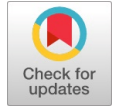# Pre-Competitive Anxiety Of Malaysian Premier League And University Football Players

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Abstract: *This study aimed to identify the level of state anxiety among football players of a Malaysian premier league and a university football players. This study involved 40 players aged between 18 to 32 years old. The questionnaire used in this study was Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 Reverse Survey (CSAI-2R) to measure the level of athlete's somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and self-confidence. The findings showed that the premier league players has a lower level of somatic and cognitive anxiety than the university players. Premier league players also were shown to have higher levels of self-confidence. Based on the findings, experience and achievement level are the contributing factors in determining the level of anxiety and increasing self-confidence. The more experience and skills the athlete has, the easier it is for athletes to control the level of anxiety.*

Index Terms: *State anxiety, pre-competitive, self-confidence, football players.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Soccer is undeniably the most popular sport in the Malaysia. Many researches have been conducted on soccer involving players and even fans/supporters. This includes researches in fitness training and testing [1-4], coaching development [5], sociology [6, 7] and psychology [5, 8, 9]. The deterioration in quality and performance in soccer can be due to many psychological factors of the athlete especially during the game.

Anxiety always developed among the athlete before, during and after a competition. Systematic training alone does not guarantee excellent performance for an athlete, because psychological factors influence a person in doing something and can affect performance. According to Williams and Reilly [10], in addition to systematic training approaches, several factors such as physical, physiological, psychological and sociological are among the major factors in the success of a football team. Aziz [11] stated that anxiety is negative and can affect the achievement of athletes in sports. It refers to the individual's cognitive interpretation of what is in the environment. If the interpretation leads to something that negatively impacts, then it creates anxiety. Anxiety usually occurs to athletes before the game takes place and this concern applies to everyone. Anxiety is an experience and happens to all athletes regardless of age and skill level. The success of a team also depends on the confidence of an athlete in facing a match. Self-esteem is the belief that an individual presents a course of action to achieve certain goals and is able to control his surroundings. Confidence can increase concentration and achievement, while uncertainty tends to lower their achievement by increasing levels of anxiety, feeling of doubt and concentration disruptions. High achievement of athletes in major sports such as Olympic sports depends largely on optimism to face challenges.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants were 40 football players aged between 18 and 32 years old. They consisted of 20 premier league and 20 university football players.

B. Instrument

The instrument used is the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 Reverse (CSAI-2R) questionnaire which has 17 questions and two (2) sections; i.e part A is demographic information and part B is CSAI-2R questionnaire which has three components i.e. somatic, cognitive and self-confidence.

C. Procedures

Letter of permission for data collection was given to the coaches of both teams. After getting permission, questionnaires were distributed to players of both teams before the game. The explanation of how to answer the questionnaire is given clearly and the language used in the questionnaire is also easy to understand. The response time is limited to 15 minutes and the participants are reminded and continually encouraged to answer honestly and sincerely. The understanding of the participants on the questionnaire items is a guarantee of reliability and reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaires that were answered were recollected on the same day.

C. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistic was used to analyse the mean and

III. RESULTS

Table 1. State anxiety level (cognitive, somatic and self-confidence) among university and premier league players

Parameter	Team	Mean	SD	Difference Mean
Somatic	PL UNI	10.50 13.05	1.987 3.120	-2.550
Cognitive	PL UNI	8.05 13.80	0.999 1.824	-5.750
Self-confidence	PL UNI	17.90 10.95	1.447 1.761	6.950

Table 1 showed the state anxiety level (cognitive, somatic and self-confidence) among university and premier league players.

Table 2. The Comparison Of State Anxiety Level Among Premier League And University Players

Parameter	t	df	Sig.
Somatic anxiety	-3.083	38	0.049
Cognitive anxiety	-12.37	38	0.042
Self-confidence	13.63	38	0.041

Table 2 shows a comparison of instantaneous (somatic, cognitive and self-confidence) levels for premier league and university teams. The findings show that the premier league team has a lower level of somatic anxiety than the university team. For constructional cognitive anxiety, the results of the premier league team were also lower (M = 8.05; SD = 0.999) compared to the university team (M = 13.80; SD = 1.824). For confidence constructs, premier league scored higher (M = 17.90; SD = 1.447) than university team (M = 10.95; SD = 1.761).

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The results showed that there were significant differences in somatic and cognitive anxiety levels for both teams. However, for self-confidence, there were differences but not significant for both teams.

Comparative descriptive test results showed that the severity of premier league's team was lower than university (t = -3.083; p = 0.049<0.05) with a mean difference of -2.550. This is because, an individual who is always worried before the competition will cause him to lose his focus and cannot play well in the competition. However, according to Hanton et al. [12], athletes showed a high degree of anxiety due to high relevance, high level of opponent quality, and anticipated high opponent performance. Whereas, the cognitive anxiety level of premier league players were lower than university players (t = -12.367; p = 0.042<0.05) with a mean difference of -5.750. This is because, the suitability of

the event may explain the differences in pre-competition anxiety [13, 14]. For premier league players, they are accustomed to the atmosphere and the event at high level as they have a variety of experience in matches with various opponents. This is evidenced by the demographic background which is the highest achievement level of SMEs higher than university achievement level. The highest achievement level for premier league at the international level is 3 (15%) while university at the international level is 1 person (5%). Furthermore, the success of each team requires self-confidence in each individual to ensure that their team's performance is always in optimum condition. Analysis showed the self-confidence among premier league players were higher than the university (t = 13.634; p = 0.041< 0.05) with a mean difference of 6.95. At high competition levels, high anxiety will affect the athlete's self-confidence either before, during or after the competition. This will cause athletes to perform well in the field and will affect performance. This is evidenced by the demographic background for the experience of both teams. For the premier league team, the highest level of experience is 9 players (7-9 years' experience) and there are 2 players with 10 years' experience. For university team, the highest level of experience is 12 players with 4-6 years' experience.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Real athlete achievement is not only focused on the mastery of physical skills, but it should be combined with psychological skills so that athletes can act excellently in a competition. Low anxiety can improve athlete's performance. Athletes who can control the anxiety before the competition or during the tournaments can definitely perform the best performances during the game. Confidence can increase concentration and achievement, while uncertainty tends to lower the achievement by increasing levels of anxiety, feeling of doubt and concentration disruptions. Additionally, this study provides guidance to coaches, and sports psychologists to create programs that relate to the degree of anxiety and increase self-confidence to increase athletic performance in sports.

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