subdimensions balance one another further support the finding by Stoeber and Otto [52] that not all perfectionism is maladaptive.

Analysis showed an insignificant difference in players' positions on resilience. This supports the conclusions made by [53]. The outcomes showed no differences in the quality of decision-making between the different positional roles. This was also in line with research by Mouloud [39], who discovered no discernible variations in self-confidence, physical state anxiety, or cognitive state anxiety among young football players based on positions played.

## 6.1 | Implication of Study

The research aims to contribute to the understanding of the joint prediction of perfectionism, humour, and controlling leadership style on resilience among soccer athletes in Nigeria. Prior studies have mostly looked at these factors separately, ignoring any possible interactions between them. The combined impacts of humour, perfectionism, and a controlling coaching style on resilience in Indigenous soccer players are examined in this study, which contributes to our understanding of the potential unique consequences of these elements on Indigenous players' mental health, overall experience in the sport, and performance. The results of this study may be used to modify coaching strategies and support structures to meet Indigenous athletes' needs better, enhancing their performance and well-being in soccer. By focusing on soccer players, the study immediately transfers its findings to a demanding, performance-oriented workplace. The results can inform coaching strategies and interventions to enhance athletes' resilience and well-being. The findings will provide legislators, coaches, and psychologists with valuable data to develop targeted interventions to increase resilience in this particular population.

## 6.2 | Limitations and Future Directions

This study's cross-sectional methodology restricts our capacity to ascertain causality. Future research may benefit from a longitudinal strategy to address this problem. Although concentrating on Nigerian soccer players provides insightful information, it is possible that the results cannot be applied universally to different cultural contexts without considering possible differences in how these psychological aspects manifest and influence behavior. Future studies may include comparisons between different cultural situations to get around this restriction. Information provided by the self: perfectionism, humour, and resilience can all have biases and accuracy limits when self-reported data is the only source used. The validity of the results could be improved by including data from other sources, such as teammate or coach evaluations.

## 7 | Conclusion

In conclusion, this study makes a distinctive contribution to the fields of sports psychology and coaching development by examining the joint prediction of perfectionism, humour, and controlling coaching style on resilience among soccer athletes in Nigeria. By analysing these variables in the unique cultural setting of Nigerian soccer, the research offers essential new understandings of the intricate relationships that influence players' resilience to stress. The study can substantially contribute to our understanding of athlete resilience by examining the unique interactions between resilience, humour, controlling leadership styles, and perfectionism in the Nigerian soccer culture.

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