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The impact of psychological skill training on selected psychological attributes on female football players

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ABSTRACT

Developing effective psychological skill training program for Players is a strategy for improving self -confidence, Team cohesion, motivation and anxiety. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of psychological skill training on self-confidence, team cohesion, Motivation, anxiety variables. The study employed Experimental research design. 26 female football players of Dilla kenema with experimental and control group and it has divided randomly into 2 equal groups. Both the experimental group n =13 and control group n = 13. experimental group only participated in additional 8 week psychological skill training interventions which comprised as goal setting, self-talk, pep talk, imagery, progressive relaxation techniques, arousal regulation, team building strategies and relaxation response techniques were given through 3 phases which comprise educational, acquisitions and practical phases by sport psychologist. Both groups had taken pre and post-testing and all the subjects participated to response standard questionnaires: self-confidence was measured using trait sport confidence inventory, team cohesion was measured using group environment questioners, motivation were measured using sport motivation scale test and anxiety were measured using state trait anxiety inventory test .The data collected from the study subject was analyzed using SPSS version 20 software by paired t-test with level of significant 0.05. The results showed PST significantly improved the stated variables self-confidence, team cohesion, motivations and anxiety in experimental group at ($p<0.05$). Furthermore, no more significant differences were found in all of the variables in control group ($p>0.05$).

Keywords: Psychological skill training, self-confidence, team-cohesion, motivation and anxiety

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1. Introduction

Psychology is one of the most important scientific aspects of the sport. With the advances achieved in the field of psychology science, psychological skills have gained a significant role in expressing sport skills. Psychological skills refer to inherent or learnt (acquired) qualities of an athlete which make it possible and probable for him to succeed (Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. 2023). Practicing psychological skills along with physical practices plays significant role in enhancing the athlete preparedness such that psychological skills help the athlete to not only enjoy more from sports experience but also to perform the sports activity in a more desirable way and achieve sports successes.

Sport psychology means applying psychological theories and concepts to aspects of sports such as coaching and teaching. The sport psychologists use psychological assessment techniques and intervention strategies in an effort to help individuals to achieve their optimal performance. In order to bring football players 'performance, researchers all over the world have actively studied these practitioners in different areas of sports sciences, including sports psychology. In this context, psychological skills training (PST) research has emerged as an important tool to support the psychological preparation of football players in the achievement of higher level of performances (Thelwell et al., 2006).

Moreover, one of the findings that distinguished those athletes that performed well from those that did not perform well was the development and adherence to physical and mental preparation plans. To observe the benefits of mental preparation plan it is probably critical to identify the benefits of developing and consistently using mental preparation routines; including attaining an ideal state, high self-confidence, control of mental energy, effective focus, comfort in structure and engaging the mind (Ravizza, 2006).

There are different strategies to reach an effective mental preparation process. One of the most used strategies of mental preparation is psychological skill training. Psychological Skills Training (PST) program is a combination of methods designed individually to meet the needs of psychological skills (Gill, 2000). Psychological skills training (PST) is a process that relates to the development of daily routine activities and capability in relation to settings in sport and exercise (Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. 2023). In itself, different abilities are interrelated components, separately for the purposes of research and training. In the earliest step, PST instructions were performed on individual skills such as physiological arousal, cognitive arousal, mental images, attention, concentration, confidence, goal setting, and motivation (Wann & Church, 1998)

Different studies of sport psychology literature have supported the effectiveness or impact of PST program in improving the performance and personal growth of athletes. While sports psychology is concerned with analyzing human behavior in various types of sport settings, it also focuses on the mental aspects of performance. Psychology as behavioral science has made its contribution to improving sports performance. It helped the Coaches to coach more efficient athletes to perform more proficiently and efficiently. This psychological aspect of the sport is gaining much attention among sports administrators. Make it possible and probable for him to succeed (Weinberg and Gould, 2007)

Vealey (2007) stated that mental preparation is the learning and implementation of traditional cognitive-behavioral techniques with the objective of assisting sports participants in the development of mental skills to achieve performance success and personal well-being‖.

Ritz (2012) introduces mental preparation as a crucial ingredient for success in performance enhancement. Mental training and preparation are important elements for all sports to spend some time on. Mental-preparation skills such as goal setting, self-talk, imagery, and optimistic thinking, etc.… are important methods that athletes and coaches can use to enhance performance.

The psychological factors involved in athletic performance have long been of interest to athletes, coaches, sport psychologists and sports scientists. Empirical studies have largely focused on individual and team psychological factors and their influence on performance which includes confidence, motivation, attention, cohesion, visualization, and psychosomatic skills (Gucciardi, Gordon, & Dimmock, 2009).

Similarly, some studies indicated that the use of mental skills such as goal setting, imagery, relaxation, self-talk, visualization, mental rehearsal, are important areas in the field of sport psychology (Sheldon; et al. (2012).

They also asserted that goal setting as attaining a specific standard of proficiency on a task, usually within a specified time limit can increase performance during competition. Moreover, imagery as using all the senses to re-create or create an experience in the mind helps athletes to perform better and increase self-confidence (Rattanakoses, et al., 2009).

Elite athletes believe that the impact PST including goal setting, self- talk, visualization, imagery, meditation and motivation play an important role in their successes. Today, sport psychologists are very frequently employed in professional sport to meet the needs arising in this area. They help athletes to learn psychological skills. Some coaches and athletes don’t know how prepare

athletes psychologically and they are not aware of the impact of this program and as a result they neglect it. While physical preparation will be considered previously as important factor, psychological preparedness has gained especial attention and emphasis in today world.

The experiences gained in psychological skill training by Weinberg and Gould suggested that if the athletes compete in great matches with other athletes who have the same level of physical preparedness, finally psychological preparedness will be determine the winner. Successful coaches to emphasize the psychological preparedness of athletes. They suggest that it is important to create and maintain the psychological preparedness during the exercises and training and they devote part of the preparedness program to psychological preparedness. For example, practicing psychological skills is an effective and useful method for sport-related and other situations where psychological aspect is emphasized (Weinberg and Gould, 2007).

Previous studies (Thelwell and Greenlees, 2001) indicate that PST program is the most efficient when a combination of psychological traits was used. Based on the results of the previous studies (Morgan et al., 2006). So, these four different psychological skills programs; team cohesion, self- confidence, anxiety, and motivation will be the focus of the current study. The four psychological traits were select for two reasons. First, earlier discussions with coaches and football players of the team indicate that many football players lack these four skills of PST program, particularly in the Ethiopian context and then Dilla especially. Secondly, these studies were important for optimal performance in football players as well as other sport performers, and studies have shown the importance of these traits (Singer, Murphey, & Tennant, 1993; Wann, 1997; Weinberg & Gould, 2007). The objective of the study was investigating the application of psychological skill training and its impact on selected psychological attributes in female football players. The study was tried to check the application of psychological skill training has a positive or negative effect on female football player's psychological attributions. The main benefit of the research is to increase knowledge; the study which carried out by one researcher may be further studied and would be studied by others many times which is increase in knowledge upon a specific issue.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

- ***Description of the study area***

The study was conduct in the administrative center of the Gedeo Zone in the Southern Nations

Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR) particularly in Dilla town, which found in 92km far from Hawassa in the capital city of SNNPR and 359km far from Addis Ababa in the capital city of Ethiopia. The town is located in longitude and latitude of 6° 22′ N, 6° 42′ N and 38° 21′ to 38° 41′ E respectively with an elevation of 1476 meters above sea level. The area receives annual maximum, medium and minimum rainfall of 1400, 1500 and 900 mm respectively and the mean annual daily maximum and minimum air temperature is 28.4 and 12.8°C respectively. Therefore, the study was conducted on the application of psychological skill training and its impact on selected psychological attributes of female football players on dilla town football club.

- ***Sampling method and Strategy***

For the purpose of these study 26 female football players was selected from Dilla town female football team to the sample group of the study. 26 female players were selected using a census/ whole sampling method and among the selected players half of them (13) was experimental group and the remaining (13) was in a controlled group randomly. Experimental and controlled groups were identified using simple random selection because they have similar characteristics. Totally the sample size of players in the team was 26. Therefore, the total sample sizes of the study were 26.

- ***Study design and methodology***

The study was aimed at investigating the application of psychological skill training and its impact on selected psychological attributes of female football players. According to the objective of this study the researcher was use the experimental design.

- ***Psychological training protocol***

In the current study, we just used the evaluation of athlete ‘s functioning in sports. The PST program used with this current study consisted of several components, most of which are mentioned in the sport psychology literature.

The program was also designed to reveal long term effect of PST program on participants by follow up tests. In the following sections, a discussion of the rationale for certain components that the researchers felt would become part of

the PST program and how these components were implemented is provided. The program described here has involved four different mental abilities: anxiety control, self-confidence, motivation, and team cohesion (team building).

The four psychological skills were selected in the current PST program. Overall, 8 weeks psychological skills program took place during the season. Educational phase skill's processes lasted for two weeks. Weinberg & Gould's PST program phases (education, acquisition and practice) were pursued to practice psychological skills. 8-week PST program consisted of 32 sessions totally. For each psychological skill, 8 sessions were conducted. First 2 sessions of each skill were for education phase. 4 sessions were for acquisition phase of PST and 2 sessions of program was for practice phase to make corrections and reviews if needed.

For each skill, the first phase of PST program is educational phase because many sport participants are unfamiliar with theoretical part of the psychological skills and how psychological skill can enhance learning and performance (Weinberg & Gould, 2007). The education phase assists the athlete in identifying basic psychological skills/methods, and recognizing their own personal use or patterns regarding each skill/method (Vealey, 1988). The important part of the education phase involves increasing athletes 'awareness of the role that psychological skills play in performance and personal excellence (Ravizza, 2006). The psychological skill training program's educational sessions were conducted in the classroom of the GELMA Hall. Monday of the first weeks for each skill are applying for educational phase. Every educational session will be set for 40 minutes. Curriculum of the educational sessions were designed to explain theoretical basement of the skill (for example; Definition of Anxiety), importance of the skill, determinants (for example; correlates of self-confidence) of the skill and relationship between related skill and performance (Team cohesion & Performance).

Second phase of the PST is acquisition phase that focuses on strategies and techniques for learning the various psychological skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2007). During the acquisition phase, the athlete enhances existing skills / methods or develops new skills / methods through a combination of practice, monitoring and reinforcement (Vealey, 1988). While choosing techniques for young participants some clues that come from scientific studies were followed including shorter training sessions, simpler verbal instructions, and turning the exercises into games. Moreover, some of the related homework assignments were given to the participants to have regular practice effects of related skills.

Detailed information related with those processes was given within each skill's explanation. Following the education phase, acquisition phase of the PST program will be performed in four sessions for each skill.

The last phase of PST is practice phase. The practice phase has three primary objectives: (a) to automate skills through over-learning, (b) to teach athletes to systematically integrate psychological skills into their performance situations, (c) to simulate skills that athletes will be want to apply in actual competition (Weinberg & Gould, 2007). In the practice phase, the athlete performs the skills / methods systematically in order to integrate them into his / her practice and competition routines (Vealey, 1988). Following acquisition phase, practical phase of the PST program was performed in four sessions for each skill.

PST program phases were ranging in duration from 15-30 minutes per session. The practice of combining several different interventions is commonly referred to as a psychological skills training program. According to the objective of the current study, it will be expected that certain cognitive-behavioral techniques would be utilized, such as goal setting, relaxation, imagery, concentration, visualization, attention focus, self-talk, pep talk, positive thinking, arousal regulation. By this way athletes input guided the development of the PST program.

- ***Data quality control***

Most research studies have validated and reliable the effectiveness of mental skill training on female football performer enhancement. Ritz (2012) introduces that mental skill training as an important ingredient for success in football player performance enhancement. Mental training and preparation are important elements for all sports especially in football to spend some time on. Mental-training skills such as goal setting, self-talk, imagery, visualization, positive attitude, mental rehearsal, and optimistic thinking, etc.… are important methods that players and coaches can use to enhance playing performance (Barr and Hall 1992; Van Raalte, Brewer, Rivera, & Petitpas, 1994; Vealey 2005; Malouff et al. 2008; Ritz, 2012). To ensure data quality, all the test procedures, collection of data, and handling of information was carried out in accordance with standard protocols and measurements. And the researcher was used an assistant to collect data. The test measurements were taken with the same examines. The researcher was created awareness for subjects about the test and recommended preconditions, which they tried to do prior to taking the test.

Reliability of the questionnaire instrument was assessed by a test–re-test procedures. It was tested using Alpha Method Using SPSS Version 20 (Cornbrash's Alpha). It was found that the overall reliability coefficient value was 0.816. This value indicating that the instrument was reliable and it would achieve the purposes of study. According to (Wiersma, 2009) recommended that the general rule is reliability coefficient value greater than 0.8 are high or more acceptable to considered adequate for the study.

- ***Data analysis***

The following statistical techniques was applied to find out the impact of psychological skill training program on team cohesion, self- confidence, anxiety, and motivation on female players. Quantitative data analysis techniques were employing. The data collected from pretest and posttest results and from closed ended questionnaires was analyze by descriptive statistics such as, percentage, means, standard deviation, independent sample t test and paired sample t- test by using SPSS version (20.0) independent sample t test was used to compare the difference of mean between groups and Paired samples statistical T-test was used to compare the difference of mean scores of pre-test and post-test for control and experimental groups of two variables. Whereas close and open-ended questionnaires were narrated and analyzed qualitatively. In all case the criterion for statistical significance will be set at 0.05 level of confidence ($p<0.05$).

3. RESULTS

After collecting the reliable data through experimental methods such as pre and post-test of each variable, the researcher tabulated, analyzed and interpreted it.

Table 1: The mean and standard deviation values on team of female football players between experimental and control groups are analyzed and presented below.

Variables	Experimental group		Control group	
	Pre-test $\bar{x}\pm$ SD	Post –test $\bar{x}\pm$ SD	Pre-test $\bar{x}\pm$ SD	Post –test $\bar{x}\pm$ SD
Self-confidence	1.254±0.962	2.443 ±.0.147	2.313 ±0.204	1.183 ±0.119

Team cohesion	1.273 ±0.144	1.923 ±0.116	2.076 ±0.320	1.354 ±0.105
Motivation	2.310±0.179	3.195±0.119	3.574±0.237	2.222±0.088
Anxiety	2.440±0.076	2.986±0.067	2.457±0.180	2.430±0.074

EG= experimental group, CG= control group, N=number of participants SD=standard deviation and MD=mean deviation.

The mean values of the Self-confidence Pre-test and Post-test results of the experimental groups were 1.254±0.962 and 2.443 ±.0.147 respectively. Whereas the mean values of the control group Self-confidence, were 2.313 ±0.204 and 1.183 ±0.119 respectively. After intervention the mean of EG was increased on pretest to posttest from 1.254 to 2.443 due to the stated interventions. Thus, the researcher can conclude that PST interventions to motivation variables on experimental group's show positive effect. But there is no significant change was observed on control group posttest.

The mean values of the Team cohesion Pre-test and Post-test results of the experimental groups were 1.273 ±0.144 and 1.923 ±0.116 respectively. Whereas the mean values of the control group Team cohesion, were 2.076 ±0.320 and 1.354 ±0.105 respectively. After PST intervention the mean of EG was increased on pretest to posttest from 1.273 to 1.923 due to the stated interventions. Thus, the researcher can conclude that PST interventions to Team cohesion variables on experimental group's show positive effect. But there is no significant change was observed on control group posttest.

The mean values of the Motivation Pre-test and Post-test results of the experimental groups were 2.310±0.179 and 3.195±0.119 respectively. Whereas the mean values of the control group Motivation, were 3.574±0.237 and 2.222±0.088 respectively. After PST intervention the mean of EG was increased on pretest to posttest from 2.310 to 3.195 due to the stated interventions. Thus, the researcher can conclude that PST interventions to motivation variables on experimental group's show positive effect. But there is no significant change was observed on control group posttest.

The mean values of the Anxiety Pre-test and Post-test results of the experimental groups were 2.440±0.076 and 2.986±0.067 respectively. Whereas the mean values of the control group Anxiety, were 2.457±0.180 and

2.430±0.074 respectively. After PST intervention the mean of EG was increased on pretest to posttest from 2.440 to 2.986 due to the stated interventions. Thus, the researcher can conclude that PST interventions to Anxiety variables on experimental group's show positive effect. But there is no significant change was observed on control group posttest.

Table 2: Comparing pre- and post-test results of self-confidence, team cohesion, and motivation and anxiety skills of students in controlled and experimental groups.

Variables	Group	Pre-test to Post-test	p
		$\bar{x}$± SD	
Self confidence	Experimental group	1.191±0.153	.000
	Control group	0.236±0.379	1.000
Team cohesion	Experimental group	0.648±0.153	.001
	Control group	0.722±0.328	.239
Motivation	Experimental group	1.922±0.195	.000
	Control group	1.3520.224	.547
Anxiety	Experimental group	0.063±0.096	.002
	Control group	0.035±0.178	.547

The above table 2 demonstrates that the pre and post-test results of female football player's self-confidence showed a statistically significant difference in the experimental group because the p value is less than 0.05, which is 0.00. But there was no significant change in the control group as shown in the table above, i.e., the p value is greater than 0.05, which is 1.000. From this, the researcher concluded that eight-week programed PST had statistically significant improvement in the experimental group. But the control group does not. This training plays a great role on self-confidence of female football player's. Due to this reason the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

The experimental group demonstrates the pre and post-test results of team cohesion of female football players showed a statistically significant difference because the p value is less than 0.05, which is 0.01. But there was no significant change in the control group as shown in the table above, i.e., the p value is greater than 0.05, which is 0.239. From this, the researcher concluded programed PST had statistically significant improvement in the experimental group. But the control group does not. This training plays a great role on team cohesion of female football player's. Due to this reason the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

According's to the above table the pre and post-test results of motivation of female football players in experimental group showed a statistically significant difference because the p value is less than 0.05, which is 0.00. But there was no significant change in the control group as shown in the table above, i.e., the p value is greater than 0.05, which is 0. 547. From this, the researcher concluded programed PST had statistically significant improvement on their motivation in the experimental group. But the control group does not. This training plays a great role on motivation of female football players. Due to this reason the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Depending on the above table the pre and post-test results of anxiety of female football players in experimental group showed a statistically significant difference because the p value is less than 0.05, which is 0. 002. But there was no significant change in the control group as shown in the table above, i.e., the p value is greater than 0.05, which is 0. 547. From this, the researcher concluded programed PST had statistically significant improvement on their anxiety in the experimental group. But the control group does not. This training plays a great role on motivation of female football players. Due to this reason the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3: Independent Samples t- test between experimental and control of female football players

Equal variances assumed

Variables	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	T	df	**Sig.**	Mean Difference	95%confidence interval for mean	
							Lower	Upper
Self-confidence	1.23	0.641	23.84	24	**0.000**	1.262	1.1523	1.3707
Team-cohesion	0.899	0.464	13.07	24	**0.000**	0.5677	0.4780	0.6573
Motivation	2.561	0.861	23.75	24	**0.000**	0.9723	0.8878	1.0568
Anxiety	8.451	0.023	0.61	24	**0.548**	0.0177	-0.0422	0.0776

The results of Levine's Test for Equality of Variances from Table 3 showed that there is a significant difference (P = 0.000) between the experimental and controlled groups for Self- confidence of the female football players. So, the intervention of programmed PST training showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and controlled groups of self-

confidence on female football players, since the p value between the two groups is less than 0.05.

There is a statistically significant difference (P = 0.000) in the team cohesion between the experimental and controlled groups. So, the intervention programed PST showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and controlled groups on the female football players 'team cohesion, since the p value between the two groups are less than 0.05.

There is a significant difference (P = 0.000) in female football players motivation between the experimental and controlled groups. So, the intervention of programed PST showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and controlled groups on female football players motivation, since the p value between the two groups is less than 0.05.

There is a significant difference (P = 0.000) in female football players anxiety between the experimental and controlled groups. So, the intervention of programed PST showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and controlled groups on female football players anxiety, since the p value between the two groups is less than 0.05.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study investigated on the Impact of psychological skill training on selected psychological attributes of female football players. Subjects participated throughout the treatment period and cooperated for the success of collection of necessary data. The experimental or training group participated in Eight-week psychological intervention program the selected psychological skill training designed to the female player's, while the control group did not participate in this selected psychological skill training.

- ***Discussion on self-confidence***

The results of the current study with regard to the significant increase in self-confidence have been indicated by various researches. Vealey (1988) explained that psychological methods, techniques and strategies mean to practices that lead to psychological skill. For instance; goal setting, self-talk, progressive relaxation, and imagery are psychological methods those use to improve / decrease some psychological skills. Each of these psychological methods, when learned and implied in right manner, lead to developed psychological skill. On the other hand, psychological skill refers to learned or innate characteristics of the athlete that make it possible that she / he will achieve in sport. Examples of

psychological skill consist of self-confidence, arousal control, anxiety control, and general self-awareness.

Daw and Burton (1994) aimed to examine the impact of a comprehensive psychological skills training for tennis program on collegiate tennis players. Program effectiveness was evaluated on 24 tennis players. As expected, findings demonstrated significant differences with experimental group players displaying higher self-confidence than did their control group counterparts. In addition, Hughes, (1990) studied with total 27 soccer and basketball players who were aged between 14 – 17 years old to see the effectiveness of PST program on high school athletes 'self-confidence levels. Findings of the study indicated that self-confidence levels of the athletes did improve.

Savoy and Beitel (1997) performed a study to prove effectiveness of eight weeks PST program on self-confidence levels of athletes and its findings showed that only basketball players in an experimental group PST program increased their perceptions about self-confidence. The findings of the current study indicated that athletes in experimental group significantly increased perceptions of their self-confidence level over the intervention time period. The level of confidence of control group remained stable. Follow up tests results showed that experimental group had a significant increase in perceptions of self-confidence from pre-test to post-test. The study also indicated that the increase in the perception of self-confidence was maintaining over the follow-up tests.

The positive change of self-confidence showed that implied psychological strategies to develop self-confidence significantly enhanced athletes 'perceptions and feelings about living in a more secure sportive environment, being more encouraged to behave according to basketball principles, having a better ability on performing motor skills, and having a better ability to deal with stressful sportive situations.

These results could be attributed by some reasons include; creating enthusiastic sportive environment with the help and support of all athletes, developing perceptions of athletes about inspiration for success, trying to establish more positive manners in a team, and directing the athletes to have better level attention focus within all sport settings. The results of the current study with regard to the significant increase in self-confidence have been indicated by various researches. Cohn et al. (1990) showed that cognitive behavioral interventions (directing intentional focus) improved self-confidence. Same findings of the Cohn's et al., (1990) study with current study could be explained by better perception and practice about ability related with directing

intentional focus. Morgan (2006) study indicated that a season-long mental skills training (MST) program increased all volleyball players 'confidence levels. Using similar education phases and strategies, having a better winning percentage could be associated with increased self-confidence levels of athletes. By using same sport and same duration of PST program. Gipson, McKenzie & Lowe (1989) have been reported same results with Morgan's (2006). Consistent with our hypothesis the results of the studies could be explained by having a more positive manner, better ability to focus attention. Zinsser, Bunker & Williams (1998) highlighted that cognitive-behavioral strategies are helpful objects to develop any psychological skills of athletes. In their study they introduced that self-talk strategy significantly developed self-confidence levels of athletes. In line with our hypothesis the results of the study attributed by the cognitive control of emotions.

Daw and Burton (1994) who examined the impact of a comprehensive psychological skills training found an increase in self-confidence for tennis players who received a PST program compared to tennis players who did not receive the program. Similar findings with current study results could be attributed by trying to have healthier emotions, and having a more positive manner. Similar results have been reported by Garza & Feltz (1998). In their study they also highlighted the emphasis of healthier emotions and better control of those emotions.

Savoy and Beitel (1997) performed a study to prove effectiveness of six weeks PST program on self-confidence levels of athletes and its findings showed that only basketball players in an experimental group PST program increased their perceptions about self-confidence. Same findings of the Savoy & Beitel (1997) study with current study could be explained by trying to convert negative thoughts to positive ones, and having a better ability to control focus of attention. Consistent with our hypothesis, Hanton and Jones (1999) study's results approved that appropriate strategies to enhance self-confidence levels of athletes are recommended if those strategies 'contents are associated with success and competence. These results could be attributed by having a theme, eliminating of distractions and having a better ability to convert negative thoughts to positive ones. Results of Gonzalez et al., (2011) study could be attributed in line with our findings by athletes 'realization of the importance of having a theme, eliminating of distractions by pep-talk intervention in PST program.

Landin & Hebert (1999) in their study reported increased self-confidence after the PST program that has cognitive behavioral intervention (self-talk).

Similar results of their study with current study could be attributed by effects of self-talk on directing intentional focus and prompt movement patterns by breaking bad habit by deciding on the best self-instructional cues to make new response automatic.

Additionally, consistent with our hypothesis, Johnson, Hrycaiko, Johnson, & Halas, (2004) aimed to find effectiveness of PST program on self-confidence levels of athletes and its findings showed that participants' self-confidence levels were increased by thinking simplistically about any movement necessary perform the sports drills and directing their thoughts more positively and attention. Supportively, Perkos, Theodorakis, & Chroni (2002) found that cognitive strategies (self-talk – positive thinking etc.) within PST programs are beneficial to develop perceptions of some psychological skills of athletes such as self-confidence. In line with our hypothesis the implementation of strategies emphasized that positive self-talk or positive thinking assist athletes in staying appropriately focused in the present, not dwelling on past events and mistakes. These findings could be explained by athletes 'better ability to control their inner dialogue. Similar results have been reported by Hatzigeorgiadis, Theodorakis, and Zourbanos (2004). In their study they highlighted the importance of psychological strategies to enhance self-confidence levels and performance levels of athletes. Results showed that self-confidence levels and performance of athletes were improved. Those results could be explained by reduction of interfering thoughts of athletes.

Edwards & Steyn (2008) they performed a study on same age group of current study and same duration of PST program with current study, its findings revealed that implied PST program on athletes increased perceptions of self-confidence of athletes. Results of Edwards & Steyn (2008). Study could be attributed in line with our findings by creating more enthusiastic environment, eliminating of distracting. Also, Gucciardi, Gordon & Dimmock (2009) performed a 6 weeks PST program (same with current study) and found a significant positive effect on self- confidence levels of football players. They attributed their results to better sportive environments to success and better ability of eliminating negative thinks.

The results of some studies with regard to the non-significant increase in self-confidence have been indicated by various researches. In Lan & Gill (1984) study highlighted that psychological practice did not changed level of perceptions of self-confidence. Since, through the psychological practice the players did not realize the importance of directing their attention properly. This

result could be explained by the athletes 'low level effort to differentiate easy and difficult tasks in their sports.

- ***Discussion on team-cohesion***

The findings of the current study indicated that athletes in experimental group significantly increased perceptions of cohesion over the intervention time period more than control group. In other words, football players who took part in the Psychological Skill Training had a significant increase in their perceptions of team cohesion in general from pre-test to post test. The study also indicated that the increase in the perception of team cohesion was maintaining over the follow up tests. Senecal, Loughead, & Bloom's (2008) study indicated that a season long PST program significantly increased experimental groups' team cohesion through the use of and the realization of the importance of setting common goals. These results could be explained by having an enough duration time of PST program and setting common goals enhanced the team cohesion level by putting all athletes in same ways (goals) to reach. Cogan & Petrie (1995) they found that there was a significant improvement on perceptions of team cohesion of athletes in their study. That result could be attributed to duration of the study which was a season long like Senecal et al. (2008) study. Stevens & Bloom (2003) study that argued that practiced team cohesion interventions through the PST program increased the perceptions of team cohesion. They attributed their results to players 'better awareness about importance of social interaction, role behavior, coach-athlete communication and team leadership. In addition, Burton's (1989) a season-long PST program indicated that goal setting interventions have impact on team cohesion. Results of Burton' (1989) study could be attributed in line with our findings by athletes 'realization of the importance of shared cognition and increase in the athletes 'satisfaction levels by goal setting intervention in PST program. Brawley, Carron and Widmeyer (1993) study indicated that members of teams view various aspects of group endeavor in consistent, patterned ways and perceptions of group cohesion were improved. These results could be explained by acting together as in the case of participating as a team in setting team goals.

Kingston and Hardy (1997) performed a research and findings of the study provide further evidence for the positive impact of process goals in cohesion levels of players and performance of players. In line with our hypothesis through and after the implementation process of PST emphasized the awareness of shared cognition and setting common goals for enhancement of team cohesion.

Shared cognition and setting common goals are the supportive features for mutual understanding which is a crucial thing to enhance team cohesion of athletes or teams. Voight & Callaghan (2001) study that practiced team cohesion interventions through the PST program enhanced the perceptions of team cohesion. Consistent with our hypothesis findings could be explained by wittiness of players about the importance related to social interaction, and team unity

Carron et al., (2002) in their study found that a significant improvement in perception of team cohesion. Same results with current study could be attributed by effects of the implied PST program enhanced realization of the importance of shared cognition (perception) and shared responsibilities.

The results of some studies with regard to the non-significant increase in team cohesion have been indicated by various researches. In Bloom & Stevens (2002) study highlighted that PST program did not changed level of perceptions of team cohesion. Since, through the PST program the players did not realize the importance of powerful interactions and shares responsibilities. Football players who took part on Psychological Skill Training had a significant increase in their perceptions of team cohesion in general from pre-test to post test. The finding of this study on team cohesion showed that PST program significantly enhanced athletes' individual perceptions about having an enough motivation to be a part of team and team's tasks and shared belief to success. The best way to enhance team cohesion in team sports is accepted as team building interventions. Team building interventions has big variety; the qualifications of the studies determined the appropriate techniques to use. When team building is achieved, it is assumed that team synergy is improved which leads to developed team performance and personal growth (Newin, Bloom and Loughead, 2008).

The improvement of team cohesion showed that there was a significant improvement on athletes 'individual perceptions about having a good social interaction. Bray & Whaley (2001) they worked on total 90 basketball players (41 male and 49 female) to examine the team cohesion and individual performance relationship at the middle and end of the regular season. Within their study results they highlighted that increased individual performance is a significant consequence of feeling more attracted to the group at the end of the season. The results of the current study are also consistent with the Vazne (2008) studies that argue

Football is commonly used in sport psychology literature related with psychological skills and personal or performance excellence relationship. In the

study that included working with young Latvian football players indicated that the improvement of the players 'team cohesion structure was characterized by increase perceptions of components of team cohesion include; feeling secure, willingness to change and having a greater confidence.

This result has shown consistency with similar researches done in different times. For example, Martin, T. M., & Duda, J. L. (2000) designed a study to evaluate of team building activities on team cohesion of selected British professional soccer players. Their sample comprised of 22 players. The team had attained courses 5 times related with team building strategies (Phases of team cohesion) s and results of the study indicated that implied interventions enhanced perceptions of team cohesion level.

- ***Discussion on anxiety***

The findings of the current study indicated that athletes in experimental group did not significantly decrease perceptions of their anxiety level over the intervention time period. The level of confidence of control group remained stable. Follow up tests results showed that experimental group did not have significantly decrease in perceptions of anxiety from pre-test to post-test. The study also indicated that there was not decrease in the perception of anxiety was maintaining over three follow-up tests. Current study implications did not decrease anxiety levels significantly. The reasons for this unexpected result may vary. Cox (1998), informed that PST programs should last at least for three months to change some traits and psychological skills of athletes. Six weeks duration time of the current study could not be enough to decrease anxiety levels. Age of athletes can be another reason for not reaching significant differences because McCarthy (2010) defined that athlete in 13–16 age years old is in specializing years and in this term anxiety levels are in a high level. Having enough time to introduce the technique and take the athletes through it in a systematic manner and replying it regularly are essential for the success of relaxation methods in helping children to decrease anxiety (Weiss, 1991). Anxiety part of the current study PST program was only two weeks and that part has three different relaxation techniques and additionally a mental imagery program. This intensive program can be a reason for not finding significant difference in the current study. Additionally, it is generally agreed that the best time to initiate a PST program is the off season or pre-season. In these time periods athletes have more time to learn and practice new skills, and also, they do not have winning pressure. However, just like in the current study, coaches

and athletes often want to start a PST program in the middle of the season because of some precipitating situations, such as unexpected league rank, enharmonically team – coach relationship, practice time limitation etc. In these types of cases coaches and athletes need quick solutions and they think PST will be the key for the success (Weinberg & Gould, 2007). This issue could be another reason for not reaching significant differences on anxiety. However, descriptive results (mean averages) indicated that athletes 'anxiety levels decreased. Even though there are reasons to view the positive results with caution, there are also reasons to be optimistic about the findings. In a qualitative part of the current study about some of the participants reported that the PST program was beneficial for their sport training, reduced anxiety levels, attenuated debilitative interpretations, and boosted personal coping resources. The results of the current study with regard to the non-significant decrease in anxiety have been indicated by various researches. Jones & Hanton (1996) and Hanton & Jones (1999) showed that constant cognitive practices did not change anxiety levels of athletes. Same findings of those studies with current study could be explained by durations of the practices and not having ability about modifying perceptions of athletes.

Cogan & Petrie (1995) performed a season long PST program to change some psychological skills of selected athletes. There were no between-team differences emerged at any time during the year. Although this finding indicates the ineffectiveness of the anxiety program, like current study results they introduced the reduction of anxiety within the intervention team from the preseason to postseason. Supportively, Morgan (2006) in her study worked on the impact of a season-long PST program informed by cognitive-behavioral methods on the anxiety and the overall results of the study revealed no changes in anxiety levels of athletes over the season. Those results could be attributed by not having affective way to attenuate interpretations about anxiety Moreover; Hamstra et al., (2004) implied PST program interventions to have significant changes on some psychological skills. Although they found reduction in anxiety levels of athletes, they summarized the findings of the study as that was not expected significant results because athletes did not reach the needed level of having relaxed state of mind and body. Crocker, Alderman and Smith (1988) could not find significant decrease in anxiety levels of athletes. After the implementation of mental skills program on less than 19 years old athletes, findings of the study showed that there were no interpretable differences between groups 'anxiety levels. In line with our hypothesis the results could be

explained by the time between assessments may not have been long enough to allow subjects to perceive any changes in their trait anxiety. Moreover, Navaneethan & Rajan (2010) implied their study to investigate the effect of psychological skill training techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation on anxiety. The results of those studies revealed that there was no significant difference in levels of anxiety among the male intercollegiate volleyball players. The affect-reducing strategies of relaxation techniques may not be appropriate, especially during the limited time available during an intervention program.

The results of some studies with regard to the significant decrease in anxiety have been indicated by various researches. Poland (2007) performed a project by the implementation of a psychological skills training program to female high school basketball athletes. Following the completion of the PST, the anxiety levels of athletes were lowered. Findings of the study could be explained by having a relaxed body and mind. Wadey & Hanton (2008) in their study investigated the relationship between psychological skills (imagery & relaxation) and the anxiety. Results revealed that the athletes maintained their anxiety response prior to competition and could deploy imagery, or relaxation to enable facilitative interpretations of anxiety related symptoms. The underlying mechanisms perceived to be responsible for these effects included perceived effort for imagery and motivation, and intentional focus the anxiety response. Shaffer & Wiese- Bjornstal, (1999) have been reported same results in their studies those aimed to approve effectiveness of cognitive psychological strategies on anxiety levels of athletes. Results of the studies could be attributed to strategies may modify perceptions of anxiety and those help the athletes achieve a relaxed state of mind. Research conducted with psychological skill training includes relaxation, imagery, and cognitive restructuring to decrease level of anxiety of athletes. The authors concluded that the interventions reduced anxiety levels results of the study associated with improving self-esteem levels of athletes affected levels of anxiety (Meyers, Schleser, & Okwumabua, 1982). Later research continued to demonstrate the efficiency of cognitive-behavioral interventions in decreasing anxiety. The treatment group showed decreases in anxiety. The findings of the study could be explained by athletes 'better ability to calm their mind and body by implying relaxation techniques (Holm, Beckwith, Ehde, & Tinius, 1996).

To prevent unjustified extrapolation of the results of current study, several limitations warrant discussion. The sample used in the current study was limited to young athletes in the specializing years of sport participation. In addition, the

sample came from same category basketball league from the same region in Ankara, Turkey. Certain aspects of the training procedures used for the current study also had limitations, especially duration of the PST program (6 weeks) and implication of the PST program (mid-season). These issues may limit the generalizability of these results.

- ***Discussion on motivation***

The findings of the current study show that athletes who are given the psychological skill training (interventions) to improves their motivation level show significant improvement after the intervention of PST. The gradual increment in the mean of athletes from pretest to posttest shows that the PST given for the athletes improve their motivation. Savoy &Beitel, (1997) in their study performed PST program 3 times a week, prior to practice. Thereafter, they continued the same schedule for the duration of the regular season. Clearly, the assessment results indicated that there was an increase in the motivation of the athletes who participated in the study, following the implementation of the psychological skills training program.

This result has shown consistency with similar researches done in different times. For example, Hughes, (1990) studied with total 27 soccer and basketball players who were aged between 14–17 years old to see the effectiveness of PST program on high school athletes' motivation levels. Findings of the study indicated that motivation levels of the athletes did improve. The results of the current study are also consistent with Landin and Hebert (1999) performed a study to show effectiveness of PST strategy on motivation levels. They worked with 5 tennis players whose ages ranged between 18 -21 years women tennis players. The findings of the study indicated that players reported increased motivation following intervention. The study that aimed to show effectiveness of PST interventions on motivation and some other components was involved the use of two selected PST practice in an effort to enhance the motivation, and performance ratings of competitive figure skaters (Garza & Feltz, 1998). As could be seen from the findings of the study the motivation level of the participants of the Dilla Kenema females football players improve from pretest to posttest significantly due to PST interventions. Orlick (2015) in his study stated about motivation that the highest level of personnel excellence are guided by belief in one‘s potential, belief in one‘s goal, belief in the meaningfulness of one‘s goal and belief in one‘s capacity to reach that goal‖ and claimed that it is

a critical psychological perspective athletes need to develop and maintain in order to achieve expected level personal & performance excellence.

The findings of the current study show that the psychological skill training given for the football players alleviate their motivation. So as to improve the overall motivation of the whole players prolonged psychological skill training should have to be given. This is in line with the PST programmes of Morgan (2006) and Daw and Burton (1994) discussed above, and could likewise be attributed to healthier emotions and a more positive manner.

The findings of this research also revealed that the psychological skill training can alleviate youth football players 'motivations level. The results of the current study with regard to the significant increase in motivation have been indicated by various researches. Aida al awamleh, et al, (2014) states that, mental training of motor skills leads to changes in brain circuitry and behavior, just as physical training.

Research has supported that mental-skills training can prepare athletes for competition and improves psychological well-being such as improving managing anxiety, focus, managing emotions, dealing with pressure. The common mental training techniques in use in sport include, goal setting to help gymnasts enhance motivation and to learn new techniques and experience success, imagery which can help students improve concentration, gain emotional control and enhance the development, positive self-talk which help to eliminate negative self-take so focusing attention on now and encourage the gymnast to maintain the effort and build confidence. E. Bhambri, et al (2005) aimed at examining the effect of psychological interventions such as General relaxation, Imagery and combination of both on the mental toughness dimensions of Table-Tennis players. The study was carried out on 32 national level tables –tennis players in the age group of 12-17 years. Loehr psychological performance inventory was administered to assess their mental toughness on seven variables viz. self-confidence, negative–energy, attention control, visual and imagery control, motivational level, positive energy and attitude control. The results indicate that all the 3 psychological interventions enhanced mental toughness dimensions of sports persons. However combined intervention consisting of both relaxation and imagery therapies showed the maximum effect on mental toughness dimensions Additionally, Golby and Wood (2016) examined the effects of a psychological skills intervention, designed to enhance the mental toughness and psychological well-being of student- athlete. Over the course of the intervention, mental toughness significantly

improved, in addition to perceived self-efficacy, self-esteem and positive affect. Positive significant relationships were observed between components of mental toughness and each of the positive measures; which lends support to the conceptualization of mental toughness as a positive psychological construct which fosters positive psychological states.

5. Conclusion

Based on the major finding of this study, the following points were stated as a conclusion. In order to investigate the impact of psychological skill training intervention on self- confidence team-cohesion, motivation and anxiety level of Dilla Kenema female football players. Adequate amount of data was collected from the target group through standard questioners for football players in pre and posttest of both groups. Therefore, within the limitations and delimitations of the study the following conclusion were drawn:

- Implementing an 8 weeks PST program with an intact football team made significant differences on experimental group athletes 'self-confidence, team cohesion, motivation and anxiety levels.
- There was a significance mean difference between the post and pretest of experimental group of self–confidence, Team-cohesion, motivation and anxiety level of female football players. So, the researcher can conclude again psychological intervention would have significance difference on female players PST variables who attend psychological intervention than those who do not take psychological intervention.
- There was a significance mean difference between experimental group and control group in PST variables for female football players. So, the researcher can conclude that psychological intervention would have significance difference on female players rather than who do not take PST interventions.
- This study also concludes that psychological intervention program carried out during eight-week intervention period for experimental group was conducive, effective and has a positive influence in improved self–confidence, team-cohesion, motivation and anxiety of female players.
- In general, there were meaningful differences between experimental and control group athletes on implied psychological skills all over time of study.

- ***Ethical consideration***

The researcher an introduction letter was obtained from the Department of Sport Science at Dilla University. Participants were briefed on the aims and objectives of the study. What needs to be known, why and how they have been selected and how their opinions and observations are important to the study. The researcher was informing the participants of the purpose of the research and notified them of their freedom of choice whether to participate in the research or not. Participation was purely voluntary and as such, the participants were given a consent form to sign. All the information was held confidentially and the participants asked not to indicate their names in the questionnaires

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