

# **A Study of Psychological Burnout Among Football Players in Light of Certain Variables**

## **Field study of some active teams in the Batna League First Division**

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### **Abstract:**

*The study aimed to identify the level of psychological burnout among football players in light of certain variables for some teams active in the Regional First Division of the Batna League, as well as to determine the differences according to the age variable (older than 23 years, younger than 23 years) and marital status (single, married). The study sample consisted of 100 players, selected*

randomly from the research population comprising teams active in the Regional First Division of the Batna League. The researchers adopted a descriptive approach, as it is the most suitable for such studies. As for the study tools, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used, consisting of 22 items distributed across three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. For data analysis, the researchers relied on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the study revealed the following:

- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among football players attributed to the age variable (younger than 23 years, older than 23 years). This was confirmed in the first hypothesis
- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among football players attributed to the marital status variable (married, single). This was confirmed in the second hypothesis
- From the above, we conclude that football players generally suffer from psychological burnout, albeit at a moderate level across its three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment).

**Keywords:** psychological burnout- football

## **Étude de l'épuisement psychologique chez les footballeurs à la lumière de certaines variables Étude sur le terrain de quelques équipes actives de la première division de la ligue de Batna.**

### **Résumé :**

L'étude visait à identifier le niveau d'épuisement psychologique chez les joueurs de football à la lumière de certaines variables pour certaines équipes actives dans la première division régionale de la ligue de Batna, ainsi qu'à déterminer les différences en fonction de la variable de l'âge (plus de 23 ans, moins de 23 ans) et de l'état matrimonial (célibataire, marié). L'échantillon de l'étude était composé de 100 joueurs, sélectionnés de manière aléatoire au sein de la population de recherche comprenant des équipes actives dans la première division régionale de la ligue de Batna. Les chercheurs ont adopté une approche descriptive, car elle est la plus adaptée à ce type d'étude. En ce qui concerne les outils d'étude, ils ont utilisé le Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), composé de 22 items répartis sur trois dimensions : l'épuisement émotionnel, la dépersonnalisation et la ré-

*duction de l'accomplissement personnel. Pour l'analyse des données, les chercheurs se sont appuyés sur le logiciel SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé ce qui suit :*

- *Il n'y a pas de différences statistiquement significatives dans le niveau d'épuisement psychologique chez les joueurs de football attribuées à la variable de l'âge (moins de 23 ans, plus de 23 ans). Cela a été confirmé dans la première hypothèse*
- *Il n'y a pas de différences statistiquement significatives dans le niveau d'épuisement psychologique chez les joueurs de football attribuées à la variable de l'état civil (marié, célibataire). Cela a été confirmé dans la deuxième hypothèse.*
- *De ce qui précède, nous concluons que les joueurs de football souffrent généralement d'épuisement psychologique, bien qu'à un niveau modéré dans ses trois dimensions (épuisement émotionnel, dépersonnalisation et réduction de l'accomplissement personnel).*

**Mots clés :** *épuisement psychologique – football*

## Introduction

The science of sports training has undergone rapid evolution, with its theories taking new directions to align with modern developments in football. This includes innovative playing styles, technical performance demands, and increasingly high physical requirements. In the era of professionalization, which calls for more complex and sophisticated performance levels, adopting cutting-edge advancements in sports training science has become an indispensable necessity when planning training processes and developing specialized programs.

Football, as a high-performance sport, demands not only rigorous physical and technical preparation but also comprehensive \*psychological conditioning\*. Psychological training plays a pivotal role in enhancing players' mental processes and developing positive solutions to various psychological challenges. These challenges may stem from individual personality traits, behavioral patterns during competition, or training-related stressors (Nahid Rust Sikkar, 2000, p. 285).

Psychology has emerged as one of the most vital sciences requiring in-depth study due to its profound biological and behavioral impacts on individuals. In recent years, its importance has become particularly evident in the sports domain, where psychological factors exert significant influence during both training and competition. As Mahmoud and Hossam El-Din (1999, p. 62)

Al-Alawi (1998) notes that the term "burnout" has recently gained prevalence in sports contexts. We now frequently encounter reports of athletes suffering from burnout - their performance levels deteriorating to their lowest ebb, often leading to complete retirement or withdrawal from athletic

participation. Similarly, we hear or read about coaches experiencing psychological burnout, marked by distress, boredom, despair, and the onset of various physical ailments and pains resulting from their demanding profession. These coaches often find themselves packing their bags in preparation for permanently leaving this grueling occupation.

From the above, it becomes clear that football players are more susceptible to burnout. The results of many studies confirm that athletes are the most susceptible individuals to burnout as a result of the psychological pressures they are exposed to related to results and performance, the excessive training load (i.e. overtraining) that leads to injury, failure and loss of successful experiences for the athlete, which makes him see sports as a source of failure and an obstacle to psychological stability, and the expectations of the fans. These pressures may lead to a feeling of psychological exhaustion, which negatively affects athletic performance.

Accordingly, we decided to pose the following general question: What is the level of burnout among soccer players in light of certain variables (age, marital status)? From here, the following questions can be posed:

- Are there statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among soccer players attributable to the variable of age?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among soccer players attributable to the variable of marital status?

### **Study Hypotheses:**

**General Hypothesis:** The level of psychological burnout among football players is moderate. **Sub-hypotheses:**

- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among football players attributed to the variable of age.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among football players attributed to the variable of marital status

**Study objectives:** The current study aims to:

- Identify the level of burnout among soccer players.
- Identify the extent of agreement or disagreement in the level of burnout among soccer players according to the variables of age and marital status.

## **1. Defining Study Terms:**

**Psychological burnout:** It is defined as a state of tension and psychological irritation experienced by a teacher as a result of intense and continuous work pressures. (Nouredine, Mustafa, 2016, p. 2).

**Operational definition:** It is an internal psychological state experienced by an individual as a result of psychological pressures and various burdens, leading to mental and physical exhaustion and fatigue.

**Football:** Football involves two teams competing on a grassy field with goals on either side. The idea in football is to try to score a goal by using the feet and head. Only the goalkeeper is allowed to use his hands. A team consists of 11 players. (Abu Jamous, 2012, p. 526).

## **2. Levels of Burnout:**

While burnout occurs over successive stages, some graded levels reveal the degree of burnout. Mona Badran (1997) stated that burnout has three levels:

- 1) Moderate psychological level: This results from repeated bouts of fatigue, anxiety, and frustration.

- 2) Moderate psychological burnout: This results from the same sources as the previous level, but it lasts longer.
- 3) Severe psychological burnout: This results from physical manifestations such as ulcers, severe chronic headaches, and chronic back pain. (Badran, 1997, p. 58)

### **3. Previous Studies:**

**3.1- A study (Muhammad Janan 2014)** entitled "Psychological Burnout and Its Relationship to the Final Results of Some Premier League Handball Clubs" aimed to identify the level of psychological burnout, which may affect players' performance on the field and in training. This may therefore be one of the reasons for these negative results. The study aimed to assist coaches in addressing this condition and addressing it to achieve optimal performance and the ability to overcome changing circumstances, especially during play. The researcher used a descriptive survey approach, and a sample of (70) players from several Premier League clubs was studied. The number of players was determined by five clubs with high levels of psychological burnout, while clubs with lower levels of psychological burnout were excluded. The researcher concluded that there was a significant correlation between the level of psychological burnout and the final results in the league.

**3.2- A study by Samira Arabi et al. (2007)** entitled "Psychological Burnout among Football Coaches in Jordan." The study aimed to identify the level of psychological burnout among football coaches in Jordan, as well as to identify differences in the level of psychological burnout among football coaches in Jordan according to the variable of degree. To

achieve this, the study was conducted on a sample of (81) coaches. The Maslach Burnout Inventory of Morocco, modified by the researchers, was applied to them. The results of the study showed that the level of psychological burnout among football coaches in Jordan was within the average level. The study also concluded that the coach's degree (International AB) had an impact on the level of burnout. The results of the study indicated that the higher the coach's degree, the lower his degree of psychological burnout.

**3.3- A study by Al-Saadawi Mohsen Ali et al. (2009)** entitled "Psychological Burnout and Its Relationship to Self-Concept among Football Players." The study aimed to identify the degree of psychological burnout among football players and to understand the correlation between psychological burnout and self-concept. The researchers used the descriptive approach because it was appropriate for the nature of the study objectives. The study sample consisted of (234) players. A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool, using two scales: the burnout scale and the self-concept scale. The statistical package (SPSS) was used to analyze the results. The results showed a high level of burnout among Premier League club players, a high level of burnout, and a correlation between burnout and self-concept.

**3.4- Al-Nahi Essam Mohammed's (2007)** study titled "Burning Out Among Basketball Referees" aimed to identify differences in burnout among basketball referees according to the degree of control variable, and differences in burnout among basketball referees according to the academic achievement variable. The research sample consisted of (12) referees, who were deliberately selected, comprising (6) international referees and (6) first-class referees accredited within the Central Basketball Federation. The sports referee burnout scale, which consists of (15) statements, was used as



a research tool. After ensuring the validity and reliability of the tool, the data were processed statistically using the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and simple correlation coefficient. The second test was conducted. The researcher concluded the following: Both international and first-class referees enjoy a good level of physical and psychological preparation in a way that contributes to facing the pressures of competition, including the phenomenon of burnout. The competence and experience of international and first-class referees in the performance of leading the match work to limit the occurrence of the phenomenon of burnout.

## **4. Methodological approach**

### **4.1. Exploratory Study:**

After selecting the study tool, the Burnout Strength Scale questionnaire, the researchers tested it in the field through a pilot study conducted randomly on two teams. Sixty players were selected. This was to determine the suitability of the tool for its intended purpose, namely its validity in measuring what it was designed for (the validity of the tool), its suitability for the sample level, and the clarity of the items and paragraphs.

### **4.2. Study Methodology:**

The researcher's use of a specific method is based on the nature of the topic he wishes to study. In accordance with the problem posed in this study and given the topic of our research, we used the descriptive method in this study, as it is the appropriate method for this study.

### **4.3. Study Population and Research Sample:**

The study population in this study consists of some players from teams active in the First Regional League of Batna (2024-2025). The study sample consisted of players from the M'Sila province teams active in the first regional league of Batna. The sample size for the exploratory study was 60 players, while for the primary study, it was 100 players, who were selected using a simple random method.

### **4.4. Research Areas:**

**Spatial Scope of the Study:** The field study was conducted at the level of some of the first regional league teams of Batna, which consists of 16 teams from different provinces: Batna, M'Sila, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Biskra, and Khenchela.

**Timeframe of the study:**

The study was conducted from the beginning of October 2024 to the end of December 2024.

### **4.5. Data Collection Tool:**

**Maslach Burnout Inventory:**

The researchers used the Maslach Burnout Inventory, developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), to measure burnout among workers in the field of humanitarian and social services. A number of researchers have Arabized the scale to suit the Arab context, including (Dawani and colleagues 1979, Muqabala and Salama 1990, and Al-Wabili 1995). The scale consists of 22 items related to an individual's feelings toward their profession, requiring the respondent to respond to each item. The scale was developed to measure three main dimensions of burnout:

- 1) **Emotional stress:** This measures the level of stress and emotional tension a person feels as a result of

- working with a specific group or in a specific field. This dimension is measured by (nine items).
- 2) Emotional numbness: This measures the level of interest or apathy as a result of working with a specific group or in a specific field. This dimension is measured by (five items).
- 3) Lack of sense of accomplishment: This measures the individual's attitude toward themselves and their level and sense of competence and satisfaction in their work. This dimension is measured by (eight items).

**Table No. (01): shows the distribution of the scale items across the three dimensions.**

Dimension	Distribution	Total
emotional stress	-14-13-8-6-3-2-1 20-16	9 Paragraphs
numbness of feelings	22-15-11-10-5	5 Paragraphs
lack of sense of accomplishment	-19-18-17-12-9-7-4 21	5 Paragraphs
Paragraphs 22		Total

**4.6. Psychometric Properties:**

Instrument Validity: The original scale enjoyed a good level of validity. Maslach and Jackson (1981) extracted the scale's discriminant validity. The results demonstrated the scale's validity in terms of its ability to discriminate between different categories of workers suffering from low burnout and high burnout.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between each dimension and the total score of the scale. The

following table illustrates the correlation between the total score of the scale and its sub-dimensions.

**Table No. (2): Shows the correlation between the scale score and its sub-dimensions.**

Scale dimensions	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Emotional stress	0.857	0.01
Emotional numbness	0.801	0.01
Lack of sense of accomplishment	0.846	0.01

**Source: Prepared by researchers, SPSS21 outputs**

The data shown in the table above indicate that all correlation coefficient values for the scale's dimensions are statistically significant at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), with values of (0.857, 0.801, and 0.846), respectively. This confirms the homogeneity and strength of the scale's internal consistency.

Scale Reliability:

Using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated for this scale, yielding the following results:

**Table No. (03): Shows the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the burnout scale for football players and its sub-dimensions.**

Scale dimensions and total score	Cronbach's coefficient	Number of phrases
Emotional stress	0.734	9
Nullness	0.741	5
Lack of sense of accomplishment	0.715	8

**Source: Prepared by researchers, SPSS21 outputs**

The table above shows that all Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scale's dimensions were high, ranging between 0.715 and 0.741. This indicates that it has a strong reliability coefficient, making it suitable for application in the main study.

**4.7. Study Design and Statistical Processing: The following statistical methods were used in our study:**

- \*The researchers used SPSS to analyze the data.
- Cronbach's alpha test to determine the reliability of the questionnaire.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient to measure the validity of the statements.
- Arithmetic means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficient.
- Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests.
- Independent test to calculate the differences between two independent samples.

**4.8. Data distribution.**

Table No. (04) shows the results of the two data distribution tests.

Statistical de- cision	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Scale
normal dis- tribution	signifi- cance level (Sig),	Test value
	0.28	0.082

Source: Prepared by researchers, SPSS21 outputs

From Table (4), we find that the test's significance level of (0.094) is greater than (0.05), meaning that the data follow a normal distribution. Therefore, we will rely on parametric statistical tests for the analysis.

### 5. Presentation and Analysis of the Results for the Hypotheses

#### 5.1. Presentation and Analysis of the Results for the First Hypothesis:

There are no statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among soccer players attributable to the age variable.

**Table No. (05) shows the statistical description of the level of burnout among football players according to the age variable.**

Signifi- cance (sig)	Degrees of Free- dom	T- value	standard devia- tion	arith metic mean	Sam ple	Age Var- iable	Axis
0.802	98	-0.251	28.53	50.40	30	Over 23 years old	
			28.41	51.95	70	Under 23 years old	
					100	Total	

**Source: Prepared by researchers, SPSS21 outputs**

It is clear from Table (6) that the sample members are “100”, of whom “30” are older than 23 years and “70” are younger than 23 years. The arithmetic mean value is “50.40” for those older than 23 years, with a standard deviation of “28.53” and for those younger than 23 years, the arithmetic mean value is “51.95” with a standard deviation of “28.41”.

We note that there are no clear differences attributed to the age variable in burnout, and this is confirmed by a T-test for two independent samples (since the distribution is normal, a T-test for two independent samples will be used). We find that the value of the (T) test is equal to (-0.251) and the degree of significance of the test (Sig) is equal to (0.802), which is greater than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, there are no statistically significant differences between the group of people over 23 years old and the group under 23 years old in psychological burnout. This means that the first hypothesis (there are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among football players attributable to the age variable (over 23 years old, under 23 years old)) is achieved (accepted).

5.1. Presentation and analysis of the results for the second hypothesis:

There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among football players attributable to the marital status variable.

Table No. (06) shows the statistical description of the level of burnout among football players according to the family status variable.

Signifi- cance (sig)	De- grees of Free- dom	T- value	stand- ard devia- tion	arith- metic mean	Sam- ple	Marital status va- riable	Axis
0.091	98	1.705	27.95	54.74	72	Single	
			28.27	43.82	28	Married	
					100	Total	

Source: Prepared by researchers, SPSS21 outputs

It is clear from Table (06) that the sample members are "100", of whom "72" are single and "28" are married. The arithmetic mean value for single individuals is "54.74" with a standard deviation of "27.95" and for married individuals the arithmetic mean value is "43.82" with a standard deviation of "28.27". We note that there are no clear differences attributed to the age variable in burnout, and this is confirmed by a T-test for two independent samples (since the distribution is normal, a T-test for two independent samples will be used). We find that the value of the (T) test equals (1.705) and the degree of significance of the test (Sig) equals (0.091), which is greater than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, there are no statistically significant differences attributable to the marital status variable (single-married) in psychological burnout. This means that the second hypothesis (there are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among soccer players attributable to the marital status variable (single-married)) is achieved (accepted).

## **6. Discussion of the results in light of the hypotheses:**

From Table (5), we find that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among soccer players in the age variable. This is with an arithmetic mean of 50.40 and a standard deviation of 28.53 for those over 23 years old. As for those under 23 years old, the arithmetic mean was 51.95 with a standard deviation of 28.41. We also used the T test and found that the value of the (T) test The mean value of the test (Sig) is (-0.251) and the significance level of the test (Sig) is (0.802), which is greater than the significance level (0.05), meaning that the first hypothesis is met. Table (6) shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among soccer



players in the marital status variable. This is with an arithmetic mean of "54.47" and a standard deviation of "27.95" for singles. As for "married", the arithmetic mean was 43.82" with a standard deviation of "28.27". We also used the T-test and found that the value of the test (T) is (1.705) and the degree of significance of the test (Sig) is (0.091), which is greater than the significance level (0.05), meaning that the first hypothesis is met.

The researchers attribute this result to the great similarity in the ages of the players, and despite their differences in family status and the diversity of their pressures, the players do not suffer from burnout to a large extent, as they have few bouts of anxiety and frustration due to good preparation and lack of overtraining. They are characterized by psychological stability and have experiences of success among athletes. This is confirmed by the study of Al-Nahi Essam Mohammed (2007), whose results reached: Both international and first-class referees enjoy a good level of physical and psychological preparation in a way that contributes to facing the pressures of competition, including the phenomenon of burnout. The competence and experience of international and first-class referees in the performance of leading the match work to limit the occurrence of the phenomenon of burnout. This differed from the study of Al-Saadawi Mohsen Ali et al. (2009), whose results showed a high level of burnout among players of clubs in the Premier League, and the variation in the level of burnout, which was high, and the existence of a correlation between the level of burnout and the concept of self.

## **Discussion of the General Hypothesis:**

Text of the General Hypothesis: The level of burnout among soccer players is average.

As shown in Tables (5) and (6), we note the absence of significant differences between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical mean. This indicates that the level of burnout among soccer players is within the average range. This means that the level of burnout among soccer players is average, as stated in the general hypothesis. This study is consistent with the study by Samira Arabi et al. (2007), which showed that the level of burnout among soccer coaches in Jordan was within the average level. The study also concluded that the coach's rank (International AB) has an impact on the level of burnout. The study results indicated that the higher the coach's rank, the lower his level of burnout. This study also agreed with the study by Muhammad Janan (2014), where the researcher concluded that there is a significant correlation between the level of burnout and the final results in the league. Researchers explain that players, no matter how motivated they are to achieve success and how motivated they are to avoid failure in an attempt to achieve excellence, we find that football players suffer from psychological burnout, even if it is to a moderate degree in its three dimensions. This is due to the pressure of performance, results, and fans. We find that psychological preparation, the player's experience, and the importance of competitions control psychological burnout.

## Conclusions and suggestion

- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among soccer players attributed to the variable of age (younger than 23 years, older than 23 years), which is confirmed in the first hypothesis.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among soccer players attributed to the variable of age (married, single), which is confirmed in the second hypothesis.
- From the above, we generally conclude that soccer players suffer from burnout, albeit to a moderate degree in its three dimensions.

## Suggestions:

- Focus on the presence of a specialized psychological trainer in all teams and in various divisions.
- Reducing media pressure by educating players on how to deal with the media.
- Managing time between training, matches, and rest.
- Strengthening team spirit to enhance relationships among players.
- Emphasizing psychological training courses.
- Ensuring good sleep to improve mental and psychological health.
- Setting realistic, achievable goals to avoid frustration.

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