Motivation Assessment for Professional and Amateur Female Soccer Players

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Abstract: This paper aims to determine the level of motivation in the case of both professional and amateur female soccer players in Romania. We have designed and administered a motivation questionnaire ("Assessing motivation for soccer practice") to a sample of 75 female subjects, comprising 25 professional and 50 amateur soccer players in the Romanian league. The results obtained for the general score of the questionnaire show no relevant differences between the experimental group and the control group ($p > 0,05$). However, the analysis of the scores for each motivational dimension shows that the experimental group obtained higher values for the dimensions „Self esteem” and „Necessity of movement” ($p < 0,01$). No relevant differences between the two groups were visible for the dimensions “Affiliation need” and “Combateness; aggressivity”. The control group scored better than the experimental group for the dimension “Competition interest”. The analysis of the results indicates that, no matter which group they belong to, the players present a high level of motivation for soccer practice.

Keywords: *motivation, soccer, professional women's soccer, amateur women's soccer.*

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1. Introduction

Motivation can be defined as the force which contributes to behavior development and conservation. It represents the direction and intensity of personal effort, closely linked to the desire of attaining excellence in the activities performed (Epuran et al., 2001; Eubank & Gilbourne, 2003; Noor et al., 2019). Motivation influences the level of energy that an individual puts to use in order to reach a goal.

Mainly, motivation can be either intrinsic (internal) or extrinsic (external). Internal motivation regards the engagement of the individual in a self-fulfilling activity, while external motivation involves taking into consideration external factors such as rewards, family, even the coach's personality etc. (Amorose & Horn, 2000; Clancy et al., 2017).

The motives which determine a young woman to strive to become a soccer performer are various, starting from the desire of self-realization, of developing specific abilities, the desire to be part of a representative team, to travel, to play in a valuable team together with famous players, to imitate certain role models and ending with the mere pleasure of playing, financial gains and even the opportunity to build social relationships with interesting personalities (Carrascosa, 2004, Chatzopoulos et al., 2006; Clancy et al., 2016). Any game / competition is an exam through which personality factors of the sportspersons can be evaluated in conditions of great pressure. If during training the balance between physical effort and psychological effort is in favor of the former, during the game the situation changes. What prevails during the game are the psychological states which sustain aspirations and express individual psychological qualities such as passion, combativeness, "aggressivity", the desire of victory, attention to different degrees and in different ways (Beswick, 2001; Voinea, et al., 2019).

As Carrascosa (2004) sustained, in order to intervene upon the aforementioned psychological qualities, to sustain their development and maintenance at a high level, which is necessary for soccer specific manifestations and for obtaining performance, the players disponibilities must be known first of all. Moreover, adequate information on the players' conduct of normal activities, self-management and ability to overcome fear / stress is a good strategy to influence their attitudes, beliefs and behavior (Calotă, 2017).

The psychological particularities necessary for women soccer players have been investigated by very few researchers (e.g. Gidu et al., 2010; 2021) and research on women soccer practice mainly tends to focus on aspects such as the level of team cohesion, leadership, strategies for participating in

the World Cup and winning, motor abilities and so on. (Dawn, 2001; Hulse, 2003; Muşat & Gidu, 2018; Petcu & Timnea, 2018; Scott, 2001; Teodor, 2017). In this regard, we believe that it is essential to conduct a research focused on identifying the level of motivation for Romanian female soccer players. Furthermore, our current research can be extended in the future, in order to assess the motivation of female players in the European area.

The present study aims to fill this gap by identifying the motivation level for the women soccer players.

2. Methods

2.1. Experimental Design

In order to identify the level of players' motivation, we designed a questionnaire, titled "The motivation evaluation for the soccer practice", as our own testing tool. Further, the questionnaire was administered to 75 women, all soccer players and members of SN Constanța, C.S.S. Tîrgoviște teams (control group – N=50) and of the Romanian National Women Soccer Players Team of Seniors (experimental group – N=25).

The research process was conducted in consonance with the relevant ethical guidelines for scientific research. The study was approved by the club's manager and performed according to the principles expressed in the Declaration of Helsinki. Written informed consent was obtained from the subjects. They have been informed that participation in this study was optionally and that they were free to withdraw from the experiment at any moment.

The subjects' identification data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Subjects' age and training experience (in years)

Source: Authors' own conception

Group	Age	Training experience (years)
Experimental (N = 25)	25.70 ± 4.96	5.30 ± 1.70
Control (N = 50)	24.60 ± 5.37	6.12 ± 2.21

2.2. Evaluation Test

The questionnaire “The assessment of motivation for practicing soccer” contains 32 items, grouped into 5 operational dimensions: “Self-esteem”, “Affiliation need”, “Necessity of movement”, “Competition interest”, “Combateness; aggressivity”.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

To compare the mean differences among the groups, mean, standard deviation, and t-test were computed by the help of statistic software. The minimum semnification threshold for the statistics was $p = 0,05$.

3. Result and discussion

The questionnaire score obtained by both the experimental group (129.37 ± 7.20) and the control group (128.60 ± 5.00) fits into the range between 101 and 140 points, corresponding to a high motivation level for soccer practice, according to the test quantification scale. There were no significant differences between the two groups’ results ($t = 0.770$, $f 73$, $p > 0.05$) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. General score – comparison between experimental and control group

Source: Authors’ own conception

Regarding each operational dimension, the results obtained from the statistical analysis between the two groups were different, in favor of the experimental one, as follows.

“Self-esteem” – the experimental group registered a significantly higher score than the control one ($t = 5.519$, $f\ 73$, $p < 0.01$) (Figure 2). The explanation behind this difference could be the fact that the experimental group subjects are members of the national team. Reference literature shows that sportspeople with a higher degree of performance manifest a higher level of self-esteem, in comparison with the sportspeople with fewer achievements (Epuran, et al., 2001).

Figure 2. “Self-esteem – comparison between experimental and control group

Source: Authors’ own conception

“Affiliation need” – in this case there were no significant differences between the two groups ($t = 0.322$, $f\ 73$, $p > 0.05$) (Figure 3). An interesting finding was that, for this operational dimension, all the subjects obtained a lower score, compared to the rest of the questionnaire items (20.50 for the experimental group; 20.60 for the control one).

Figure 3. “Affiliation need” – comparison between experimental and control group

Source: Authors’ own conception

“Necessity of movement’ – In this regard, women soccer players from the national team obtained a higher score than ones in the control group ($t = 14.230$, $f 73$, $p < 0.01$) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. “Necessity of movement” – comparison between experimental

and control group

Source: Authors’ own conception

“Interest for competition” – the scores obtained by the control group were significantly higher than those gathered by the experimental group for this item. ($t = 4.476$, $f 73$, $p < 0.01$) (Figure 5). This result could be explained by the fact that the club players (in the control group) have only 20 games per year, while national team players take part in more competitions over the course of a year (calification tournaments, training tournaments, exhibition games etc.), which may diminish their interest in attending such events.

Figure 5. “Competition interest” – comparison between experimental and control group

Source: Authors' own conception

“Aggressivity; combativeness” – there were no significant differences for the results regarding this item between the two groups ($t = 1.666$, $f 73$, $p > 0.05$) (Figure 6). However, the registered scores (26.00 p. for the experimental group and 25.40 for the control group) were close to the maximal score (30 points), so we can assert that this dimension is well outlined for female soccer players. This finding is in line with previous research works which demonstrate that sportspeople in general possess this trait at a higher level in comparison with people who do not play any sports (ibidem).

Figure 6. “Combativeness; aggressivity” – comparison between experimental and control group

Source: Authors' own conception

These motivational markers can be an important instrument which should be applied in order to make corrections during the games, as Ruiz-Vanoye et al. (2017) and Sheehan et al., (2018) mention.

4. Limitations

We take into account the possibility that the findings obtained may be representative only for the particular age sample (between 24 and 26 years) studied in this work. Different age samples may produce different findings, therefore we believe that this study needs to be extended, in order to cover all age groups of female soccer players, in Romania as well as in the European area.

5. Conclusions

1. Women soccer players, regardless the group they take part in, manifest a higher level of motivation for practicing soccer games; the analysis of the scores registered by the two groups has not identified any significant differences between them ($p > 0.05$).

2. The motivation for practicing soccer games needs to be placed at a higher level, taking in consideration the fact that, at least in our country, feminine soccer is yet another one of the marginalized sports. Besides, it is known that, without a decent level of motivation, no activities, especially those connected with, can be performed successfully.

3. As Oltean & Calotă (2018) conclude in their research, after having likewise administered a questionnaire and considering the conditions of individual diversity existing in the case of female soccer players, this study could have practical applications, especially for designing, organizing and conducting the players' training process and for improving their sport performance.

Authors' Contributions

GDV conceived the questionnaire, performed the literature search, contributed to writing the manuscript, and read and approved the final manuscript. E-V V performed and revised the literature search, contributed to writing the manuscript. E-V C, CF, GAA and LRM contributed to writing the manuscript, and read and approved the final manuscript. CD and GAD participated in the design of the manuscript. All authors participated in the revision of the manuscript and figure.

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