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The Examination of Sports Injury and Career Anxiety Levels of Football Players

Onur SARI[1A], Hülya CİN[2B], Cosmin George DAMİAN[3C]

[1] *Department of Sport Management, Dumlupınar University Faculty of Sport Science, Kütahya, Turkey.*
[2] *Department of Sport Management, Kastamonu University Faculty of Sport Sciences, Kastamonu, Türkey.*
[3] *Department of Physical Education and Sport, Ovidius University Faculty of Sport Sciences, Romania.*

Address Correspondence to O. SARI: e-mail: onur.sari@dpu.edu.tr

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A: Orcid ID0000-0001-6539-6278 B: Orcid ID: 0000-0002-8021-3449 C: Orcid ID: 0009-0004-9988-093X

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between sport injury anxiety and career anxiety of amateur football players in Turkey. The study group of the research consists of 392 Amateur football players, 59 women, and 333 men, who are actively participating in the competitions of the Turkish Football Federation in the 2021-2022 season. In this study, the "Sport Injury Anxiety Scale (SIAS)" and the "Career Anxiety Scale (CAS)" were used as data collection tools. The study used descriptive statistical methods (percentage, frequency, mean, standard deviation), independent sample T-test, One-Way ANOVA analysis, and Pearson Correlation to analyze the data. Depending on the findings there was a significant difference according to the being injured before and league variables in the SIAS mean scores of the participants, but there was no significant difference in the variable of family income in the SIAS mean scores of the participants. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found in the variables of family income and league in the CAS mean scores of the participants. And no statistically significant difference was found in the CAS mean scores of the participants according to the being injured before variable. The results of the correlation analysis showed that the mean scores of SIAS were in a significant, positive, and moderate relationship with the mean scores of CAS. In conclusion, it has been revealed that as the sports injury anxiety level of amateur football players increases, their career anxiety levels also increase.
Keywords: Football, İnjury, Career, Anxiety

Özet
Futbolcuların Spor Sakatlığı ve Kariyer Kaygı Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki amatör futbolcuların spor yaralanması kaygısı ile kariyer kaygısı arasındaki ilişkisini incelemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2021-2022 sezonunda Türkiye Futbol Federasyonu müsabakalarına aktif olarak katılan 59 kadın ve 333 erkek olmak üzere 392 amatör futbolcu oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak "Spor Yaralanmaları Kaygı Ölçeği (SYKÖ)" ve "Kariyer Kaygısı Ölçeği (KKÖ)" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde tanımlayıcı istatistiksel yöntemler (yüzde, frekans, ortalama, standart sapma), bağımsız örneklem T-testi, Tek Yönlü ANOVA analizi ve Pearson Korelasyonu kullanılmıştır. Bulgulara göre

katılımcıların SYKÖ ortalama puanlarında daha önce sakatlık geçirme değişkenine ve lig değişkenine göre anlamlı bir farklılık bulunurken, katılımcıların SYKÖ ortalama puanlarında aile geliri değişkenine göre anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamıştır. Öte yandan, katılımcıların KKÖ ortalama puanlarında aile geliri ve lig değişkenlerine göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmuştur. Daha önce sakatlık geçirme değişkenine göre katılımcıların KKÖ ortalama puanlarında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık bulunamamıştır. Korelasyon analizi sonuçları SYKÖ ortalama puanlarının KKÖ ortalama puanları arasında anlamlı, pozitif ve orta düzeyde bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Sonuç olarak, amatör futbolcuların spor yaralanması kaygı düzeyleri arttıkça kariyer kaygı düzeylerinin de arttığı ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Futbol, Yaralanma, Kariyer, Kaygı

INTRODUCTION

"Football is my life" (23), "Football is one of the most beautiful things in the world" (13) we often come across such statements in our daily lifes. Football is one of the most popular sports branches in the world, with millions of players and billions of fans (24). Because of its popularity, football is not just a game for many people, it plays an important role in the daily life of them. For example, some people plan their daily lives according to their team's match schedules (27).

Besides the interest of the fans, football has become a major economic field. Players' salaries have grown exponentially, their TV contracts have generated income on a scale unimaginable just a few years ago, many football fields have been completely rebuilt, and the commercial sponsorship and sales profile has increased above normal. However, some clubs have become companies. Football has become a commercial area, making headlines regularly, and newspapers devote pages to the financial aspects of sports (1). The fact that football has become such a big economic factor also affects the income of the players. Especially in men's football, players can make a living by playing football. For example, the famous Argentinian football player Messi earned 130 million dollars from football between May 2021 and May 2022 (33).

Women's football has also developed rapidly in the last two decades, transforming from being a purely amateur sport to a professional sport that offers economic capital for female football players all over the world (19), nevertheless, the financial income of female football players is lower than the income of male football players (17). As an example, the female football player Giulia Gwinn, who plays for the German national team, earns $ 8200 per month, which makes an average of $ 100,000 annually (4).

As in every sports branch that requires physical contact, injuries occur also in football. While some injuries can heal easily, some injuries can force athletes to end their careers. Among the most common injuries in football are knee injuries (22); (28). As some injuries can be serious, it is assumed to be normal for some footballers to have anxiety to be injured. Demir (9) observed that the anxiety levels of injured football players are higher in sports injury anxiety and disappointment compared to the non-injured players. In addition, the support of the social environment of an athlete is very important in cases of injuries (7).

It is assumed that for athletes who are living with football, it is very important to play regularly without getting injured because serious injuries can negatively affect their football careers. In this case, the career anxieties of injured football players may arise. In this context, this study aims to investigate the relationship between sport injury anxiety and career anxiety of amateur football players in Turkey.

METHOD

Research Model

The correlational survey model, a quantitative research technique, was employed in this study. This model seeks to identify the presence of covariance between two or more variables (18).

Participants

The sample group consists of 392 amateur football players who are actively competing in the Turkish Football Federation championships in the 2021–2022 season, including 59 women and 333 men. The convenience sampling approach was used to choose the study group. Members of the target population who

fit specific practical requirements, such as being conveniently accessible, are included in the sampling process and are suitable for the research's objectives (12).

Data Collection Tools

To collect data, three data collection tools were used. The first tool included personal questions like family income, league level, and injury history. The other data collection tools are presented below.

Sport Injury Anxiety Scale (SIAS)

The "Sport Injury Anxiety Scale" was developed by Rex and Metzler (2016) and adapted into Turkish by Caz et.al (6). This scale consists of 19 items, and 6 sub-dimensions, and is a 5-point Likert type. The sub-dimensions are anxiety associated with (a) loss of athleticism, (b) being perceived as weak, (c) experiencing pain, (d) loss of social support, (e) letting down important others, (f) reinjury, and (g) having an impaired self-image.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the subscales are 0.724 for the anxiety of loss of athleticism, 0.645 for the anxiety of being perceived weak, 0.780 for experiencing pain, 0.876 for letting down important others, 0.608 for reinjury anxiety, and 0.812 for the anxiety of losing social support. Accordingly, it was determined that the scale and its sub-factors had a high level of internal consistency and therefore reliability (3).

Career Anxiety Scale (CAS)

"Career Anxiety Scale" which was developed by Gündüz and Yılmaz (16) was also used in our study. The "Career Anxiety Scale" consists of 14 items and is in a 5-point Likert type. This scale has 2 sub-dimensions; career anxiety for family effect and career anxiety for career choice. In the original scale, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for career anxieties because of the family was found to be 0.742, and for career concerns about career choice was found to be 0.797 (32).

Data Collection And Analysis

Online data collection was done using Google Forms. The data were analyzed and the calculated values were discovered using the SPSS 21 statistical package application. It was determined that the data for each independent variable displayed a normal distribution based on the kurtosis and skewness values that were collected. Descriptive tables for the variables were made using frequency and percentage analyses. The Cronbach Alpha value was used to assess the dependability of the research data. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this research was founded 0.88 for the whole scale. After that T-Test, One-Way ANOVA analysis, and Pearson Correlation were used to analyze data. The level of significance was taken as 0.05.

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Scales	Number of Items	N	X	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max	Cronbach Alpha
SIAS	14	392	2.32	0.79	0.03	0.18	1	4	0.87
CAS	19	292	2.24	0.54	0.22	-0.3	1	5	0.91

Table 1 demonstrates that the arithmetic mean of the individuals' scores on the SIAS and CAS is 2.32 and 2.24. The participants' mean scores on the SIAS and CIAS have standard deviations of 0.79 and 0.54. The participants' lowest and highest scores on the SIAS were 1 and 4, while their greatest and lowest scores on the CAS were also 1 and 4. The SIAS's internal consistency according to Cronbach's alpha is 0.87 in this study, while the CAS' internal consistency is 0.91.

Table 2. T-Test Results By The Being Injured Before Status Of The Participants

Scales	Being injured before	N	X	Sd	t	p
SIAS	Yes	230	2.34	0.55	4.19	**0.000***
	No	162	2.11	0.50		
CAS	Yes	230	2.35	0.81	1.02	0.306
	No	162	2.27	0.77		

*p < 0.05.

According to the been injured before variable, there is a statistically significant difference in the participants' SIAS mean scores, as shown by the T-test findings for independent samples in Table 2 (t=4.19; p<0.01). The mean scores of the participants who had prior injuries are greater than those of the participants who had no prior injuries. It can be claimed that athletes who have previously been harmed fear getting hurt during sports more than athletes who have not.

The T-test results showed also that the CAS mean scores of the participants did not differ statistically according to the being injured before variable. (t=1.02; p>0.05).

Table 3. ANOVA Results of The Family Income Variable

Scales	Groups	Variables	N	X	Sd	F	p	Difference
SIAS	Family Income	Low	120	2.29	0.54	1.04	0.355	-
		Middle	258	2.23	0.53			
		High	14	2.11	0.67			
CAS	Family Income	Low	120	2.47	0.76	3.31	**0.037***	Low > Middle, High
		Middle	258	2.25	0.80			
		High	14	2.29	0.91			

*p < 0.05.

According to the ANOVA results by the family income variable shown in Table 3, the participants' CAS mean scores varied significantly depending on the family income variable (F=3.31; p<0.05), One of the post-hoc tests, LSD, was employed to determine whether groups had significant differences after a one-way ANOVA. It was shown that the individuals with low family income had higher mean scores than those with medium and high family incomes. Or, to put it another way, professional worry rises when family income levels fall.

It was also revealed that there was no statistical difference in the SIAS mean scores of the participants according to the family income variable (F=1.04; p>0.05).

Table 4. ANOVA Results Of The League Variable

Scales	Groups	Variables	N	X	Sd	F	p	Difference
SIAS	Leagues	Youth	170	2.17	0.55	2.83	**0.038***	Youth < Regional and super amateur (men) and Women's leagues
		Regional and super amateur (men)	115	2.32	0.54			
		1. and 2. amateur (men)	62	2.22	0.49			
		Women's leagues	45	2.37	0.53			
CAS	Leagues	Youth	170	2.12	0.84	6.10	**0.000***	Youth < Regional and super amateur (men), 1. and 2. amateur (men) and Women's leagues
		Regional and super amateur (men)	115	2.46	0.73			
		1. and 2. amateur (men)	62	2.49	0.67			
		Women's leagues	45	2.44	0.78			

*p < 0.05.

Table 4 displays the football players' ANOVA findings by league variable. The findings show that the SIAS scores are significantly different (F= 2.83; p<0.05). One of the post-hoc tests, LSD, was employed to identify the locations where significant differences between the groups were found after one-way ANOVA. The participants' mean scores in the women's and men's regional super amateur leagues were both higher than their respective participants' mean scores in the youth league. Finally, there is an increase in sport injury fear as the league level rises.

As shown in Table 4, there is also a significant difference in the CAS mean scores of the participants according to the league variable (F= 6.10; p<0.05). Participants in the regional super amateur men's leagues, women's leagues, and 1. and 2. amateur men's leagues had mean scores that were higher than those of participants in the young league. As a result, it may be claimed that career anxiety increases as the league level rises.

Table 5. Pearson correlation results of the mean scores of scales.

Scales	SIAS	CAS
SIAS	1	0.430**
CAS	0.430**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000*	0.000*
N	392	392

*p < 0.05.

The relationship between the football players' career anxiety levels and their sport injury anxiety levels was examined using correlation analysis. As demonstrated in Table 5, the analysis findings indicated that there was a moderately significant, moderate, and positive correlation between career anxiety and sports injury anxiety (r=0.43, p<0.01). In conclusion, football players' career anxiety rises along with their fear of sports-related injuries.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When the sports injury anxiety mean scores of the participants were examined according to the variable injured before, the participants who were injured before had higher mean scores than the participants who were not injured before. Cassidy (5) found out that varsity athletes who had been injured at least three times had a substantially higher score on pain-related anxiety than athletes who had not been injured before. Tanyeri (30) conducted a study on athletes who were interested in different sports branches. He compared participants who had a sports injury before and those who were not injured ever. In his study, a significant statistical

difference was found in favor of those who had a sports injury before. Considering the findings obtained in our study and some findings in the literature, it can be said that athletes who experience sports injuries are more concerned about sports injuries than those who do not.

There are also studies in the literature that contradict our study. Güler (15) found that there was no statistically significant difference in the previous injury statuses of sports science faculty students. An explanation of this different result could be because the study group was different from our study. Due to the career anxiety mean scores of the participants according to the injured before variable, there was no statistically significant difference. Wolanin et al. (31) examined that athletes who were injured had higher mean scores for depression and anxiety than athletes who were not injured before.

When the career anxiety mean scores of the participants were examined according to the family income variable, The participants with a low family income had higher mean scores than the participants with medium and high family income. There are findings in the literature that support our study. In a study conducted by Kula and Saraç (20) on university students, it is seen that as the family income level of the families increases, the anxiety score averages of the students decrease. There are also findings in the literature that contradict our study. Ekin and Bülbül (11) conducted a study on badminton players and they did not find any differences who were depending on the average family income according to career anxiety. Çalı and Doğar (8) did also not find any variables depending on the average family income according to career anxiety. Though studies supporting and opposing our study exist in the literature, this situation could be explained by the fact that the studies had different study groups.

According to the findings of our study, the mean scores of the participants playing in the regional, super amateur men's leagues and the women's leagues were higher than the mean scores of the participants playing in the youth league. As the league level rises, there is an increase in sport injury anxiety. This can be explained by the fact that especially men's football has turned into an industrial area (10). Changes in the structure of the sports world and the economic and social environment had an impact on the financial sustainability of many amateur sport clubs in the world (2). Another explanation for this situation may be the age difference between the youth and senior leagues. Namlı and Buzdağli (25) revealed that as the age of the participants increased, their sports injury anxiety increased also. They explain this with the fact that healing slows down with age.

The findings obtained that the mean scores of the participants playing in the regional, super amateur men's leagues, in the women's leagues, and the 1. and 2. amateur men's leagues were higher than the mean scores of the participants playing in the youth league. As a result, it can be said that as the league level rises, there is an increase in career anxiety. The higher the league level, the higher the performance level. Therefore, when the desired performance is not shown in higher leagues, the probability of being out of the game may be higher. This could explain the career anxiety levels of the participants playing in higher leagues. Especially in the case of women's football, according to Hjelm (17) "conditions of amateur sports" are valid for the vast majority of female football players. Female football players have to acquire another profession besides football. This may explain their career anxiety levels.

The correlation analysis results showed a significant, positive, and moderate relationship between sports injury anxiety and career anxiety. It can be said that as the sports injury anxiety levels of football players increase, there is an increase in their career anxiety levels. Injury is a very serious issue in the sports world. Football players may encounter the situation of quitting football in case of serious injuries (14); (21); (28); (29). It can be said that serious injuries can end football careers. This situation can explain the relationship between sport injury anxiety and career anxiety.

In conclusion, it has been revealed that as the sports injury anxiety level of amateur football players increase, their career anxiety levels also increase.

This result indicates that factors influencing athlete performance and psychology are interrelated. For amateur football players, sports injuries can play a significant role not only in terms of physical health but also concerning their career and psychological well-being. Besides that, recognizing the importance of addressing both physical and psychological aspects of injuries is essential in promoting the long-term success and well-

being of athletes. Through comprehensive support systems, sports organizations can help athletes effectively cope with injuries, manage career anxieties, and foster a positive and thriving athletic environment.

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