

The efficiency of a suggested counseling program for relaxation skill to cope with gymnasts' psychological stress

فعالية برنامج إرشادي مقترح لمهارة الاسترخاء لمواجهة الضغوط النفسية لدى لاعبي الجمباز

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Abstract: The present study aims to identify the effects of a suggested counseling program for relaxation skill to cope with gymnasts' psychological stress, through its application on a sample of 28 gymnasts suffering from psychological stress and recording a high stress level in Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) (of Martens et al), which has been arbitrated by professionals. The method used in this study is experimental in which a control sample of 14 players, and an experimental one of 14 other players have been chosen to apply the counseling program for relaxation skill only on the experimental sample. After statistical process, statistically significant differences between the control and experimental sample groups have been noticed in favor of the experimental group, by considering the homogeneity of the sample members in the experimental and control groups in terms of variables of age, sex, athletic level, sports field, and the level of psychological stress before applying the suggested counseling program.

After collecting, statistically processing, exposing, analyzing, and discussing data in the basis of a theoretical background and available previous or similar studies, the present study has found out that the suggested counseling program for relaxation skill leads to coping with gymnasts' psychological stress.

Keywords: efficiency, counseling program, relaxation skill, coping with psychological stress, gymnasts

المخلص : هدفت هذه الدراسة الى معرفة اثر برنامج ارشادي مقترح لمهارة الاسترخاء لمواجهة الضغوط النفسية لدى لاعبي الجمباز ، من خلال تطبيقه على عينة م<ن لاعبي الجمباز قوامها 28لاعب يعانون من مشكلة الضغط النفسي الحاصلون على درجات عالية في مقياس الضغط النفسي مارتنز وزملائه والذي عرّبه اسامة كامل راتب وتم تحكيمه من قبل المختصين، استخدم الباحث المنهج التجريبي في هذه الدراسة من خلال اختيار عينة ضابطة (14 لاعبا) وعينة تجريبية (14 لاعبا)ومن ثم تطبيق البرنامج الارشادي المقترح لمهارة الاسترخاء على العينة التجريبية فقط، وبعد المعالجة الاحصائية تبين ان هناك فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين المجموعة الضابطة والتجريبية والفروق كانت لصالح المجموعة وتم مراعاة تجانس افراد العينة في المجموعة الضابطة والتجريبية في متغيرات السن والجنس والمستوى الرياضي والتخصص الرياضي ومستوى الضغوط النفسية قبل تطبيق البرنامج الارشادي المقترح. وبعد جمع البيانات ومعالجتها احصائيا وعرضها وتحليلها ومناقشتها على الخلفية النظرية وما توفر من دراسات سابقة او مشابهة وقد جاءت نتائج الدراسة ان تطبيق البرنامج الارشادي المقترح لمهارة الاسترخاء يؤدي الى مواجهة الضغوط النفسية لدى لاعبي الجمباز.

الكلمات المفتاحية : فعالية، برنامج ارشادي، مهارة الاسترخاء، مواجهة الضغوط النفسية، لاعبي الجمباز

1. Introduction and problematic of the study:

Athletic physical activity has imposed itself as one of the educative factors. It is a powerful statement and a critical means in preparing individuals, developing their critical and psychological aspects and supplying them with a wide range of expertise and skills helping them to be adapted to everyday life. Within this framework, officials, trainers, and technicians ensured objective and scientific conditions that contribute to the training and development of this type of activity. In order to prepare coaches and players for a comprehensive, balanced and integrated training, it is necessary to take into account four important and required aspects which are: technical, tactical and psychological preparation, considering that the human personality is three – dimensional, i.e. it is related to physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects. (Mohammad Hassan Allawi, 2002, p. 24)

Psychological stress is of human nature, and not necessarily a negative phenomenon that can be neglected to avoid the reduction of the individual's reactions, capacities and eventually lead to their failure. Moreover, the absence of stress means death, one must

also consider that severe and recurrent stress negatively impacts an individual's life and consequently leads to dysfunctionality. (Abdul Aziz Majid Muhammad, 2005, p. 77)

Undoubtedly, the significance of the psychological stress factor impacts on the players' performances, especially the ones of advanced levels, where stress renders the player to a state of confusion and inability to make the right decision during the competition. In addition, it detracts from their positive interaction with others during the game. (Qamini Hafid, 2012, p. 25)

The topic of stress has been studied in many fields, medicine and clinical psychology, and among some theories we mention the following:

The stimulus-response model :

This was the dominant model for many years, and it is represented by a simple view response stimulus (SR), which consider that the individual respond negatively to the stimuli surrounding him, and based on this general model, researchers defined pressure as an external stimulus, while others defined it as a response (D 'Zurilla & Nezu, 1982, p85).

Cognitive behavioral theory:

Due to the overlap between cognitive-behavioral methods, the need for an integrative theory emerged, which is the cognitive behavior theory aimed at promoting the behavioral change that leads to relaxation by reconstructing emotional thoughts. Our behavior is guided to a large extent by the self-talk that occurs within our minds. It is a dialogue within ourselves with the aim of explaining the world in which we live (Kamil Ratib, 2004 i 1, p. 131.132).

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The study of "Classe Benjamin & David 1997" about "the sources of psychological stress related to performance during competitions" aimed to identify the sources of psychological stress related to performance during competitions.

The "Silva 1990" study about the psychological stress that leads to athlete burnout aimed to comprehend the causes of psychological stress that that leads to athlete burnout.

Previous studies have dealt with the topic of psychological stress in different ways. They either highlight the main causes of psychological stress or the different causes and sources that lead to feelings of stress. Whether in training or when players perform during competitions. Hardly any study dealt with the techniques of coping with psychological stress, like relaxation for instance, which is one among many strategies to cope with psychological pressures.

Counseling is used in order to reach the highest possible degree of emotional control and cope with stress in the field. Different counselling skills and techniques are used, notably relaxation, in the training of gymnasts in Algeria for sporting events. This experiment, however, has been overlooked because of the coaches' interest in physical, technical, and tactical aspects and rather than the psychological ones.

Relaxation is one of the most popular therapeutic approaches used nowadays. It holds a reputable position among the psychotherapeutic techniques, that rely on therapeutic mediation. Relaxation is the idea of a psychical-psychological strategy that intervenes in muscle contraction—visceral pressure and breathing. Furthermore, it is not merely a therapeutic method but also an instrument for discipline and rehabilitation. Therefore, relaxation therapy holds such a reputable position in psycho-sports preparation for competitions. In this context, "Tomas" quotes "Bousingen" believes that the importance of relaxation for athletes has long been recognized, especially when it comes to quick and fairly short competitions."We are aware of the importance of

physical and psychological relaxation, especially when athletes are required to perform in front of the public," says Bousingen. (Thomas Raymond, 1991, p. 67)

Improving breathing processes, lowering muscle tension, increasing mental focus, and developing the ability to positively visualize a performance, are amongst the most significant benefits of relaxation exercises. However, the technical methods of these relaxation and meditation exercises must be explained for a better outcome, like how the player's muscles feel relaxed under different pressures, whether excitement or psychological turmoil. The use of the subconscious (once in relaxation mode) performance improvement and positive preparation are equally as important for an accomplished performance. (Wafaa Darwish, 2007, p. 45)

According to the aforesaid elements, the problematic can be formulated as such:

- Is the proposed counseling program for relaxation techniques, efficient for gymnasts to cope with psychological stress?

Through this problematic, the following sub-questions arise:

- 1.1. Are there any statistically significant differences between the control group players and the experimental group players in the level of psychological stress before applying the proposed counseling program?
- 1.2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the control group players and the experimental group players in the level of psychological stress after applying the proposed counseling program?

2. Study hypotheses:

General hypothesis (principal):

Applying the proposed counselling program for relaxation skill is efficient for gymnasts to cope with psychological stress.

Partial hypotheses:

- 2.1. there are not any statistically significant differences between the control group players and the experimental group players in the level of psychological stress before applying the proposed counseling program.
- 2.2. there are statistically significant differences between the control group players and the experimental group players in the level of psychological stress after applying the proposed counseling program

3. The study significance:

The importance of this research work is twofold: theoretical importance, and practical importance:

3.1. Theoretical significance:

The theoretical significance of the present study can be seen in the lack and scarcity of previous studies dealing with psychological stress among players in such sports, which may generate for some various psychological disorders such as emotionalism, discomfort and stress, etc. which would eventually result in fear and anxiety that affect the player's performance on competition. Although some studies addressed counselling programs in a descriptive manner, this topic was not particularly tackled. Thus, our study represents an addition to what the researchers have already contributed with in this field.

3.2. Practical significance:

The practical significance of the study stems from the current reality of sports, and what it has come to relate to from various sciences such as sports medicine, statistics, and psychology.

The reality of sports in general in Algeria, and gymnastics in particular, and what is observed on the ground compelled us to address the issue of relaxation, as the focus of coaches and educators on the psychological, skill aspects, the strategic capacities, as

well as their interest in the physical aspects, made them undoubtedly neglect the most critical stage in the sports process, i.e. the stage of relaxation, including its foundations and means.

Hence, our scientific research raises awareness on the process and effects of relaxation, whose effective role is not hidden in raising and improving the physical efficiency of the player and their outcomes.

4. Study objectives:

The present study aims to achieve the following:

- 4.1. Preparing a psychomotor counseling program suggested to deal with psychological stress, using relaxation skill.
- 4.2. Understanding to what extent is the difference between the control group players and the experimental group players in the level of psychological stress before applying the proposed counseling program.
- 4.3. Understanding to what extent is the difference between the control group players and the experimental group players in the level of psychological stress, in favor of the experimental group, after applying the proposed counseling program.

5. Key words:

- 5.1. **Efficiency: Idiomatically:** it is "the ability to achieve results according to specific criteria. Whenever the result is fully achieved, the sufficiency increases." (Badawi Ahmed Zaki, 1979, p. 127).

Procedurally: efficiency is the suggested counseling program's ability to cope with the stress of gymnasts, using the technique of relaxation.

- 5.2. **Counseling Program:**

Idiomatically: a counseling program is an organized program based on scientific foundations, that consists of a set of constructive experiences. The latter are planned, designed in a coherent organized manner, as well as include many activities and various methods in order to achieve previously set and specific goals.

Procedurally: the suggested counseling program for relaxation skill is defined as "a program that contains a set of planned, organized, and guided relaxing sessions, based on scientific grounds, to provide assistance to the study sample individuals who suffer from a high level of psychological stress.

5.3. Coping With Psychological Stress:

Idiomatically: "The definitions have varied according to the difference of scholars," Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person." (Taha Abdel-Azim, salama, 2006, p 77)

Procedurally: coping with psychological stress is defined as "the response of study sample members to the phrases of the scale used on the competition pressure, according to what applies to their psychological states in relation with to their symptoms of psychological stress. It is expressed with high level scored by the sample members."

5.4. Gymnasts: Idiomatically: Gymnastics is considered a rather difficult technical aesthetic sports, which requires high skills, physical and psychological preparation in order to practice it. Gymnastics requires muscle strength, speed, and agility in addition to boldness, courage, and determination in order to reach advanced levels and compete with professional, proficient, and skilled players. (Mohamed Ibrahim Shehata, 2004, p 75)

Procedurally: gymnasts are known as: " the ones involved in the sporting compound" Al Mujahid Mohammed Ben Issa, in the commune of Dar Al Shyoukh in Djelfa Province"

6. Previous studies that dealt with the topic, through a brief and balanced review of the previous published studies related to the topic

6.1. First study : Al-Attiyah(2002)

Untitled "the effectiveness of a behavioral cognitive counseling program in reducing some common anxiety disorders in a sample of children in Qatar"

The study aimed to check the effectiveness of a behavioral cognitive counseling program in reducing some common anxiety disorders in a sample of children in the stage of late childhood in Qatar

The study sample consisted of 746 girls from different all-girls elementary schools in Doha, Qatar, whose ages ranged between 9-12 years. 40 of whom were selected and who scored high levels in the psychometric stress scale used in the study. The sample was then divided into two groups, the first being experimental of 20 girls, on whom the counseling program was applied. The second group being the control group, also consisting of 20 girls, and on whom the counseling program was not applied. Among the tools used in the study, are a personal data form (prepared by the researcher), draw-a man test for intelligence (by Fouad Abu Hatab and others 1979) anxiety disorder scale for children (prepared by the researcher), C.A.T test (Bellak & Bellak)

As for the statistical methods used: Confirmatory factor analysis for integrity for the anxiety disorders scale, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha to assess stability of the scale, and the Wilcoxon test, Mann-Whitney test, The results of the study indicated the effectiveness of the behavioral cognitive counseling program in reducing anxiety disorders among children in the study sample, and the continuous impact of this program after its application after a month of follow-up. (Al-Attiyah Asma Muhammad Abdullah, 2002, p. 221)

6.2. Second Study: Ikiouane Mourad (2002)

The study was about the techniques of relaxation and stress management techniques related to sports competition among Algerian football players.

Research hypothesis: Relaxation techniques are of great importance in managing the psychological stress related to competitions among Algerian football players, as they work to control the degree of muscle strain, in order to reduce the responses and regression of the optimal vigilance limit. The research sample consisted of 26 players in football who belong to the U23 category.

the researcher instructed the players on relaxation techniques and then distributed a questionnaire for them. In addition, he handed them a self- assessment in the form of a drop test and proceeded to use a psychological scale (a competition behavior test).

Presenting the test:

Self-assessment Network: a drop-test to assess the motivation and general physical state, in addition to temper (measuring emotions and reactions)

Competitive Behavior test: consists of 50 items that aim to measure the players' emotions in addition to their behavior during the competition.

Survey: consists of 22 questions that aim to highlight the significance of relaxation techniques for players, in terms of their emotions and self-control (temper and behavior)

Results of the test:

- The self-assessment network shows that the relaxation techniques have a positive impact on their motivational impulse and physical state.
- The competitive behavior test shows that continuous and persistent training on relaxation techniques positively impact muscle contraction , breathing and controlling of negative thoughts.
- The survey, that consists of 22 questions – curated by the “K2” test – showed significant statistical differences. All the subjects affirmed the positive role of this technique by answering on all questions on the survey with “often” (Ikhouane Mourad, 2002, p. 07)

6.3. Third study: Ben Nedjma Nourredine (2019)

The study aimed to identify the effect of a counseling program during the physical education (P.E.) session in raising the degree of self-confidence. The research sample consisted of middle school pupils (32 pupils) who suffer from self-esteem issues.

The experimental method was used by assigning a control and experimental group. Two tools were also used, namely, the counseling program and a self-esteem scale.

The results showed that the counselling program is indeed effective in raising self-esteem amongst middle school pupils. (Noureddine Ben Nejma, 2010, p.221)

The Practical Chapter :

1. Followed Methodologies

1.1. Scoping Study:

Through our scoping study, we went to the Mujahid Shaikh Mohamed bin Issa sports compound in Dar Al Shyoukh, Djelfa Province, where we had a meeting with the gymnastics coach working there. In order to get closer to her, take notes, and record some of the difficulties she faces when dealing with the players' psychological stress, and to which extent she applies relaxation programs before and after sporting events and competitions.

We have also gotten closer to, directly asked the players and became familiar with the issues they face, and the different counselling services provided to them in order to relieve them from competition pressures. This was done through direct questioning.

1.2. Adopted method To study this research, test its hypotheses and verify their validity, the experimental approach has been used. The latter is one of the most scientific approaches in which the features of the scientific method are clearly represented. It studies the variables related to a specific phenomenon, makes a deliberate change in some elements and control other variables until the causal

relationships between these variables are made clear. (Budawd Abd al-Yaman, Attallah, 2009, p. 136)

1.3. study society and sample

1.3.1. study society

the study sample consists of gymnasts and those involved in the in the sporting compound "Al Mujahid Mohammed Ben Issa in the year 2019, in the commune of Dar Al Shyoukh in Djelfa Province"

1.3.2. study sample: The sample of the current study consists of (28) gymnasts, and those involved in the sporting compound "Al Mujahid Mohammed Ben Issa, in the commune of Dar Al Shyoukh in Djelfa Province",

Sports Competition Anxiety Test (Martens and al) has been applied on the sample that was specifically chosen from gymnasts.

1.3.3. Conditions for choosing a study sample

When choosing a study sample, the following set of conditions must be taken into consideration:

- The sample members of both the control and experimental group must not have prior experience in sporting events.
- The sample members must not be younger than 14 years of age, and older than 18 years of age.
- None of the sample members must have any prior experience in any counselling programs on relaxation techniques.
- The sample members of both the experimental and control groups before applying the proposed counselling program for relaxation techniques.

1.4. Variables Identification :

independent variable: the suggested counselling program for relaxation skill

dependent variable: psychological stress

1.5. Experimental Control:

Experimental control is inherent to some techniques used to eliminate the effects of variables (with the exception of the independent variable) that can affect the dependent variable (Mohamed Hassan Allawi, Osama, 1999, p. 221), and they are:

Sex: The experimental and control groups consisted of males only.

Age: The sample members chosen are aged between 14-18 years. The significance of the differences between the average age of the members of the experimental and control groups has been calculated using the “T” test as the following Table (01) demonstrates:

Table (01) : Significance of the differences between the sample members of the experimental and control groups on the time age variable

experimental group			Control group			“T” Value	Signification level
N	M1	Y1	N	M2	Y2		
14	15.85	1.51	14	15.91	1.33	0.11	Statistically insignificant

Signification level at $2.799 = (0.01)$

$2.058 = (0.05)$

the previous table shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the average scores for the players of the experimental and control groups before applying suggested counselling program for relaxation techniques on the age variable.

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Athletic level: The sample has been chosen from players with the same athletic level.

Athletic specialization: all sample members in both the control and experimental groups are gymnasts, taking into account the specialization of ever player.

Level of psychological stress: A comparison has been made between the average scores of members of the experimental and control groups on the competition pressure scale before applying the proposed relaxation techniques counselling program, using the "T" test, and Table (02) Illustrates the differences between the average scores of the two groups in the pre- measurement of the competition pressure gauge used.

Table (02) the significance of the differences between the control and experimental sample in the degrees of psychological stress in pre-measurement using the T-Test for two separate samples

Variables	Control group		Experimental group		T Value	Sig	Differences
	Arithmet ic Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation			
Cognitive Anxiety	29.21	2.42	29.71	1.63	-0.640	0.528	Statistically Insignificant
Physical Concerns	29.57	1.78	28.64	1.86	1.346	0.190	Statistically Insignificant
Self-Esteem	27.57	2.13	28.35	2.23	-0.949	0.351	Statistically Insignificant
Overall Score For Psychological Stress	86.35	3.71	86.71	3.60	-0.258	0.798	Statistically Insignificant

The above table notes that the arithmetic mean of pre-measuring for the control sample group for cognitive anxiety is 29.21 with a standard deviation of 2.42, whereas the experimental sample has an arithmetic average of 29.71 with a standard deviation of 1.63, and the t-test value is -0.640 with a Signification level of 0.528. This is a value greater than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are not significant.

The arithmetic mean of pre-measuring for the control sample group for physical concerns is 29.57 with a standard deviation of 1.78, whereas the experimental sample, has an arithmetic average of 28.64 with a standard deviation of 1.86, and the t-test value is 1.346 with a Signification level of 0.190. This value is greater than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are not significant.

The arithmetic mean of pre-measuring for the control sample group for self-esteem is 27.57 with a standard deviation of 2.13, whereas the experimental sample, has an arithmetic average of 28.35 with a standard deviation of 2.23, and the t-test value is -0.949 with a Signification level of 0.351. This value is greater than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are not significant.

The arithmetic mean of pre-measuring for the control sample group for psychological stress is 86.35 with a standard deviation of 3.71, whereas the experimental sample, has an arithmetic average of 86.71 with a standard deviation of 3.60, and the t-test value is -0.258 with a Signification level of 0.798. This value is greater than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are not significant.

Which confirms the homogeneity and equality of the control and experimental groups on the scale of psychological stress before applying the suggested counselling program for relaxation techniques.

1.6. Study tools and their scientific foundations

In order to test the validity of the study hypotheses, the following tools were used:

- Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) (Martens and al), that was translated into Arabic by Osama Kamel Rateb (2004, p. 273)
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- The proposed counselling program for relaxation techniques (prepared by the researcher) is: "An organized planned program in the light of scientific foundations consisting of a set of constructive experiences planned and designed in a coherent and organized manner. These experiences include many relaxation activities and counseling sessions, to provide group counseling services. "Which aims to provide assistance to players who suffer from high competition pressure, using a variety of guidance techniques."

2. Exposing, analyzing, and discussing study results:

2.1. Exposing and analyzing results:

Table (03) the differences between the control and experimental sample in the degrees of psychological stress in post-measurement using the T-Test for two separate samples

The above table notes that the arithmetic mean of post-measuring for the control sample group for cognitive anxiety is 28.64 with a standard deviation of 2.37, whereas

Variables	Control Group		Experimental Group		T Value	Sig	Differences
	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation			
Cognitive Anxiety	28.64	2.37	23.78	2.00	5.848	0.000	Statistically Significant
Physical Concerns	29.07	1.89	22.50	3.08	6.791	0.000	Statistically Significant
Self-Esteem	28.50	1.28	22.35	2.56	8.022	0.000	Statistically Significant
Overall Score For Psychological Stress	86.21	4.57	68.64	4.30	10.46	0.000	Statistically Significant

the experimental sample has an arithmetic average of 23.78 with a standard deviation of 2, and the t-test value is 5.848 with a Signification level of 0.000. This value is less than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are significant. **Referring to the arithmetic mean, we find out that the differences are in favor of the experimental group that applied the proposed counselling program.**

The above table notes that the arithmetic mean of post-measuring for the control sample group for physical concerns is 29.07 with a standard deviation of 1.89, whereas the experimental sample has an arithmetic average of 22.50 with a standard deviation of 3.08, and the t-test value is 6.791 with a Signification level of 0.000. This is value is less than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are significant. **Referring to the arithmetic mean, we find**

out that the differences are in favor of the experimental group that applied the proposed counselling program.

The above table notes that the arithmetic mean of post-measuring for the control sample group for self-esteem is 28.50 with a standard deviation of 1.28, whereas the experimental sample has an arithmetic average of 22.35 with a standard deviation of 2.56, and the t-test value is 8.022 with a Signification level of 0.000. This is a value less than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are significant. **Referring to the arithmetic mean, we find out that the differences are in favor of the experimental group that applied the proposed counselling program.**

The above table notes that the arithmetic mean of post-measuring for the control sample group for the overall score for psychological stress is 86.21 with a standard deviation of 4.57, whereas the experimental sample has an arithmetic average of 68.64 with a standard deviation of 4.30, and the t-test value is 10.46 with a Signification level of 0.000. This is a value less than the level of Signification approved in the study $\alpha \leq 0.05$, and from it we deduce that the differences are significant. **Referring to the arithmetic mean, we find out that the differences are in favor of the experimental group that applied the proposed counselling program.**

From the previous results, the hypothesis that states “**there are statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between the arithmetic mean scores of the players of the control and experimental groups, in the level of psychological stress after applying the suggested counselling program in favor of the experimental group**” is validated

2.2. Discussing study results:

The hypothesis is related to the **significant differences between the arithmetic mean scores of the players of the control and experimental groups, in the level of**

psychological stress after applying (post-measurement) the suggested counselling program in favor of the experimental group

It was found through the results of Table (03) that the value of (T) is statistically significant in relation to Sports Competition Anxiety Test, meaning, there are significant fundamental differences that rose to the level of signification between the average scores of the players of the control and experimental groups in post-measurement, in favor of the players of the experimental group, whose level of the psychological stress decreased compared to the scores of the control group players.

These differences are due to the proposed counselling program for relaxation techniques, which has proven to be very effective in facing psychological stress. These results indicate that although the program is short and took a short time to apply, it has proven its effectiveness in facing competition pressure among players in the experimental group.

These results explain that the proposed counseling program for relaxation techniques works to develop the skills required for continuous preparation for sporting events, all of which would reduce cognitive anxiety and physical concerns and increase self-esteem.

The suggested sports counselling program also used the group guidance method among other methods, as is confirmed by (Noureddine Ben Nejma, 2019 study)

The researcher believes that the application of counselling programs related to relaxation, and are organized and built on scientific grounds, have effectiveness in addressing and reducing psychological stress in general, and coping with them during sporting events and competitions in particular.

After applying the suggested sports counselling program, which includes a set of counselling and relaxation session, in which guided services were provided, helped reduce the psychological stress level and increase self-esteem. Martens (1967) was

able to distinguish between cognitive stress and physical concerns and self-esteem as essential dimensions to sports competition anxiety, which in its turn had led the players of the experimental group to cope with their psychological stress.

3. Findings and suggestions :

3.1. Findings:

The current study showed that the counselling program for relaxation skill has a positive effect in facing and addressing psychological stress by reducing cognitive anxiety, physical concerns and increasing self-esteem among gymnasts.

Based on the findings of the experimental method used and within the sample of the study, based on the objectives established in the research, the following conclusions have been reached:

- Preparing a psychomotor counseling program designed to deal with psychological stress, using relaxation techniques.
- No statistically significant differences have been found between the average scores of the experimental and control groups players in the level of psychological stress before applying the suggested counselling program.
- significant statistical differences have been found between the average scores of the experimental and control groups players in the level of psychological stress after applying the suggested counselling program, in favor of the experimental group.
- Applying the suggested counselling program for relaxation techniques leads to coping with psychological stress for gymnasts.

3.2. Suggestions:

Through our experience in the current study, we present the following suggestions:

- The necessity of conducting similar studies in this regard that are concerned with psychological phenomena among players, especially those with additional competitions and pressure.
- Prioritizing counseling programs that address various mental disorders common to athletes of different age groups.
- Regulation of psychological tests to measure the uneven degrees of psychological phenomena among athletes and training psychologists to treat them.

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