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Psychological hesitation and its relation to the accuracy of football goal scoring among first-year students at the College of physical education and sports science - Al-Mustansiriyah University

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Abstract

The significance of this research lies in its focus on the psychological factor, which is one of the important and influential factors in the accuracy of goal scoring. The research problem involved identifying the level of influence of the psychological factor on football players, as football is a sport beloved by many people. The research aimed to understand the relationship between psychological frequency and the skill of scoring accuracy in football. To achieve this, we selected a purposive sample consisting of 22 players from the students of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Al-Mustansiriya University, out of a total of 30 players, making the sample 73% of the total original population. The researcher used a descriptive method with a survey approach as it was suitable for the nature of the research. The researcher concluded that there is a variation between the level of psychological frequency and the accuracy of goal scoring among football players and that there is no significant difference between psychological frequency and scoring accuracy in football due to the lack of attention to the psychological aspect.

Keywords: Football, psychological, hesitation

Introduction

The development that has occurred is an inevitable result in all aspects of life. Football is one of the games that have been subjected to scientific principles and foundations, which is the secret behind this rapid and successive development in performance. This includes playing techniques and both defensive and offensive strategies. Undoubtedly, there is a development in the sports sector in general and football in particular. Football has incorporated elements of physical fitness, tactical skill performance, and psychological preparation of players. The basic offensive skills are considered as one of the solid foundations for a football player, focusing on overcoming the opponent's defenses. Shooting is part of the offensive skills and is the primary means of determining the final result of the teams. The accuracy of shooting is affected by several factors, which can be negative or positive, predominantly including the psychological factor, which is one of the important and influential factors on scoring accuracy. Given this importance, many specialists in the sports field have conducted prospective and accurate studies on psychological factors and their relation to sports performance and the benefits of employing these factors to enhance sports performance. Therefore, the researcher decided to study psychological hesitation in the sports field and evaluate it among football players as it is a psychological state with a direct impact on the athlete's performance. This study helps coaches in directing psychological preparation in a way that reduces the intensity and impact of psychological hesitation on the athlete's level. In team sports like football, psychological emotions play a prominent role that cannot be ignored. An athlete participating in sports championships without proper psychological preparation may exhibit certain psychological traits that hinder sports performance. Given this importance, many specialists in the sports field have conducted prospective and accurate studies on psychological factors and their relation to sports performance and the benefits of employing these factors to enhance sports performance. Therefore, the researcher decided to study psychological hesitation in the sports field and evaluate it among football players as it is a psychological state with a direct impact on the athlete's performance.

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This study helps coaches in directing psychological preparation in a way that reduces the intensity and impact of psychological hesitation on the athlete's level. In team sports like football, psychological emotions play a prominent role that cannot be ignored. An athlete participating in sports championships without proper psychological preparation may exhibit certain psychological traits that hinder sports performance ^[1].

Many professional players have faced situations where they failed, evidenced by missed penalty kicks by even the best players. This can be attributed to psychological reasons, among which psychological hesitation may be one of the most important reasons for some failures in scoring. Therefore, the issue of psychological preparation has become very important, concentrated upon in training programs, with the struggle now occurring in the psychological realm in these training programs. From here comes the importance of this study in examining one of these aspects, which is psychological hesitation among football players and its relation to scoring accuracy, a topic not extensively addressed in research and studies. The researcher deemed it necessary to conduct this study to enhance research in this field ^[2].

Research Problem

The psychological preparation of an athlete has a significant impact on their level of achievement and sports performance. Through it, an athlete's maximum potential can be unleashed. Psychological hesitation is one of the psychological traits that greatly affect sports achievement. In football, missing the target when shooting can lead to the loss of easy scoring opportunities which the team desperately needs. This failure often turns a team from attackers into defenders and can lead to the team's loss, especially when the competing teams are closely matched. Through the researcher's observation of this aspect, it was found that there are many instances of failed shots that waste crucial winning opportunities. Herein lies the research problem, and one of the reasons for this failure could be psychological hesitation.

Materials and methods

The researcher used a descriptive method with a correlational approach to suit the nature of the research. As for the research sample, the research was conducted on a sample of students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, totaling 30 students. The researcher selected the sample purposively and excluded 3 due to injuries from the research sample and five students for the pilot study. Thus, the main research sample became 22 students, representing 73%.

Psychological Hesitation Scale

The researcher used the Psychological Hesitation Scale developed by Firas Hassan Abdul Hussein, which consists of 51 items with five alternatives ("Applies to me completely," "Applies to me," "Sometimes applies to me," "Does not apply to me," "Does not apply to me at all"). Scores were given from 1 to 5. The levels of this scale are: 116-145 very high hesitation, 87-115 high hesitation, 58-86 moderate hesitation, 30-57 acceptable hesitation, and 29 or below indicates weak hesitation. This scale is standardized for the Iraqi environment.

Tests and Measurements

Shooting with the foot at overlapping rectangles. ^[3]

Purpose of the Test

To measure the accuracy of shooting (scoring).

Performance Specifications: The test subject stands behind a line and then shoots five consecutive balls at the rectangles, trying to hit the small rectangle. The test subject has the right to use either foot.

Equipment: Five footballs, a wall in front of a leveled ground with three overlapping rectangles drawn on it, with their dimensions specified. Fig. (1).



Fig 1: Shooting with the foot at overlapping rectangles

Scoring

- If the ball hits the small rectangle (inside the rectangle or on its defining lines), three points are awarded to the test subject.
- If the ball hits the medium rectangle (inside the rectangle or on its defining lines), two points are awarded to the test subject.
- If the ball hits the large rectangle (inside the rectangle or on its defining lines), one point is awarded to the test subject.
- If the ball hits outside of the rectangles, zero points are awarded.

Questionnaire Form

The researcher adopted the questionnaire taken from the doctoral thesis of the researcher Firas Hassan Abdul Hussein ^[4], It is noteworthy that this form was designed and standardized for the Iraqi environment and contained 51 items to measure the state of psychological hesitation in the player.

Questionnaire designed to measure psychological hesitation in sports

Dear player, after reading the form carefully, please answer its items by marking (✓) inside the box you find appropriate for you. Note that no personal information should be mentioned, and there are no correct or incorrect statements.

Items	Does not apply to me at all	Does not apply to me	Sometimes applies to me	Applies to me	Completely applies to me
I hesitate when I feel weak in the game I am about to play.					
Willpower motivates me to perform well.					
I hesitate when I engage in a sports activity that I do not like or want.					
I hesitate to perform a sports movement if I feel it may cause me injury.					
I possess experience and prior knowledge that make me not hesitate in practicing sports.					
Feeling exhausted and tired makes me hesitate to engage in exercises and sports.					
My self-confidence makes me not hesitate in the game.					
I hesitate when others mock me.					
The presence of assistive devices and assistants makes me not hesitate in performing sports.					
A weak relationship with the coach makes me hesitate in playing the game.					
I possess vitality and energy that helps me in playing sports.					
Because I have high psychological preparation, I practice sports without hesitation.					
My courage makes me not hesitant in performing sports movements.					
The complexity of devices and difficult movements make me hesitant in performing them.					
When I know the purpose of the game, I do not hesitate to perform it.					
I hesitate to play a sport when I feel I am not consistent in training.					
I do not hesitate when I am calm and mentally stable.					
I hesitate when I feel a sense of failure.					
I experience times when I feel no desire to engage in sports.					
I feel hesitant to play when I do not receive moral incentives.					
My practical and theoretical experience makes me not hesitate in performing sports.					
I hesitate when I expect that my performance will not be at the required level.					
My fear of the activity or device causes hesitation in performing sports.					
Feeling bored keeps me away from practicing sports.					
I worry about performing the activity.					
I am indifferent to the final performance result.					
I hesitate when my pulse rises before matches.					
My personality is the reason for my hesitation.					
When asked to make a certain decision, I am slow in making it.					
The importance of the competition makes me participate in it.					
Sudden changes in daily habits make me not want to perform sports.					
Experiencing fatigue makes me hesitant in performance.					
I hesitate when asked to compete against a high-profile player.					
I hesitate when asked to participate in high-level championships.					
My discomfort with some referees makes me hesitant in performing the assigned activity.					
Repeated failure causes me to hesitate in performing sports activities.					
My poor physical preparation causes hesitation in performance.					
Feeling confused and unstable makes me hesitant in practicing the assigned sports game.					
I cannot control my nerves in critical situations.					
My physical condition makes me hesitate in playing the game or exercises.					
When I don't feel good, I do not want to practice sports.					
I have high morale that makes me a player without hesitation.					
I hesitate when I hear treacherous and defamatory words.					
My shyness is the reason for my hesitation in practicing sports.					
I am optimistic.					
Poor equipment in sports competitions makes me hesitate in performing sports activities.					
Weather conditions make me hesitant.					
I do not feel hesitant in performing the activity when I have hope of winning.					
I hesitate when I face some frustration.					
My struggle does not make me hesitant in performance.					
I feel hesitant in performing an activity or exercise when I see a large audience.					

Pilot Experiment

The pilot experiment "serves as a practical training for the researcher to personally identify the negatives and positives encountered during the test to avoid them" [5]. The researcher conducted the pilot experiment on Sunday, 15/1/2023, on five students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, who are part of the research community. They were excluded from the main experiment, which was held at the Al-Mustansiriyah University field.

Main Experiment

The researcher conducted the main experiment on Sunday,

22/1/2023. This included carrying out the test for measuring psychological hesitation and the accuracy of shooting on the research sample consisting of 22 students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences. The tests were conducted at Al-Mustansiriyah University field. The data from the psychological hesitation questionnaires were collected and processed, along with the data and scores from the shooting accuracy test.

Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results between the level of psychological hesitation and shooting accuracy in football

Table 1: The calculated value (r) between the level of psychological frequency and the accuracy of shooting

Tabular (r)	Calculated (r)	Shooting Accuracy		Psychological Hesitation	
		Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean
0,468	-0,209	2,234	23,76	2,238	24,18

Table (1) shows that the calculated value (r) is (-0.209), which is lower than the tabular value (r) of (0.468). This indicates that there is no significant difference between psychological hesitation and shooting accuracy at a level of (0.05) under a temperature of (16 degrees). The researcher attributes the lack of significant difference between psychological hesitation and football scoring accuracy to the lack of attention given to the psychological aspect (Psychological preparation) in the football team. This has reflected on the team's level during the test. This practice is common among most coaches in general sports activities, and especially in football in Iraq. Most coaches do not provide training units focused on the psychological preparation of players; instead, their focus is almost exclusively on physical, skill, and tactical preparation of players, without giving due importance to psychological preparation and its significant traits.

Psychologists Nizar Al-Taleb and Kamel Louis confirm that psychological problems faced by an athlete in the state of psychological tension just before the start of a race, and sometimes during the race, can affect their performance level [6]. This indicates that psychological hesitation is one of the important psychological traits that coaches should consider in training units, as it can enhance an athlete's level during training or competition and consequently reflect on the outcome of the match in terms of winning or losing. "Psychological hesitation plays an important role in the athletic level, being a psychological state with a direct impact on an athlete's performance" [7].

Thamer Mahmoud Dhunoon mentions that psychological hesitation is more of a psychological state that affects a player rather than a characteristic that dominates their personality. Its causes could be attributed to the strength of competition and opponents, the atmosphere of the championship, the specificity of the game, the nature of the audience, and the location of the competition. All these factors contribute to creating a state of hesitation in some or most players, varying in degree from one player to another [8].

Saleh Shati Sajet and others agree that psychological hesitation is an important psychological state that coaches should consider in training units, as it can elevate an athlete's level during training or competition and thereby affect the competition's outcome in terms of victory or defeat. "Psychological hesitation plays a vital role in achieving the desired sports level as a psychological state

with a direct impact on an athlete's performance [7]."

In this regard, Osama Kamil Rateb [9] and Nagham Sabah Hatem [10] indicate that psychological hesitation is a psychological state with a direct impact on skill performance at certain times, leading to failure in achieving the desired level. This underscores the importance of understanding the level of psychological hesitation in players, which helps the coach to guide them to be less intense and less impactful on the athlete's performance level.

Conclusions

The researcher has come to the following conclusions in the study:

- Psychological hesitation has a direct impact on sports performance.
- There is a correlation between psychological hesitation and the identification relationship in the research sample.
- Increasing the psychological factor has an effective impact on the development of football scoring skills.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached, the researcher recommends the following:

- Pay attention to the psychological aspect in teaching basic football skills to students of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, especially first-year students.
- Conduct similar research using other methods, such as mental training, for teaching basic football skills.
- Emphasize the psychological aspect in all its facets and characteristics during the performance of training units.
- Give good attention to psychological preparation as it is an important element in the sports preparation phase to achieve good sports results.

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