

Sports Future Anxiety and its Relationship with Causal Attribution Types among some Combat Athletes

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Introduction

Sports achievements not only depend on both physical structure and skill improvement but also on other psychological factors such as motivations, thinking, and anxiety and so on.

Anxiety is considered to be one of the main factors affecting a human character. Anxiety has always been a rich topic for researchers in psychological sciences because of its vital role in most psychological problems. Sports competitions are considered one of the basic sources of stress. Being both an evaluation and indicator of a player's abilities, Moreover, These contests are characterized with a feeling of fear of failure, lack of confidence, and inability to

control the various factors of success and winning either material or abstract rewards (10)(4).

When anxiety accompanies performance, and exceeds the normal, it hinders and disturbs the sports performance. Also, the falling of anxiety level down the normal leads to a feeling of indifference to face the situation. In both cases-whether up or down the normal, anxiety is considered as a negative element in the competitive sports situation.

Othman (2001) points out-referring to Sigmund Freud-that anxiety is a case of severe, ambiguous fear that befalls a person causing him/her a lot of sadness, upset and pain. Anxiety means disturbance

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/annoyance. A worried person is always pessimistic, psychologically disturbed and hesitant; he also lacks self-confidence, seems unable to make decisions or even concentrate on tasks (11). The American Association of Psychology defines anxiety as "being a feeling of fear, worry, or stress resulting from unknown, imprecise, ill-defined coming danger. The same physiological changes accompany both anxiety and fear (9).

The Analytical approach maintains that anxiety is a warning signal of danger that is, letting out the pent-up emotions from the unconsciousness to the consciousness, which, In turn, urges the Ego's defences to face this danger (17). The Behaviourists, however, consider anxiety as an acquired/learned behaviour from the environment in which a person lives in terms of positive and negative reinforcements. Behaviourists do not believe in the

unconscious motives, but they explain anxiety in terms of action-response classical conditioning, that is, the association of a new motive with an old one. The new motive becomes able to recall the old motive's response (7). This means that anxiety is an acquired, conditioned response of fear; and the individual is unaware of its normal, original impetus (6). Whereas Humanists see anxiety as fear of the future, and that each future event bears a threat to one's existence and humanity. Anxiety stems from what an individual expects to happen and not from the individual's past (6).

Therefore, we can say that the Existential approach is the future perspective-compared with the Analytical and Behaviourist approaches-concerning anxiety; it indicates that a human usually looks forward to the future longing for achieving his hopes and ambitions, and thus what worries him most is the failure of not fulfilling these hopes.

The cognitive theory, however, posits that anxiety is associated with the individual's inability to process his/her information. Moreover, it supposes that there are cognitive structures controlling anxiety. The cognitive approach focuses on the relationship between cognition, behaviour and response when defining anxiety as they are inseparable. Beck maintains that painful experiences during childhood form the dark and negative outlook towards the Self, the world and the future. Whereas Freeman and Mark Reineke (1995) believe that anxiety is the result of cognitive distortion in its positive and negative form (8).

Zaleski (1996) points out that the cognitive factor is the basic element behind the feeling of future anxiety. He defends his hypothesis on the basis of some concepts such as Atkinson's concept of fearing failure, Beck's concept of depression, Telck's fear of fate (Existentialism), Bandura's concept of Self- efficacy ,

Rotter's concept of control centre, and Eysenk's cognitive theory of anxiety (17) (21).

Pioneers of cognitive theory (e.g. Bandura and Aron Beck) believe that the origin of anxiety is the cognitive distortion, and misperception of the Self and the future.

In addition, anxiety results from an individual's way of perceiving and interpreting events. An individual's own ideas shape his/her reactions; and in light of his thinking content, anxiety has a negative soliloquy with the Self. The person usually interprets the real world with hidden feeling of danger. Besides, the perception of information about the Self and the future are thought of as a source of danger, weakness and decrease of Self-efficacy. This is what Bandura's theory calls the cognitive trend to anxiety (15). Combat games are individual sport in which the participant player has all the responsibility of victory and defeat. Thus, there is a great psychological

burden on the athlete contrary to the team sports.

Attribution theories postulate that individuals are motivated to understand and interpret their surrounding world (Eggen & Kauchak, 2004). Failure and success experiences are among the most important things that an individual seeks to understand and interpret. Schunk (2008) emphasizes that the way an individual attributes his/her failure or success plays a crucial role in his/her motivation and performance; an individual usually attributes his/her failure or success to factors such as ability, exerted effort, difficulty of task and luck (5), (16).

Negative interpretations are related to false beliefs. For example, it is believed that a good act is unattainable in life and that bad things are unavoidable whatever an individual does. This, of course, leads to such a fall in performance and innovation rate that the person becomes unable to solve his/her

problems logically. In turn, the self-efficiency rate decreases, and the anxiety rate increases.

Weiner (1994) maintains that there are three dimensions for causal interpretation: First, locus of control: it is related to the learner's realization of the cause locus. It can be internal like when a person attributes his failure or success to ability or effort; or it may be external as the case when the person attributes his success/failure to luck or difficulty of task. Second, stability: for example, when the individual attributes his/her success/failure to stable factors such as ability, or unstable factors such as effort. Third, controllability: it refers to the case in which the attributed factor is controllable- e.g. effort and planning- or uncontrollable such as luck, anxiety and partiality (20).

Because the cognitive theory supposes the existence of cognitive structures controlling anxiety, and also emphasizes a relationship between cognition, reaction

and behaviour, we cannot separate the individual's beliefs from his future behaviour and performance. In sport, if an athlete believes that he/she is defeated because of lack of abilities, he is not expected to win in the future. Whereas if he blames the defeat on a controllable factor such as effort, he/she is expected to exert much more effort in the future and, then, to win as he knows that effort is under his control. As the causal attribution is a cognitive constituent, the two researchers maintain that causal attribution can be an indicator of the sports future anxiety which results from the cognitive distortion, thinking badly of the Self, and the way an individual perceives and interprets events. Thus, this study focuses on the various types of attribution that characterize combat games athletes and these types' relationship with the future anxiety rate.

Aims of the study

This study aimed to:

- Investigate the level of sports future anxiety among the combat athletes (fencing, wrestling, taekwondo).
- Explore the types of causal attribution characterizing combat athletes (fencing, wrestling, taekwondo).
- Study the differences among athletes (fencing, wrestling, taekwondo) at each level of sports future anxiety and the types of causal attribution.
- Investigate the relationship between sports future anxiety and the types of causal attribution among athletes of fencing, wrestling and taekwondo.

Material and Methods

Data collection

1- The scale of sports future expectation anxiety was designed by Abdul Aziz Abdul -Mageed, Mustafa Omeera, Nibal Badr (2008). This scale consists of (42) phrases that measure (3) basic components. Each group of phrases measures a specific dimension.

The total scale score is (126) and its minimum score is (42). The scale has the following components:

- The first component: the athlete's character properties. It includes the following dimensions:

- Susceptibility to excitability

- Pessimism tendency

- Self-confidence

- The second component: the sports environment. It includes the following dimensions:

- The athlete's group/team

- The administrative and technical authorities

- Team members

- Family

- Spectators

- Mass media

- Sports preparations

- The third component: Competition result. It includes the following:

- Injury

- Revenues of professionalism

- Negative experiences (1).

2- The scale of Causal attribution was designed by

Mohamed Hassan Allawy (1998). It consists of (32) items and includes (4) dimensions. Each dimension includes (8) phrases as follows:

- Attribution of winning

- Attribution of defeat

- Attribution of good performance

- Attribution of poor performance (2).

Study method

Taking into account the nature of the study, the researchers used the descriptive method.

Participants

The study sample included (57) combats players, (12) for survey study, (45) for basic study of registered players in the sports federations for 2012/2013 season, (12) fencers, (16) wrestlers, (17) Taekwondo players. They are chosen according to the selectively intended and classified method from high standard players representing the following clubs (El Maady, El Zohour, Nasr City, Helwan and El Moassasa).

Procedures

Survey study

The researchers conducted a survey in a sample of (12) players from the same community, but who were not included in the study population between December 2 and December 9, 2012. For future anxiety items, the validity coefficient ranged from 0.576 to 0.876, and the reliability coefficient ranged from 0.656 to 0.963.

For causal attribution items, the validity coefficient ranged from 0.577 to 0.869, and the reliability coefficient ranged from 0.877 to 0.949.

Basic study:

The researchers conducted the scale of sports future expectation anxiety and the scale of Causal attribution in the basic study sample between December 16 and December 20, 2012.

Results

Measurements and analysis showed that the level of sports future anxiety of the athlete character properties component rises among the Taekwondo players than those

of fencing and wrestling at the axis of excitability, and goes down among wrestlers at the axis of pessimistic tendency and self-confidence than those of taekwondo and fencing, in the component of sports environment, the sports future anxiety level is nearly equal at all axes among the combat players (fencing, wrestling and Taekwondo). In the component of competition result, the sports future anxiety goes down at the axes of injury and negative experiences among fencers, if compared with those of wrestling and Taekwondo (Figure 1). Further analysis revealed that the attribution of winning and good performance is internal-oriented among combat athletes (fencing, wrestling, and taekwondo), whereas the dimension of defeat attribution is internal-oriented among fencers, and external among wrestlers and taekwondo players. As for the poor performance dimension, it is internal-oriented among those of taekwondo (Figure 2).

Analysis revealed, statistically significant differences between Fencers, wrestlers and Taekwondo players concerning attribution defeat, Susceptibility to excitability, Pessimistic tendency, self-confidence, character properties component, the athlete's team, injury, competition results component and future anxiety (Table 1).

These differences between fencers and wrestlers in favour of fencers regarding attribution defeat, character properties, self-confidence and favour of the wrestlers concerning injury, competition results, there are also differences between fencers and Taekwondo players in favour of fencers in terms of attribution defeat, and in favour of Taekwondo players regarding excitability, injury, competition results and future anxiety. Moreover, there

are also differences between wrestlers and Taekwondo players in favour of Taekwondo players with regard to Susceptibility to excitability, pessimistic tendency, self-confidence, character properties, the athlete's team, future anxiety (Table 2).

For fencers, there is a statistical positive correlation between character properties and attribution defeat, and also there is a statistical positive correlation between sports environment and attribution bad performance (Table 3). For wrestlers, there is a negative correlation between competition results and attribution poor performance (Table 4). And for Taekwondo players, there is a positive correlation between competition results and attribution defeat (Table 5).

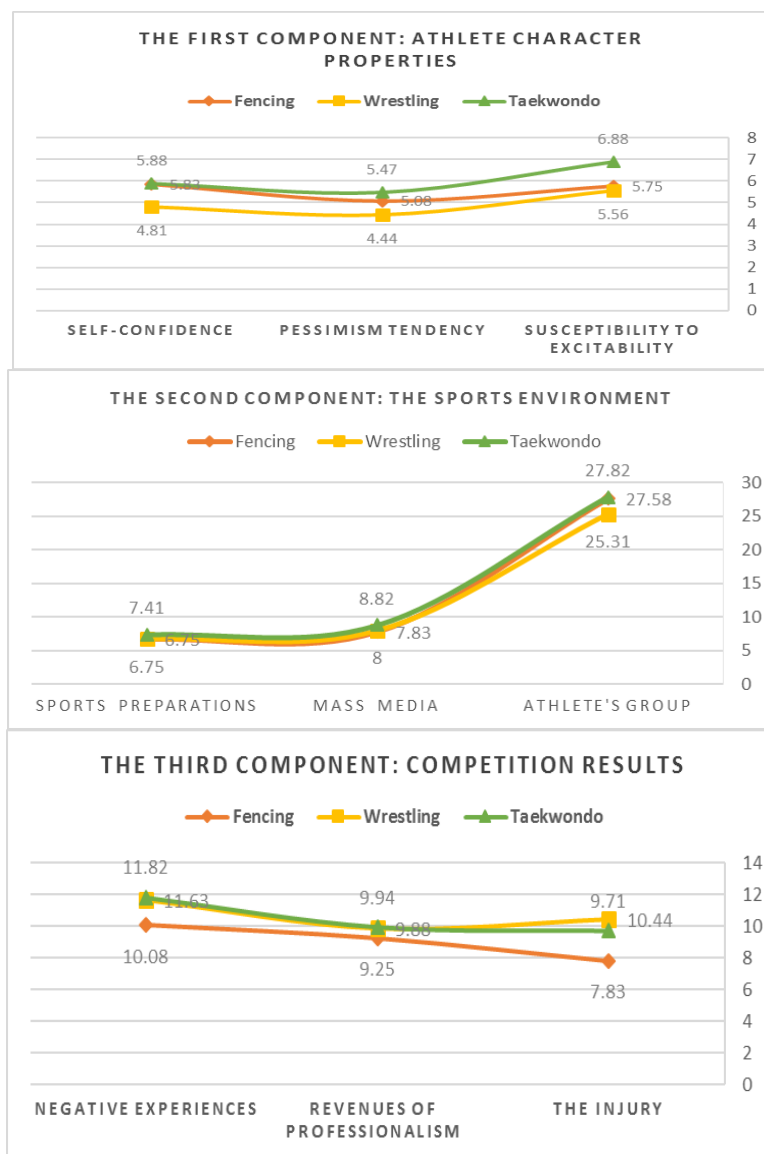


Figure 1
Level of the components of Sports Future Anxiety among
Combat Athletes (fencing, wrestling, Taekwondo)

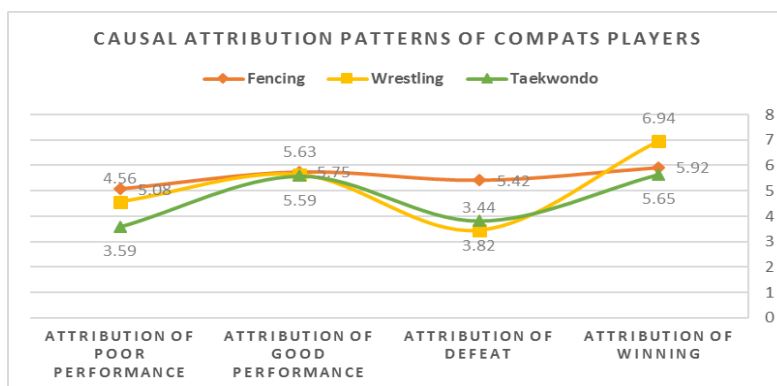


Figure 2
Types of Causal Attribution Characterizing Combat Sports (fencing, wrestling, and Taekwondo)

Table (1)

The differences between combat players regarding future anxiety

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Susceptibility to excitability	Between Groups	16.492	2	8.246	6.419	.004
	Within Groups	53.952	42	1.285		
	Total	70.444	44			
Pessimistic tendency	Between Groups	8.911	2	4.455	3.278	.048
	Within Groups	57.089	42	1.359		
	Total	66.000	44			
Self-confidence	Between Groups	11.376	2	5.688	3.990	.026
	Within Groups	59.869	42	1.425		
	Total	71.244	44			
Character properties component	Between Groups	96.637	2	48.319	7.512	.002
	Within Groups	270.163	42	6.432		
	Total	366.800	44			
The athlete's group	Between Groups	60.375	2	30.188	3.419	.042

Follow Table (1)
The differences between combat players regarding future anxiety

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Within Groups	370.825	42	8.829		
	Total	431.200	44			
Mass Media	Between Groups	8.663	2	4.331	1.245	.298
	Within Groups	146.137	42	3.479		
	Total	154.800	44			
Sports preparations	Between Groups	4.632	2	2.316	.960	.391
	Within Groups	101.368	42	2.414		
	Total	106.000	44			
Sports environment component	Between Groups	131.655	2	65.827	2.301	.113
	Within Groups	1201.545	42	28.608		
	Total	1333.200	44			
Injury	Between Groups	48.066	2	24.033	11.584	.000
	Within Groups	87.134	42	2.075		
	Total	135.200	44			
Professionalism revenue	Between Groups	3.859	2	1.929	1.330	.275
	Within Groups	60.941	42	1.451		
	Total	64.800	44			
Negative experiences	Between Groups	24.107	2	12.054	2.468	.097
	Within Groups	205.137	42	4.884		
	Total	229.244	44			
Competition results component	Between Groups	182.405	2	91.202	9.751	.000
	Within Groups	392.839	42	9.353		
	Total	575.244	44			
Future anxiety	Between Groups	568.281	2	284.141	3.893	.028
	Within Groups	3065.496	42	72.988		
	Total	3633.778	44			

Table (2)
The differences between combat players regarding causal attribution types

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attribution win	Between Groups	14.841	2	7.421	2.948	.063
	Within Groups	105.737	42	2.518		
	Total	120.578	44			
Attribution defeat	Between Groups	29.120	2	14.560	4.656	.015
	Within Groups	131.325	42	3.127		
	Total	160.444	44			
Attribution good performance	Between Groups	.193	2	.097	.041	.959
	Within Groups	98.118	42	2.336		
	Total	98.311	44			
Attribution poor performance	Between Groups	17.028	2	8.514	2.400	.103
	Within Groups	148.972	42	3.547		
	Total	166.000	44			

Table (3)
The significance of differences between combat players regarding future anxiety and causal attribution types.

Variable	sport	Mean	wrestling	Fencing	Taekwondo
Attribution defeat	wrestling	3.44		-1.97917 [*]	-.38603
	Fencing	5.42			1.59314 [*]
	Taekwondo	3.82			
Susceptibility to excitability	wrestling	5.56		-.188-	-1.320- [*]
	Fencing	5.75			-1.132- [*]
	Taekwondo	6.88			
Pessimistic tendency	wrestling	4.44		-.646-	-1.033- [*]
	Fencing	5.08			-.387-
	Taekwondo	5.47			
Self-confidence	wrestling	4.81		-1.021- [*]	-1.070- [*]
	Fencing	5.83			-.049-
	Taekwondo	5.88			
Athlete character properties	wrestling	14.81		-1.85417 [*]	-3.42279 [*]
	Fencing	16.67			-1.56863
	Taekwondo	18.24			

Follow Table (3)
The significance of differences between combat players regarding future anxiety and causal attribution types.

Variable	sport	Mean	wrestling	Fencing	Taekwondo
Athlete's group	wrestling	25.31		-2.271-	-2.511-*
	Fencing	27.58			-.240-
	Taekwondo	27.82			
Injury	wrestling	10.44		2.604*	.732
	Fencing	7.83			-1.873-*
	Taekwondo	9.71			
Competition results	wrestling	31.94		4.77083*	.46691
	Fencing	27.17			-4.30392*
	Taekwondo	31.47			
Future anxiety	wrestling	86.8125		.81250	-6.95221-*
	Fencing	86.0000			-7.76471-*
	Taekwondo	93.7647			

Table (4)
Fencers' correlation matrix

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Athlete character properties	Sports environment	Competition Results	future anxiety
Attribution win	5.9167	1.67649	-.137	.416	.229	.283
Attribution defeat	5.4167	1.50504	.596*	.574	.092	.475
Attribution good performance	5.7500	1.95982	-.149	.325	.234	.231
Attribution poor performance	5.0833	1.44338	.286	.649*	.447	.571

Table (5)
Wrestlers' correlation matrix

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Athlete character properties	Sports environment	Competition Results	future anxiety
Attribution win	6.9375	.68007	.034	.240	.087	.208
Attribution defeat	3.4375	1.78769	-.425	.323	-.130	.044
Attribution good performance	5.6250	1.31022	.128	.314	-.243	.189
Attribution poor performance	4.5625	1.99896	-.431	-.200	-.543*	-.456

Table (6)
Taekwondo players' correlation matrix

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Athlete character properties	Sports environment	Competition Results	future anxiety
Attribution win	5.6471	2.05977	-.251	.081	.203	.042
Attribution defeat	3.8235	1.91165	-.219	.155	.590*	.288
Attribution good performance	5.5882	1.37199	-.123	.101	-.026	.003
Attribution poor performance	3.5882	2.03282	-.376	.227	.180	.075

Discussion

Figure (1) shows that Fencers achieved a mean level in all the components of the future anxiety, while wrestlers achieved a low level of future anxiety with regard to the character properties component and a high level in the competition results. However, Taekwondo players achieved a mean level of future anxiety in both the components of character properties and sports

environment and a high level in competition results.

It is also obvious from figure (2) that combat athletes (Wrestling, Fencing and Taekwondo) are all equal in the attribution direction regarding the attribution to win and attribution good performance dimensions because they were all in the internal direction. However, when it comes to the

dimension of attribution defeat, the attribution direction was internal in the case of fencers and external in the case of both wrestling and Taekwondo. Concerning the attribution bad performance, the attribution direction was internal in the case of Fencers, wrestlers and external in the case of Taekwondo players. Thus, all the combat athletes agree on attributing success to internal factors such as ability or the exerted effort, while in the attribution failure, the attribution direction fluctuates between the internal and external directions. Allaway (2002) points out that a large number of players or sports teams in all sorts of sports activities tend to attribute their success to the internal personal factors. However, they attribute failure to the external factors or the environmental ones (3).

Statistically, table (1) and (3) shows that there are differences between wrestlers and both the Fencers and Taekwondo players in the

components of self-confidence and character properties; they were low in the case of wrestlers and mean in the case of fencers and taekwondo players. There are also differences between fencers and both the wrestlers and Taekwondo players in the future anxiety level in terms of injury and competition results component ; they were mean in case of the Fencers and high in case of wrestlers and Taekwondo players.

The researchers believe that the difference in anxiety level in terms of future anxiety components between the combat athletes is attributed to the different nature of each sport and the different kinds of threats faced or expected by the athletes. Wrestlers experience a lower level of future anxiety than the Taekwondo and Fencing players in terms of both the components of self-confidence and character properties due to the fact that wrestling requires certain character properties. Prime among these are

aggressiveness, boldness, determination and self-confidence. This is so because of the high degree of physical friction in wrestling. Moreover, unlike Taekwondo and Fencing, the laws of wrestling allow the athletes to make up for the loss through the round and the match. This in turn mitigates the psychological burden that the wrestlers have to bear. Thus, the character properties are not considered as a source of future anxiety for wrestlers.

Besides, wrestlers and Taekwondo players scored a high level of future anxiety in terms of competition results component which includes the axes of injury and negative experiences. However, it was mean in the case of Fencers. This is due to the fact that fear of injury which happens in the competition is one of the most common fears and especially in the kinds of activities that are characterized by increase in the degree of physical friction. The rise in this kind of fear is related to the high possibility

of injury occurrence that the athletes might sustain.

If the anxiety degree is consistent with the kind of threat faced or expected by the athlete, then the athlete will behave in the most appropriate manner that enables him /her to face and overcome the threat. Thus, the threat is considered as a positive element.

Some other research findings demonstrated that there is no specific level of anxiety that helps to demonstrate the player's best performance. A certain level of anxiety could help one athlete to do the best he/ she can but the same level of anxiety could deter another from achieving whatever is expected from him / her. This difference in the effect of the same level of anxiety on the various athletes is attributed to the athlete's assessment of his /her personal abilities and also his/her awareness of the kind of the competitive sports situation that lies ahead and which differs based on the type

of sport practiced by the athlete.

Tables (2) and (3) highlight the fact that there are statistical differences between Fencers and both the wrestlers and Taekwondo players in the attribution defeat; the attribution defeat was internal in the case of Fencing and external In the case of wrestling and Taekwondo.

Noticing that there is a high level of future anxiety in terms of competition results and that the attribution defeat direction is external in the case of wrestlers and Taekwondo players, we conclude that players with the high level of anxiety believe that their lives are governed by the events that are out of their hands. They also think that the results of their decisions and behaviour are governed by external powers such as luck, fate and others' power. This is in agreement with what Simons(1999) referred to when he said that people who suffer from fear of failure think that success depends on luck or

external factors and not on their abilities .i.e., they have external discipline. They also feel that they are unable to control their future and thus they lose interest and their motivation and desire to work and succeed decrease (18).

Rappaport (1991) indicates that the person who experiences future anxiety uses internal defence mechanism like removal and/or projection to mitigate his/her negative conditions (12).

Tables (4) and (5) show that there is a statistical positive correlation between attribution defeat and competition results component in the case of Taekwondo. This means that failure attribution direction is internally related to the high level of anxiety in terms of future anxiety for both Fencers and Taekwondo athletes. This demonstrates that the player's attribution of his /her failure to the internal or personal factors is related to the high level of anxiety in terms of some of the components of failure anxiety.

Table (5) indicates that statistically, there is a negative correlation between attribution bad performance and competition results in the case of wrestlers and this means that the attribution bad performance direction is externally related to the high level of anxiety in terms of competition results component. This concurs with Eman Sabry's study that concluded that the individuals with the high level of anxiety suffer from lack of self-confidence in their abilities and they attribute the unhappy situations in their lives to external factors (14).

So, the attribution direction is not the only indicator of future anxiety; there are other more important factors such as attribution stability. Weiner's study demonstrates that the future predictions of achievement are based on the causal attribution stability. For example, if the athlete attributed his loss to his weak susceptibility then this athlete should not expect to win in the future. Moreover,

the dimension of stability affects determination and perseverance. If the athlete thinks that his failure is attributed to the fact that he/she didn't exert enough effort during the competition (unstable factor), then the athlete will exert more effort and persevere for longer periods in the future because he knows that effort is under his control. Thus, attribution after winning or losing affects the athlete's motivation and determines the future behaviour (19).

Both of the researchers believe that if the player attributed his failure to his weak susceptibility, ability, or skills(stable factors) , this would lead to a rise on the level of future anxiety because he/ she attributes the causes of failure to factors that are out of his control. This concurs with what Zaleski referred to when he said that future anxiety has strong cognitive components, i.e., it is more of a cognitive component than an emotive component. He confirmed that

proactive cognitive mechanisms are the main source of future anxiety; the properties of ideas are one of the logical indicators of future anxiety. This is to say, knowledge comes before anxiety. Knowledge representation is the basis of future anxiety, this representation is accompanied by negative emotional conditions. The person should have the ability and confidence to control his/ her environment to achieve the personal aims and confront the negative events. This understanding helps to mitigate future anxiety (21).

Rateb (2000) indicates that there are two factors that affect the emotive case and this generates the athlete's anxiety prior to the competition. The first factor includes the external environment surrounding the competition. The second factor is related to the set of ideas, emotions and reactions that happens inside the athlete. The increase in anxiety is expected when the

athlete's ability to control all the external and internal factors decreases; the athlete feels that things are controlled by external factors (13).

Conclusions

Based on results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. As for the Fencers, the level of all the future anxiety components is mean, while for the wrestlers, the level is low in the component of the athlete's personality and mean in the sports environment component and high in the competition results component. When it comes to the Taekwondo players, the level is low in both the components of athlete character properties and sports environment, and high in the competition results component.
2. The attribution direction of the dimensions of attribution win and attribution good performance in the case of combat players was internal, while in the attributed defeat dimension, the attribution direction was internal in the

case of Fencers and external for both the Wrestlers and taekwondo players.

Concerning attribution bad performance, the direction was internal in the case of Fencers and Wrestlers and external for the Taekwondo players.

3. There are some differences between Fencers, Wrestlers and Taekwondo players in attribution defeat invariable. Attribution defeat was in the internal direction in the case of Fencers and in the external direction in the case of Wrestling and Taekwondo players.

4. There are differences between the Wrestlers, Fencers and Taekwondo players in the variables of susceptibility to excitability. Pessimistic tendency, self-confidence, character properties, the athlete's group, injury, competition results and future anxiety

5. Statistically, there is not a significant correlation between attribution success direction (attribution to win, attributed good performance)

and the components of future anxiety, while there is a correlation between attribution failure direction (attribution defeat, attribution bad performance) and some components of future anxiety in combats players according to the factor of attribution stability.

Practical Implications

Based on the aims of the study and the collected data, the following implications can be made:

1. Using the scales of future anxiety expectation and the causal attribution to try to detect some of the weakness points regarding the player's psychology and mentality to set the suitable programs for the players' psychological preparation.

2. The importance of originating training programs on causal attribution to attribute the causes of success to the internal or invariable factors and the causes of failure to the variable factors.

3. Conducting more studies to try to figure out the most

important factors that athletes identify as causes of future anxiety.

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