

The effect of a proposed relaxation training program on psychological stress among team sports players in Palestine

By

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Abstract

The current study aimed to identify the effect of the proposed training program for relaxation on the psychological pressures of team sports team players for the experimental group, as well as to identify the effect of the traditional training program on the psychological pressures of team sport team players for the control group, as well as to determine the differences on the post-measurement of psychological stress between members of the two groups. (experimental and control). The researcher used the experimental method and one of its forms, the pre- and post-measurements, for the experimental and control groups to suit the objectives of the study. The study was conducted on a purposive sample of (30) players from team sports teams in Palestine. One of the most important findings of the study is that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements, in favor of the post-measurement, in the total score of psychological stress and all its fields. There are also statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).) between the means of the pre- and post-measurements and in favor of the post-measurement in the areas of psychological pressures related to (sporting competition, psychological characteristics of players, family and social life, and the public). One of the most important recommendations reached by the researcher is to focus on teaching players how to benefit from the use of psychological programs in the period preceding the start of the match, through multiple methods in this field so that the best results can be achieved.

Keywords: Relaxation, psychological stress, group games, Palestine.

Introduction

Modern training for various team sports is a planned educational process based on scientific foundations whose goal is to bring players to the highest levels of integrated, advanced and rapid performance that countries of the world seek. Most, if not all, of these countries have been keen to prepare their teams and provide their coaches with a new idea of performance to represent their country in tournaments International.

Sports training depends on a group of natural and human sciences, and sports psychology is considered one of the most important human sciences on which sports training depends. Sports psychology is at the forefront of the sciences that help the success of the coach and develop sports performance.¹ As a result, sports training experts have begun to pay close attention to various psychological aspects. Related to sports training and sports competitions.²

The methods and principles of physical, skill, and tactical preparation have converged to a great degree in recent years, and therefore the need has emerged for more attention to the psychological aspect.

The importance of the study lies in the following points:

1. The scarcity of studies that address the psychological aspect of preparing training programs for team sports players.
2. This will be the first study (as far as the researcher knows) that aims to use a training program to reduce psychological pressure among players of team sports teams, which will reflect positively on the development of these team sports in Palestine.

As for the problem of the study, the researcher noted that many officials, coaches, and players believe that the main reason for the low level of physical, skill, and tactical performance is due to the low level of training programs and the players' seriousness in implementing these programs, while the problem is due to the lack of focus on training and developing psychological skills on the part of coaches and players. themselves, which are the skills of mental relaxation, muscle relaxation, concentration of attention, self-confidence, and how to confront competition anxiety. The researcher also noted that most training programs, studies and research have dealt with developing physical and skill performance without taking psychological skills into consideration.

Research objectives

1. Identify the effect of the proposed training program in developing relaxation on psychological pressures among team sports team players for the experimental group.
2. Identify the effect of the proposed training program in developing relaxation on the psychological pressures of team sports team players for the control group.
3. Identify the effect of the proposed training program in developing relaxation on psychological stress among team sports team players for the two groups (experimental and control) for post-measurement.

Research hypotheses

1. Are there statistically significant differences between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements of psychological stress for team sports players in the experimental group?

2. Are there statistically significant differences between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements of psychological stress among team sports players in the control group?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in the means of the post-measurement of psychological stress between the players of team sports teams in the experimental and control groups?

Research Methodology

The researcher used the experimental method in one of its forms, the pre- and post-measurements, for the experimental and control groups to suit the objectives of the study.

Research population

The research population included all the players of the Palestinian team sports teams for football, basketball, handball, and volleyball, numbering (70) players, according to the official records of the Palestinian sports federations in the sports season (2023-2024 AD), and Table (1) shows this.

Table 1. Show distribution of the study population according to the team for team play (n= 70)

Team sports teams	N	Percentage %
Soccer	30	42.9
Basketball	12	17.1
Handball	14	20
volleyball	14	20
Total	70	100%

The research sample

The study was conducted on a sample of (30) players from the team sports teams in Palestine who were chosen intentionally from players available and available to undergo the training programs. The study sample represents approximately (43%) of the total population of the study, and Table (2) shows the distribution Individuals of the study sample according to the type of group game and group.

Table 2. Show distribution of study sample members according to type of group game and group (n=30)

Team sports teams	Experimental group (n=15)		Control group (n=15)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Soccer	6	20	6	20	12	40
Basketball	3	10	3	10	6	20
Handball	3	10	3	10	6	20
Volleyball	3	10	3	10	6	20
Total	15	50%	15	50%	30	100%

The results of Table (2) indicate that the number of members of the experimental group (15) players, and the number of members of the control group (15) players were randomly distributed to the two groups, where the experimental group underwent the proposed relaxation training program, while the control group underwent the regular or traditional training program. Before starting to implement the training programs, a pre-measurement was conducted and the

two study tools were distributed to the players in order to ensure the equality between them in the study variables related to psychological stress, through the use of a t-test for two independent groups (Independent samples t-test), as shown in Table (3).

Table 3. Show equivalence between members of the experimental and control groups on the pre-measurement of psychological stress (n= 30)

Variables	Groups	Mean	STDEV	(t) Value	Significance level*
Psychological stress associated with training	Experimental	3.41	0.35	1.11	0.275
	Controlled	3.54	0.31		
Psychological pressures associated with sports competition	Experimental	3.58	0.42	0.26	0.798
	Controlled	3.61	0.34		
Media-related psychological pressures	Experimental	3.64	0.21	1.36	0.185
	Controlled	3.49	0.38		
Psychological pressures related to the characteristics of players	Experimental	3.72	0.25	0.85	0.400
	Controlled	3.79	0.20		
Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Experimental	3.82	0.25	1.79	0.084
	Controlled	3.64	0.29		
Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Experimental	3.71	0.36	0.55	0.584
	Controlled	3.63	0.36		
Psychological pressures associated with the public	Experimental	3.70	0.39	0.72	0.480
	Controlled	3.62	0.22		
Total degree of psychological stress	Experimental	3.65	0.23	1.52	0.141
	Controlled	3.41	0.58		

* Statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results of Table (3) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the pre-measurement of the total degree of psychological stress and all its fields among team sports players between the experimental and control groups. This indicates that parity was achieved between the two groups before the training programs began.

Research tools

In light of the objectives of the study, the study tools were determined. The first study tool measures the psychological pressures among players of team sports teams in Palestine, in addition to training programs, and the following is an explanation of that:

1. Psychological Stress: By informing the researcher of previous studies related to the subject of the study,² such as the studies of and,³ the researcher designed the study tool to measure psychological pressures among players of collective sports teams in Palestine, where the tool was formed in its form The final one consists of (46) paragraphs.

2. Training programs: The study included a proposed training program for relaxation that was applied to the experimental group for a period of eight weeks and three training units per week. The program included various relaxation training exercises. As for the control group, it underwent the regular or traditional training program simultaneously with the experimental group and separately from it so as not to cause an effect of transfer of training between the two groups.

Psychometric properties of the two study tools

1. Validity: To ensure the validity of the two study tools by using the validity of the arbitrators in the first step and the validity of the internal consistency in the second step, the following is an explanation of that:⁴
 - A. The validity of the arbitrators for the two study tools: The researcher designed the study tool for psychological stress and then presented it to (10) arbitrators who hold a doctorate in physical education and are specialists in sports psychology, working in the field of teaching in Jordanian and Palestinian universities, as shown in Appendix No. (4), in order to express an opinion on the suitability of Items for the fields of study, selecting appropriate paragraphs, and deleting inappropriate paragraphs. The arbitrators' opinions represented the validity of the content of the tool, and the amendments indicated by (80%) of the arbitrators or more were taken into account. The psychological stress tool in its final form consisted of (46) items distributed over (7) Areas, and thus the study tool measures what it was designed for.
 - B. Internal consistency validity of the study tool: After arbitration in the second step, the validity of the two study tools was confirmed using internal consistency validity, by extracting the Pearson correlation coefficient values between the items and the total score for each tool, after distributing the tool to a survey sample consisting of (20) players. Group sports teams in Palestine were not included in the original study sample.
2. Reliability of the study tool: To ensure the reliability of the two study tools, Cronbach's Alpha was used for the same exploratory sample.

Results and discussion

1. Results related to the first question, which reads: Are there statistically significant differences between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements of psychological stress among team sports players in the experimental group?
 - To answer this question, a paired samples t-test was used and the percentage change was calculated, and the results of Table (4) show this.
 - The results of Table (4) indicate that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements and in favor of the post-measurement in the total degree of psychological stress among team sports players in the experimental group. This indicates an effective effect of the proposed relaxation training program in reducing psychological stress among players, as the percentage of the total score for psychological stress was (-35.68%).
 - The researcher attributes the reduction of psychological stress among the experimental group to the effectiveness of the proposed program for psychological skills, as it included relaxation exercises, in addition to the use of breathing control to induce mental relaxation.⁶ where they indicated that mental training positively affects the ability to relax, reduce the level of tension, and acquire the skill of controlling the muscular system to reach the optimal level of tension.⁷

Table 4. Show the results of the paired t-test for the significance of the differences between the means of the pre- and post-measurements of psychological stress among team sports players in the experimental group (n= 15)

Variables	Tests	Mean	STDEV	(t) Value	Significance level*	Change rate %																																																																		
Psychological stress associated with training	Pretest	3.41	0.35	4.50	*0.000	-24.04																																																																		
	Posttest	2.59	0.33				Psychological pressures associated with sports competition	Pretest	3.58	0.42	5.31	*0.000	-32.12	Posttest	2.43	0.38	Media-related psychological pressures	Pretest	3.64	0.21	13.10	*0.000	-35.98	Posttest	2.33	0.19	Psychological pressures related to the psychological characteristics of players	Pretest	3.72	0.25	11.31	*0.000	-37.36	Posttest	2.33	0.27	Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Pretest	3.82	0.25	12.68	*0.000	-42.93	Posttest	2.18	0.26	Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Pretest	3.71	0.36	7.57	*0.000	-38.27	Posttest	2.29	0.40	Psychological pressures associated with the public	Pretest	3.70	0.39	6.96	*0.000	-37.83	Posttest	2.30	0.38	Total degree of psychological stress	Pretest	3.65	0.23	10.68	*0.000
Psychological pressures associated with sports competition	Pretest	3.58	0.42	5.31	*0.000	-32.12																																																																		
	Posttest	2.43	0.38				Media-related psychological pressures	Pretest	3.64	0.21	13.10	*0.000	-35.98	Posttest	2.33	0.19	Psychological pressures related to the psychological characteristics of players	Pretest	3.72	0.25	11.31	*0.000	-37.36	Posttest	2.33	0.27	Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Pretest	3.82	0.25	12.68	*0.000	-42.93	Posttest	2.18	0.26	Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Pretest	3.71	0.36	7.57	*0.000	-38.27	Posttest	2.29	0.40	Psychological pressures associated with the public	Pretest	3.70	0.39	6.96	*0.000	-37.83	Posttest	2.30	0.38	Total degree of psychological stress	Pretest	3.65	0.23	10.68	*0.000	-35.61	Posttest	2.35	0.24						
Media-related psychological pressures	Pretest	3.64	0.21	13.10	*0.000	-35.98																																																																		
	Posttest	2.33	0.19				Psychological pressures related to the psychological characteristics of players	Pretest	3.72	0.25	11.31	*0.000	-37.36	Posttest	2.33	0.27	Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Pretest	3.82	0.25	12.68	*0.000	-42.93	Posttest	2.18	0.26	Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Pretest	3.71	0.36	7.57	*0.000	-38.27	Posttest	2.29	0.40	Psychological pressures associated with the public	Pretest	3.70	0.39	6.96	*0.000	-37.83	Posttest	2.30	0.38	Total degree of psychological stress	Pretest	3.65	0.23	10.68	*0.000	-35.61	Posttest	2.35	0.24																
Psychological pressures related to the psychological characteristics of players	Pretest	3.72	0.25	11.31	*0.000	-37.36																																																																		
	Posttest	2.33	0.27				Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Pretest	3.82	0.25	12.68	*0.000	-42.93	Posttest	2.18	0.26	Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Pretest	3.71	0.36	7.57	*0.000	-38.27	Posttest	2.29	0.40	Psychological pressures associated with the public	Pretest	3.70	0.39	6.96	*0.000	-37.83	Posttest	2.30	0.38	Total degree of psychological stress	Pretest	3.65	0.23	10.68	*0.000	-35.61	Posttest	2.35	0.24																										
Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Pretest	3.82	0.25	12.68	*0.000	-42.93																																																																		
	Posttest	2.18	0.26				Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Pretest	3.71	0.36	7.57	*0.000	-38.27	Posttest	2.29	0.40	Psychological pressures associated with the public	Pretest	3.70	0.39	6.96	*0.000	-37.83	Posttest	2.30	0.38	Total degree of psychological stress	Pretest	3.65	0.23	10.68	*0.000	-35.61	Posttest	2.35	0.24																																				
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	Posttest	2.35	0.24																																																																					

* Statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

In this regard, Davis (1999) points out that the ability to relax is considered one of the most important psychological skills that work to confront sources of stress, which surprise the player with requirements that must be adapted to and worked through.⁸ that the level of anxiety can be reduced through mental programs.⁹ The anxiety may have a positive driving force that helps the individual to exert the maximum effort possible, or it may have a negative driving force that contributes to hindering performance and reducing self-confidence.

Results related to the second question, which reads: Are there statistically significant differences between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements of psychological stress among team sports players in the control group?

To answer this question, a paired samples t-test was used and the percentage change was calculated, and the results of Table(5) show this.

Table 5. Show the results of the paired t-test for the significance of the differences between the means of the pre- and post-measurements of psychological stress among team sports players in the control group (n= 15)

Variables	Tests	Mean	STDEV	(t) Value	Significance level*	Change rate %
Psychological stress associated with training	Pretest Posttest	3.54 3.44	0.31 0.47	0.84	0.417	-2.82
Psychological pressures associated with sports competition	Pretest Posttest	3.61 3.26	0.34 0.39	2.29	*0.038	-9.69
Media-related psychological pressures	Pretest Posttest	3.49 3.29	0.38 0.51	1.13	0.278	-5.73
Psychological pressures related to the psychological characteristics of players	Pretest Posttest	3.79 3.41	0.20 0.34	3.41	*0.004	-10.02
Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Pretest Posttest	3.64 3.43	0.29 0.40	1.63	0.125	-5.76
Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Pretest Posttest	3.63 3.33	0.36 0.34	2.79	*0.015	-8.26
Psychological pressures associated with the public	Pretest Posttest	3.62 3.34	0.22 0.34	3.16	*0.007	-7.73
Total degree of psychological stress	Pretest Posttest	3.41 3.33	0.58 0.21	0.45	0.662	-2.34

* Statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results of Table (5) indicate that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements and in favor of the post-measurement in the areas of psychological pressures related to (sporting competition, psychological characteristics of players, family and social life, audience) among players. Team sports teams in the control group, while there were no statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-measurements of the total degree of psychological stress and its aspects related to training, media, and the team's technical and administrative staff. This indicates that there is an effective effect of the regular training program in reducing psychological stress, which is statistically significant.¹⁰

The researcher attributes the psychological pressures among members of the control group, which are caused by the inability of the players to cope with psychological pressures and thus force the player to be unable to carry out job duties to meet the mental, physical or psychological requirements to readapt and balance with the environment, as well as being exposed to psychological crises as a result of their feeling of their inability to Maintaining training requirements. Psychological pressures have become one of the problems facing coaches, players, and administrators, leaving negative effects and thus weakening self-confidence when one has the belief or thought that one is incompetent, in addition to causing internal conflict or physical injury that causes differences or early retirement and withdrawal from training.¹¹

The results of this study agreed with the results of the study of Benjamin and Avid (1997) and the study of Al-Zyoud (2014), and this study differed with the results of the study of Jaber (2009) and the study of Salem (2012), which stated that psychological pressures were low, and the researcher also attributes this to The lack of interest by the technical and administrative staff as required in preparing the players psychologically in the correct manner, and promising to reward them financially, as well as the lack of interest of the coaches and administrators in putting the player in conditions similar to the conditions of the match, as well as the lack of trust between the technical and administrative staff and the player, which increases the psychological pressure on the players. As well as the bias of the technical and administrative staff towards some players, which leads to an increase in psychological pressure among the players.¹²

Results related to the third question, which reads: Are there statistically significant differences in the means of the post-measurement of psychological stress between the players of team sports teams in the experimental and control groups?

To answer the question, an analysis of covariance (ANOVA) was used to control the effect of the pre-measurement for the two groups and isolate it and compare them to the post-measurement, as well as calculate the size of the effect using the partial eta squared to determine the percentage of explained variance or effect of the proposed training program for relaxation and mental imagery compared to the program. Regular or traditional training.

Table 6. *Show means and standard deviations for the post-measurement of psychological stress among team sports players in the experimental and control groups (n= 30)*

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	STDEV
Psychological stress	Experimental	15	2.59	0.33
associated with training	Controlled	15	3.44	0.47
Psychological pressures	Experimental	15	2.43	0.38
associated with sports	Controlled	15	3.26	0.39
competition				
Media-related	Experimental	15	2.33	0.19
psychological pressures	Controlled	15	3.29	0.51
Psychological pressures	Experimental	15	2.18	0.26
related to the				
psychological	Controlled	15	3.41	0.34
characteristics of players				
Psychological pressures	Experimental	15	2.29	0.40
associated with the team's				
technical and	Controlled	15	3.43	0.40
administrative staff				
Psychological pressures	Experimental	15	2.29	0.40
related to family and	Controlled	15	3.33	0.34
social life				
Psychological pressures	Experimental	15	2.30	0.38
associated with the public	Controlled	15	3.34	0.34
Total degree of	Experimental	15	2.35	0.24
psychological stress	Controlled	15	3.33	0.21

Table 7. Show the results of the associated analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the significance of the differences in the means of the post-measurement of psychological pressures among team sports players in the experimental and control groups ($n=30$)

Variables	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	(f) value	Significance level
Psychological stress associated with training	Companion (pre)	0.45	1	0.45	2.82	0.105
	The group	5.77	1	5.77	36.06	*0.000
	The error	4.32	27	0.16		
	Total	282.79	30			
Psychological pressures associated with sports competition	Companion (pre)	2.25	1	2.25	25.41	*0.000
	The group	5.53	1	5.53	62.61	*0.000
	The error	2.39	27	0.09		
	Total	252.09	30			
Media-related psychological pressures	Companion (pre)	0.50	1	0.50	3.71	0.065
	The group	5.56	1	5.56	41.29	*0.000
	The error	3.64	27	0.14		
	Total	248.07	30			
Psychological pressures related to the psychological characteristics of players	Companion (pre)	0.48	1	0.48	5.94	*0.022
	The group	9.18	1	9.18	114.09	*0.000
	The error	2.17	27	0.08		
	Total	259.08	30			
Psychological pressures associated with the team's technical and administrative staff	Companion (pre)	0.39	1	0.39	3.87	0.060
	The group	9.21	1	9.21	91.11	*0.000
	The error	2.73	27	0.10		
	Total	250.80	30			
Psychological pressures related to family and social life	Companion (pre)	0.46	1	0.46	4.08	0.053
	The group	7.63	1	7.63	68.09	*0.000
	The error	3.03	27	0.11		
	Total	249.04	30			
Psychological pressures associated with the public	Companion (pre)	1.16	1	1.16	12.26	*0.006
	The group	7.24	1	7.24	76.74	*0.000
	The error	2.55	27	0.09		
	Total	250.83	30			
Total degree of psychological stress	Companion (pre)	0.22	1	0.22	4.90	*0.035
	The group	6.01	1	6.01	134.01	*0.000
	The error	1.21	27	0.05		
	Total	280.85	30			

* Statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results of Table (7) indicate that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the means of the post-measurement of the total degree of psychological stress and all its fields among the players of the collective sports teams in

Palestine between the experimental and control groups and in favor of the experimental group (the best mean) .

Conclusion

In light of the objectives and hypotheses, the limits of his sample and procedures, and the results of statistical processing of the data, he concluded that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements, and in favor of the post-measurement in the total degree of psychological stress and all its fields among the players of the team sports teams in the experimental group. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the averages of the pre- and post-measurements and in favor of the post-measurement in the areas of psychological pressures related to (sporting competition, psychological characteristics of the players, family and social life, and the public) among the players of the team sports teams in the control group and in light of His conclusions: The researchers recommend focusing on teaching players how to benefit from the use of psychological programs in the period preceding the start of the match, through multiple methods in this field so that the best results can be achieved, and ensuring training in psychological skills, especially relaxation, concentration of attention, and self-confidence, because of their extremely important role. In increasing the effectiveness of performance, whether in training or competitions.

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