



The Relationship Between Athletes' Injury History and Anxiety Levels in Football Games

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between injury history and anxiety levels among soccer players. In sports, anxiety is a psychological factor that significantly impacts an athlete's mental readiness, concentration, and decision-making ability during a match. A history of injury is often associated with increased anxiety due to the fear of re-injury, and thus, is thought to impact an athlete's mental state during competition. This study used a quantitative method with a correlational design to assess whether there is a relationship between the two factors. A total of 30 soccer players participated in this study by completing a questionnaire that had been previously tested for effectiveness. The collected data were then analyzed using a correlation test with a significance level of 0.05. The results showed a significance value of 0.32. This result indicates that there is no significant relationship between injury history and anxiety levels among soccer players. Therefore, past injury experience does not play a major role in determining anxiety levels in athletes. These findings suggest that anxiety in sports can be influenced by various other factors, including competitive pressure, competition experience, perception of one's own abilities, psychological state, and the training environment. Therefore, future research should consider other variables that may have a greater impact on athlete anxiety.

How to Cite

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INTRODUCTION

An athlete is an individual who specializes in a particular sport and strives to perform at their best in every competition (Brastangkara & Jatmiko, 2019). In football, athletes require strong physical fitness and mental readiness to cope with the pressure of competition (Hidayat et al., 2019). Anxiety is a common psychological problem and can affect concentration, decision-making, and performance during training and matches (Meilia & Rahmat, 2022). This anxiety often increases after an injury, as athletes may worry about re-injury or not being able to return to their previous level of performance (Ismunandar, 2020). Therefore, post-injury anxiety is a major concern that impacts the recovery process and performance of athletes.

The urgency of this research is based on evidence that anxiety not only impacts athletes' short-term performance but also their long-term psychological well-being. Athletes experiencing high or excessive anxiety often exhibit symptoms such as self-doubt, decreased self-confidence, and reduced motivation (Meilia & Rahmat, 2022; Nursaba et al., 2024). In youth soccer athletes, anxiety after injury can hinder the recovery or rehabilitation process and increase the risk of recurrent injury (Maulana & Khairani, 2017). Given the high competitive pressure in soccer, a thorough understanding of injury-related anxiety is crucial to supporting athlete performance.

Although numerous studies have examined anxiety, there is still a lack of understanding regarding how past injuries relate to the levels of anxiety experienced by athletes during competition, particularly in youth soccer players. Players often appear nervous, lack confidence, and even struggle to perform optimally due to the challenges or high pressure they face (Akbar et al., 2023). However, research on how injuries affect competitive anxiety in team sports like soccer is still limited (Jõesaar et al., 2011). This indicates the need for further research to gain a better understanding of the relationship between these two aspects.

Being an athlete means that injuries impact not only the body but also the mind, triggering anxiety. After an injury, players are often deeply concerned about re-injury, their ability to return to peak performance, and their place on the team. These worries can cause stress and make it difficult for them to concentrate or maintain confidence. Athletes in other sports face similar challenges—fear of performing certain movements or returning to competition

can make them hesitant and prevent them from playing as aggressively as they could, even when physically ready. This suggests that anxiety after injury is a common problem that can slow the recovery process and impact performance. It has also been linked to a higher risk of re-injury in young athletes (Maulana & Khairani, 2017; Tang et al., 2022).

Anxiety is a common experience for many athletes, especially when they are competing or under pressure to perform optimally (Akbar et al., 2023). This anxiety can make athletes feel uncertain, lacking in confidence, and even prevent them from performing at their best, even during training (Meilia & Rahmat, 2022; Nursaba et al., 2024). This indicates a gap between what athletes aspire to achieve and their actual mental state. However, research on how past injuries can influence anxiety during competition is limited. This gap opens up opportunities for further research to understand the impact of injury history on athletes' mental state and performance (Jõesaar et al., 2011).

Several studies have examined how injuries affect athletes' mental health. Supriaten, (2020) found that injuries can increase anxiety in pencak silat athletes due to the pressure to perform and compete. Fatwa et al., (2022) stated that anxiety is an important part of athletes' mental readiness and can worsen if they have not fully recovered from previous injuries. Other studies have also shown that athletes with a history of injury often experience lower confidence and increased anxiety during competition, as seen in studies (Bani-Irshid & Bani-Rshaid, 2022; Boladeras et al., 2025; De Pero et al., 2013).

The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on adolescent soccer athletes and its emphasis on lower extremity injuries, such as anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries, hamstring injuries, and ankle sprains, which are the most common types of injuries and carry a high risk of anxiety and fear of re-injury in adolescent soccer athletes. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between injury history and anxiety levels among adolescent soccer athletes, providing a new dimension in understanding the psychological consequences of sports injuries, while also contributing to the development of effective psychological management strategies in the context of team sports.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a quantitative method with a correlational approachT-

he population in this study was 30 male soccer athletes from SSB PS Graha Permata aged 13-15 years. The sampling technique used total sampling, namely where the population became the research sample (Fraenkel et al., 2022). The research instrument used a questionnaire, namely the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory (CSAI-2) to measure anxiety adopted from (Putra & Guntoro, 2022) and divides anxiety into three components: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence. This instrument consists of 27 questions/statements divided into 9 items from each component. And for injuries, a questionnaire in the form of an injury history questionnaire was used which was created by the author himself in consultation with the supervisor to validate the contents of the question items. The analysis was carried out using the SPSS version 26 program so that the results obtained were more accurate and objective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained through the research that has been carried out is then compiled and described to reach a conclusion that can be understood by everyone. Based on this, the data that has been obtained from the research is then analyzed using SPSS 26.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Test

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Injury	30	3	11	213	7,10	2,32
Anxiety	30	61	80	2198	73,27	4,08

Based on **Table 1** the injury variable score for 30 respondents had a minimum score of 3 and a maximum score of 11, with a total overall score of 213. The average (mean) injury score was 7.10 with a standard deviation of 2.32, indicating variation in injury levels among respondents. Meanwhile, the anxiety variable had a minimum score of 61 and a maximum score of 80, with a total overall score of 2198. The average anxiety score was 73.27 with a standard deviation of 4.08, indicating that respondents' anxiety levels tended to be high and relatively varied.

Table 2. Data Normality Test Shapiro-Wilk

	Statistic	df	Sig.	Information
Injury	0,95	30	0,22	Normality
Anxiety	0,93	30	0,05	

Based on **Table 2** the sig. (0.22) $\geq$ 0.05 and sig. (0.05) = 0.05 are obtained. Therefore, Ho is

accepted. It can be concluded that all data are normally distributed.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test

Variabel	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	Information.
Injury	0,614	7	21	0,738	Homogeneity
Anxiety	0,999	5	18	0,446	Homogeneity

Based on **Table 3** the significance value of the injury variable is 0.738 and anxiety is 0.446. Therefore, Ho is accepted, so it can be concluded that the data is homogeneous.

Table 4. Test of the Relationship between Injury History and Anxiety

Variabel	Sig.	N	Information
Injury - Anxiety	0,32	30	Not Significant

Based on **Table 4** a significance value of $0.32 \geq 0.05$ is obtained, so Ho is accepted, so it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between anxiety and injury.

Based on the research results, it was found that injury history had no significant relationship with anxiety levels in soccer athletes. A correlation value of 0.186 with a significance level of 0.325 indicates a very weak relationship. This finding indicates that injury history is not the dominant factor influencing athlete anxiety. This condition indicates that anxiety is more influenced by other, non-physical aspects. Thus, psychological and situational factors are more influential in determining athletes' anxiety levels.

Injuries can impact an athlete's motor skills, strength, flexibility, and stability, often affecting their comfort during competition (Febrianty, 2020; Ilham, 2023; Juhanis et al., 2025). Age is an important factor in the development of athletes' emotional regulation abilities. Because young athletes are still developing self-control skills, they tend to be more susceptible to anxiety (Oktavia & Jannah, 2023; Silmaufar & Jannah, 2023). Psychosocial maturity is generally higher among older or more experienced athletes. This maturity allows them to evaluate situations more clearly and rationally. Therefore, past injuries may not affect athletes with high emotional maturity as much. Social support can help develop coping skills and reduce emotional distress (Ega, 2018). With this support, athletes may perceive the injury as less of a problem. Therefore, having a history of previous injuries does not necessarily lead to higher anxiety among athletes.

The findings of the present study were also affected by the relatively low level of severity in the current sample, which had predominantly experienced minor injuries. Less serious injuries usually do not play a big role in an athlete's confidence and performance perception. As such, fear-of-reinjury anxiety may be less pronounced in comparably highly functionally impaired athletes. Small wounds also often heal quickly, so there is no lasting trauma. This might be the reason for non-existence of a significant relation between injury and anxiety (Sadzali et al., 2025). Most athletes experience injuries that heal quickly, making them feel safer returning to training (Muthmainnah, 2024). This sense of security can reduce their anxiety. Therefore, anxiety data may not reflect the full picture of how athletes with a history of serious injuries feel. This helps explain why the study results showed a weak relationship. This supports the idea that injuries are not the primary cause of anxiety.

Athletes' ability to understand the questionnaire questions can affect research results. If they don't fully understand the questions, their answers may not reflect their true feelings. This can introduce bias into the measurement of anxiety, as demonstrated in Amir, (2012) study. This condition may explain the low correlation in this study. Individuals who are less focused may answer based on guesswork rather than their true feelings. Furthermore, athletes' understanding of psychological concepts can influence the accuracy of their responses. Therefore, data quality is crucial in psychological research.

A positive and supportive club environment can help mitigate the negative impact of injury on athletes' mental health. Clubs that provide support to athletes typically have more emotionally stable players. Conversely, stressful environments can exacerbate anxiety. These environmental differences may explain why some athletes feel more anxious than others. Environmental factors are an important part of understanding anxiety. Past injury experiences can also change how athletes perceive new injuries (Aditya et al., 2025). Athletes who have recovered well from previous injuries may feel less anxious about minor injuries. However, those with poor recovery experiences may feel more fearful. These differing perspectives are another reason why there is not always a clear link between injury and anxiety. Therefore, it is important to consider athletes' prior mental health. With a better understanding, coaches can design more effective mental support programs, as demonstrated in (Febrianty et al., 2021).

Overall, these findings suggest that athlete

anxiety is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors. Injury history is not the primary determinant, but rather just one small variable in the dynamics of an athlete's psychological well-being. Psychological, social, environmental, and experiential factors are significantly more influential in determining anxiety levels. Therefore, a multidimensional approach is essential for a comprehensive understanding of athletes' emotional states. These findings provide a strong foundation for further research into psychological factors in sport.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the Relationship between Athlete Injury History and Anxiety Levels in Football, it can be concluded that injury history does not show a relevant significant relationship with anxiety levels in football athletes. This finding indicates that athlete anxiety is more influenced by factors other than injury history, such as competitive experience, social support, mental readiness, and the individual's psychological state. Therefore, injury history cannot be used as a primary indicator in determining anxiety levels in football athletes.

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