

Mental Toughness among Footballers: A Case Study

M.S. Omar-Fauzee

Universiti Utara Malaysia & Sports Academy, Universiti Putra Malaysia

E-mail: dromarfauzee@yahoo.com

Yudha H. Saputra

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Norinda Samad

Sports Academy, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Zeinab Gheimi

Sports Academy, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Mohd Nizam Asmuni

Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)

Mastura Johar

Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN)

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the mental toughness perceived by selected the National football players. A sample of twelve Malaysian footballers (current and ex-players), aged 19 to 57 years old agreed to participate. All of them have been playing in the Malaysia National Football League that consists of four former national footballers, four former state footballers and four currently active footballers. Among them, five individuals are active as a coach. A semi-structure interview scheduled was used in the research. All of the respondents have signed the informed consent letter for tape-recorded during the interviewed. The transcribed verbatim from the tapes were content analyzed by the authors to identify the themes. Results show that eight themes emerged from the interviews, which are motivation, negative energy, self-confidence, positive energy, visual and imagery control, patriotic spirit, perseverance and attention control. Almost all of the themes have been identified by previous researchers (i.e., Fourie & Potgieter, 2001; Jones, Hanton & Connoughton, 2002; 2007; and Loehr, 1986), except for patriotic and perseverance. Recommendations for further research also suggested.

Keyword: Mental Toughness, Football players, Motivation, Patriotic Spirit and perseverance.

INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most significant current discussions in sports today and is one of the most successful sports in the world. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in this sport among Malaysian (Douglas 1989). The past decade has seen the rapid development of football in many countries like England, Spain, Italy and German team which has proved a quality and world standard game, despite of local and domestic league. However, in Malaysia, there is increasingly concern that quality of the players is not at par both international and domestic team players (Mingguan Malaysia, 2008). Although, Malaysia has won the South East Asia Championship at SEA Games 2010, however, their capacity in Asia region is still far behind from Japan, South Korea, Iran or Iraq. The issue on the quality of the game and the players has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the field of these sports. Quality game needs quality players and mental toughness played a key role in order to achieve success in every game played (Bull & Shambrook, 2004). Team managers, Sir Alex Ferguson and Sven-Groan Eriksson agreed that mental toughness does contribute to their team success and it is also important component that applies during the local football league (Bull & Shambrook, 2004). Therefore, mental toughness is an important component in the success of sports event. Perhaps, mental skills reduce the anxiety level and build up confidence among athletes (Dominikus, Fauzee, Abdullah, Meesin, & Choosakul, 2009). Furthermore, it also helps to create good imagery and coping strategies in sports performances (Omar-Fauzee, Wan Daud, Abdullah, & Abd Rashid, 2009). On the other hand, Loehr (1986) had reported 50% success in sports is due to psychological impact concerning mental strength among athletes and coaches. In addition, other study in mental toughness by Gould et al. (1987), found that coaches agrees that mental toughness contribute to their team performance. Gould et al. (2002) in his study found that the champion and high performance athlete in Olympic game confesses that mental toughness factors contribute to their success. However, is the football team rank over 140 in the world having the same mental strength with the top 100 teams?

Moreover, Loehr (1986) defines mental strength as the ability to perform consistently at the optimum level during the competition when needed. There are seven (7) components of mental toughness, 1) Self confident 2) Negative energy control 3) Focus control 4) Imagery and visualization 5) Motivation level 6) Positive energy control and 7)Cognitive and behavioral control. However, in Fourie and Potgieter (2001) study done among 131 expert coaches (in certain sports specifically) and 160 athletes from elite groups found that there are 12 components of mental toughness. The components are motivation, coping skill, confident maintenance, cognitive skill, discipline and goal directedness, competitiveness, possession of prerequisite physical and mental requirement, team unity, preparation skill, psychological hardiness and ethics.

In addition, Jones et al. (2002) points out that there are four (4) main factors and 12 components of mental toughness. The first factor is mental preparation and attitude before any competition attain. The two components involve are self believe and focus. Second factor, are during the competition and the three components involve are long goal target as motivation, ability to control surrounding and performing at the maximum during training session. Thirdly, during the whole period of competition with six components involved. The components are self

believe, always focus, performance control, stress control, readiness and cognitive and emotional control. Lastly, the fourth factor is after the competition and the components are the willingness to accept lost and win. One major criticism by Crust (2008) concerning the study done by Jones et al. (2002), the study is narrower down to mental toughness in sports aspect using scientific approach. Perhaps this situation is important to observe and understand how athletes show their mental toughness level as a whole and complete structure. However, mental toughness is not only referring to psychological factor but also involved emotionally and physically through behavior during the competition performs and in their everyday life (Brown 2001; John & David; 2001). The purpose of this study is to examine the mental toughness perceived by Malaysian footballers.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research methodology using the in-depth interview technique was employed in this research. Interview is one of the practical ways to open more space for ideas and topic from respondent. Respondent will feel free to express their view through their experience from the question proposed (Orlick & Partington, 1988) and able to answer and building ideas when they express their view in future research (Sabine, 2003). The semi structured and open ended set of questions forms were used to collect data from respondent. The semi structured and open ended set of questions has been chosen by researcher due to the freedom of developing question and respondent will be able to express more freely and critically (Glynis et al. 2006; Sidek Mohd Noah, 2002; & Jackson, 1995). The tools used had been verified by expert in the area of sports psychology from University Putra Malaysia. A pilot study had been carried out between 20-second year in Physical education degree students and one lecturer non-respondent to get the understanding and its reliability of the tools. Experts have identified and verify that the questions appropriate for the research concern. However, interview should be done with proper procedure and face to face between researcher and respondent to receive direct information (Sabine 2003 & Sidek 2002). Tape recorder is used during the interview and it can be replayed if data is needed at anytime around for verification (Patton 1990). However, short notes were also taken during the interview for easier identification of main ideas during data process later (Glynis et al. 2006). The uniformity during interview session is also important and that is the reason why researcher using the same sets of question forms and same interviewer to all interviews.

The initial sample consisted of 12 athletes and all of the participants were aged between 19 and 59 at the beginning of the study. The subjects were selected based on a degree of homogeneity of which four people (33.4%) were ex-national football players experienced playing at international level. The other four was states players (33%) participating at national level which include "Malaysia league" and "Piala Emas Raja-raja league" representing their states and the last four respondents (33.3%) were current national team players whom still actively participating in local league. Among the ex-national players, one respondent performing more than 11 years and had received 251 caps while the rest of the respondent had less than five years of experiences. However, four of the respondents (33.4%) played the attack position, while three players played midfield and defend (25%) and two respondents were the goalkeeper position (16.7%).

To control for bias, all the transcript measurements were re-typed and send back to the respondents to verify the content described. The specific theme was identified for analysis process, and the themes identified were 1) raw data theme; 2) Second data theme and 3) Main theme. Firstly, the data was recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed by listening to all the interviews repeatedly to understand the whole idea before identifying the themes. Second step, after understanding the whole transcript, only than raw data theme was identified and at this stage or step data were collected most. Researcher will rearrange all the common statement into a common theme identified for data process analysis.

The third step, the data were divided into sub category after arranging the statement and were label into first and second theme to form specific dimension. Inductive analysis is applied to identify raw data theme and last step to built specific dimension in order to draw the real picture of mental toughness components among football players perception in Malaysia.

RESULTS

This finding has important implications for developing and identifying mental toughness components among Malaysian ex-footballers. Two hundred and thirty-eight raw data were extract from six respondent involved in this study, and further been categorized into 15 second data theme (Table 1) and eight main themes (Table 2). The results of this study indicate eight main themes of mental toughness profile from the respondent which include 1) motivation 2) negative energy control 3) self confident 4) Positive energy control 5) Imagery and visualization control 6) Patriotic Spirit 7) Patient 8) Focus control (Table 3)

These findings further support that the first component identified is motivation. **Motivation component contribute 21.9 %**, the highest mental toughness main theme among ex Malaysian football players. Referring to table 2, intrinsic motivation include self motivation and individual spirit. As mentioned in the literature review, the themes were excluded from the interview as respondent One responded: *"if we observe our ex player, they are highly motivated playing for their country, Malaysia, and if they played at this condition, normally their mental already have the perception that they will win the game."*

The second component identified is **negative energy and it contribute 19.2%**, and most respondent refers stress and pressure as part of negative energy. The statement can be clearly identify from respondent 2 and 4. *"To me mental stress err...the ability to control pressure, it is done conciously, this is my understanding about mental toughness"*. However, respondent 4 says that *"mental toughness come from own self strength and it will absorb pressure, we should not play when we are stress or pressured as it will pressure our mental and will effect performance"*. So, negative feelings, such as anger, fear and anxiety will contribute stress and increase pressure among players, and if players could not control this situation and if the situation is being exploid, it will become a problem and will ruin the players performance.

It is apparent from the component themes in table 3 that self confident component consist of self disipline and knowledge and **self-confident contribute 13.7%** and it is the third important component in mental toughness that have been identified among the football players. In

addition, discipline and knowledge is part of self confident component and it is important to the respondent.

Further analysis on self-confident component showed from the respondent statement is *“usually if someone with high self confident, they naturally will increase their own performance and does not border about anything else except on the competition or event, and anything that borders his mental, he can easily excludes it from his mind”*. However, respondent 1 added, *“meaning when we are in the field, we must always think we are better off than the other team. We must have this mind set....don’t ever say that we gonna lost the game before compete even though, how good the other team is, for example Selangor team during that time around was one of the best in Malaysia...and every time when meet up with Selangor, most team will declare losing before even compete. We need to throw away the negative mind set and must set their own mind that they are good and can win the game”*

Perhaps, self confident is a critical element during important event or match especially when meet up with strong opponents. In addition, respondent 8 added *“discipline is needed among players...rest is should be taken before any competition the next day. Late rest at 2-3am prior to competition is not a good and healthy thing to do...if we have good and enough sleep, we will be able to perform at our best...so it is all about self-discipline. We should know what is best for us and our performance and it is discipline”*. Respondent 10 also agrees with discipline element as mental toughness. *“Must have self discipline and they talk about discipline yet they don’t really understand the actual meaning...like me, I always pack all my things earlier if I gonna have training in the evening. Get ready my shoes and things, or else I don’t pack...if no game. Therefore, with self-discipline an individual will be able to maintain their performance and always ready to upgrade him or herself. However, knowledge is also an important element in self-confident because with knowledge, players can utilize their efforts at its optimum. Referring to respondent 11, “knowledge is important because only with it can guarantee future undertaking...than only we have a piece of mind to play. A lot of things to learn...and then only can become discipline, can develop and easy to deliver new things...without knowledge how to be a good player especially football event will be difficult later...”*

The fourth component refers to **positive energy (11.2%)**. Positive energy is needed to control and change into mental toughness. Most of the respondent refers positive energy to enjoyment during performing and the team cohesiveness besides feeling good on all the effort done. Respondent 7 says: *“if we played without stress, meaning we can play freely and have a free of mind...we won’t feel tired and most important we will enjoy playing “enjoy the game...coz if we play did not enjoy the game, indirectly we will feel stress, and stress will destroy our fitness even though we are at the peak of our fitness level”*. This statement proof that positive element which include happiness and enjoyable will increase the mental toughness of the respondernt. However, respondent 1 had mentioned about doing it at the maximum effort element: *“my needs is strong in playing football, that is why i played at my maximum effort..all because of my own self not anyone else...”* The latter point has been support by respondent 9: *“we always do....err...we should play at our maximum effort even though we are underdog team...because even underdog team can make surprises...and it is a big thing....”*

The fifth components is **imagery and visualization control (9.5%)** which refer to the readiness of one's physical and mind before any competition. Physical preparation is involving watching video of a football match. However, imagery skill is also important in planning for future game specifically on the movement and strategy of the game. Below stated is the respond from respondent 5 & 6: *"I love watching video.....even during the training I do watched video....I observe how excellent team perform...and I will follow the best...its difficult...because I could not depend and get all from the coach at times I cannot perform all that I saw in the video, normally I will practice during my training most of the skill that I adapt from watching those video...but as a goal keeper not much I can adapt...especially during penalty...I have to think fast, chose what I should do...wish I could try the skills but most of the time I didn't make it..."* added by another respondent: *"Most of the time we do try the skill, we will imagine first, mental imagery for the next game...this is what we always do..."*

The sixth component is **patriotic spirit (9.3%)** which consist the element of the high spirit of love towards their country. The feeling and high spirit is in them with the responsibility to carry the good name of Malaysia when they representing the national team: *"I say that when we representing our country we must have the spirit towards own country. Meaning, once we put on the national jersey, our spirit must be strong. That's why last time if we were to compare today, our spirit is very high during the game. That is the reason why if we lost; we could not accept the facts as we could not face the people and fans"*

In addition, this view were also supported by another respondent : *" First time when I played for national team, the spirit towards the country is high and all players must have this spirit every time when they are in the field, because we bringing along our country name, and if we perform outside Malaysia, we are like diplomat representing our country..."* While another respondent added; *what I can see now. Our players are not like that...like carry the Malaysian flag... but patriotic spirit less...patriotic spirit is a Yes!..It is good..."*

The seventh component is **patient (8.5%)** referring more to the religion and believes of oneself to help increase mental toughness. Respondent 3 focus on the patient as one of the most important element: *"Patient....is important and in Islam, patient is part of faith..."* he added *"since my school time till now I only got 1 red card...it shows that how patient a person through red card...haa..."* Respondent 5 added: *"Patient is very important especially during the game...anything can happen...the opponent will attack, provoke to raise our anger...so if we are not patient enough...We cannot become the national team players..."*

Last component is focus control (6.7%) which include concentration and has been mentioned many times as one of the important factors in mental toughness within the football players. Statement from respondent six: *"concentrate...concentrate...we must concentrate on whatever we do, think positive...crowd is another issue...we are in the field...I will start concentrate normally after lunch as we know we gonna played the game, take care of my food...just eat what is needed by the body only..."*

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that there are eight components of mental toughness that had been identified as the influence factor to both the ex and the existing Malaysia football team's performance. The results were similar with the previous work in this field where motivation components in the contact of extrinsic can increase intrinsic motivation (Shojaei & Ghasem, 2007; Cox 1998). In addition, Bandura (1986) and Omar-Fauzee et al., (2009) relate his study between motivation and positive high spirit words to increase athletes motivation level and also increase the highest performance specifically in football. These findings further support the idea of Jefry Ngaiman and Mohd Sofian (2002) and Morris and Summer (1995) which suggested that, athlete with lower intrinsic motivation level will prefer to join result oriented event (prizes will only given to the winner) if the value of the prizes is worth with their effort for them to excel. A possible explanation for this might be the reasons why our current national players are not highly motivated when compete internationally as they knew their performance level could not compete with the world level teams. However, it is encouraging to compare this with the former ex football players whose intrinsic motivation was high without bordering about the extrinsic frills given during their competition. A football player with high motivation in them normally will put an extra effort with a planned goal to overcome their weakness in order to increase their performance incrementally (Mohd daun, Mohd Zain & Mohd Sofian, 2004) at time to time. Another important finding was high motivation level would definitely increase focus, which will boost them to act, and will have the positive impact (Arnold & Jack, 2002) and findings by Durand-Bush et al. (2007) high commitment and motivation contribute to every games success. Therefore, it is important to know how we can increase motivation at time to time.

Negative energy refer to the element of pressure which can contribute to good or bad implication from players own negative feeling such as anger, arousal and anxiety. Jefferey and Mohd Sofian (2002) support that there are two types of energy effort, one is negative effort will add hardness while positive effort will boost up performance in their game among the respondent. These findings further support the idea from Ruzli and Mohd Sofian (2002), coaches should deliver their message to the athlete using effective communication to avoid pressuring them, as pressure will lead to players not enjoying the game played and they will not feel free to speak up if they need to share their ideas because in the situation of uncertainty (Vincent & Mohd Sofian 2002) which will lead to more difficult situation. Therefore, enjoyment and satisfaction during performance are an important element so that players have no pressure which could ruin their performance during competition. Negative thinking during competition will contribute to bad performance (Mohd Safrussahar & Mohd Sofian 2002) especially high level players during international game, need to have skill to control negative energy (Golby & Shread 2003). Players with strong mental toughness would be able to manipulate situation and absorb pressure and bring goodwill to themselves. Thus, mental skill will also help to reduce anxiety and increase the confidence level of the athletes (Dominikus, Fauzee, Abdullah, Meesin, & Choosakul, 2009).

Prior studies have noted the importance of self confident as one of the components in mental toughness and the results of this study indicate that self-confident is the third components

identified. However, another important finding by Jefferey and Mohd Sofian, (2002) shows that, self confident and the belief of own physical and mental capability to perform will contribute to mental toughness to the athletes. Moreover, with a discipline and good training aspect will lead to athlete's mental toughness (Mohd Shafrussahar & Mohd Sofian 2002). Athletes with low self confident will pressured own self when they are stressed despite of non important matters (Vincent & Mohd Sofian 2002) compared with high self confident athletes (Ling & Mohd Sofian 2002). It is interesting to note that base on cases of this study, the relationship between athlete's performance and their self confident during both national and international event is important factor to develop their mental toughness during competition with a stronger team. Thus, self confident s an important component in controlling the game and contribute to one's mental toughness during long tough league like "Super league and 'Malaysia league"

This study has found that generally positive energy is the fourth components that influence the respondend during the game period which than all the obstacle faced can be overcome as Zainizam dan Mohd Sofian (2002) suggested that satisfaction and enjoyment is the strong key motivation factors for them to perform with the positive condition surround them. The positive feeling is very critical before any game to which help boost their confident level and performance as it create an enjoyable and team cohesiveness. With positive condition, naturally the negative feelings such as anxiety and arousal will not felt.

The fifth component identified in this study is visual and imagery control. It is found that through this component respondend were able to prepare themselves mentally prior to competition by structuring and controlling the game before the actual game. In addition, Cox (1998) and Hannaham et al. (1995) identified that imagery training will increase skill movement and control during the actual game. While Block (1983) and Rattanakoses, et.al, (2009) identify that imagery is picturing and visualising future game situation. However, the importance of applying visual during imagery training in basket ball (Kendall, et al & Kendall 1990), tennis (Efran, Lesser, & Spiller 1994), figure skating (Ming & Martin 1996), golf putting (Beauchamp & Koestner 1996) dan athletics (Abma et al. 2002) in Golby & Shread (2003), added the the importance of imagery is the ability to train the football players to strategize their ports skill without involving their physical and the environment status but it involve all others senses to program the players mind set as schedule. This will help players able to perform the mental and visualized skill and at the same time performing or applying the same skill directly during the competition. Example scissor kick skill can be easily perform when players has already visualize and imagining the skill during their mental training session.

The current study found that patriotic spiritual component played an important role to the National player's mental toughness. This is because of their high motivation towards the good name of their country and their team, specifically Malaysia. It is found that the patriotic spiritual component is needed in every players own self particularly those who played for the country. This finding supports previous research into this brain area which links patriotic spiritual component and mental toughness as it is important to priorities their responsibility for their national team with others commitment. They should sacrifice their time, energy and money for their national team and country without taking into consideration on financial and

expecting rewards from the government/country. To achieve team success, team cohesiveness and team's spirit factors should be inside the players mind set. Through this context will contribute to a better game. Patriotic spirit and love for the country should be in the players to win the championship. Experts in sports psychology like Bandura (1997), Weinberg and Gould (1999) and Vallerand, et al. (1996) had showed this spirit does contribute success. Team work is also found as one of the main issues contributed to the team's success. Athletes should be able to put all their heart and commitment during both the training and competition, able to admit their wrongs and improve mistake done at time to time in order to succeed.

These findings suggest that patience is the seventh components in mental toughness found among the football athletes. This study found that patience component had been the player's challenge and test in order to sustain them at the level they are. Hence, this element had made them strong, motivated to able them to stay longer, and played for their country. Having believing in one selves and high self-confident will contribute to physical and mental capabilities to succeed. However, if players have patience in them, it will make the players able to control in every game they played (Jeffrey & Mohd Sofian, 2001). Besides above mentioned, players believe in religion and spiritual are the factors that contribute to their inspiration and confident.

The last component of mental toughness found in this study is attention control that are player's focus and concentration basically due to the process of cognitive activities (Galotti 1994). However, concentration is still influence by players anxiety and self confident (Ziya et al., 2007). This is a positive relationship between concentration and self confident where concentration decrease, players self confident also decreases and vice versa. Therefore, players should focus and gave full commitment to the game played as fitness and environmental factors contributed to player's focus control especially during long period of game.

SUGGESTION

In this investigation, the aim was to assess important information regarding mental toughness components among Malaysia's football players. Taken together, these results suggest that both the management and coaches should plan, develop and design program tailored to their needs based on the components identified. An implication of this is the possibility that athletes too, should improve their performance through these findings. Further survey through qualitative investigations are needed to develop tools to measure how athletes can improve their mental toughness during challenging situations or maintain their ability when leading. Therefore, a more comprehensive data is needed to measure those athlete involving in 'Super league' dan 'Malaysia league' and representing Malaysia at any time and place during and after the competition when needed.

CONCLUSION

More information on respondent would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter as this research study only focus on the current local active football players only.

Moreover, more national football players should be made available to get inferential population and significant. With all the eight components identified in the findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice on the best performance respondent to find their point of views. Since this study is particularly focus on Malaysian footballers by a group of researchers from two nations, Malaysia and Indonesia, therefore similar study also can be conducted with Indonesia players who rank over 120 in the FIFA ranking.

REFERENCES

- Arnold, L., & Jack, R.N. (2002). *Sport Psychology* (3rd Ed.) California: Wodsworth Group.
- Aufenanger, S. J. (2005). Relationship between mental skill and competitive anxiety interpretation in open skill and closed skill athlete. Miami University, Oxford, Ohio
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy. The exercise of control.* New York: W.H. Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN 013815514X.
- Brown, J. (2001). *Sport Talent : How to Identify and Develop Outstanding Athlete.* Champaign, ILL: Human Kinetic.
- Bull, S., & Shambrook, C. (2004). *Soccer, the mind game. Seven steps to achieving mental toughness.* Reedsward publishing, USA.
- Cox, R.H. (1998). *Sport Psychology: Concepts and Applications* . (4th ed.). Boston:MA:McGraw-Hill.
- Crust, L. (2008). A review and conceptual re-examination of mental toughness: Implications for future research. *Personality and individual differences* (2008), doi:10.1016/j.paid.2008.07.005.
- Dominikus, F., Fauzee, M. S. O., Abdullah, M. C., Meesin, C., Choosakul, C. (2009). Relationship between mental skill and anxiety interpretation in secondary school hockey athletes. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 9, 651-658.
- Douglas, S.A. (1989). *Sport in Malaysia.* In E.A. Wagner, (ed) *Sport in Asia and Africa: A Comparative handbook*, pg 165-182. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Fourie, S., & Potgieter, J. R. (2001). The nature of mental toughness in sport. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, Vol. 23, 63-72.
- Galloti, K.M. (1994). *Cognitive psychology in and out of the laboratory.* Pacific Gouve, CA : Brooks/Cole.
- Garry, K., & Jolly, R. (2007). Goal profiles, mental toughness and its influence outcomes among Wusyu athletes.
- Glyn, R., Kevin, S.S., & Cynthia, L. P. (1992). *Learning Experience in Sport Psychology* (2nd Ed.). USA. Human Kinetic
- Glynis, M.B., Sean, M., Chris, F., & Jonathan, A. S. (2006). *Research methods in psychology* (3rd ed.). London:Thousand Oaks.
- Golby, J., & Shread, M. (2003). Mental toughness and hardiness at Different Level of Rugby League. *Personality and Individual Differences*. Vol. 37, 5, 933-942.

- Gould, D., Hodge, K., Peterson, K., & Petlichkoff, L. (1987). Psychological foundations of coaching: Similarities and differences among intercollegiate wrestling coaches. *Sport Psychologist*, Vol. 1, 293-308.
- Gould, D., Dieffenbach, K. & Moffet, A. (2002) Psychological characteristics and their development in Olympic champion. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, Vol. 14, 172-204.
- Hafidzah A. K. & Mohd Sofian O. F (2004). Kesan latihan Mental Imageri Ke Atas Peningkatan Prestasi Sukan.[The effect of mental imagery towards sports performance]. In Mohd Sofian Omar Fauzee (Ed.). *Aspek-aspek psikologi dalam membina motivasi & Estim Kendiri Atlet* [Psychological aspects in building self-esteem and motivation], pg 37-67, Kuala Lumpur: Karisma Publications. .
- Hannaham, C., Tetreau, B. & Sarrizin, C. (1995). Use of imagery while performing dance movement. *International Journal of Psychology*, 26, 413-430
- Jackson, S. A. (1995). Factors influencing the occurrence of flow state in elite athletes. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 7, 138-166.
- Jefferey, L.F. L, & Mohd Sofian, O. F. (2002). Masalah sosial dan kesepaduan. [Social problems and cohesion]. In Mohd Sofian Omar Fauzee (Ed.). *Pendekatan psikologi dalam menangani masalah atlit* [Psychological perspectives in overcoming athlete problems], pg 116-136, Kuala Lumpur: Karisma Publications.
- Jefry Ngaiman & Mohd Sofian, O.F. (2002). Latihan relaksasi untuk mengawal tahap kebangkitan dikalangan atlit. [The relaxation skills to control the arousal among athletes]. In Psikologi Sukan: *Daya tahan mental dan emosi dikalangan atlit. [Sports Psychology: Mental endurance and emotion among athletes]*, pg 113-127, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors.
- John. L., & David. R. M. (2001). *Mental toughness training manual for baseball/softball player*.
- Jones, G., Hanton, S., & Connaughton, D. (2002). What is this thing called mental toughness? An investigation of elite sport performers. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, Vol. 14.
- Jones, G., Hanton, S., & Connaughton, D. (2007). A framework of mental toughness in the world's best performers. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, Vol. 21, 243-264.
- Kendall, Hrycaiko, Martin and Kendall (1990). The effects of an imagery rehearsal, relaxation, and self-talk package on basketball game performance. *Journal of sport & Exercise psychology*, Vol. 12, 157-166.
- Loehr, J.E. (1982). *Athletic excellence: Mental toughness training for sports*. Forum Publishing Company.
- Loehr, J.E. (1986). *Mental toughness training for sports: Achieving athletic excellence*. Lexington, MA: Stephen Greene Press.

Mingguan Malaysia (2008). Kita Sudah Terlalu Lama di Tangga Tercorot – Azizuddin.[We have long been in lower ranking-Azizuddin].

Mohd Daud, Mohd Zain dan, & Mohd Sofian O.F. (2004). Halangan-halangan untuk bermotivasi.[The restrictions of motivations]. In Mohd Sofian Omar Fauzee (Ed.) In *Aspek-aspek psikologi dalam membina motivasi & estim sendiri atlet.[The psychological aspects in building the self esteem and motivations]*, pg 68-82, Kuala Lumpur: Karisma Publications.

Mohd Shafrossahar Yusof & Mohd Sofian, O.F. (2002). Kekuatan imageri dan acara meningkatkan disiplin pemain. [The power of imagery in improving athletes diciplines]. In Mohd Sofian Omar Fauzee (Ed.). *Pendekatan psikologi dalam menangani masalah atlit. [Psychological perspectives in overcoming athlete problems]* pg 1-24, Kuala Lumpur: Karisma Publications.

Omar-fauzee, M. S., Daud, N., Kamaruddin, K., Yusof, A., Geok, S. K., Nazaruddin, M. N., Aman, S., & Salikon, R. H. (2009). *What's make university student particular in sport. European Journal of Social Science, 8*, 449-458.

Omar-Fauzee, M.S., Wan Daud, W.R., Abdullah, R., & Abd Rashid, S. (2009). The effectiveness of imagery and coping strategies in sport performance. *European Journal of Social Sciences, 9*, 97-108.

Orlick T. & Partington J. (1988). Mental links to excellence. *The Sport Psychologist, 2*, 105-130.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CA:Sage.

Rattanakoses, R., Omar-Fauzee, M.S., Geok, S.K., Abdullah, M. C., Choosakul, C., Nazaruddin, M.N., & Nordin, H. (2009). Evaluating the relationship of imagery and self-confidence in female and male athletes. *European Journal of Social Sciences, 10*, 129-142.

Sabine M. O. (2003). *How to conduct in-person interviews for surveys (2nd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sadeghi, H., Omar-Fauzee, M.S., Jamalis, M., As-Latif, R., & Cheric, M.C. (2009). The mental skills training of university soccer players. *International Education Studies, 3*, 81-90.

Shojaei. M., & Ghasem. A., (2007) Motivational Traits of Iranian Elite Soccer Player. *Journal of Sports Scince and Medicine. Vol.10*, 152-157.

Sidek Mohd Noah (2002). Reka bentuk penyelidikan: *Falsafah, Teori dan Praktis*. [Research methodology: Philosophy, theories and practices]. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang.

Stephen J. B., Christopher J. S., Wil, J., dan Jocelyn, E. B. (2005). Towards an Understanding of Mental Toughness in Elite English Criketers. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 17*, 209-227.

Tunney, J. (1987). Thoughts on the line. Mental toughness: Biceps for the mind. *Soccer Journal*, Vol. 32,49-50.

Vallerand, R.J., Forties, M.S., Guay, F. (1997). Self-determination and persistence in a real life setting: Toward a motivation Model of high School dropout. *Journal of personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 72, 1161-1176.

Vincent A. Pranabas & Mohd Sofian, O.F. (2002). Meningkatkan Motivasi Atlit. [*Increasing athletes motivations*]. In Mohd Sofian O.F.(Ed.). *Pendekatan psikologi dalam menangani masalah atlit. [Psychological perspectives in overcoming athlete problems]* (pg 25-51). Karisma Publications. Kuala Lumpur

Wienberg, R. S., & Gould, V. D. (1999). Character Development and Sportmanship. *Foundation for sport and exercise psychology*. 2nd ed., Champaign, ILL: Human Kinetics.

Zainizam Mohd Yasin & Mohd Sofian, O. F. (2002). Bagaimanakah maklum balas, pengukuhan dan motivasi intrinsik membantu atlet mencapai kejayaan? [How the feedback, reinforcement and intrinsic motivation help atlet to success?] In Mohd Sofian Omar Fauzee (ed). *Psikologi sukan : Aplikasi teori dan praktikal. [Sports psychology: Application of practical and theory]*. Kuala Lumpur : Utusan Publications & Distributors.

Ziya. K., Nihan. A., Sertan, K., & Serdar, K. (2007) Competitive anxiety and Concentration Levels of Football Players. *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*. Vol.10,

Table 1:
Raw Data of Mental Toughness Components of Football Players in Malaysia

| Mental Toughness Components | No's of Raw Data | (%) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 1. Confident | | |
| Confident | 8 | 3.4 |
| Self | 8 | 3.4 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|----|------|
| Self Strength | 5 | 2.1 |
| Self Immunity | 3 | 1.3 |
| 2. Discipline | | |
| Discipline | 12 | 5.0 |
| Priority | 2 | 0.8 |
| 3. Knowledge | | |
| Knowledge | 9 | 3.8 |
| Pendidikan | 2 | 0.8 |
| Self Learn | 1 | 0.4 |
| 4. Positive Feelings | | |
| Enjoyment | 3 | 1.3 |
| Understanding | 3 | 1.3 |
| Positive | 2 | 0.8 |
| Satisfied | 1 | 0.4 |
| 5. Emotional Strength | | |
| Consistent | 9 | 3.8 |
| Respectfulness | 3 | 1.3 |
| Rebellious | 1 | 0.4 |
| Strong Will | 1 | 0.4 |
| 6. Patience | | |
| Patience | 11 | 4.6 |
| Prayer | 3 | 1.3 |
| Pray | 3 | 1.3 |
| Religious | 1 | 0.4 |
| 7. Pressure | | |
| Pressure | 26 | 10.9 |
| Stress | 8 | 3.4 |
| 8. Feelings | | |
| Frustrated | 4 | 1.7 |
| Emotional | 3 | 1.3 |
| Anxiety | 1 | 0.4 |
| Give up | 1 | 0.4 |
| 9 Extrinsic Factors | | |
| Problems | 3 | 1.3 |
| Shiver | 1 | 0.4 |
| 10. Physical preparation | | |
| Preparation | 7 | 3.0 |
| Watch Video | 3 | 1.3 |
| 11. Mental Preparation | | |
| Imagery | 2 | 0.8 |
| Mind relax | 1 | 0.4 |
| 12. Concentration | | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Concentration | 11 | 4.7 |
| Focus | 3 | 1.3 |
| 13. Extrinsic Motivation | | |
| Pay | 9 | 3.8 |
| Support | 2 | 0.8 |
| Reward | 2 | 0.8 |
| Galakan | 1 | 0.4 |
| 14. Intrinsic Motivation | | |
| Spirit | 16 | 6.7 |
| Self Motivation | 15 | 6.3 |
| Objective | 7 | 3.0 |
| Heart | 2 | 0.8 |
| Goals | 2 | 0.8 |
| Ambition | 2 | 0.8 |
| Wants | 1 | 0.4 |
| Self talk | 1 | 0.4 |
| 15. Patriotic Spirit | | |
| Patriotic | 5 | 2.1 |
| Songs & Flag | 3 | 1.3 |
| Responsible | 2 | 0.8 |
| Country | 2 | 0.8 |
| Dedication | 1 | 0.4 |
| TOTAL | 238 | 100 |

Table 2: Hirarchical Structure of Main Theme Components of Mental Toughness

| <u>Raw Data (Element)</u> | <u>Second Theme</u> | <u>Main Theme (Components)</u> | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Spirit | Insrinsic Motivation | MOTIVATION (1) | |
| Self-Motivation | | | |
| Onjective | | | |
| Goals | | | |
| Ambition | | | |
| Wants | | | |
| Self Talk | | | |
| Salary | Extrinsic Motivation | MOTIVATION (1) | |
| Reward | | | |
| Surpport | | | |
| Frustrated | Feelings | | NEGATIVE ENERGY (2) |
| Anger | | | |
| Emotion | | | |
| Anxiety | | | |
| Give Up | Pressure | | |
| Pressure | | | |
| Stress | | | |
| Load | Self Confident | | |
| 655 | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Self | | Confident | } | CONFIDENT (3) |
| Self Strength | | | | |
| Imune | | | | |
| Consistent | } | Emotional Strenght | } | |
| Trust | | | | |
| Respect | | | | |
| Enjoy | } | Positive Energy | } | POSITIVE ENERGY (4) |
| Understanding | | | | |
| Satisfaction | | | | |
| Happy | | | | |
| Positive Thinking | | | | |
| Imagery | } | Mental Preparation | } | VISUAL & IMAGERY CONTROL (5) |
| Visualization | | | | |
| Relax mind | } | Physical Preparation | } | |
| Shadow | | | | |
| Tengok video | | | | |
| Tectical | | | | |
| Patriotic | } | Spirit to the Country | } | PATRIOTIC SPIRIT (6) |
| Country | | | | |
| National Aterm | | | | |
| National Flag | | | | |
| Patience | } | Patience | } | PATIENCE (7) |
| Tough | | | | |
| Prayer | } | Religion | } | |
| Pray | | | | |
| Religion | | | | |
| Concentration | } | Concentration | } | FOCUS CONTROL (8) |
| Focus | | | | |
| Specific | | | | |

Table 3: Mental Toughness Structure

