The Relationship of Psychological Skills and Performance of Skilled Men Volleyball Players in Vulnerable Situations of Competition

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ABSTRACT The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship of psychological skills and performance of skilled male volleyball players in vulnerable situations of Competition. For this purpose, 33 male players were selected by available sampling that were participated in Iran's Premier League and were achieved to final round. A questionnaire of mental skills of Ottawa 3 (OMSAT) and Data software were used to collect information and to analyze the performance of players in three positions of service, attack and defense, respectively. Spearman correlation coefficient results showed that there were no significant relationship base psychological skills, psychosomatic and cognitive skills with the success of the players' performance in some skills. According to the calculation of the effect size in the skills of goal setting in the service position \( r = 0.30 \), it indicates the average relationship of goal setting in the implementation of service and calculated number on the defensive position \( r = -0.25 \) which reflects the average and reverse relationship, in the illustration skills in the service position \( r = 0.23 \) represents the average relationship between illustration in competition designing skills in attack position \( r = -0.19 \) showed the average and inverse relationship between competition designing and implementing an attack. In general, it seems that some mental skills in the performance of volleyball players play useful role with average effect size.

KEYWORDS Mental Skills, Performance of Volleyball Players, Sensitive Positions.

INTRODUCTION

We have seen many that a team lost the game despite with more stamina and being surrounded technical skills and advanced tactics to a team that is inferior in every respect. On the other hand, we see weaker athletes that with a good spirit and mental preparation are winning much more powerful. The fact is that in the highly competitive sport events, we should face with a holistic approach and deal with the competition in all aspects with respect to various aspects into our tournament. One of the most important aspects of sports science is the psychology. In general, the optimal implementation of sports skills is dependent on physical, technical and psychologically fitness. As far as, the distance between the Champions has decreased to milliseconds and those of
a few millimeters, the performance difference of heroes is dependent on mental preparation more than ever. In professional sports, the narrow border between winning and losing is narrower. In Olympic Games of 2008, the difference between first and fourth in the men and women’s rowing championship was 1.34% and 1.03%, respectively. This high level of performance leads to creating pressure on the athletes for competition. So, it is not surprising that in recent years, mental skills training are considered, and the number of athletes who will benefit from mental training approaches has increased. Elite athletes are frequently forced to compete under high pressure and hence, mental characteristics make the difference between successful and unsuccessful athletes (Sanai, 2013).

There are many factors that affect the competitive pressure moments. Optimal performance among athletes is a combination of technical capabilities (technical and tactical), physical (strength and speed) and mental (concentration, self-esteem). The basic necessities of professional life of athletes are having mental skills among athletes that attention to it has a direct effect in the development of professional sports and addressing it is the essential condition for achieving fitness goals in the tournament and the difficult field. Professional sport period among athletes will be considered particular period between players for reasons such as being away from family, having the difficult social responsibility, time relationship of this period with the youth and adolescents condition and the pressure of difficult exercise and physical activity and expectations of teachers and the relevant authorities. On the other hand, it seems that to reach and enter to sport competitive arena is associated with great changes in social and human relations among athletes and players. In addition to these changes, expectations and it should be mentioned to new roles that by entering a difficult sport fields is formed among athletes.

Being in such conditions is often associated with stress and anxiety and performance is affected. In addition, mental health problems among some players lead to disruptions in the performance of duties and exercise, lack of motivation, anxiety and acute concern that players think and spend a considerable part to solve the problems and thus, they may lose sufficient interest in the effective exercise and physical activity. Today, the role of learning and sport psychology interventions in the performance of athletes has great importance. With the advancement of the psychology science, the mental skills has considerable importance in implementation of sports performance, whereas, previously it has been emphasized more on the importance of physical preparation (Mihan-doust, 2001).

Today, athletes need to beyond intensive training and continued efforts that are mental preparation. Without a doubt, obtaining peak of performance athletic without any mental skills of goal setting, focus, motivation, etc., will not be a dream. All athletes who are demanding a high level of sports performance should be familiar with sports and the development of mental preparation and physical science concepts (Aghaali-nejad, 1997). Conducted research in the field of sports psychology suggests that mental skills play an important role in achieving high performance (Sanati-monfared, 2006). According to many studies, people with mental skills, benefit from the following features: are able better to focus, have high confidence, increases their mental performance and have less exciting and therefore, are more successful in performance. Also, successful athletes to other athletes have more power of positive thinking and better decision-making (Gould & Weinberg, 1995).

Recently, a new process with an emphasis on identifying mental skills related to sports is formed (Salemla and Bush, 2000). Sports psychologists have been classified mental skills into three categories: The first category is basic skills which included: goal setting, confidence and commitment. The second category is psychosomatic skills that include response to stress, fear control, relaxation and refreshment that are associated to the athlete’s physiological features. The third category is called cognitive skills including visualization, mental rehearsal, focus, refocus and designing competition, because interact with the steps and cognitive processes, such as the learning, perception, memory and thinking.

Nowadays, many studies have been done on the role of sport psychological skills (Shojai et al., 2010). Weinberg and Gold (2007) consider psychological factors as the first cause of day to day fluctuations in athletic performance. Weinberg and Williams (2001) summarized and concluded the study that 38 cases, i.e. 85% of the studied cases, suggesting a positive effect of mental skills training on the performance. Sheard and Golby (2006) emphasized on the positive impact of cognitive skills training on the implementation of the swimmers. Sometimes, the aim of these studies was to examine the effect of a
special program of mental skills training. Various programs are used to evaluate the impact on specific skills and reports generally show a positive impact of programs. Grossarth et al. (1990) have described psychological factors as determinants of success in football and boxing. Also, recent research shows that there is the significant difference between mental skills of successful and less successful elite athletes, so that successful elite athletes have more confidence, concentration, orientation to performance, stress control and coping skills than less successful elite athletes. As it was mentioned, past researches has supported the relationship between psychological characteristics and athletic performance and results show that elite athletes had more motivation than non-elite athletes in their sports and confidence, stress control, coping skills, orientation to performance, and more focus. However, none of these studies were not investigated the role of mental skills in critical moments of competition.

In this area (Sanai, 2013) examined the relationship between psychological skills of soccer men elite players and their performance on penalties in professional football teams and predicting the performance of elite men's squash players to earn sensitive points based on their mental skill level in Iran. In volleyball, the final point of each set of the game and final score of game is among the most important points of the game and again in the matches has been seen that many players have difficult to play due to high-sensitivity in these situations, and despite this fact, have optimal performance to achieve this border but to get to this position that is the only remaining points to win the set or the match have trouble and lose several points and ultimately earn a final point with difficulty, but sometimes an athlete who is in a win position is not able to earn a final point and lost the game.

Due to the high sensitivity of this final position in volleyball play, it is expected that to athlete mental skills is very impressive in maintaining or lose one final point of the game. Considering the great importance of this subject, it is necessary to determine the share of mental skills to the success of a volleyball player at critical points of the game, accurately and also determine whether certain mental skills are more important in the meantime? And if so what are these skills? Thus, this study sought to determine the role of important mental skills in sensitive positions of playing volleyball.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method was descriptive and correlation type. The population was consisted of 64 skilled volleyball man players that were reached to the final League of Iran in 2014-2015 that 33 individuals of them were voluntarily participated in this study. After coordination with Volleyball Federation and the relevant authorities, the researchers distributed OMSAT questionnaire among players of defined teams with the necessary explanation. In addition, in order to the contest that will not have any interference in the response of the players, a time was determined to collect information that it was not held the competition not before that day and not later than that day. In order to calculate the points of the players' performance in critical situations were considered in compared to non-points. It is worth noting that player points was normalized based on the number of their efforts in each situation. In other words, their negative points of each player were divided to the number of their efforts. To measure the variables the following tools were used.

Mental preparation questionnaire of Ottawa (OMSAT): mental skills of this research was reviewed and evaluated by using a mental preparation questionnaire of Ottawa (OMSAT). This questionnaire has two parts: i) personal profile including information about age and experience of players. ii) Preparation test of athletes mental skills. Persian version of the questionnaire of Ottawa -3 mental skills was used in this study. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed using confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficients and intra-class correlation of Persian version of 12 factor structure with 48 questions (Sanati-monfared, 2006). This test is the most comprehensive of athletes mental preparation tests that measures twelve mental skills in three basic mental skills (goal setting, commitment, confidence), Psychosomatic skills (reaction to stress, fear, control, relaxation, and refreshment ), cognitive skills (focus, recycling focus, visualization, mental rehearsal, and designing competition). This questionnaire contains 48 questions that were in the form of 7-point Likert scale. Against any such options are disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree / do not disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree. The ratings are awarded one to seven. The participants answer to one of these seven options based on their current or past status in the competitions and trainings. The range of scores in any
mental skills determine the mental state of athletes, scores above 25 indicate excellent, scores 25-20 indicate good status, scores 20-15 represents the average score and lower than 15 indicates poor condition.

**Data application**

The performance of studied players in this research was reviewed and evaluated by Data Software Produced by Project Company of Italy that is as the best and the most common application for most countries. In this application, all the events of the game are predefined as codes that are recorded by the analyzer and software display these data in the form of tables, charts and graphs. Informative tool that gives data analysis software to user is as follows:

1. The statistical performance of own and opposing players in all techniques (service, reception, attack, defense, and pass).
2. The path of spike and service techniques in different position.
3. Positive and negative scores taken by each player.
4. Type of setters pass distribution in different situations.

In this study, because of the diversity of conditions in volleyball players, sensitive positions in three groups of service, attack and defense were categorized and analyzed by the analyzer to analyze the performance of the players of the national team during league. To analyze the performance of players, it was used in three positions of service, attack and defense. Errors (negative points) were considered as a measure of performance, and were divided on the number of player’s efforts in each position that error be considered because of the efforts of all the players. Spearman correlation test was used to analyze the data. In all analyzes, the significance level was considered p <0.05.

**RESULTS**

In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of variables is shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>22.09</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>24.12</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshment</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualization</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental workout</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing Competition</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to stress</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear control</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling focus</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spearman correlation was used to examine the relationship between variables. Results are presented in Table 2. It is seen that there was not a significant relationship between commitment mental skills and service performance at attacking of Volleyball players in vulnerable situations of competition (r=-0.02,
p=0.84). Also, there was not a significant relationship between commitment mental skills and performance at attacking of Volleyball players in vulnerable situations of competition (r=-0.05, p=0.777). There was not a significant relationship between commitment mental skills and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations, (r=-0.05, p=0.766). There was not a significant relationship between confidence mental skills and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations, (r=0.03, p=0.870). There was not a significant relationship between confidence mental skills and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations, (r=-0.07, p=0.672). There was not a significant relationship between confidence mental skills and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations, (r=0.09, p=0.632). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of goal setting and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations, (r=0.30, p=0.089). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of goal setting and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.17, p=0.334).

There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of goal setting and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.25, p=0.174). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of design competition and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.007, p=0.970). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of relaxation and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.008, p=0.964). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of relaxation and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.14, p=0.440). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of visualization and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.12, p=0.508). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of visualization and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.15, p=0.399). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of visualization and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.08, p=0.664). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of refreshment and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.01, p=0.949). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of refreshment and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.09, p=0.609).

There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of refreshment and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.14, p=0.440). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of visualization and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.23, p=0.197). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of visualization and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.15, p=0.399). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of visualization and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.08, p=0.664). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of mental training and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.12, p=0.508). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of mental training and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.14, p=0.419). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of mental training and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.13, p=0.476). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of designing competition and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.16, p=0.358). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of designing competition and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.19, p=0.295). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of designing competition and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.06, p=0.731).

There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of reaction to stress and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.02, p=0.902). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of reaction to stress and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.13, p=0.472). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of reaction to stress and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.14, p=0.432). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of refreshment and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.05, p=0.779). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of refreshment and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.03, p=0.855). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of refreshment and performance in the defense of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.12, p=0.521). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of reaction to stress and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.08, p=0.645). There was not a significant relationship between mental skills of reaction to stress and performance in the service of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=-0.08, p=0.645).
relationship between mental skills of focus and performance in the attack of volleyball players in vulnerable situations (r=0.22, p=0.219).

There was not a significant relationship between Focus mental skills and performance in defense of volleyball players competition in vulnerable situations (r=0.16, p=0.377). There was not a significant relationship between mental skill of Recycling focus and service performance of Volleyball players in vulnerable situations of competition (r=0.02, p=0.878). There was not a significant relationship between mental skill of Recycling focus and performance at attacking of Volleyball players in vulnerable situations of competition (r=-0.09, p=0.598). There was not a significant relationship between mental skill of Recycling focus and performance at defending of Volleyball players in vulnerable situations of competition (r=0.06, p=0.740).

Table 2. The results of correlation between research variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Commit</th>
<th>Self-confidence</th>
<th>Goal-setting</th>
<th>Relaxation</th>
<th>Reaction to stress</th>
<th>Fear control</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Recycling focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.970</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.508</td>
<td>0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td>0.672</td>
<td>0.334</td>
<td>0.964</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.144</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.440</td>
<td>0.440</td>
<td>0.664</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between psychological skills and performance of volleyball male skilled players in vulnerable situations of competition. The results showed that psychological skills of goal setting (basic skills), in the service position r = 0.30 had a positive and average effect size, this means that players who have the mental skills of goal setting and positive average effect size will face to fall the performance on the service position. Answer to this question that why the positive and average effect size of goal setting skills in the service position will cause the fall in performance of the players in the sensitive situations of competition, it can be interpreted that service skill is a closed skill that is based on the individual ability of players, in this respect, it should be stated that one reason for falling in players’ performance is low technical level of person in the service with high-risk.

In modern volleyball, use of risky and wavy services, which is intended as a tactic has a risky nature. On the other hand, when the player is placed in service position, especially in the important national games and leagues, when he asked to use the risky and jumpy services, at this moment he is under pressure and all eyes and expectations regard to him increase and suddenly, the load of team’s success is heavy on his shoulders. We can say that in this situation, goal is conclusive goal and player focus on optimal performance instead of focuses on the outcome of the competition and usually involves a comparison between the individual. At this critical moment of the competition, a person will have high motivation and as a result, his performance comes down. According to Drive theory, three major factors influence the performance: the complexity of the skills, learned habits and motivation. We may lose dominant at the high arousal in response to environmental conditions. In basic skills, increasing motivation will improve performance.

\[ \text{Performance} = \text{Motivation} \times \text{Habit} \]

If the skills be complicated or not have mastered to it (it is not the habit), arousal will be prevented from implementing. Because, the arousal level in the competition will be more than the training and in proportion to the importance, competition will also increase. Drive theory predicts that the best performance happen in the very important competitions. The mental skills of goal setting in the defensive position, r = -0.25 average effect sizes were negative; this means that players who are equipped with this mental skills, enhance performance and their success in the competition. Defense skills are closer to open
skills and are changeable according to the ability of opponent. On focus mental skills (cognitive skills) in attack position, \( r = 0.22 \) effect size was positive and average, this means that high levels of mental skill in players lead to the loss of their success in attacking position. The cause of lose in performance of the players in attack position at crucial moments of the competition can be examined from two perspectives. First, the attack skill in volleyball play considers open skills that its success depends on self team tactics and opponent team and is unpredictable skill. Second, the focus is one of the most important mental skills that play an important role in the success of players in professional sports, especially volleyball. Focus means the attention of consciousness to a limited range of stimuli and ignores other stimuli that are necessary for high performance of players. Even for a moment focus deviation from the conditions of competition leads to change the outcome of the competition. The main reason for the inability to maintain optimal performance is to carry out attacks at key moments of the competition that athletes focus on issues other than competition (For example, instead of focus on technical skill (attack) is thought to be thinking that have fear of the occurrence). These thoughts and feelings, keep them from appropriate attention to signs.

There are many disturbing focus factors: internal factors (attention to the upcoming competition, attention to the last competition, competition pressure, analysis of body movements, fatigue, lack of motivation, etc.) and external factors (visual and auditory stimuli, opponent tricks, . . .). In visualization mental skills (cognitive skills) in service position, effect size \( (r = 0.23) \) was average and positive, this means that high levels of this skill decreases the performance of players at crucial moments in the match. As previously mentioned, the reason of the lack of result, it can be stated that, service skills is a closed skill that is based on the ability of individual players, in this respect, it should be stated that one of the causes is low technical level of the skill. Researchers believe that the visualization has a positive effect in the different sports and on various occasions. Obviously, one of the reasons for the decline in performance of the players in service position is non-compliance with the principles of effective visualization. In designing competition skills (cognitive skills) in attack position, effect size is average and negative \( (r = -0.19) \). This means that high levels of this skill increase the performance of the players and their success in crucial moments of the match. Each athlete must learn how to create the desired mode of operation (thoughts, feelings, physical reactions) at match time, which is usually associated with high performance in itself. Given that in this study, the mental skills of athletes in sensitive positions were considered by researcher, the research by Heydari (2010) was consistent with this issue to predict the performance of Iran’s elite penalty players of professional soccer teams.

The results of mentioned research also showed a significant relationship between base mental skills, psychosomatic skills and cognitive skills with the success of players in the penalty shootout, and there is the ability to predict the success of professional football teams based on mental skills. This result was consistent with some of part of this research and was not inconsistent with other parts of this research. In this study, the critical position in the volleyball game is classified by researchers at three positions of attack, defense and service. Hypothesis test result indicates that high and positive effect size of mental skills of goal setting (basic skills) in service position, focus (cognitive skills) in attack position and visualization (cognitive skills) in service position lead to fall in performance of the players at crucial moments in the competition. Possible cause of this discrepancy may be related to the characterization of these two sports in the competition conditions. The differences in the characteristics of skills can be due to the nature of the sport (in terms of to be individual and team) and definition of the critical situation in these sport fields based on analysis skills and classification. In football, in time of penalties, players are in predictable position in terms of skill, while in the volleyball, implementing position depends on the opponent player and conditions are approached to open and unpredictable skill.

Mentioned research was consistent with present research in mental skills of goal setting at defensive position and designing competition on attack position. Sanai (2013) carried out research entitled predicting the performance of elite men’s squash players to earn critical points based on mental skill level. The results showed that an increase in the relaxation (psychosomatic skills) and the visualization and designing competition (cognitive skills) has significant relationship with reducing the possibility of winning at internal games. It means at internal and international games, if relaxation skills and visualization and designing competition among the players increase, their probability of winning will be reduced. The result of the implementation of variable regression analysis showed that an increase in the relaxation (psychosomatic skills) and the mental visualization (cognitive skills) have significant
relationship with reducing the possibility of winning at the overall internal and international games. These results of present study according to similarity with regard to sensitive positions in internal games and international volleyball competitions with the sensitive conditions was consistent with some parts of the research and was inconsistent with others parts. This means that the results of the study hypothesis represents the reduction in the performance of players with higher visualization (in service position) which was consistent with these skills in mentioned research and was inconsistent with designing competition skills (in the attack position). High mental skills of designing competition in the players (in attack position) lead to increase their performance, while has reverse result in the squash due differences in skill characteristics, sports nature (in terms of to be individual and team) and defining the critical situation in this sport based on the analysis and classification of skills.

Ghadimi (2005) with the profile of mental skills in karate elite and non-elite athletes determined that there was significant between the skills of motivation, focus, confidence, mental visualization, goal setting, and all mental skills, but this difference was not observed in the energy level setting. The results of the mentioned study was inconsistent with the result of present study in goal setting skills (in service position), visualization skills (in service position) and focus skills (attack position). The reason of lack of result is sports nature of these two is sports major, karate is an individual major and volleyball is a team major. Another reason could be in defining the critical position of this sport based on the analysis and classification of skills.

Aghbashli (2005) studied the relationship between mental skills with performance of judo male athletes, and results showed that the five measured factors included the goal setting, visualization, focus, adjusting the psychological pressure, and confidence of judo male champion with performance had high and positive relationship and only there was not a high correlation in motivation factor. Mentioned research was inconsistent with present study in the mental skills of goal setting (in attack position), visualization (service position) and focus (in attack position). The reason is the nature of these two sports. Judo is an individual and volleyball is team sport and the other reason is due to the sensitive situation in this sport that can be defined based on the analysis and classification of skills. Vianna et al. (2005) to study the psychological profile of the mental skills of young Brazilian national volleyball team achieved the following results: they have basic skills such as goal setting, confidence and commitment, scores and cognitive skills such as focus, visualization, mental training and designing competition. Mental skills of elite Brazilian volleyball players showed that they are really excellent and their good results at the international level showed their highly developed mental abilities that was inconsistent with current research on mental skills of visualization and goal setting (in service position), but was consistent at goal setting skills (on the defensive position) and designing competition skills (in the attack position).

This reason of this inconsistent in these two studies may be due to age (young people in the survey) and type of planning in various countries in the implementation of training programs of mental skills. The results of this research show that the players with high and positive mental skills of goal setting (in service position), focus (in attack position) and visualization (in service position), their performance come down in critical situations of game. This study suggests that players who possess the average and negative skills of goal setting (in defense position), designing competition (in attack position), their performance in the critical moments of the race is improved and lead to their success. What is important is that psychological skills are learned and requires practice. So, athletes should be considered enough time to learn and practice these skills and to note that achieving this requires time and practice skills such as physical fitness and is crucial in the results of their games.

Conflict of interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest

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