



Mental Toughness and Its Relationship with Sports Achievement Motivation Among Professional Football Players in Palestine

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify mental toughness and its relationship with sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine, as well as to identify the differences between the levels of mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine attributed to the variables of club level and years of experience. To achieve this, the study was conducted on a sample of (146) professional football players in Palestine, who were selected in a randomized, stratified manner. The researcher used the descriptive approach which was appropriate for the nature of the study and its questions. He also used the Mark Atkinson (2014) scale for Mental Toughness and the Achievement Motives Scale by (Anne-Marie Elbe & Franziska Wenhold (2005)). The results revealed that the total levels of the hope of success and fear of failure scopes among professional football players in Palestine were high. They also revealed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine. The results also showed a statistically significant correlation between mental toughness and the scopes of hope of success and fear of failure related to sports motivation achievement among players, and showed that there were no statistically significant differences at a significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine attributed to the variables of professional level and years of experience.

Keywords: Mental toughness, sports motivation achievement, professional football players in Palestine, hope of success, fear of failure.

INTRODUCTION

The development of sports, which is evident in many sports studies, is the result of scientific research and efforts which have contributed to developing this movement at all levels. Moreover, sport sciences interact with each other to reach high achievements in various sports activities. Those achievements rely on various factors such as the physical fitness of the athlete, which is considered the basis for learning and developing skillful performance. Sport psychology is also an important field for sport activities and is in need of further deepened study due to its vital impact on athletes. This has been a science of increasing importance in recent years, especially due to its effect on the training process. It also has a direct effect on developing performance levels among athletes (Younis, 2004).

Furthermore, Psychology is a science that has contributed to athletes reaching their full potentials, as it aims at preparing athletes mentally to the highest levels, and helps them reach their full potentials in facing athletic difficulties they may face during sport competitions which require a competitive approach from the player to enable him to understand himself and his capabilities and tendencies (Crust & Clough, 2015).

Understanding the psychological element accompanying successful athletic performance requires an understanding of the mental composition related to optimal performance, and its contribution to determining the performance level. This results from the player's athletic form at the physical, skills and mental levels. The psychological factor remains the decisive factor for performance at the training and competition levels, and many trainers and players have indicated in their personal reports that 40% to 90% of performance relies on mental factors (Kimiecik, J. C., Stein, G. L., 2002).

Football is the most popular sport worldwide and the number of people playing it has exceeded 250 million, whereas followers of the sport's various competitions are in the billions. It has been known throughout communities to be a source of joy, as well as a source of financial benefit. It has also been a means of success for poor families. This has all driven many researchers and specialists to study football, in an attempt to raise club achievement to the highest possible standards. The potential level of development is related to a number of factors such as: physical fitness, skills, planning and mental factors. The development of sport achievement among football players relies on various preparation processes which are planned based on scientific principles derived from various natural and human sciences. Those processes contribute to developing physical fitness and work on developing and improving motor skills and planning capabilities. This is achieved through sport training, which is a purposeful process based on scientific principles that aim to help the player reach major athletic achievement. This is achieved by developing a player's physical, skill and mental capabilities (Weineck, J., 1997).

The concept of mental toughness and achievement motivation has provoked the interest of many researchers in the field of sport psychology due to its important role in improving resilience and resistance as requirements of performance and achievement, and also due to its role in facing negative effects caused by sport work pressure and training across all sports. Such pressures lead to the draining of a player's psychological and physical energy. Nonetheless, many studies have indicated varying capabilities among athletes in bearing the pressures of professional sports and competitions, and in adapting to them. They have also revealed variances in athletes' interactions with environmental events, in order to reach their desired objectives. This phenomenon appears clearly among most players and is usually attributed to will-power (Funk & Kent, 1987).

Study Problem

Mental toughness is one of the most important factors and a positive personal characteristic in performance development and the achievement of athletic victories. Therefore, developing mental toughness levels among athletes during competitions and training conditions enables players to overcome internal and external personal obstacles and to accomplish achievements. The researcher noticed that mental toughness affects a player's skills and a match's final result. He also noticed that trainers fail to provide enough focus on psychological requirements and that psychological pressures affect players in the form of negative thoughts, leading to match

losses. Players with low mental toughness fail to achieve wins, and such disorders begin with neuromuscular incompatibility and function, leading to loss of self-confidence.

Study Importance

1. The study is expected to identify mental toughness and its relationship with sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine.
2. This study provides us with facts, information, various references, and study results on the features of mental toughness and achievement motivation among football players in Palestine.
3. This study guides towards the need to conduct training programs and guidance sessions to raise the levels of mental toughness and achievement motivation among individuals needing such help.
4. This study contributes to helping specialists in the sports field to set training plans that take into consideration the development of mental toughness and raising the level of achievement motivation among players.

Study Objectives

1. To raise the level of mental toughness among professional football players in Palestine.
2. To raise the level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine.
3. To identify the relationship between the levels of mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine.
4. To identify the differences between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine according to the variables of (professional level and years of experience).

Study Questions

1. What is the level of mental toughness among professional football players in Palestine?
2. What is the level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine?
3. What is the relationship between the level of mental toughness and the level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine attributed to the variables of (professional level, and years of experience)?

Boundaries of the Study

1. Human Boundary: Football players in Palestine.
2. Geographical Boundary: The study populations' football clubs in Palestine.
3. Time Boundary: The study was conducted during the (2022-2023) football season.

Study Terminology

Mental Toughness: (Brooks, 2005) defined mental toughness as the athlete's ability to deal with mental pressures, his ability to address daily challenges and difficulties, and his ability to deal with frustration, mistakes, mental shocks and daily problems, in order to develop set realistic objectives, solve problems and interact subtly with others, respect them and maintain self-respect.

Motivation is defined as the conditions that enable the continuity of a behavioral trend, leading to the achievement of required responses. It is also defined as a process or series of processes that stimulate behavior in order to achieve and maintain the desired objective (Govern & Petri, 2004).

Sports Achievement Motivation: It is the player's preparedness to face competitive athletic situations and his attempt to overcome and excel within the limits of a certain excellence level or standard by showing a high level of activity, effectiveness, and perseverance, and by expressing his desire to struggle to achieve excellence in a sport competition (Allawi, 2006).

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Ross, et al. (2012) conducted a study aiming at identifying the role of mental toughness when anticipating sport injury before it happens, as well as the direct and indirect mental toughness effects on players' responses when injury occurs. The longitudinal design (long-term) was used, and the study sample included (694) players who had showed symptoms of injury during a period of two years. (104) players actually experienced injury and their responses to the questionnaire items were taken. After data collection and statistical processing, the study revealed a positive and desired correlation between mental toughness, mental responses, and adaptation after injury takes place and during recovery. The study also revealed that mental toughness has a positive effect on the ability of injured athletes to adapt and respond psychologically. The study concluded that mental toughness has important reflections on athletes, and that it reduces the possibility of injuries, and speeds up recovery.

Besharat&Ramzi (2010) conducted a study aiming to identify the effect of mental toughness on sport achievement and mental health. The study sample included (74) athletes, divided into (44) males and (30) females, who were subjected to the scales of mental toughness, mental health and sport achievement. The SPSS program was used to analyze the results, and the results revealed the positive effect of mental toughness on mental health and sport achievement. It also revealed a statistically insignificant correlation between mental toughness and mental anxiety, and that there was no statistically significant relationship between mental toughness and achievement motivation. The study recommended raising mental toughness among athletes due to its positive effect on mental health and sports achievement by making athletes feel committed, in control and competitive.

Jaber (2011) conducted a study aiming at identifying the sports achievement motivation related to sport competition among basketball players in Palestine according to the variables of (professional level and experience). To achieve this, the study sample consisted on (240) players, composing (89.8%) of the original study population of (354) players. To collect the study data and achieve its objectives, the descriptive method was used, as well as the Sport Achievement Motivation List designed by Allawi in 1998. The study results revealed that the sports achievement motivation related to sports achievement among basketball players in Palestine was high at a rate of (80.8%). It also revealed that the success motivation dimension had the highest rate with a relative weight of (86.4%), followed by the avoiding of failure dimension with a relative weight of (75.2%). There were no statistically significant differences between sports achievement and competitiveness attributed to the variables of (professional level and experience).

Khan (2011) conducted a study aiming at identifying the relationship between sport competition anxiety and sports achievement motivation among a sample of badminton players. The study was applied to a sample of (20) players aged (17-25) years, who were selected randomly, and the Sport Achievement Motivation and Sport Anxiety scales were used. After data collection and analysis, the results revealed a negative statistically significant correlation between competition anxiety and sports achievement motivation among badminton players.

STUDY METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Study Methodology

The researcher used the survey descriptive research method due to its suitability to the nature of the study and to achieve the study objectives.

Study Population and Sample

The study sample consisted of (146) professional football players in Palestine, comprising (40%) of the total study population.

Table No. (1): Distribution of Study Sample Individuals according to Independent Variables (n=146)

Independent variables	Variable level	Repetition	%
Profession level	Full time	91	62.3
	Part time	55	37.7
	Total	146	%100
Years of experience	5 years or less	24	16.4
	6-10 years	39	26.7
	More than 10 years	84	56.9
	Total	146	%100

Study Tool

The researcher used the Mental Toughness Scale designed by Mark Atkinson in 2014 and consisting of (18) items. He also used the Sport Achievement Motivation Scale designed by Anne-Marie Elbe and Franziska Wenhold in 2005, and consisting of (30) items.

Validity of the Two Study Tools:

To verify the validity of the study tools, arbitration validity was used as a first step by presenting the tools before several specialists in sport psychology. Amendments were made based on their remarks.

In the second step, internal consistency validity was used by finding the Pearson correlation coefficient between the items and the tool's overall degree upon distributing the two tools among a survey sample of (30) players, who were not included in the original study sample. The results of tables (2, 3 and 4) explain this.

Table No. (2): Validity of Internal Consistency for the Mental Toughness Tool (n=30).

No.	Items	Average Response	Standard Deviation	(r) value
1	You can always achieve your goals through hard work.	2.60	0.76	**0.84
2	I do not like to make changes to my daily schedule.	2.83	0.89	**0.56
3	I am very excited about my work.	2.03	0.93	**0.78
4	I am not well prepared to deal with unexpected problems of life.	2.73	0.95	**0.81
5	Most of the things that happen in life are supposed to happen.	2.80	0.96	**0.67
6	When I make plans, I make sure that they can work.	2.37	0.99	**0.77
7	No matter how much I try, I usually achieve little.	2.57	0.98	**0.56
8	I like high variety in my work.	2.87	0.90	**0.85
9	Most of the time, people listen carefully to what I have to say.	2.80	0.92	**0.76
10	Thinking of yourself as a free person leads to frustration.	2.40	0.97	**0.78
11	Exerting your full effort in what you do usually pays off in the end.	3.17	0.87	**0.86
12	It is usually very difficult to correct my mistakes.	2.87	0.87	**0.64
13	I am disturbed when my daily routine is interrupted.	2.70	0.98	**0.51
14	I usually wake up excited to face life where it left off.	2	0.74	**0.76
15	Many times, I feel I do not understand myself.	2.67	0.92	**0.60
16	Changes to my routine motivate me to learn.	2.67	0.91	**0.77
17	Most days, life is really enjoyable and exciting for me.	2.60	0.99	**0.75
18	It is difficult to imagine that any person feels excited about his work.	2.57	0.97	**0.51

**Statistically significant relationship at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$).

The results of Table (2) reveal that there is a statistically significant positive correlation at a level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the total levels of mental toughness for all items, as the Pearson correlation coefficient value ranged from 0.51 to 0.86.

Therefore, the study tool can measure what it was placed for.

Table No. (3): Validity of Internal Consistency for the (Hope of Success) Scope (n=30).

No.	Items	Response Level	Standard Deviation	(r) Value
1	I noticed that sport challenges I cannot immediately master make me interested in them quickly.	2.77	0.94	**0.59
2	When I am faced with a sport challenge I can achieve, I find myself enthusiastic about performing it.	3.10	1.06	**0.75
3	I like to succeed in sport activities I participate in.	3.47	1.07	**0.81
4	I am drawn to sport activities that allow me to select my capabilities.	3.40	1.02	**0.79
5	I enjoy sport activities which I am not sure whether I can accomplish or not.	2.67	0.88	**0.72
6	When I am faced with a sport activity which I am not sure I can perform, I want to try it immediately.	2.63	0.93	**0.61
7	I enjoy sport situations through which I can display my athletic capabilities.	3.47	0.94	**0.88
8	I like to face difficult sports tasks.	3.17	1.01	**0.80
9	I like sport situations in which I can show how good I am.	3.40	0.97	**0.79
10	I like to try new unpopular sport tasks, even if my attempts are unsuccessful.	2.73	0.98	**0.69
11	It is important for me to succeed in sports tasks which I am able to accomplish.	3.20	1.03	**0.78
12	I am attracted to sport situations in which I can test my abilities.	3.07	1.01	**0.74
13	I enjoy sports tasks which are somewhat difficult for me to perform.	2.90	0.99	**0.75
14	I am drawn to sports tasks which I find difficult to master.	2.90	0.99	**0.62
15	I like to learn new things in sports, even if they are not part of my usual sport activities.	3.13	1.01	**0.78
	Total level for the Hope of Success Scope	3.09	0.82	**0.90

**Statistically significant relationship at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$).

The results of Table (3) indicate that there is a statistically significant positive correlation at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the total level of the Hope of Success scope and all its items and the total motivation level. The Pearson correlation coefficient ranged from 0.59 and 0.90. Therefore, the study tool can measure what it was placed for.

Table No. (4): Validity of Internal Consistency for the (Fear of Failure) Scope (n=30).

No.	Items	Response Average	Standard Deviation	(r) Value
16	I do not to like to practice any sport activity unless I am sure I can achieve it.	2.87	1.07	**0.58
17	I do not like sport situations which test my abilities.	3.17	1.15	**0.63
18	When I face a difficult sports task, I hope I do not have to do it due to fear of failure.	3.17	0.99	**0.65
19	I feel anxious when I am unable to meet the requirements of a sports task immediately.	2.90	1.09	*0.42
20	I prefer avoiding sport situations in which I cannot apply my skills.	3.23	1.17	**0.59
21	I find it frustrating to do something in sports when I am not sure I can achieve it.	3.00	1.02	**0.57
22	I feel extremely afraid of performing new sports activities, even if no-one is watching.	3.63	0.81	**0.79
23	I fear sports activities I cannot succeed in, even if no-one notices my failure.	3.47	0.90	**0.72
24	I fear failure in sports challenges which I believe I can accomplish.	3.03	1.16	**0.55
25	I feel shy when I fail in a sport activity, even if no-one discusses it with me.	3.07	1.14	*0.45
26	I fear failure in sports challenges that rely mostly on my performance.	3.23	1.04	**0.59
27	I feel uncomfortable when performing sport activities in which I must prove my athletic capabilities	3.10	1.09	**0.71
28	Merely thinking about a new and unfamiliar sport challenge makes me feel somewhat anxious.	3.00	1.02	**0.72
29	I do not enjoy performing sport tasks when I am not sure I will succeed.	3.23	1.04	**0.74
30	Requesting difficult sport activities somewhat disturbs me.	2.97	1	**0.74
	Total Level for the Fear of Failure Scope	3.14	0.74	**0.88

Statistically significant relationship at a significance level of **($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and *($\alpha \leq 0.01$).

The results of Table (4) indicate that there is a statistically significant positive correlation at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the total level of the Fear of Failure scope and all its items and the total motivation level. The Pearson correlation coefficient values ranged from 0.42 to 0.88. Therefore, the study tool can measure what it was placed for.

Stability of the Two Study Tools:

To check the stability coefficients, the Cronbach's alpha Formula was used for the same survey sample. The results are explained in Table (5).

Table No. (5): The Stability of the two Study Tools

Scopes	No. of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Mental toughness	18	0.94
Hope of Success	15	0.96
Fear of Failure	15	0.92
Motivation	30	0.96

The results of Table (5) indicate that the stability coefficient value for the mental toughness item was (0.94), the stability coefficient value for the sports achievement motivation tool as a whole was (0.96), whereas, with regards to the scopes of Hope of Success and Fear of Failure, their stability values were 0.96 and 0.92 respectively. These values indicate that both study tools enjoy a good level of stability for achieving the study objectives.

Study Tool Correction:

The researcher has selected the Mental Toughness Scale designed by Mark Atkinson in 2014. This scale consists of (18) items and is answered using four levels of measurement (Totally incorrect- 4 points, partially correct- 3 points, mostly correct- 2 points, and extremely correct- 1 point). Negative items are measured oppositely. The higher a player's measurement points, the higher his mental toughness, and vice-versa.

On the other hand, the researcher used the Sport Achievement Motivation Scale designed by Anne-Marie Elbe and FranziscaWenhold in 2005. It consisted of (30) items, where items (1-15) measure (success achievement motivation), and items (16-30) measure (failure avoidance motivation). Each dimension is corrected separately and the answers for this scale use four levels of measurement (Totally incorrect- 4 points, partially correct- 3 points, mostly correct- 2 points, and extremely correct- 1 point). Negative items are measured oppositely.

Study Variables

Independent Variable:

- 1- Experience: 5 years or less, 6-10 years, more than 10 years.
- 2- Profession Level: Full time professional, semi-professional.

Sub-Variable:

It is represented by the response of the players on the Mental Toughness and Sports Achievement Motivation scales.

Statistical Processing

Data was processed using the (SPSS) program through the following processes:

- Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the answers were used to determine the levels of mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among the players.
- The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among the players, and also to verify the validity of internal consistency.
- The (Independent t- test) was used to determine the differences between the two study tools according to the profession level variable.

- One-way ANOVA was used to determine the differences between the two study tools according to the years of experience variable.
- The Cronbach's alpha formula was used to find the stability of the study tools.

STUDY RESULTS

Results Related to Question 1, Stating: What Is the Level of Mental Toughness Among Professional Football Players in Palestine?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviation for each item, and for the total mental toughness level, were measured, as explained in Table (6). To interpret the results, the arithmetic means of the 4-point Likert Scale were used as follows: Below (1.75)- Very low level, (1.75-2.49)- Low level, (2.50-3.24)- High level, (3.25) and above- Very high level.

Table No. (6): Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and Mental Toughness Levels among Professional Football Players in Palestine (n=146)

No. in scale	Items	Response Average*	Standard Deviation	Toughness Level
1	You can always achieve your goals through hard work.	3.36	.780	Very high
2	I do not like to make changes to my daily schedule.	2.31	.990	Low
3	I am very excited about my work.	3.19	.850	High
4	I am not well prepared to deal with unexpected problems of life.	3.29	.760	Very high
5	Most of the things that happen in life are supposed to happen.	2.51	.970	High
6	When I make plans, I make sure that they work properly.	2.98	.720	High
7	No matter how much I try, I usually achieve little.	3.09	.970	High
8	I like high variety in my work.	3.16	.840	High
9	Most of the time, people listen carefully to what I have to say.	2.88	.720	High
10	Thinking of yourself as a free person leads to frustration.	3.52	.850	Very high
11	Exerting your full effort in what you do usually pays off in the end.	3.34	.760	Very high
12	It is usually very difficult to correct my mistakes.	3.30	.850	Very high
13	I am disturbed when my daily routine is interrupted.	2.72	.990	High
14	I usually wake up excited to face life where it left off.	2.93	.860	High
15	Many times, I feel I do not understand myself.	3.08	.930	High
16	Changes to my routine motivate me to learn.	3	.870	High
17	Most days, life is really enjoyable and exciting for me.	2.80	.890	High
18	It is difficult to imagine that any person feels excited about his work.	2.25	.860	Low
Total level of mental toughness		2.98	0.36	High

*The highest response level is (4) points

The results of Table (6) indicate that the level of mental toughness among professional football players in Palestine was very high for items (1, 4, 10, 11 and 12), where the response average was higher than (3.25). The mental toughness level was high for items (3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14,

15, 16 and 17), where the response average was between 2.51 and 3.19. The level was low for items (2 and 18) and the response average was 2.31 and 2.25 respectively. With regards to the total level of mental toughness among professional football players in Palestine, it was high with a response average of (2.98).

The Results Related to Question 2, Stating: What Is the Level of Sports Achievement Motivation Among Professional Football Players in Palestine?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviation for each item, and for the total sports achievement motivation level, were measured, as revealed in Table (7). To interpret the results, the arithmetic means of the 4-point Likert Scale were used as follows: Below (1.75)- Very low sports achievement motivation level, (1.75-2.49)- Low level, (2.50-3.24)- High level, (3.25) and above- Very high level.

(Hope of Success) Scope:

Table No. (7): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for the Items of the (Hope of Success) Scope among Professional Football Players in Palestine (n=146)

No. in Scale	Items	Response Average*	Standard Deviation	Level
1	I noticed that sport challenges I cannot immediately master make me interested quickly.	2.93	.850	High
2	When I am faced with a sport challenge I can achieve, I find myself enthusiastic about performing it.	3.38	.850	Very high
3	I like to succeed in sport activities I participate in.	3.66	.730	Very high
4	I am drawn to sport activities that allow me to select my capabilities.	3.49	.750	Very high
5	I enjoy sport activities which I am not sure whether I can accomplish or not.	2.82	.860	High
6	When I am faced with a sport activity which I am not sure I can perform, I want to try it immediately.	2.91	.880	High
7	I enjoy sports situations through which I can display my athletic capabilities.	3.45	.840	Very high
8	I like to experience difficult sports tasks.	3.17	.870	High
9	I like sport situations in which I can show how good I am.	3.44	.780	Very high
10	I like to try new unpopular sport tasks, even if my attempts are unsuccessful.	3.01	.850	High
11	It is important for me to succeed in sports tasks which I am able to accomplish.	3.38	.860	Very high
12	I am attracted to sport situations in which I can test my abilities.	3.34	.820	Very high
13	I enjoy sports tasks which are somewhat difficult for me.	3.16	.800	High
14	I am drawn to sports tasks which I find difficult to master.	2.83	.960	High
15	I like to learn new things in sports, even if they are not part of my usual sport activities.	3.25	.810	Very high
Total Level of the Hope of Success Scope		3.21	0.58	High

*The highest response level is (4) points.

The results of Table (7) reveal that the level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine for the items of the Hope of Success scope was very high for items (2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 15), where the response averages were (3.25) and above. Moreover, the level was high for the remaining items where the average responses were between 2.82 and 3.17. With regards to the total level of the Hope of Success scope among professional football players in Palestine, it was high at a response average of (3.21).

(Fear of Failure) Scope:

Table No. (8): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for the Items of the (Fear of Failure) Scope among Professional Football Players in Palestine (n=200)

No. in the scale	Items	Response Average*	Standard Deviation	Motivation Level
16	I do not like to practice any sport activity unless I am sure I can achieve it.	3	.930	High
17	I do not like sport situations which test my abilities.	3.40	.890	Very high
18	When I face a difficult sport task, I hope I do not have to do it due to fear of failure.	3.23	.930	High
19	I feel anxious when I am unable to meet the requirements of a sports task immediately.	2.79	.990	High
20	I prefer avoiding sport situations in which I cannot apply my skills.	3.36	.970	Very high
21	I find it frustrating to do something in sports when I am not sure I can achieve it.	3.08	.920	High
22	I feel extremely afraid of performing new sports activities, even if no-one is watching.	3.48	.800	Very high
23	I fear sports activities I cannot succeed in, even if no-one notices my failure.	3.41	.840	Very high
24	I fear failure in sports challenges which I believe I can accomplish.	3.09	.980	High
25	I feel shy when I fail in a sport activity, even if no-one discusses it with me.	3.07	1	High
26	I fear failure in sports challenges that rely mostly on my performance.	3.20	.950	High
27	I feel uncomfortable when performing sport activities in which I must prove my athletic capabilities	3.21	.950	High
28	Merely thinking about a new and unfamiliar sport challenge makes me feel somewhat anxious.	3.14	.840	High
29	I do not enjoy performing sport tasks when I am not sure I will succeed.	3.21	.930	High
30	Requesting difficult sport activities somewhat disturbs me.	3.19	.870	High
Total Level for the Fear of Failure Scope		3.19	0.59	High

*The highest response level is (4) points.

The results of Table (8) reveal that the level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine for the items of the Fear of Failure scope was very high for items (17, 20, 22 and 23), where the response averages were higher than (3.25). Moreover,

the level was high for the remaining items, where the average responses were between 2.79 and 3.23. With regards to the total level of the Fear of Failure scope among professional football players in Palestine, it was high at a response average of (3.19).

A Summary of the Results of Question 2:

Table No. (9): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Sports Achievement Motivation among Professional Football Players in Palestine (n=146)

No.	Scopes	Response Average*	Standard Deviation	Level
1	Hope of Success	3.21	0.58	High
2	Fear of Failure	3.19	0.59	High
Total Level of Sports Achievement Motivation		3.20	0.48	High

*The highest response level is (4) points.

Table (9) reveals that the total level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine was high at a response average of (3.20) or higher. The level was high for the two scopes of Hope of Success and Fear of Failure, and their response averages were 3.21 and 3.19 respectively.

Results Related to Question 3, Stating: What Is the Relationship Between Mental Toughness and Sports Achievement Motivation Among Professional Football Players in Palestine?

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to answer this question, as revealed in table (10).

Table No. (10): Relationship between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine (n=146)

Variables	Sports Achievement Motivation		
	Hope of Success	Fear of Failure	Total Motivation Level
Mental Toughness	**0.71	**0.39	**0.67

**Statistically significant at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$).

The results of Table (10) reveal that there is a statistically significant positive correlation at a level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine, as the Pearson correlation coefficient value between them was (0.66). The results also indicated the presence of a statistically significant relationship between mental toughness and the two scopes of (Hope of Success and Fear of Failure) among the players, as the Pearson correlation coefficient value between them was (0.71 and 0.39) respectively.

Results Related to Question 4, Stating: Are There Any Statistically Significant Differences Between Mental Toughness and Sports Achievement Motivation Among Professional Football Players in Palestine Attributed to The Variables of (Profession Level and Years of Experience)?

To answer this question, the (Independent t-test) was used to determine the differences according to the variable of each profession level, as revealed by Table (11). To determine the

differences according to the years of experience variable, One-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used, as revealed by the results of Table (13).

Profession Level Variable:

Table No. (11): Results of Independent t-test between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine according to the profession level variable (n=146)

Variables	Profession Level Variable	No.	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Significance Level*
Mental toughness	Full time	91	3.00	.330	0.49	0.642
	Part time	55	2.96	.420		
Hope of Success	Full time	91	3.24	.530	0.82	0.413
	Part time	55	3.16	.660		
Fear of Failure	Full time	91	3.25	.550	1.49	0.139
	Part time	55	3.10	.650		
Total Motivation Level	Full time	91	3.25	.450	1.42	0.157
	Part time	55	3.13	.530		

*Statistically significant at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results of Table (11) reveal that there are no statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine attributed to the profession level variable.

Years of Experience Variable:

Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Mental Toughness and Sports Achievement Motivation among Professional Football Players in Palestine according to the Years of Experience Variable (n=146).

Variables	Years of Experience Variable	No.	Arithmetic Mean*	Standard Deviation
Mental Toughness	5 years or less	24	2.92	.490
	6-10 years	39	2.99	.330
	More than 10 years	84	3	.330
Hope of Success	5 years or less	24	3.22	.790
	6-10 years	39	3.23	.460
	More than 10 years	84	3.20	.570
Fear of Failure	5 years or less	24	3.06	.800
	6-10 years	39	3.19	.560
	More than 10 years	84	3.23	.540
Total Level	5 years or less	24	3.14	.740
	6-10 years	39	3.21	.410
	More than 10 years	84	3.22	.430

*The highest response level is (4) points.

Table (13): Results of One-way ANOVA for Differences between Mental Toughness and Sports Achievement Motivation among Professional Football Players in Palestine according to the Years of Experience Variable (n=146).

Variables	Source of Variation	Total Squared Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F- value	Significance Level*
Mental Toughness	Between groups	0.14	2	0.07	0.51	0.599
	Within groups	18.90	143	0.13		
	Total	19.03	145			
Hope of Success	Between groups	0.01	2	0.01	0.02	0.980
	Within groups	48.89	143	0.34		
	Total	48.90	145			
Fear of Failure	Between groups	0.55	2	0.27	0.78	0.462
	Within groups	50.45	143	0.35		
	Total	51	145			
Total Motivation Level	Between groups	0.12	2	0.06	0.25	0.776
	Within groups	33.77	143	0.24		
	Total	33.89	145			

*Significance Level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results of Table (13) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine attributed to the experience variable.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine. The result showing the degree of mental toughness among professional football players in Palestine showed a high level reaching a response average of (2.98). The researcher attributes this finding within the target group to the fact that professional football players receive high-level training preparations in areas of performance, mental preparation, success experience, motivation and self-confidence. The results also revealed that the total level of sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine was also high, with a response average of (3.20) or above. Levels were also high for the (Hope of Success) and (Fear of Failure) scopes, as their average responses scored 3.21 and 3.19 respectively.

The researcher attributes the high level of sports achievement motivation (and the Hope of Success, and Fear of Failure scopes) within the current study's target group to the fact that athletes continuously seek to excel in their sport professions. They consider athletic excellence as their life's main goal, and they are highly encouraged by supporters and words of gratitude within the competitions they participate in. This makes them feel proud and they exert their full efforts to progress and raise their levels. They also consider trainings and sport competitions as important factors for achieving themselves. Through their profession and the

goals, they score during their careers, they feel important, and this motivates them to accomplish more, become more experienced and more mature. This contributes to raising their level of competition and drives them forward to achieve success and excellence in sports competitions. The researcher also views that the reason for achievement motivation is that players have a desire to maintain their athletic levels and motivation for success. Moreover, the researcher regards the allowances and benefits provided to professional players by the Palestinian Football Association urge those players to maintain their athletic levels and to achieve further. This study agreed with the Jaber (2011) study which indicated that achievement motivation was high. The current study revealed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation at a level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine. The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables was (0.66). The results also revealed the presence of a statistically significant relationship between mental toughness and the two scopes of sports achievement (Hope of Success and Fear of Failure) among the players, as the Pearson correlation coefficient values between them were (0.71 and 0.39) respectively. The researcher attributes his study's results indicating a relationship between mental toughness and achievement motivation to the fact that athletes have positive features that qualify them to reach high athletic levels. In the same sense, Kobasa (1983) indicates that individuals with the highest mental toughness are the most resilient, achieving, and internally disciplined. The current study's target group showed a high level of mental toughness, which will increase its desire to develop and succeed in its chosen sport. Furthermore, the researcher views that there is a positive relationship between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation, meaning that when mental toughness increases among players, their sports achievement motivation reaches its highest levels. The researcher also views that the reason behind the positive relationship between mental toughness and the two scopes of sports achievement motivation (Hope of Success and Fear of Failure) is the players' full preparation regarding physical, skills, planning and mental aspects.

The study also agreed with the Ross et al. (2012) study regarding the presence of a positive and desired relationship between mental toughness and mental response and adaptation when injury occurs and during recovery. It also agreed with the Ramzi and Besharat (2010) study on the presence of a statistically significant relationship between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation. On the other hand, the study disagreed with the results of the Khan (2011) study which indicated the presence of a statistically significant negative correlation between sport competition anxiety and sport achievement motivation among badminton players.

The results also revealed no statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine attributed to the variables of profession level and years of experience.

The researcher attributes the similarity of arithmetic means within his study to the nature of the target group and their similar environment. He views that athlete in general are subjected to the same competitive conditions and requirements. Therefore, regardless of the profession level or experience, athletes continuously seek to win and succeed in a sports competition, and

to avoid failure and loss. He also views that this is a result of the physical structure resulting from continuous training.

The current study also agreed with the Jaber (2011) study, which revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between achievement motivation and sport competitiveness among basketball players in Palestine attributed to the (profession level) variable. However, it disagreed with that study on the (years of experience) variable, as the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the years of experience variable in favor of those with more than 10 years of experience.

CONCLUSION

In light of the study results and their discussion, the researcher concluded the following:

1. The level of mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine was high.
2. There is a positive statistically significant correlation at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the level of mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players in Palestine, indicating that when mental toughness increases among players, their achievement motivation level also increases.
3. There are no statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the levels of mental toughness and sports achievement motivation among professional football players attributed to the profession level variable.
4. There are no statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mental toughness level and sports achievement motivation among professional football players attributed to the profession level and experience variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need to pay attention to the players' mental aspects, and not only their physical, skills and planning aspects in trainings and competition settings.
2. There is a need to urge trainers to focus on the issue of mental toughness and its relationship with sports achievement motivation due to its importance and effect on the team's results.
3. There is a need to provide short and long-term mental preparation for players due to its importance in preparing them mentally to play in sport competitions and achieve awards.
4. Components and elements of achievement motivation should be strengthened and enforced, and the effects of failure factors should be eliminated.
5. Training programs should be designed to include theoretical applications for mental toughness, to contribute to raising the level of achievement motivation and to avoid failure, regardless of the surrounding conditions.

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