

ISSN: 2392-5442 ESSN : 2602-540X		Sport system journal
V/12 N/01 Year/2025		International scientific journal published by: Ziane Achour –Djelfa- Algeria
P 150 - 159		Received: 2024-12-15 A ccepted: 2025-03-04

Psychological skills and their relationship to competitive anxiety among Algerian football players.

Zane omar ^{1*}, hadji mohamed larbi ²

¹university of Algiers 3 (algeria), omarzsport@hotmail.com

² university of Algiers 3 (algeria), hadjimedlarbieps@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to highlight the level of certain psychological skills, specifically the relaxation skill, and its relationship with sport competition anxiety among Algerian football players. Recently, football has experienced significant developments affecting all its aspects, including the physical, technical, tactical and legal aspects, and in particular, the psychological aspect, which is considered as one of the most influential areas in sports competition. Those who are responsible for the latter have incorporated sports psychological preparation as an important and complementary factor in the process of physical and skill preparation by training specialists in sports psychological counseling with the aim of developing psychological skills among players and trying to reduce anxiety levels during and after sports competition.

In this study, we adopted the descriptive method, which is suitable for such studies. We used the Psychological Skills Scale as well as the Sport Competition Anxiety Scale, which were distributed to a sample of 40 players active in the clubs Paradou Athletic Club and Étoile Sportive de Ben Aknoun. These players were deliberately chosen because their teams are among the top-ranked this season, thus it is assumed that their anxiety levels would be higher.

Keywords: Relaxation Skill; Sport Competition Anxiety; Algerian Football.

** Corresponding author*

1. INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the team sports activities universally recognized as the number one sport worldwide, having spread across all corners of the globe. Consequently, many people play and love it, and this status was not achieved by chance but is rather the natural result of the game's abundance of skills and fundamental experiences in play, which evoke enjoyment and excitement for both players and spectators alike. For football players to learn and master these skills, they must possess good motor and psychological qualities, which are acquired through physical and psychological training. This training is based on various elements of preparation, whether physical, skill-based, or psychological, to elevate the player to the highest levels of athletic performance.

Psychological preparation is considered one of the essential and indispensable components of the training unit, without which achieving success is impossible. In recent years, psychological factors have gained increasing importance, and sports training is no longer limited to developing physical attributes and building motor abilities but it has also evolved to include the development of psychological traits and skills, refining all personality components of both the player and the coach. This necessitates the presence of specialists in sports psychology. Regardless of how well-versed a coach is in psychological preparation, they often lack sufficient time to provide psychological help and support. Psychological treatment is not merely about motivational phrases such as "Be men," "Eat the grass," or "Don't be afraid." In fact, the coach might even be the source of stress, anxiety and fear if their style and approach are not aligned with scientific principles and methods. This shortfall is considered one of the leading causes of competition anxiety and a failure to fulfill the coach's role in the guidance process.

There are many perspectives regarding the role of the sports coach in relation to the team and it is reasonable to assume that a successful relationship between the coach and the player requires effort from both parties. However, the burden of ensuring the success of this relationship often lies primarily and exclusively on the coach's shoulders and their status. This illustrates the coach's role within the team, in the following points: observing the adaptation and rehabilitation of injured players, observing players' conditions and identifying those who require social support to manage their fears (Ahmed Ben Faouzi, 2003, p. 233).

Some researchers have investigated the relationship between anxiety levels and competitive athletic performance. Their research results indicate that a specific level of anxiety helps in delivering optimal athletic performance. A certain level of anxiety may help one athlete achieve their best performance, while the same level of anxiety may hinder another athlete from reaching the expected achievement. This difference in the impact of the same anxiety level on different athletes is due to the individual athlete's perception of their abilities and their understanding of the nature of the competitive sporting situation they are facing.

Observations from professionals in the field of psychological preparation for athletes have shown that athletes characterized by anxiety as a trait of their personality perform better when they are in this state before competition, whereas their performance declines when they are not in this state. For such athletes, anxiety is considered part of their behavioral pattern and a style they rely on, and distancing themselves from anxiety does not benefit them in competition. On the other hand, some players experience intense anxiety before the start of a competition to the extent that they find it difficult to interact with others, speak to them, or even listen to instructions and they may also experience nausea and vomiting. For these athletes, these symptoms are positive indicators of their psychological readiness for competition, and the absence like anxiety symptoms before competition is considered a negative indicator of their technical readiness (Ikhlas Mohamed, 2001, p. 166). Anxiety serves as a warning or signal to mobilize all psychological, physical, and bodily values to defend and protect oneself. Conversely, anxiety, whether as a trait or state, can negatively affect a player's behavior and actions, prompting the athlete to redevelop and enhance psychological skills such as the ability to relax - the ability to visualize - the ability to cope with anxiety - the ability to build self-confidence and the achievement motivation.

2. Problem Statement:

The problem of this study revolves around identifying the level of relaxation skill and its relationship with the emergence of anxiety during sports competitions, both as a state and a trait, among Algerian football players. Through a prospective study conducted within some clubs of the First Professional League, we found a complete absence of specialists in psychological preparation, with the coach taking on this role, which requires knowledge, thought, and specialization and this negatively affects the development of players' psychological skills and

their ability to cope with anxiety during sports competitions. This

observation raises interest and motivates an attempt to highlight the importance of psychological preparation by specialists and to propose the integration of a psychological trainer to provide psychological counseling as a process accompanying physical and skill-based training. This is especially relevant in the field of football, where anxiety is considered one of the most important emotions, viewed as one of the key psychological phenomena accompanying players' activity. Football is one of the most popular sports, attracting attention from researchers regarding psychological aspects, especially since this game has gained wide popularity among both young and old from various cultures and countries. With the world becoming more interconnected, allowing anyone from anywhere to watch a football match, football's popularity on the one hand, and competition as a means of evaluating performance and training effectiveness on the other hand, have significant psychological impacts on players. This makes football matches and competitions full of excitement and emotions, leading to player anxiety, which necessitates psychological care and the development of essential psychological skills to cope with anxiety. Based on the above, the following questions can be raised:

2.1 General Question:

Is there a correlation between the lack of development in relaxation skills and the emergence of sport competition anxiety among Algerian football players?

2.2 Sub-questions:

- Is there a correlation between the lack of development in relaxation skills and the emergence of the state of anxiety among Algerian football players?
- Is there a correlation between the lack of development in relaxation skills and the emergence of the trait of anxiety among Algerian football players?.

3. Hypotheses:

3.1 General Hypothesis:

- There is a correlation between the lack of development in relaxation skills and the emergence of sport competition anxiety among Algerian football players.

3.2 Sub-hypotheses:

- There is a correlation between the lack of development in relaxation skills and the emergence of the state of anxiety among Algerian football players.
- There is a correlation between the lack of development in relaxation skills and the emergence of the trait of anxiety among Algerian football players.

4. Importance of the Study:

- Highlighting the relationship between the lack of relaxation skills and the emergence of competition anxiety as a state and trait among Algerian football players.
- Aiming to assist coaches in conducting the necessary psychological counseling process during sports competitions.
- Aiming to propose the inclusion of specialists in sports psychological counseling to develop players' psychological skills.
- Working on aligning sports psychological preparation with physical preparation to enrich the scientific body of knowledge with new facts about the topic.

5. Objectives of the Study:

- Raising awareness among coaches about the importance of psychological preparation and aligning it with physical and skill training.
- Understanding the reality of psychological counseling in football clubs.
- Proposing some solutions to enhance psychological care for Algerian football players.
- Identifying the correlation between the lack of relaxation skills and the emergence of competitive anxiety among Algerian football players.

6.research methodology:

6.1 Population and Sample of the Study:

The study population consists of a sample of 40 players belonging to elite football clubs in the U-19 category.

6.2Study Fields:

6.2.1 time Frame: This study was conducted during the 2023-2024 sports season.

6.2.2 Location: The study was conducted at the stadiums of the teams Paradou Athletic Club and Étoile Sportive de Ben Aknown.

7.Study Methodology:

There is no doubt that any scientific work aspiring to be characterized by scientific accuracy must establish a plan, method or approach that outlines the steps followed to reach the achieved results. Without this, the work would lack precision and systematic rigor. Therefore, scientific necessity dictates using the descriptive method due to its suitability for the nature of the topic.

8.Study Tools:

The study utilized the Sport Competition Anxiety Scale designed by Martens, which is a reliable and valid tool for studying individual differences in the trait of anxiety. It measures the football player's tendency or inclination to perceive competitive situations. This test is an adapted version of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory developed by Spielberger, modified to be a significant measure in the sports field instead of the general domain. It was then translated into Arabic by Dr. Mohamed Hassan Allawi.

The Sport Competition Anxiety Scale consists of three dimensions: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and self-confidence.

Additionally, the study used the Psychological Skills Scale designed by Stephan Bell.

9.Definition of Terms:

9.1Relaxation Skill:

9.1.1Conceptual Definition:

Ratib defined it as a person's temporary and deliberate withdrawal from activity, allowing them to fully recover and benefit from their latent energies, whether physical, mental or emotional. It is a characteristic determined by the absence of activity and attention, whether physical, mental or emotional (Mohammadi Ahmed: 2014, p. 34).

9.1.2 Operational Definition:

It is one of the mental skills that help in relieving stress during training and competition outside of physical activity.

9.2Anxiety:

9.2.1 Conceptual Definition:

It is a widespread fear and feeling of insecurity, expecting a catastrophe, or it may escalate to the point of panic (Osama Kamel Ratib, 1997, p. 15).

9.2.2 Operational Definition:

It is a psychological state characterized by fear, confusion, distress and panic due to a perceived danger.

Anxiety in Sports: It is one of the important emotions, viewed as one of the most significant psychological phenomena influencing athletes' performance. This influence can be positive, motivating them to exert more effort, or negative, hindering their performance (Ammar Darwish, Rachid Amin Nadawi, 2005, p. 38).

9.3Football:

9.31 .Conceptual Definition:

Football is a team sport practiced by all people. Romi Jamil pointed out: "Football, above all, is a team sport that adapts to all segments of society" (Mohamed Hazem Mohamed Abou Youssef, 2005, p. 19).

9.3.2 Operational Definition:

It is a game that requires the development of players' physical, skill and psychological attributes so that they can endure for a long time and adapt to all the variables in the game without a decrease in their efficiency. Therefore, playing football must rely on all physical, skill, and psychological abilities to achieve success and win matches.



The Level of Relaxation Skill and Its Relationship with Sport Competition Anxiety among Algerian Football Players

Table (01): Represents the correlation between the lack of development of relaxation skills and the emergence of competition anxiety as a trait.

Statistical Coefficients	Correlation Coefficient	Degree of	Significance level	Statistical significance
Dimensions	RC	Freedom		
Anxiety as a trait	0.79	38	0.05	Statistically significant
Relaxation skill				

Analysis and Discussion:

From the table above, it is observed that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the Psychological Skills Scale and the Competition Anxiety as a Trait Scale, applied to a sample of 40 football players belonging to elite football clubs in the U-19 category, was $RC = 0.79$. After comparing it with the tabulated RT at a degree of freedom of 38 and a significance level of 0.05, the tabulated value was significantly smaller than the calculated RC. Accordingly, it can be stated that there is a strong correlation between the lack of development of basic psychological skills and competition anxiety as a trait. Therefore, it is concluded that there is statistical significance between these psychological skills among football players in the Algerian Professional League 1.

Table (02): Represents the correlation between the lack of development of the relaxation skill and the occurrence of competition anxiety as a state.

Statistical Coefficients	Correlation Coefficient	Degree of	Significance level	Statistical significance
Dimensions	RC	Freedom DL		
Anxiety as a trait	0.69	38	0.05	Statistically significant
Relaxation skill				



The Level of Relaxation Skill and Its Relationship with Sport Competition Anxiety among Algerian Football Players

Analysis and Discussion:

From the table above, it is observed that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the Psychological Skills Scale and the Competition Anxiety as a Trait Scale, applied to a sample of 40 football players belonging to elite football clubs in the U-19 category, was $RC = 0.69$. After comparing it with the tabulated RT at a degree of freedom of 38 and a significance level of 0.05, the tabulated value was significantly smaller than the calculated RC. Accordingly, it can be stated that there is a strong correlation between the lack of development of the relaxation skill and the occurrence of competitive anxiety as a state. Therefore, there is statistical significance in the correlation coefficient between these psychological skills or characteristics among Algerian football players.

10. Conclusions:

Within the framework of the results obtained from this study, and within the limits of the research sample and field procedures, the researcher presents the following conclusions

Regarding the first sub-hypothesis, which states that there is a correlation between the lack of development of the relaxation skill and the occurrence of anxiety as a state among Algerian football players, it was found that most of the tested players do not have the ability to cope with competitive anxiety as a state. This is due to their weakness or deficiency in psychological skills, particularly the relaxation skill. From this, it can be understood that there is a strong relationship between the lack of development of the relaxation skill and the increased levels of anxiety as a state among players. Therefore, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis has been confirmed.

As for the second sub-hypothesis, which states that there is a correlation between the lack of development of the relaxation skill and the occurrence of anxiety as a trait among Algerian football players, the results of the field study confirmed that a low level of relaxation skill led to an increased occurrence of anxiety as a trait. From this, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between the high level of trait anxiety among players and the lack of development of the relaxation skill. Therefore, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis has been confirmed.

Alternatives:

-The necessity of paying attention to psychological preparation in sports and incorporating it consistently into the training process.

-Training coaches to apply the counseling process in parallel with physical training.

- Attempting to develop the necessary psychological skills to alleviate sport competition anxiety.

- Highlighting the importance of having specialists in the field of sports psychology.

- Proposing psychological counseling programs to reduce sport competition anxiety among football players.

11.List of References:

1.Books :

- Ahmed Ben Faouzi(2003), Principles of Sports Psychology, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1st Edition, Cairo.

- Ikhlal Mohammed(2001) Guidance and Psychological Counseling, University of Alexandria, Egypt.

- Mohammed Hazem Mohammed Abou Youssef(2005), Foundations of Selecting Youth in Football, Dar Al-Wafa for Printing and Publishing, 1st Edition, Egypt.

- Ammar Darwish, Rachid Amin Nadawi(2005),Anxiety and Its Relationship with Performance Level in Handball Players, University of Baghdad, College of Physical Education, Journal of Physical Education, Iraq

- Osama Kamel Rateb: (1997) Sports Psychology, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, kahirah

2. article :

- Mohamedi Ahmed (2014), The Relationship Between Mental Psychological Skills and Performance in Handball Players, Youth Category, PhD Thesis, University of Algiers 3.