



Akademik Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (AJESS Journal)

Competitive orientation and its relationship with psychological stress among volleyball players

Dr. Bilal Ben Toumi, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
bilal.bentoumi @ univ-msila.dz

Dr. Idriss Benredjem, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
idriss.benredjem@univ-msila.dz

Dr. MAKHLOUF MENDJHI, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
makhlof.mendjhi@univ-msila.dz

Dr. BOUSLAH NADIR, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
nadir.bouslah@univ-msila.dz

Dr. Ahmed Benredjem, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
ahmed.benredjem@univ-msila.dz

Dr. Kamel Megag, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
kamel.megag@univ-msila.dz

Dr. Boubakre Nouiri, University of M'sila, laboratory of sports media governance and sports management in Algeria
Affiliated Institution for Researchers: Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences - University of M'sila, Algeria.
boubakre.nouiri@univ-msila.dz

Article History

Received: 31/07/2026; Accepted: 20/08/2026; Published: 09/09/2026

Abstract

In this research, we examined competitive orientation and its relationship to psychological stress among volleyball players. The psychological aspect is considered as a key factor influencing athletic performance, as it contributes to emotional balance and helps players cope with various psychological pressures during training and competition. We therefore chose to explore this topic, aiming to identify the relationship between competitive orientation and psychological stress. In this study, we employed a descriptive approach with a sample of 25 players from the National First Division of volleyball, using purposive sampling. A questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. Key findings revealed no statistically significant relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress (Hypothesis 1), whereas a positive correlation was found between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress (Hypothesis 2). A primary recommendation is to foster a positive competitive orientation among players to mitigate the intensity of psychological stress during competitions.

Keywords: Competitive orientation, psychological stressors, volleyball players.

1. Study issue:

Volleyball is considered as a team sport that requires interaction between the physical, technical and tactical aspects in a continuous manner, besides the psychological aspect, which has become a fundamental axis in the understanding of athletic performance. Sports psychology emphasizes the need to analyze the players' behavior and feelings during the games. It is especially crucial during fast games when players have to make decisions immediately, like in volleyball.

Competitive orientation is one of the most important psychological variables related to performance, and it reflects how a player perceives success or failure within the competition. Some players care about their own performance, others about outperforming their competition. This difference in orientation directly influences how the player reacts to competitive situations. Competitive behavior is characterized by the achievement-oriented nature of the behavior aimed at satisfying the psychological needs. Therefore, the motives of competitive behavior differ in terms of type and strength from the motives of training and recreation (Ahmed Fawzy, 2006). The state of readiness for competition, the presence of opponents, referees, spectators and other variables of the competitive situation stimulate the motivation of the athlete for achievement in a way that is completely different from the state that stimulates them in training and sports recreation.

In contrast, psychological pressures are considered important factors affecting performance levels and these pressures can be due to competition requirements, coach expectations, audience pressure or the importance of the outcome. In some cases, these pressures can be beneficial, in others detrimental, depending upon how well the player can cope with them. According to Abbas Metwally (2000), psychological pressures are a set of stressful events that an individual encounters while performing his profession, which threaten his self because they exceed his personal capabilities and lead to persistent acute emotional responses. They are associated with negative manifestations that impact on the individual's performance, psychological status and behavior as a reaction to those pressures. One of the fundamental determinants of the level of psychological pressures is the fact that the type of orientation adopted by the player is evidence of the relationship between competitive orientation and psychological pressures. In contrast, a mastery orientation is associated with a positive and motivating perception of pressures whereas a comparison orientation is linked with higher levels of anxiety and stress.

In volleyball, a sport with rapid changes in the course of the game and sensitivity to the point, the importance of this relationship is amplified, because psychological pressures can affect the accuracy of performance in key skills such as serving, receiving and spiking.

Based on the above, we asked the following general question:

Correlation between competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players

2. Sub-questions Partial questions:

- Relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress of volleyball players
- The relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.

3. Hypotheses:**3.1/ General Hypothesis:**

There is a correlation between competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.

3.2/Sub- Hypotheses:

- There is a correlation between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.
- There is a correlational relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.

4. Importance of the study Importance of the study:

Competitive orientation is an important psychological aspect for athletes as it helps to improve the sports performance and to strive for victory. Psychological pressures players face during the competitions is also connected to this. The level of psychological pressure may increase the intensity of competition which may affect performance positively or negatively depending on the player's ability to control his/ her emotions and adapt to the conditions of the competition.

5. Study Objectives: Objectives of the study:

- Relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological tension of volleyball players.
- The relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.

6. Keywords in the study: Keywords in the study:**6.1/Competitiveness:**

- Definition of terms: e.

It is the athlete's readiness to face situations of sports competition, and to strive to excel and distinguish himself in light of the level or standard of excellence (Mohamed Hassan Alawi, 1996, p. 278).

- Operational definition of competitive orientation: The score obtained by the player through their answers to the items of the competitive orientation scale used in the study, which reflect their desire to excel, achieve victory, and face competitors during the sports competition.

6.2/ Psychological pressures:

- Technical definition: It is a series of stressful events that a person experiences in carrying out his profession that endangers his self as it surpasses his personal capacities. This results in strong and lasting emotional reactions that contribute to negative manifestations that reflect on the individual's performance and psychological and behavioral state as a reaction to those pressures. (Abbas Metwally, 2000, p.125)

-Operational definition of psychological stress: It is the score obtained by the player based on his/her answers to the items of the psychological stress scale used in the study, who reflects the level of tension, anxiety and stress that the player experiences during training or sports competition.

7- Literature Review:

7.1/Study: "Competitive Orientation and Its Relation to Competitive Behavior and Achievement of Athlete Clubs of Kurdistan Region in Athletics" Majid Khodaykhash Asad et al., 2014.

This study was conducted using a descriptive method. Data were collected using the competitive orientation scale, the competitive behavior scale, and the players' performance in the Kurdistan Athletics Championship. The research community and sample were selected from the athletes of the clubs of Kurdistan in athletics, 42 players, of which 36 players have been selected.

The goals of the research were:

- Competitive orientation for the players of the clubs of the Kurdistan region in athletics.
- The competitive behavior of the athletes in the clubs of Kurdistan Region in athletics. - The relationship between competitive orientation and competitive behavior among athletes in the clubs of Kurdistan Region in athletics. - The relationship between competitive orientation and achievement among athletes in the clubs of Kurdistan Region in athletics.

Among the conclusions reached were:

- There was a positive relation between competitive orientation and competitive behavior in the players of the event.
 - Among the event's players, a positive association was observed between the competitive orientation and achievement.
- No correlation was found between competitive orientation of the players and competitive behavior in the events (long jump, high jump, discus throw).

2.7/ Research titled: "Levels of Psychological Stress Among Football Players According to Age Group and Playing Position", Boumeziane Ibrahim, 2022.

The study used the descriptive approach on a sample of (75) players of the Mouloudia Ain El-Hijar team, distributed over three age categories (SENIORS-U19-U1) intentionally selected. The psychological stress scale developed by Moayed Abdul Razak Hassou (2008) was used for data collection. After the collection and the statistical processing of the results the following was concluded:

- The psychological stress is high for the players of the team Mouloudia Ain El-Hijar.
- The differences in the levels of psychological stress among players according to the age category variable statistically significant in favor of the age category (U19).
- There are no statistically significant differences in the levels of psychological stress of football players depending on the variable of the playing position.

3.7/ How previous studies can guide the current study and how to benefit from them:

The researcher studied similar studies to find the most significant findings of those studies, and matched them with the commonalities of the present study.

The practical side:

1. Exploratory study:

The exploratory study is the first step that helps the researcher to get an overview of the aspects of the field study for the research. (Rachid Zarouati, 2002, p. 192)

The goal of the pilot study is to test whether the study location is appropriate for the research and whether the tool used is appropriate for the research topic. With this study we could get the approval of the responsible officials of the teams concerned. Accordingly, we performed the pilot study on the basis of the following aims:

- Recognize possible problems that can occur in the implementation of the pilot study and that can block the research.
- Testing the possibility of the sample to respond smoothly with the study tools, especially the clarity of the phrases linguistically and terminologically
- The reliability coefficients are high and statistically significant, which reflects the possible stability of the results that will be obtained by using the questionnaire. (Refer to Table 1)

2. Data and information collection instruments: Data and information collection instruments:

Sources of collecting theoretical scientific material We relied on a set of books related to our study and some scientific theses and journals to define the basic concepts, through the problem of our research and its study, which is titled: Competitive orientation and its relationship with psychological pressures among volleyball players.

Second: Sources for collecting the applied scientific material:

As a consequence of the exploratory study, we performed and depending on the kind of information and data we are gathering, we found that the most suitable tool to conduct this study is:

A- Competitive Orientation Scale This scale was used by (Diana Jal, 1991) and translated by Mohamed Hassan Alawi It contained 20 items and was trimmed down to 11 items.

Scale key:

RESPONSE	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Positive competitive orientation phrases 2/5/7/8/9/10/11	5	4	3	2	1
Negative competitive orientation phrases 1/3/4/6	1	2	3	4	5

B- Psychological Stress Scale: Prepared by researcher Khalifa bin Nasser Al-Amari Al-Dosari in 2020, consisted of (34) phrases, and was converted to (11) phrases.

RESPONSE	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Degree	5	4	3	2	1

3. Scientific requirements of the tool:

- Sustainability tool:

The reliability of it was measured by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient method.

Survey axes	Number of statements	Cronbach's alpha coefficient α
Competitive orientation	11	0.853
Psychological pressures	11	0.829

As for the table No. (01), it shows the high coefficients of reliability of the Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire axis, where the first axis was (0.853) and the second axis (0.829), which indicates that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

4. The methodology of the study was:

In line with the nature of the study the descriptive approach was adopted.

5. Study population and sample

5.1. Study population: The "population" is all persons (or objects or elements) that share characteristics that can be observed. (Raja Mahmoud Abu Al-Alam, 2006, p. 154)

The population of the study at present is the player who participates in the National Volleyball Championship, Premier Division. The number of players is estimated to be 12 teams.

5.2. Sample of study:

Regarding the selection of the sample of the study, it was intentionally comprehensive for two teams (Raed Shabab Al-Masila and Najm Al-Riyadi Al-Masili) estimated at 30 players and excluded 5 players. So, the number of questionnaires that is subject to the study is 25 questionnaires.

6. Field application procedures:

6.1. Spatial domain:

The study was carried out at the level of the first division of volleyball which was composed of two teams - senior category - namely:

- The team "Raed Chabab M'sila" from the province of M'sila in Algeria.
- The team "Nassr El M'sila", from the province of M'sila, Algeria.

6.2. Time period:

The basic study, theoretical and practical aspects, was carried out from the beginning of April 2026 to the end of May 2026.

7. Statistical methods used in the study: Statistical methods used in the study:

The software used for statistical analysis was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The statistical processing techniques applied were as follows:

Pearson correlation coefficient: to explore the internal consistency validity of the questionnaire

Cronbach's alpha equation (α): To verify the reliability of the questionnaire items.

Pearson correlation coefficient: to find out the correlational relationship between psychological stress and competitive orientation.

8. Presentation, interpretation and discussion of the results:

8.1. Presentation, interpretation and discussion of the results of the first hypothesis: which states that there is a correlational relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.

Table No. (02) Pearson correlation coefficient for positive competitive orientation and psychological pressure

Variable	Sample Size	Coefficient Pearson Correlation	Significance Level	Decision
Positive competitive orientation	25	0.282	0.172	Not statistically significant
Psychological pressures				

- Regarding the table (02) it can be observed that:

The Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables positive competitive orientation and psychological stress was 0.282 at a significance level of 0.172, which indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables.

- Results interpretation and discussion:

To study the relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress of volleyball players.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated and it was found to be (0.282) which indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables.

The study's findings indicate that there was no statistically significant relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress among volleyball players. Therefore, having a positive competitive orientation does not necessarily reduce or increase the level of psychological stress. This is explained by the fact that the positive competitive orientation is not the only factor that influences the psychological pressures in volleyball, since there are other factors that affect them, such as the importance of the match, the player's experience, the level of physical and psychological preparation, the nature of the competition and the support of the coach and teammates.

The above presentation led the researcher to conclude that the hypothesis that states the existence of a relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological pressures among volleyball players has not been realized as the results showed no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

8.2. Presentation, interpretation and discussion of the results of the second hypothesis: It states that there is a correlational relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress among volleyball players.

Table No. (03): Correlation Coefficient between Negative Competitive Orientation and Psychological Stress

Variable	Sample Size	Coefficient Pearson Correlation	Significance Level	Decision
Negative competitive orientation	25	0.414*	0.040	statistically significant
Psychological pressures				

- **Table No. (03)** shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables, the negative competitive orientation and psychological stress, is (0.257*), at the significance level of (0.040), indicating a direct relationship between them.

To understand the correlational relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress in volleyball players.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.414* and showed a direct relationship between the two variables. That is, the higher the level of negative competitive orientation, the greater the psychological pressures experienced by volleyball players.

The study findings revealed that there was a direct relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress among the volleyball players. That is, the higher the level of negative competitive orientation in the player, the higher the level of psychological stress. This can be explained by the fact that a player with a negative competitive orientation is more afraid of failure and more sensitive to the results of competition and criticism, which makes them experience greater psychological tension and anxiety during training and competition. Moreover, a negative competitive orientation leads the player to focus on mistakes and the threat of defeat, rather than on good performance, which increases psychological pressures and affects the emotional balance and self-confidence of volleyball players. From the above presentation the researcher concludes that the hypothesis of the existence of a direct relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological pressures among volleyball players is confirmed.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations:

9.1 . Conclusions:

Analysis and interpretation of the results obtained by presentation:

- The researcher concludes from the above presentation that the hypothesis that there was a relationship between positive competitive orientation and psychological stress among volleyball players has not been achieved, because the results showed no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected.
- Based on the above presentation, the researcher concluded that the hypothesis that there is a direct relationship between negative competitive orientation and psychological stress among volleyball players has been confirmed.

9.2. Recommendations:

- 1- Working on creating a positive competitive mentality among players to mitigate the severity of the psychological pressures during competitions.
- 2- The importance of the psychological preparation of volleyball players in addition to the physical and technical preparations.
- 3 - Providing a sports psychologist within clubs and sports teams to observe the psychological state of the players.
- 4- Fostering the development of self-confidence and emotional control skills in players during competition.
- 5- Future studies on competitive orientation and its relation with other psychological variables such as motivation, anxiety, self-esteem and burnout should be conducted...

References

- Ahmed Fawzy, "Principles of Sports Psychology / Concepts and Applications", 2nd ed., Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, Egypt, 2006.
- Abbas Metwally: Psychological Stress and Its Relation to the Duration of Experience and Some Personality Traits Among Primary School Teachers, Egyptian Journal of Psychological Studies, Vol. 10. Egyptian Society for Psychological Studies, No. 26, Cairo, Egypt, 2000.
- Mohamed Hassan Alawi, Mohamed Nasr El-Din Radwan: Measurement in physical education and sports psychology. Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 3rd edition, Cairo, Egypt, 1996.
- * Rachid Zarouati: "Exercises in Scientific Research Methodology in Social Sciences", 1st Edition, University Publications House, Algeria, 2002.
- Raga Mahmoud Abu Al-Alam: "Research Methods in Psychological and Educational Sciences", 5th ed., University Publishing House, Egypt, 2006.

Journals:

- Competitive orientation and its relation to competitive behavior and achievement among athletes of Kurdistan Region clubs in athletics, Journal of Babylon University for Humanities, Volume 22, Issue 04, pp. 887-895, 2014.
- Psychological stress levels among football players according to the variable of age group and playing position, International Journal of Studies and Research in Sports Science and Training, Issue 02, Volume 03, pp. 13-24, University of Chlef, Algeria, 2022.