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THE RELATIONSHIP OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM WITH BURNOUT IN FOOTBALL PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at investigating the relationship of positive and negative perfectionism with burnout in Football players in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-ahmad province. The study adopts a descriptive-correlational method, conducted as a field study. The data was collected using a researcher-made personal data sheet, positive and negative perfectionism scale (PANPS) and athlete burnout questionnaire (ABQ). The population of the study consisted of eight Football teams in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-ahmad province including 100 athletes. Cronbach alpha formula, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The level of significance was considered $\alpha=0.05$ in all tests. The results indicated that there is negative significant relation between positive perfectionism and burnout and burnout concerning physical exhaustion; however, there is no negative significant relation between positive perfectionism and burnout concerning reduced feeling of progress and valueless relation. However, other results showed that there is positive significant relation between negative perfectionism and burnout and its components. At the end, the results of regression showed that the prediction regression of burnout analysis of football players is positively and negatively meaningful on positive and negative perfectionism. Therefore, it is recommended that athletes be inspired by facts that contribute to positive perfectionism. This may prevent burnout caused by reduced sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, the criteria that radically augment negative perfectionism in athletes, such as following high standards, fear of failure and self-doubt should be avoided in order to cope with athlete burnout.

Keywords: Positive Perfectionism, Negative Perfectionism, Burnout, Football

INTRODUCTION

Delving into human psyche reveals that people favor goodness and integrity, which often translates as perfectionism (Feizi, 2011). Many a sports psychologist considers perfectionism as a prominent characteristic of elite athletes (Frost *et al.*, 1993). Perfectionism is one of the outstanding characteristics associated with competitiveness at elite levels (Appleton *et al.*, 2009). Besides, team authorities tend to set very high standards of performance and success for their athletes. In psychological terms, such standards as set by the athletes and society are referred to as perfectionism (Feizi, 2011). Research findings suggest that perfectionism is a multidimensional construct comprising normal and neurotic dimensions (Hamachek, 1978). Normal perfectionists are flexible and feel satisfaction with their efforts to achieve goals though they may not meet their personal standards (Blatt, 1995). Neurotic perfectionists, however, are inflexible so that they find no satisfaction in their performance though they may be appreciated by others (Blatt, 1995; Hamachek, 1978). Besides, they are venerable and respond to negative mistakes. They have to deal with deeper negative thoughts before competitions and feel higher levels of anxiety (Frost and Henderson, 1991; Coen and Ogles, 1993), which may result in sustainable adverse effects particularly on young athletes (Gould *et al.*, 1996). Burnout is a multifaceted syndrome involving mental, physical and behavioral components (Silva, 1990). It can result in reduced sense of accomplishment, emotional-physical exhaustion and devaluation. Reduced sense of accomplishment may bring about such emotions as stagnation, ineffectiveness and poor athletic performance. Emotional-

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physical exhaustion causes physical and mental fatigue during athletic performance and training while devaluation results in disregard for sports participation, its uselessness and giving importance to activities other than sports (Raedek and Smith, 2001).

All these psychological conditions are likely to occur in Football because some talented players fail to attain elite levels as they lack enough motivation to eliminate errors in their individual and group techniques. Besides, with increased levels of competitions, the intensity of physical conflicts increases between strikers and defenders. Self-restraint is a psychological characteristic of Football players to withstand unfavorable feedback during training and competition and bear referees' bad decisions. When a player fails to control these factors (i.e. the player lacks psychological flexibility), they may disregard sports participation, consider it vain or turn to other activities rather than sports. This may lead athletes toward burnout. There are extensive reports of athletes who have had enough of sports competitions and decided to retire at the peak of their professional career. Research on young male elite athletes (Appleton *et al.*, 2009) and young elite soccer players (Hill *et al.*, 2008) has shown a negative correlation between positive perfectionism and burnout but a positive correlation between negative perfectionism and burnout. In contrast, delving into the biography of three genius perfectionists who committed suicide after a few failures, Blatt contends that specific personality traits of perfectionists may contribute to their both achievements and depression and suicide (Kourosh, 2011). When people hold unrealistic expectations of themselves, they may never gain satisfaction with their performance so that they suffer from their perfectionist efforts. Hormozi (2001) contends that the more perfectionists a student is, the less they can express themselves; that is, they show a low level of assertiveness (as cited in Sarvghad, 2011). Psychologists report that burnout is rampant among the players who deeply engage in sport (Yavari, 2012). Therefore, considerable attention has been paid to burnout in sports that has raised concerns in managers, coaches, authorities and athletes. It is highly important to investigate mechanisms that may cause athletic failures, as enormous resources are allocated to training champions so that disregard for barriers to athletic performance may waste human and financial capital. Psychologists have tried to pay greater attention to burnout and its side effects in order to discover prevention techniques and eliminate its adverse effects. It is, therefore, important to continue studies on this topic to help improve athletic performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study adopted a descriptive-correlational method and was conducted as a field study. The data was collected using a researcher-made personal data sheet, positive and negative perfectionism scale (PANPS) and athlete burnout questionnaire (ABQ). The population of the study consisted of eight Football teams including a number of 100 players. Cronbach alpha formula, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The reliability of PANPS was calculated to vary between 0.70 and 0.77 while the reliability of ABQ was estimated to be 0.84, indicating the acceptable reliability indices of the scales. The level of significance was considered to be $\alpha=0.05$ for all tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results showed that:

1. There is negative significant relation between positive perfectionism and burnout of football players ($p= 0.035$, $r= -2.12$); in other words, increase of positive perfectionism in football players reduces their burnout (table1).
2. There is no meaningful negative relation between positive perfectionism and burnout concerning decreased feeling of progress in football players ($p= 0.095$ and $r= 0.168$) (table1).
3. There is meaningful negative relation between positive perfectionism and burnout concerning physical exhaustion of football players ($p= 0.015$ and $r= -0.244$) (table1).

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4. There is no negative significant relation between positive perfectionism and burnout concerning valueless of football players ($p= 0.266$ and $r= -0.112$) (table1).
5. There is positive meaningful relation between negative perfectionism and burnout of football players ($p= 0.000$, $r= 0.500$). In other words, the more negative perfectionism of football players increases, the more their burnout also increases (table1).
6. There is positive meaningful relation between negative perfectionism and burnout component concerning reduced feeling of progress in football players ($p= 0.000$ and $r= 0.400$) (table1).
7. There is positive meaningful relation between negative perfectionism and burnout component concerning physical exhaustion of football players ($p= 0.000$, $r= 0.385$) (table1).
8. There is positive meaningful relation between negative perfectionism and burnout component concerning valueless of football players ($p= 0.000$, $r= 0.479$) (table1).
9. Prediction regression of football players' burnout analysis is meaningful on positive and negative perfectionism ($p<0.000$ and $F= 19.151$) since positive perfectionism with beta coefficient -0.183 can negatively and meaningfully predict the burnout of football players. Furthermore, negative perfectionism with beta coefficient 0.489 can positively and meaningfully predict the burnout of football players. Furthermore, determination coefficient (R^2) shows that 26.8% of burnout variance of football players is expressed by the mentioned variables (table2).
10. Prediction regression of football players' burnout analysis is meaningful on positive and negative perfectionism concerning decreased progress ($p<0.000$ and $F= 10.721$) since negative perfectionism with beta coefficient 0.392 can positively and meaningfully predict the burnout of football players concerning decreased feeling of progress. Furthermore, determination coefficient (R^2) shows that 16.4% of burnout variance of football players concerning decreased feeling of progress is expressed by the mentioned variables (table2).
11. Prediction regression of burnout analysis concerning physical exhaustion of football players is meaningful on positive and negative perfectionism ($p<0.000$ and $F= 11.924$). Moreover, determination coefficient (R^2) shows that 18.1% of burnout variance concerning physical exhaustion of football players is expressed by mentioned variables since positive perfectionism with beta coefficient -0.222 can negatively and meaningfully predict the burnout of football players concerning physical exhaustion. Furthermore, negative perfectionism with beta coefficient 0.372 can meaningfully and positively predict burnout concerning physical exhaustion of football players (table2).
12. Prediction regression of burnout analysis concerning valueless feeling of football players is meaningful on positive and negative perfectionism ($p<0.000$ and $F= 15.012$). Moreover, determination coefficient (R^2) shows that 221% of burnout variance concerning feeling of valueless in football players is expressed by mentioned variables since negative perfectionism with beta coefficient 0.474 can positively and meaningfully predict the burnout of football players concerning valueless of football players (table2).

Table 1: Simple Correlation coefficients between Positive and Negative perfectionism with burnout

Predictive variable	Statistical index Criterion variable	r	P	No.
Positive perfectionism	Burnout	-0.212	0.035	100
	Reduced sense of accomplishment	-0.168	0.095	
	Physical exhaustion	-0.244	0.015	
	Devaluation	-0.112	0.266	
Negative perfectionism	Burnout	0.500	0.000	100
	Reduced sense of accomplishment	0.400	0.000	
	Physical exhaustion	0.385	0.000	
	Devaluation	0.479	0.000	

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Table 2: Multiple regression coefficients of positive and negative perfectionism with burnout and its components using enter method.

Method	Index	Predictive variable	R	R ²	F	P	β	t	P												
Enter	Burnout	Positive perfectionism	0.532	0.268	19.151	0.000	-0.183	-2.127	0.036												
		Negative perfectionism					0.489	5.679	0.000												
	Reduced sense of accomplishment	Positive perfectionism					0.425	0.164	10.721	0.000	-0.145	-1.579	0.117								
		Negative perfectionism									0.392	4.254	0.000								
	Physical exhaustion	Positive perfectionism									0.444	0.181	11.924	0.000	-0.222	-2.437	0.017				
		Negative perfectionism													0.372	4.083	0.000				
	Devaluation	Positive perfectionism													0.486	0.221	15.012	0.000	-0.085	-0.955	0.342
		Negative perfectionism																	0.474	5.331	0.000

Discussion

The first part of results indicated that there is negative meaningful relation between positive perfectionism and burnout and burnout concerning physical exhaustion; however, there is no negative meaningful relation between positive perfectionism and burnout concerning decreased feeling of progress and valueless. These results are both consistent and inconsistent with Koivula *et al.*, (2002), Egan (2005), Cresswell and Eklund (2006), Anshel and Speipel (2006), Hill *et al.*, (2008), Appleton *et al.*, (2009), Besharat (2005), Feizi (2011), since some of these studies have claimed that positive perfectionism has negative significant relation with all components of burnout; however, the findings of researcher have just shown the negative significant relation between positive perfectionism and burnout and burnout concerning physical exhaustion. Thus, one can claim that increased positive perfectionism reduces burnout and burnout concerning physical exhaustion since positive perfectionism leads to increased sport success through some specifications such as realism, acceptance of personal limitations, enhanced self-esteem and positive impression of individual from social supports and evaluation (Besharat, 2005); and on the other hand, since physical exhaustion refers to some feelings such as body and mental exhaustion during sport performance and practices (Raedek and Smith, 2001). Thus, it seems that increased sport performance is influenced by positive perfectionism and reduces factors such as body burnout, mental tiredness, and decreased competition spirit and at the end physical burnout and on contrary leads to increased satisfaction of sport cooperation (Feizi, 2011). In confirming this findings, a research showed that there is meaningful difference between handball players of different positions in terms of burnout such that corner positions benefit from lower burnout compared to halfback players since corner players rarely participate in permitted physical collision (Alizadeh *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, this study showed that coaches confirm positive perfectionism more in halfback position to make these players play with more mental relaxation. Due to this, the players and coaches are recommended to create cases that lead to increased positive perfectionism in players to prevent physical burnout in non-professional football players.

However, the reason for differences in the mentioned studies and the present study can be considered as being due to sample selection since some researchers such as Koivula *et al.*, (2002) and Feizi (2011) used elite Olympic subjects or players of premier league of basketball, who are engaged in severe physical and

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mental practices during the year; however, the researcher of the present study have used non-professional football players that see exercise as a pleasure. Moreover, since reduced feeling of progress refers to feelings such as inefficiency and inaccessibility to desired sport performance (Raedek and Smith, 2001), it is likely that elite athletes rarely suffer in reduced feeling of progress in burnout component than non-professional football players since non-professional football players have no aim for participating in sport except for leisure. Since positive perfectionism characteristics of non-professional football players such as self-esteem, enhanced self-esteem and social evaluation happens in non-sport life rather than sport life; by changing positive perfectionism, their reduced feeling of progress doesn't significantly change since reduced feeling of progress in them is related to other cases. Thus, more studies are required to find these items. In one hand, sport performance of non-professional football players is not precisely feedback during exercises; they cannot perceive the feeling of inefficiency and inaccessibility to desired sport performance. Thus, it is recommended that if the coaches want to increase competitive physical and mental exercises in non-professional football players, they should enhance positive perfectionism in these players to prevent likely burnout and reduced feeling of progress in them or at least delay it.

Other results showed that there is no negative significant relation between positive perfectionism and burnout concerning valueless. Since it seems that the positive perfectionism characteristics of non-professional football players including self-esteem, enhancement of self-esteem and social evaluation happen in their non-sport life rather than their sport life; increase or decrease of their positive perfectionism do not lead to meaningful change of their sport life. In other words, their feeling toward insignificance of sport cooperation, its uselessness and significance of other activities doesn't significantly change. It seems that the relation between positive perfectionism or valueless depends on other factors. Thus, more studies are needed to find these items. However, since non-professional football players don't consider the significance of sport cooperation as their first priority, it seems that increase or decrease of positive perfectionism have not meaningful effect on their valueless burnout. However, on contrary, if coaches want to pursue the training of their players professionally, they should enhance positive perfectionism in their players to prevent burnout valueless burnout or at least delay it.

Other results showed that there is positive meaningful relation between negative perfectionism and burnout and all its components. These results are in line with Frost and Henderson (1991), Gould *et al.*, (1996), Lemyre *et al.*, (2008), Hill *et al.*, (2008), Appleton *et al.*, (2009), Besharat *et al.*, (2005), Hajilo *et al.*, (2011), Feizi (2011) since these results indicated that negative perfectionism has positive meaningful relation with all its components; however, they are both consistent and inconsistent with Alizadeh Pahlevani *et al.*, (2013) since this study claims that there is just positive significant relation between negative perfectionism, burnout and burnout of reduced feeling of progress. However, no positive significant relation was reported between negative perfectionism and physical exhaustion burnout and valueless relation. Meanwhile, the findings of present study indicate that the more negative perfectionism of non-professional football players increases, burnout and all its components also increase since negatively perfectionist athletes consider their environment as threatening and hostile, which results in fear, anxiety, negative feelings, fear of failure and higher levels of pre-competition anxiety. These would together culminate in athletic failure (Besharat, 2005). Lemyre *et al.*, (2008) suggest that skepticism about teamwork may result from negative perfectionism in sports performance. They contend that setting high standards of performance, fear of failure and self-doubt may result in burnout. Thus, the athletes are recommended to avoid task-oriented leadership styles that lead to discouragement, burnout and poor performance and to concentrate on relationship-oriented and combined leadership styles that may remedy burnout in elite athletes.

Other findings of study showed that there is positive meaningful relation between negative perfectionism and other components of burnout such as reduced feeling of progress, physical burnout and feeling of valueless. The difference between these results can be due to lower sample size since Alizadeh *et al.*, (2013) has used sample with lower size. The lower sample size can be effective in the results of the mentioned and present study. On the other hand, the gender of subjects can be influential in this category

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since Feizi has used male and female athletes; however, the researcher of the present study has used male subjects.

In this regard, Yavari *et al.*, (2012) claim that in burnout, individual differences should be considered since factors such as age, gender and sport experiences have direct effects on emergence of burnout in athletes, i.e. the more age and sport background increases, their include toward burnout might increase. However, on contrary to the secondary findings, the present study showed that there is negative meaningful difference between sport experience of non-professional football players and burnout ($p=0.010$, $r=-0.266$). In other words, when the age increases, burnout and its component decrease (except burnout on valueless). However, this difference is due to the fact that most subjects in present study were 18-30 years old, this age range show highest interest to sport activity. Thus, it is recommended that more studies to be done with higher sample size and on different genders to cover these issues very well.

The initial findings of regression analysis showed that positive and negative perfectionism can positively and negatively predict physical burnout in non-professional football players. Since positive perfectionism increases the feeling of competency of athletes through enhancement of self-esteem and enables the athlete to utilize his maximum capacity for success. However, they see the attribute of other positive perfectionists as relatively supportive and non-threatening in terms of social evaluation (Homacheck, 1967) such that having positive perception of social support and evaluations will be affective on performance and sport success of the individual (Besharat, 2005). Thus, all these features prevent the athlete from having the feeling of burnout or at least delay it. On the other hand, negative perfectionism weaken the situation of individual through some features such as unrealistic expectations, failure to accept individual constrains, inflexibility and feeling of dissatisfaction from personal performance, increased stress and negative thoughts due to sport situation, weakened self-esteem, feeling of competency and personal sufficiency of athlete. Thus, it prevents the athlete from using his capacity to succeed (Besharat, 2004). Thus, all these attributes direct the athlete toward burnout, thus it is recommended to keep these criteria at balance level to prevent this.

Other regression analysis results showed that positive perfectionism doesn't predict meaningfully burnout concerning reduced feeling of progress and valueless feeling of non-professional football players. It seems that lack of required physical test and skills of non-professional football players in a sport year, their position in the early step of S learning slope, the pleasure aspect of exercise, their gender prevent positive perfectionism from prediction of two components of burnout includes reduced feeling of progress and feeling of valueless.

Final findings of regression analysis showed that negative perfectionism can predict burnout and all its components since negative perfectionism reduces the feeling of competency and personal sufficiency through some attributes such as unrealistic expectations, failure to accept personal constrains, inflexibility and feeling of dissatisfaction of personal performance, increased stress and negative thoughts related to sport competition, weakening of self-esteem and weakens the individual's situation. In this way it prevents the athlete from using all his capacity to succeed (Besharat, 2004).

Thus, all these attributes direct the athlete toward burnout and its components (reduced feeling of progress, physical- emotional burnout and feeling of valueless). Reduced feeling of progress leads to some feelings such as ineffectiveness, inaccessibility to desired sport performance; physical- emotional burnout leads to some feelings such as physical and mental burnout during sport performance and feeling of valueless leads to some feelings such as insignificance sport cooperation, its uselessness and significance of other activities compared to sport. It is recommended to keep the coaches and players at balance concerning negative perfectionism to prevent these factors and prevent them from burnout.

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