

CONFIDENCE AND THE LEVEL OF ANXIETY AMONG FOOTBALL PLAYERS CLOSE TO PROMOTION TO THE LEAGUE

Agnieszka **KMIECIK**^{1ABCDEF}, Janusz **SZOPA**^{1ABCDEF}, Anna **SARNOWSKA**^{1ACDEF},
Małgorzata **MATYJA**^{1ADE}, Marta **KMIECIK**^{2AEF}

1. The Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education, Katowice, Poland
2. University of Wrocław, Poland

Keywords:

- Self-confidence,
- level of anxiety,
- motivation in sport,
- sports competition,
- football.

Abstract:

Self-confidence in sport, just like anxiety, are elements that have a significant impact on the athletic performance achieved by players. These are one of the most important factors determining success or failure. Analyzing scientific literature in this area, no information was found as the above elements affect football players of domestic league classes. To this end, the level of anxiety and self-confidence of the players of one of the first-ever sports clubs from the Silesia region was examined. The obtained results were compared with the results of similar tests carried out on competitors of other sports disciplines (including badminton players, swimmers, athletes, footballers' juniors). 20 competitors took part in the survey. In order to examine the level of self-confidence and anxiety level, Self-confidence in Sport (TSCI-PL), the Questionnaire for Measuring Widerszal-Bazyl Achievements, Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) and CSAI-2R were used. The results of the research showed that the players have high self-esteem, are confident in their own skills which positively affects their sporting successes. Surveyed athletes are characterized by an average level of anxiety, which is important because the team is at the entrance to the extraleague. It is known that strong anxiety makes it too difficult for the athlete to present his own abilities, as well as too low level of anxiety which is associated with reduced effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Confidence in sport is the basis on which player builds his own success and achieves better and better results. It is one of the most important factors determining the effectiveness of athletes [Furley, Schweizer 2013].

It is influenced by the mood of the player, his perception of the world, achieved results, the internal belief that something can be achieved [Weinberg, Gould 2015]. There are also elements

defining the image of a confident player, such as body posture, way of looking and moving on the field, facial expressions, tone of voice, behaviour, respect from colleagues and rivals and the ability to deal with pressure. The athlete's personality traits are not without importance in the perception of a particular sport situation on which the outcome of the match depends, as emphasized by Czajkowski [2010]. A player with an established self-confidence knows that he has sufficiently strong self-esteem and a lot of motivation to play at a high level regardless of the situation, while being characterized by consistency, patience, perseverance [Litwic-Kamińska 2013, Litwic-Kamińska, Izdebski 2016]. Such a person is able to maintain a positive attitude, focus on their strengths, use every opportunity to win, successfully implement a task deemed desirable [Weinberg, Gould 2015]. This is in line with opinions of Karageorghis and Terry [2014] who believe that a self-confident person is strongly convinced of his high skills that will achieve his goals regardless of the situation. Therefore, the sense of self-confidence in sport is treated as a way to respond to appearing challenges [Kingston, Wilson 2009].

Anxiety is one of the most cited psychological constructions of all prototypes of psychology [Gabilondo, Rodriguez, Palacios 2010]. It also does not avoid athletes. All athletes experience disturbing thoughts which are often a response to stress [Kar 2013]. Anxiety arises when a person feels stressed and has a high level of psychic energy. According to Akinade [2001], anxiety is seen as an "exaggerated state of anxiety or fear of imminent danger that initiates a set of behaviours, such as some defensive mechanisms. It is characterized by increased heart rate, sweating, trembling and other reactions to a threat." This is just one of the psychological factors that can be considered as a regular sport companion. The most common source of fear in sportsmen is the fear of losing. The players also feel anxious thoughts just before important tournaments due to the expectations of the team management, fans, not receiving financial rewards, etc. [Singh, Prakash, Punia, Kulandaivelan 2017]. Among some athletes, high level of anxiety determines their good preparation for competition, readiness [Gulbinskienė, Malinauskas, Skarbalius 2007]. There is also a group of players who are expected to achieve a better result than they are able to achieve. The resulting stress can negatively affect their skills during sport competition [Kar 2013]. Therefore, the pre-competitive fear has both positive and negative effects on the sports score [Singh, Prakash, Punia, Kulandaivelan 2017]. Because of that, according to Thander [2016], in sport, in order to achieve success, the role of skills and psychosomatic preparation of players should be taken into account and sometimes considered even more important than technical preparation. In order to get to know the psychological readiness of the sport's representatives to compete and achieve success, their self-confidence and the ability to be emotionally stable should be analyzed in detail [Gulbinskienė, Malinauskas, Skarbalius 2007].

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Analyzing scientific literature in the area of self-confidence, the level of anxiety and motivation in sports, no information was found as the above elements affect football players of domestic league classes. The study examined the level of anxiety and self-confidence of twenty footballers of one of the first-league sports clubs in the area of the Silesian Voivodship. Obtained results were compared with the results of similar tests carried out on

competitors of other sports disciplines (including badminton players, swimmers, athletes, footballers' juniors). In the survey, which was carried out on 18-19.01.2019, 20 competitors took part. In order to examine the self-confidence level, Self-confidence in Sport (TSCI-PL) [Vealey 1986] in the Polish adaptation of Gazdowska, Parzelski [2016] was used. To measure the motivation of achievements, the Widerszala-Bazyel Questionnaire for Measuring the Performance of Widerszal-Bazyl [Widerszal-Bazyl 1978] was used. To analyze the scale of anxiety of competitors in a competitive situation, the Sports Competitiveness Anxiety Test (SCAT) was used. This test is used to examine the level of somatic and cognitive anxiety and self-confidence in sport. CSAI-2R (The Revised Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2) was also used for the same purpose [Martens, Vealey, Burton 1990]. CSAI-2R is a special sports scale of anxiety, which includes: cognitive anxiety, self-confidence and physical anxiety [Gulbinskienė, Malinauskas, Skarbalius 2007]. This tool is suitable for measuring emotions of athletes participating in sport competition [Swain 1992].

RESULTS

On the SCAT scale (Figure 1), the punctuation 1,2,3 (rare, sometimes, often) was entered. Based on the sum of points obtained from the answer to a given question, the average level of team anxiety can be assessed. For the entire team, the anxiety experienced before the game is 1.8 points, which means that it appears sometimes. A similar result was obtained by examining the feeling of nervousness before the match (1.85 points). The very feeling of nervousness in anticipation just before the match to start the game is 1.75 points, which means that it also sometimes perform. In turn, the calmness of the players before the match manifests itself rarely or sometimes (1.5 points), as well as the feeling of relaxation (1.8 points). nSimilar results were obtained by examining the players' fear of making mistakes during the match (2.0 points). This means that the fear of making mistakes during the game, as well as the fear of a bad impression (1.60 points) occurs in competitors of this class at times. At a similar level, there are feelings associated with the somatic state of the team. Sometimes the heart rhythm increases shortly before the competition itself (1.75 points). The feeling of muscle tension also happens sometimes and amounts to 1.7 points. However, nausea in the stomach before competition is rare (1.4 points). Notice: questions 1., 4., 7., 10. and 13., according to the intent of the author of the test, were skipped in the interpretation.

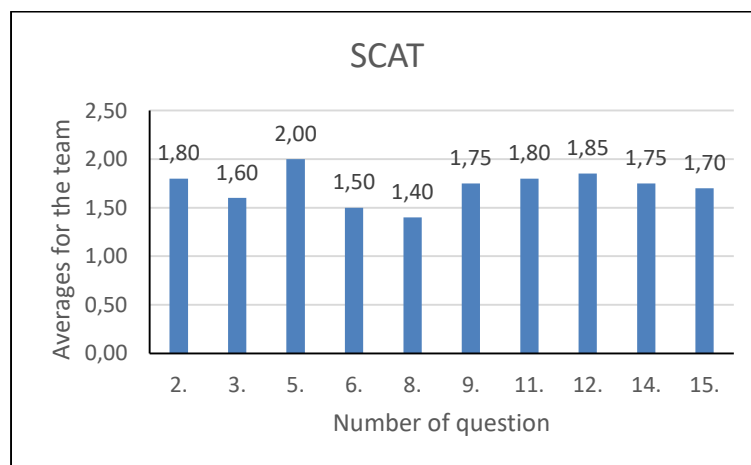


Figure 1. Average level of anxiety

Confidence of competitors was analyzed on the basis of TSCI-PL inventory (Figure 2). In this study, athletes compared self-confidence to the chosen athlete. Similarly to the SCAT test, a scoring was also introduced here, which was respectively: 1,2,3- low; 4,5,6-medium; 7,8,9-high. Competitors, self-confidence in using the skills necessary for success, and hence the skills of effective thinking and decision-making during the competition, assessed at 6.95 points, which, according to the TSCI-PL scale, indicates the result between the average and high level. Slightly below players assessed their confidence in the effectiveness of the strategy (6.5 points). The result of self-confidence in making key decisions while adapting to different conditions of sports competition and achieving success, was assessed at the medium level (6.45 points). A quick return to the form after unsuccessful action and subsequent success related to it were rated as above (6.4-6.45 points), which also ranks on an average level. Similarly, on the medium level, action under pressure (6.3 points) and the ability to concentrate on the road to success (6.6 points) were assessed. The difference was observed between confidence in the ability to achieve successes (6.45 points) and constant success (6.2 points). The average self-confidence for the whole team during the competition in sport was 6.58 points.

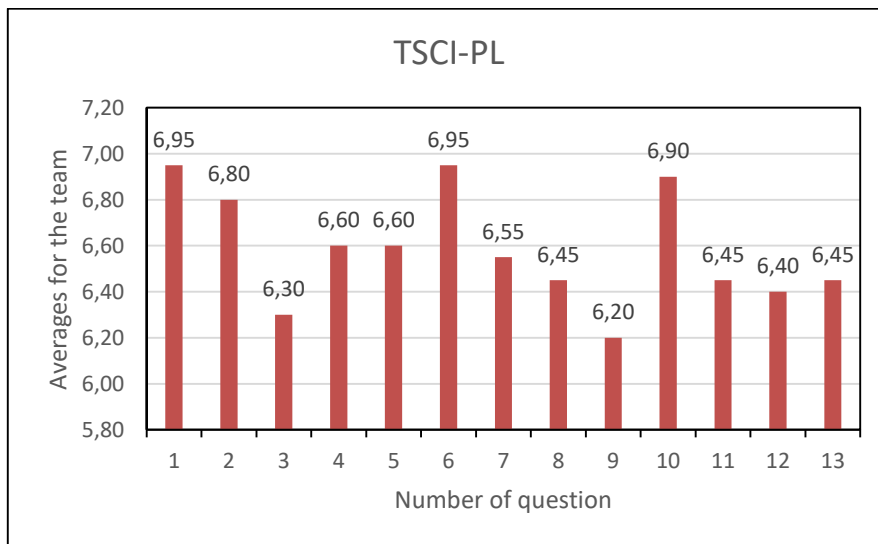


Figure 2. Average level of team confidence

Self-confidence in sport was also examined using the CSAI-2R scale (Figure 3), which was also used to analyze cognitive and physical anxiety as a feature of competitors. According to the above-mentioned tool, confidence during the last match of the players was between 20 and 40 points. The maximum number of points scored by the player was 40. Of this, medium-level self-confidence was rated by 7 players, while the other players assessed their level of confidence as high. It is significant that the indicated high level of confidence of the players was calculated on average 31.25 points. It should be assumed that the players during the last match were sure of winning and well prepared for the game in terms of both physical and mental. Cognitive anxiety with which feelings or fears are attached to the assessment of the coach, audience, fear of losing, the players assessed as low during the game. The average level of cognitive anxiety for this team was 18.3 points (the maximum score for a single player is 30 points). A similar result was obtained in the study of somatic anxiety (18.2 points) which is associated with feelings of muscle tone, tightness in the stomach, palpitations.

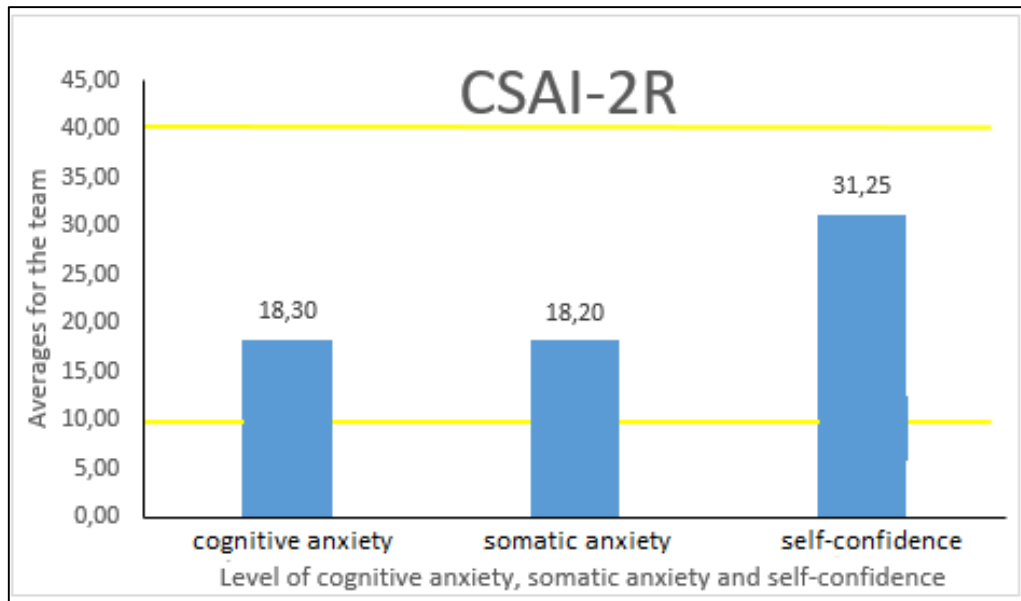


Figure 3. The average state of intensity of the state of cognitive anxiety, somatic and self-confidence in sport

With fear in competition and self-confidence in sport, motivation is inextricably linked. To measure the motivation, the Questionnaire to measure the motivation of achievements [Widerszal-Bazyl 1978] was used. Ten competitors expressed their willingness to participate in this study. According to the guidelines of the given tool, the average was drawn which for the whole team was 64.9%. And this means that players of this league class are motivated to achieve greater successes, prefer medium-risk tasks, engage in activities aimed at promotion to extraleague, and above all believe in success. This result also shows that there is no tendency to fight at all costs. Perhaps the competitors of this rank are already so motivated that they treat entry into the extraleague as the next stage in their career. This can also be confirmed by the average level of anxiety, even though the cognitive anxiety and the athletes' anxiety were higher before the match.

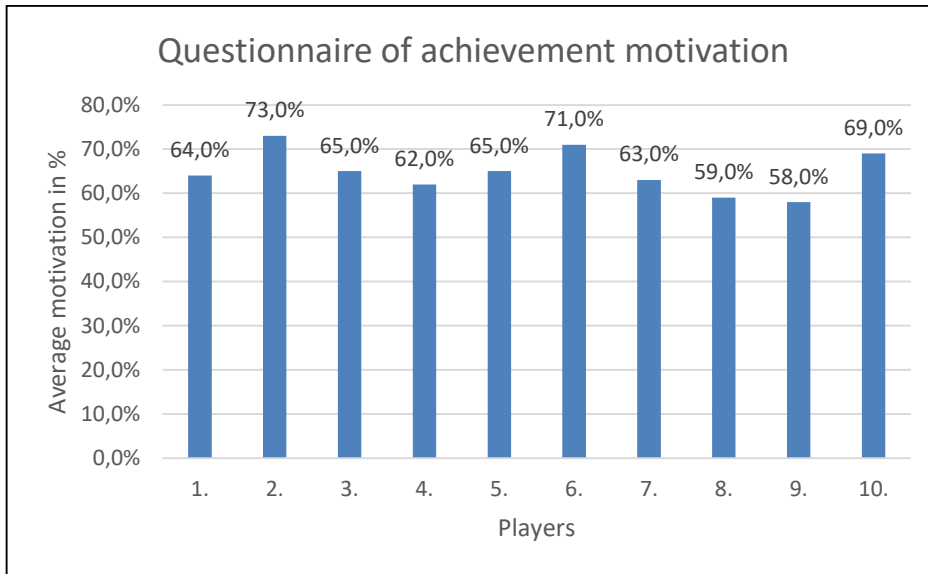


Figure 4. Average level of motivation of each player's achievements

DISCUSSION

Research conducted by Borek-Chudek [2007] showed that badminton players achieving high sports scores are characterized by a lower intensity of cognitive and somatic anxiety compared to lower-class players. This is also found in our research results on football players who have an average level of anxiety. This may result from the fact that football is a team sport and every player depends on the best possible play ("to perform well" in the eyes of teammates) [Hays, Maynard, Thomas, Bawden 2007]. If the player feels anxiety as positive, he is able to achieve higher results, which is also indicated by Borek-Chudek [2007]. Similarly, Kosiński M., Kosiński W. [2016], when examining swimmers, also showed that the lower the level of somatic and cognitive anxiety, the better sports achievements. Lower level of anxiety is also characteristic of athletes achieving results during the competition [Bukowska, Marks 2012]. However, a high level of fear of competition is visible in young footballers. It may be related to mental immaturity, pressure from the trainers, the audience or loved ones. Age, sports experience, abilities or physical condition are important elements in determining fear of a match. There is a significant difference here, because the first-league players according to the conducted study showed a low level of both cognitive (18.3) and somatic anxiety (18.2 points).

As for the self-confidence of athletes, studies show that experienced players have high self-esteem, which affects the achievement of quite high results in their disciplines. For example, among competitors of sport shooting, competitive experience allowed to achieve higher shooting results and was associated with a high level of confidence of the shooters [Gulbinskienė, Malinauskas, Skarbalius 2007]. And the point in this field is the result of the meta-analysis conducted by Craft, Magyar, Becker and Feltz [2003] which, comparing the results of many analyzes and studies carried out on athletes, showed that the self-confidence of the competitor is the best way to achieve the desired sports results. This observation coincides fully with our test results among football players. Thus, at the end, we want to prompt all trainers and managers of players to motivate their mentees also mentally, at least through positive thinking and support self-esteem, because this in turn translates into better players' performance, and above all, plays a key role a role on the road to achieving sporting successes.

CONCLUSIONS

Anxiety and confidence in sport affect the sports result. The greater the professional experience, the internship - the more confidence in the players striving for success. The stress accompanying the players before the match is smaller in professional players than in less experienced players. The players are well motivated, they know what they want to achieve, and while striving to achieve their goal, they maintain emotional stability.

REFERENCES

1. Akinade E.A. (2001), *Modern Concise Dictionary of Psychology*, Lagos: Pumark, Nigeria Ltd.
2. Borek-Chudek D. (2007), *The level of anxiety and the sporting achievements of badminton players in the light of the multi-factorial theory of Martens Anxiet*, "Sports Medicine", vol. 3, No 23, pp.140-148.
3. Bukowska K., Marks M. (2012), *Anxiety and motivation of achievements and the sports result of athletes from selected competitors*, vol. 38, pp. 33-40.
4. Craft L.L., Magyar T.M., Becker B.J., Feltz, D.L. (2003), *The Relationship between the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 and Sport Performance: A Meta-Analysis*, "Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology", vol. 25, No1, pp. 44-65.
5. Czajkowski Z. (2010), *Be afraid, anxiety, fear, fear and panic, and psychological resistance of the players*, "Movement for Culture: science year: [philosophy, science, eastern traditions, culture, health, education]", vol. 10, pp. 41-52.
6. Furley P., Schweizer G. (2013), *"I'm Pretty Sure That We Will Win!": The Influence of Score-Related Nonverbal Behavioral Changes on the Confidence in Winning a Basketball Game*, "Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology", vol. 35, pp. 316-320.
7. Gabilondo A. J.A., Rodríguez G.O., Palacios Moreno M. (2010), *Competitive Validation State Anxiety Inventory 2 (CSAI-2 RE) through a web application*, "International Journal of Medicine and Sciences of Physical Activity and Sport", vol. 12, No 47, pp. 539 -556.
8. Gazdowska Z., Parzelski D. (2016), *Psychometric properties of the polish version of Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI-PL) – pilot study*, "Movement activity of people of different ages", No 31, pp. 5-15.
9. Gulbinskienė V., Malinauskas R., Skarbalius A. (2007), *Lithuanian Academy of Culture*, "Evaluation of Sagittarius Mental Prediction Sport Science Didactic", vol.2.
10. Hays K., Maynard I., Thomas O., Bawden M. (2007), *Sources and types of confidence identified by world class performers*, "Journal of Applied Sport Psychology", vol. 19, pp. 434-456.
11. Kar S. (2013), *Measurement of Competition Level Anxiety of College Level Athletes by Using SCAT*, "International Journal of Engineering Science and Innovative Technology", vol. 2, No 3, pp. 367-75.
12. Karageorghis C.I., Terry P.C. (2014), *Psychology for athletes*, Other Walks.
13. Kingston K.M., Wilson K.M. (2009), *The application of goal setting in sport*, "Advances in Applied Sport Psychology – A review", Pod red. Mellalieu S.D., Hanton S. Taylor & Francis e-Library.
14. Kosiński M., Kosiński W. (2016), *Analysis of differences in the assessment of stress and pre-startle anxiety using SCAT and CSAI-2d tests*, „Journal of Education, Health and Sport”, vol. 6, No 12, pp. 53-61.
15. Litwic-Kamińska K. (2013), *Resiliency and stress experience among judo and taekwondo athletes*, "Journal of Combat Sports and Martial Arts", vol. 2, No 2, pp. 167-172.

16. Litwic-Kamińska K., Izdebski P. (2016), *Resiliency against stress among athletes*, "Health Psychology Report", vol. 4, No 1, pp. 79-90.
17. Martens R., Vealey R.S., Burton D. (1990), *Competitive anxiety in sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetic pp. 37-190.
18. Singh V., Prakash S., Punia S., Kulandaivelan S. (2017), *Relationship between pre-competition anxiety and performance levels in inter-university women football teams*, International Journal of Physical Education, "Sports and Health", vol. 4, No 5, pp. 136-139.
19. Swain A. B. J. (1992), *Competitive state anxiety: towards a clearer understanding*, A.B.J. Swain, pp. 178.
20. Thander A. (2016), *Analysis of Sports Competition Anxiety Between Male Judokas and Karate Fighters*, "International Journal of Scientific Research", vol. 5, No 6, pp. 442-443.
21. Vealey R.S. (1986), *Conceptualization of Sport-Confidence and Competitive Orientation: Preliminary Investigation and Instrument Development*, „ Journal of Sport Psychology", No 8, pp. 221-246.
22. Widerszal-Bazyl M. (1978), *Questionnaire to measure the motivation of achievements*, "Psychological Review", vol. 21, pp. 363-366.
23. Weinberg R.S., Gould D. (2015), *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology*, Sixth edition, Human Kinetics.