



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE COMPARISON OF ANXIETY LEVELS OF TWO FOOTBALL TEAMS IN DIFFERENT RANKINGS IN LEAGUE BEFORE THE MATCH

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ABSTRACT

Aim: It is determining the effect of league positions of football teams on anxiety levels of footballers.

Material-Method: 38 footballers of two teams in B group in Kocaeli Men Super Amateur Football League participated in this study. The league consists of 12 teams. The visiting team A is the leader of the league. The host team B was in the 6th place 5 games to the end of the league. If team B loses the match, it will have a possibility of relegation from the league. Team A and B players have filled the Beck Anxiety Scale before the match for determining their anxiety levels.

Results: 18 players of team A (mean of ages: 22.83 ± 5.272 , mean of sports ages: 10 ± 5) has 3.17 ± 4.315 Beck Anxiety Score. 20 players of team B (mean of ages: 20.6 ± 2.761 , mean of sports ages: 10 ± 5) has 9 ± 7.32 Beck Anxiety Score. There is a significant difference in anxiety levels of two teams when they are compared ($p < 0.05$). As for the Beck Anxiety Scale, while team B has mild anxiety, team A has minimal anxiety. When compared the questions of the Beck Anxiety Scale for the two teams, significant difference in fear of losing control, fear of worst happening and hot sensation has been found. (respectively, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$ ve $p < 0.05$). Team B has more negative answers than team A in these questions significantly.

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is fear whose reasons are unknown. In general, it is a feeling of annoyance produced by one's own (Ozerkan 2011, Genctan 1992). Anxiety is also defined as a state of excitement where fear and hope often shift (Morgan 1991). Spielberger (1966) describes the anxiety as "emotional reactions" involving a combination of feelings of tension, fear and nervousness, unpleasant thoughts (worries) and physiological changes. According to Spielberger, two kinds of anxiety can be mentioned: trait anxiety and state anxiety. State anxiety is an anxiety that emerges as a result of a specific situation, and disappears when the situation ends. This kind of anxiety is felt in the case of a student entering the examination, a patient undergoing an operation, an athlete joining the competition. The other type of anxiety seen in people with internal stress is trait anxiety. (Ozerkan, 2011). During a sports event, an athlete may experience tension, uneasiness,

and anxiety from time to time or continuously. This emotional condition can occur both before and during the competition and is called competition anxiety (Ozerkan, 2011). Competition anxiety is defined by Gill (1986) as "a tendency to be anxious and uneasy about losing in the competition or a motive to avoid losing." In anxious situations, the athlete react in many different ways to their bodies getting out of control (Genctan, 1992). Some of these reactions are muscle strain, nervousness, nausea, increased tension and respiratory rate, confusion, impaired concentration, and difficulty in making decisions. Also, perfect and smooth performing of movements can be disturbed (Konter, 1996). Anxiety can lead to impairment in some behaviors and abilities in regard to decisions made by athletes. Because of the high level of anxiety, the athlete can make different decisions from their realistic lines. In highly anxious and oppressed situations, it is observed that athletes often make the wrong decisions. In order to improve the performance, coaches need to research sports psychology and methods to eliminate psychological and physiological obstacles that may arise (Tavacioglu, 1999). In this study, we aimed to compare the pre-match anxiety levels of team A and team B in Kocaeli Super Amateur Football

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League that is composed of 12 teams and explore the effect of ranking in the league on anxiety levels of footballers'.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

18 players with team A and 20 players with team B are participants of this study. 5 weeks to the end, in group B of Kocaeli Men Super Amateur Football League where as, team A is the leader, team B, is the 6th. Team B has a risk of relegation from the league if it loses the match. Kocaeli Super Amateur Football League consists of 12 teams. Only voluntarily participation is accepted to this study. The Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), which includes age and sports age questions, was applied to the team A and B players before the match. BAI was created in 1988 by Beck *et al.* (1988) and translated into Turkish by Ulusoy *et al.* (1998). BAI is a scale of anxiety assessment used to determine the frequency of anxiety symptoms experienced by individuals. It is a likert type measure consisting of 21 items, including "never", "mildly", "middle", "serious" and scored between 0-3. The score range is from 0 to 63. The higher scores refer to more severe anxiety experienced by the individual. The BAI scores are classified as minimal anxiety (0 to 7), mild anxiety (8 to 15), moderate anxiety (16 to 25), and severe anxiety (26 to 63). SPSS v20 package program was used for statistical analysis. (SPSS for Windows v. 20.0, SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA) Descriptive statistics of ages, sport ages and anxiety scores from BAI were calculated. The anxiety scores of the two team players were compared with the Mann-Whitney U. The Fisher Exact test was used to find out which of the BAI questions had a significant difference for two teams.

Findings

The average age of 18 players of team A is 22.83 ± 5.272 , the average of sports age is 10 ± 5 , and the average score of BAI is 3.17 ± 4.315 . The average age of 20 players in team B is 20.6 ± 2.761 , the average sports age is 10 ± 5 , and the average score of BAI is 9 ± 7.32 . As a result of comparison of anxiety scores, there is a significant difference between the anxiety levels of two teams ($p < 0.05$). In addition, when assessed the anxiety scales of these teams, it is found that the team B players have mild anxiety while the team players have minimal anxiety. Team B players give significantly more anxious answers than team A players in the losing control, fear of the worst happening, and hot sensation questions (respectively, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.05$). The ranking in the league can influence the anxiety levels of soccer players. Team B defeated Team A with 3-1 score at the end of the match. In this sense, the risk of relegation from the league and mild anxiety levels of team B players might have positive effects on the success of team B.

RESULTS

Raising the performance of the athlete is possible by not only physically preparing the athlete but also get the athlete into sufficient psychological capacity. A mild level of anxiety for team sports can affect in a positive manner. However, high levels of anxiety can cause serious failures and loss. Many factors can affect anxiety level in team sports such as sport genre, player's position, professionalism level, gender, and remaining time to competition. Factors affecting the anxiety levels of the athletes, personal characteristics of the athletes and also ranking of the team should be examined for the success.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and BAI scores of team A and team B players

League Ranking	Team	Age	Sports Age	BAI Score
1	A (n:18)	22.83 ± 5.272	10 ± 5	3.17 ± 4.315
6	B (n:20)	20.6 ± 2.761	10 ± 5	9 ± 7.32

DISCUSSION

There are many studies related to the relationship between anxiety of athlete and motor performance. Ozerkan (2011) observed that college female basketballers had higher levels of anxiety than college male basketballers before the competition and that there was an inverse relationship between competition anxiety and sports performance. However, we believe that variables such as age, gender, and sports branch should be supported by more researches. In this study, it has been observed that mild anxiety may have positive effects on male footballers. Oxendine (1970) noted that the level of anxiety should be the lowest in archery and for a shot at the basketball, while it should be the highest in short-distance running and American football for high performance. Yadav (2017) compared the anxiety levels with success-motivation tests of 20 male hockey players and 20 male footballers. Age range of these two groups was from 20 to 25 years. It was found that hockey players had higher anxiety and achievement-motivation scores. From these studies it is understood that the best anxiety levels for success may differ in each sport branch. In this study, the team with higher level of anxiety achieved success by beating the team with lower level anxiety. Abatkun and Mohan (2017) evaluated the anxiety and self-confidence levels of Ethiopian male soccer players aged from 14 to 19 years according to the position of the footballers. There was no significant difference in anxiety and self-confidence according to position in this study.

Mabweazara *et al.* (2014) compared the anxiety levels of 62 swimmers 7 days before competition and 1 hour before competition in 62 swimmers. It was found that the anxiety levels of swimmers 1 hour before the competition was significantly higher. The upcoming competition is an increasing anxiety for individuals or teams. The anxiety scales of the footballers in this study were also evaluated 1 hour before the match. Cerit *et al.* (2013) assessed relationship between anxiety levels and performance of 45 elite female basketball players in 4 of 2nd league basketball teams before the final four matches. As a result, they found a very significant relationship between anxiety level and performance. This result is also parallel to our study.

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