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SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

False Confidence and Behavioral-Psychological Balance and Their Relationship with Rational and Irrational Thoughts among Futsal Players

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the levels of false confidence, behavioural psychological balance, and rational and irrational thoughts, as well as to investigate the relationships among these variables in futsal players. To achieve this objective, the researchers developed scales for measuring false confidence and behavioural psychological balance, while the standardized scale for rational and irrational thoughts, developed by Aseel Naji, was adopted for use in the current research. The researchers employed the descriptive method using a correlational approach, as it was deemed the most appropriate for the nature and objectives of the study. The research population consisted of players from Iraqi futsal clubs during the 2024–2025 season, representing the following teams: Al-Sharqiya, Al-Janoub, Amanat Baghdad, Al-Intidhar, Alayat Al-Shurta, Naft Al-Basra, Baladiyat Al-Basra, Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi, Al-Shurta, Al-Murur, Naft Al-Wasat, Misafi Al-Wasat, Al-Thafar, Shabab Al-Basri, Gazi Al-Janoub, and Al-Jaysh. The total number of participants included in the research sample was 224 players from these official clubs. After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed it using the SPSS statistical software package. The findings revealed that behavioural psychological balance had a significantly positive influence on the level of rational thinking, contributing to players' ability to make more precise and consistent decisions under pressure. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended the implementation of structured training programs that raise players' awareness of the risks associated with false confidence, emphasizing the use of objective and continuous feedback to enhance self-awareness, psychological regulation, and performance consistency. and this achieves one of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations in Iraq which is (Quality Education).

Keywords: Behavioral-psychological balance, False confidence, Rational and irrational thoughts

1. Introduction

Self-confidence is a critical factor in achieving success across various sports, having been identified as one of the strongest predictors of superior performance. It significantly affects mental processes, focus, and how athletes interpret anxiety and tension before competitions. High confidence levels are associated with positive emotions and greater enjoyment of competition. Confidence also plays a central role in enhancing focus, goal-setting, and the effort exerted to achieve goals. Moreover, belief in one's abilities

empowers athletes to take risks and make bold decisions during play. Ultimately, self-confidence is fundamental to transforming potential into elite athletic performance.

While self-confidence is generally seen as a positive and essential component of athletic performance, excessive or false confidence may have the opposite effect and harm performance levels. This study seeks to define false confidence, explore its influence on futsal players' performance, examine potential causes of its development, distinguish it from genuine confidence, evaluate its measurement tools, and

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propose strategies to manage it and foster realistic confidence.

Futsal is a dynamic, fast-paced sport that requires high technical and physical skills and rapid and precise decision-making under pressure. Success in this competitive context goes beyond physical and technical readiness and is greatly influenced by players' psychological state. Confidence, emotional balance, and the ability to manage psychological pressures are pivotal in determining performance levels.

Psychological factors significantly affect athletic performance, as self-confidence and behavioral-psychological balance influence decision-making and performance under pressure. In futsal, with its fast pace and cognitive demands, false confidence can hinder optimal performance by leading players to make reckless decisions or underestimate the importance of training and continuous improvement. Conversely, psychological and behavioural balance contributes to better coping with pressures and challenges during matches (Ellis & Harper, 1997).

A key factor influencing these aspects is the type of thoughts a player adopts. Rational thoughts positively affect self-control and balanced performance, whereas irrational thoughts may lead to impulsive decisions or feelings of frustration. Based on this, the study examines the relationship between false confidence, behavioral-psychological balance, and rational and irrational thoughts among futsal players.

False confidence can be described as an exaggerated outward display of confidence that masks internal insecurity or lack of genuine belief in one's abilities. This form of confidence may lead players to underestimate opponents, neglect adequate preparation, or struggle to acknowledge their own mistakes.

According to Dunning et al. (2003) behavioural-psychological balance refers to harmony between the player's mental and emotional states and their behaviours and performance both on and off the field. This balance is believed to be significantly influenced by the nature of the player's thought processes.

Rational thoughts are characterized by flexibility, logic, and alignment with reality, and they foster healthy emotions and adaptive behaviours. In contrast, irrational thoughts are rigid, extreme, and illogical, resulting in unhealthy negative emotions and maladaptive behaviours that impede performance and goal achievement.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the psychological factors affecting futsal players' performance by analyzing the relationship between false confidence, behavioral-psychological balance, and rational and irrational thinking. The research problem is summarized in the following question:

What is the nature of the relationship between false confidence and behavioural-psychological balance on the one hand and rational and irrational thoughts on the other hand among futsal players?

1.1. Research objectives

- To assess the levels of false confidence, behavioral-psychological balance, and rational and irrational thoughts among futsal players.
- To explore the relationships between false confidence, behavioral-psychological balance, and both rational and irrational thoughts.
- To examine the presence of statistically significant differences among these variables.

2. Methodology and procedures

The researchers employed the descriptive correlational approach appropriate for addressing the research problem and objectives.

2.1. Research population and sample

The research population consisted of futsal club players from across Iraq during the 2024–2025 season, including the following teams: Al-Sharqiya, Al-Janoub, Amanat Baghdad, Al-Intidhar, Alayat Al-Shurta, Naft Al-Basra, Basra Municipality, Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi, Al-Shurta, Al-Murur, Naft Al-Wasat, Wasat Refineries, Al-Dhafar, Shabab Al-Basri, South Gas, and Al-Jaish. The total number of players was 224.

Table 1. Research sample distribution.

Research Population	Statistical Analysis Sample	Reliability Sample	Pilot Sample	Application Sample
224 players	100 players	20 players	20 players	84 players

Based on the Table 1 above, the total sample of 224 players was divided as follows: 100 players were assigned to the statistical analysis sample, 20 players to the reliability testing sample, 20 players to the pilot experiment sample, and 84 players to the main application sample.

2.2. Tools and instruments used

The researchers used the following tools and equipment: Arabic and English sources and references, psychological scales, data entry forms, previous studies, a manual calculator, a computer, papers, and pens.

2.3. Scale construction procedures

2.3.1. False confidence scale and behavioral-psychological balance scale

The researchers constructed a False Confidence Scale for futsal players. The items were drafted and presented to experts for evaluation, who assessed their validity, clarity, and whether any items required modification, deletion, or addition. After expert review, items with an agreement rate of 80% or more were retained, and the scale was finalized.

The final version of the scale consisted of 30 items distributed across five sub-dimensions:

1. Exaggeration in evaluating individual skills (6 items)
2. Unrealistic confidence in teamwork (6 items)
3. Denial of pressure and difficulty in decision-making (6 items)
4. Avoiding responsibility for mistakes (6 items)
5. Ignoring the need for self-improvement (6 items)

Using the following response options:

“Always applies to me,” “Often applies,” “Sometimes applies,” “Rarely applies,” and “Never applies.”

The False Confidence Scale’s total score ranges from a minimum of 30 points to a maximum of 150. points. As shown in [Appendix 1](#).

The Behavioral-Psychological Balance Scale consists of 35 items distributed across five dimensions:

1. Positive thinking – 8 items
2. Emotional regulation – 7 items
3. Psychological flexibility – 7 items
4. Behavioural control during play – 6 items
5. Psychological stability before and during matches – 7 items

This scale also uses the same five-point options. The total score ranges from 35 to 175 points. As shown in [Appendix 2](#).

The researchers conducted statistical analyses of the two scales (False Confidence and Behavioral-Psychological Balance) by calculating internal consistency coefficients to assess the discriminatory power of the items. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to achieve this purpose.

After reviewing the items with a panel of experts, the final version of the False Confidence Scale included 30 items, while the Behavioral-Psychological Balance Scale contained 35 items.

Subsequently, the researchers applied the Chi-square test (χ^2) to determine the validity of each item. The results showed that all items were statistically valid, as their calculated Chi-square values were lower than the critical value of 3.84 (at $df = 1$,

$p \leq 0.05$), indicating face validity for all items in both scales.

2.4. Reliability testing

According to Hussein [Mardan and Abd \(2006\)](#), a reliable test yields similar results when repeated under comparable conditions. To assess reliability, the researchers administered the same questionnaire twice to 20 players, with a one-week interval between tests under identical conditions.

Using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the researchers calculated a reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating a high level of stability for the scale. Furthermore, the scales demonstrated strong objectivity, as confirmed by expert feedback, and were characterized by clarity and ease of response.

2.5. Pilot study

On Monday, November 20, 2024, at 10:00 AM, the researchers conducted an exploratory trial of the two scales. This trial aimed to:

- Identify any obstacles that might occur during implementation,
- Ensure that the participants clearly understood all statements in both scales,
- Determine the average time required to complete each form.

The forms were distributed to a pilot sample of 20 players. The average completion time for each questionnaire was 10–15 minutes.

After collecting participant feedback, it was confirmed that the items were worded, and no difficulties or ambiguities were reported during the response process. The participants understood the content well, and no revisions were deemed necessary.

2.6. Rational and irrational thoughts scale

The researchers employed the Rational and Irrational Thoughts Scale developed by [Naji \(2020\)](#) from the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Al-Mustansiriyah University. Strong psychometric properties characterize this scale and include two major domains:

- Rational thoughts: Logical and balanced thinking that supports effective performance.
- Irrational thoughts: Negative or illogical thinking that negatively impacts performance

The scale comprises 20 items, equally divided between rational and irrational thought patterns.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and T-test values for the scales of false confidence, behavioral-psychological balance, and rational/irrational thoughts.

Variable	Sample Size	M	SD	Hypothetical Mean	T-Value	
					Calculated	Tabulated
False Confidence	84	60.33	5.95	90	2.390	2.160
Behavioral-Psychological Balance	84	149.55	12.56	105	5.150	2.160
Rational and Irrational Thoughts	84	55.76	4.56	60	2.190	2.160

The tabulated t-value at a significance level of 0.05 is 2.160.

Responses are measured using five options: (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

Scores are categorized into three levels: (low, moderate, and high) to assess the prevalence of rational or irrational thinking among futsal players.

2.7. Main application of the scales

The research scales were implemented on the application sample. The questionnaires were distributed to futsal players, who completed them with the assistance of the research team from November 26 to December 30, 2024.

After data collection, responses were transferred to data entry forms for statistical analysis and the extraction of final results.

3. Results

The Table 2 above presents the means, standard deviations, and t-test values for the three scales: False Confidence, Behavioral-Psychological Balance, and Rational and Irrational Thoughts.

- The mean score for false confidence was below the hypothetical mean ($60.33 < 90$), indicating a moderate level of false confidence among the players.
- The mean score for behavioural-psychological balance was well above the hypothetical mean ($149.55 > 105$), suggesting that players demonstrated a high behavioural and psychological balance level.
- The mean score for rational and irrational thoughts was slightly below the hypothetical mean ($55.76 < 60$), indicating that players exhibited moderate sensible and illogical thinking.

Table 3 results indicate that the correlation between false confidence and rational/irrational thoughts is. In contrast, the correlation between behavioral-psychological balance and sensible/irrational thoughts is statistically substantial among futsal players.

4. Discussion

Based on the data in Table 2, the mean score for false confidence did not exceed the hypothetical mean, indicating that futsal players exhibit a moderate level of false confidence. A closer examination of the questionnaire responses shows that many players demonstrated characteristics of false confidence. Athletes who struggle with self-awareness or have difficulty regulating emotions may develop false confidence as a coping mechanism or be unable to assess their abilities accurately. These factors can significantly affect a futsal player's performance, individually and collectively.

On the other hand, the mean score for behavioural-psychological balance exceeded the hypothetical mean, suggesting that players maintain a high level of psychological balance. This balance represents a state of stability and harmony across various psychological and behavioural domains, which are essential for peak performance. Such balance is especially critical during competitive matches, where players face intense mental and physical pressures that demand effective emotion regulation and interpersonal control. The findings emphasize the importance of developing and enhancing psychological balance to optimize performance and improve athletes' competitive experience.

The mean score on the rational and irrational thoughts scale was below the hypothetical average, indicating a moderate level of rational and irrational

Table 3. Correlation between false confidence, behavioral-psychological balance, and rational/irrational thoughts.

Scale Comparison	T-Value for Correlation Significance	Statistical Significance
False Confidence & Rational/Irrational Thoughts	2.120	Not Significant
Behavioral-Psychological Balance & Rational/Irrational Thoughts	4.102	Significant

The critical t-value at a significance level of 0.05 is 2.160.

thinking among players. Reviewing the questionnaire responses reveals that players possessed a mix of rational thought patterns but still required further enhancement in some cognitive regions.

Table 3 shows that the correlation between false confidence and rational/irrational thoughts was insignificant. The researchers attribute this to the possibility that false confidence may be associated with elevated levels of irrational beliefs. Players exhibiting false confidence may overestimate their capabilities and overlook performance-related factors.

According to Dunning et al. (2003), individuals with false confidence often overrate their skills, leading to poor decision-making on the field. Furthermore, a study by Wilson et al. (2012) found that players with high levels of irrational thinking are more prone to impulsivity and recklessness during matches, negatively affecting individual and team performance.

In contrast, the significant correlation between behavioral-psychological balance and rational/irrational thoughts suggests that psychological balance is a key component of athletic performance. Balanced players tend to stay focused and manage match-related pressures effectively. A study by Hardy et al. (2004) supports this, indicating that athletes with good psychological balance are likelier to adopt rational thought processes that help them handle challenging in-game situations.

On the other hand, research by Ellis & Harper (1997) highlights that irrational thoughts can disrupt psychological balance, leading to increased anxiety and tension during matches.

In summary, analyzing the relationship between false confidence, psychological balance, and cognitive patterns suggests that players with excessive false confidence may struggle with maintaining psychological stability, especially under pressure requiring critical decisions. Conversely, players with rational thinking are likelier to preserve balance and make sound decisions during play. Beck (2011) confirms that rational thought contributes to improved sports performance by minimizing the impact of external pressures.

5. Conclusion

1. There is a relationship between false confidence and behavioral-psychological balance among futsal players.
2. A negative relationship exists between false confidence and rational thoughts, indicating that rational thinking tends to decrease among players as false confidence increases.
3. False confidence and irrational thoughts have a positive relationship, which may lead to illogical decision-making during matches.

4. Behavioural-psychological balance positively influences rational thinking, supporting players in making more accurate and stable decisions.

6. Recommendations

1. Players should be aware of the risks associated with false confidence through training programs incorporating objective feedback mechanisms.
2. Rational thinking should be reinforced through psychological programs based on cognitive restructuring techniques.
3. Strategies to enhance behavioral-psychological balance should be developed using mental training and relaxation techniques.
4. Psychological training programs promoting rational thought and maintaining psychological balance can improve sports performance.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no personal or financial conflicts related to this study.

Ethical approval

This manuscript was approved by the Iraqi Futsal Federation on December 22, 2024.

Author contributions

- Sherin Laibi Manati, Aseel Naji Fahd, and Sundus Burhan Adham contributed to the study design, data collection, and manuscript preparation. The authors created all the figures and tables.
- Expert contributions were provided by:
 - Dr. Noor Hatim (statistical analysis)
 - Dr. Furqan Muhammad (language review)

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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Appendix 1

False confidence scale.

No.	Statements	Always Applies to Me	Often Applies	Sometimes Applies	Rarely Applies	Never Applies
1	I can always dribble past any opponent and score from anywhere on the court.					
2	Our team doesn't need much communication because we understand each other perfectly, and I always make the right decision for the team.					
3	I am always calm and composed under pressure, make no critical mistakes, and always know the best way to play.					
4	I always perform well and rarely make mistakes. If any mistake happens, it's usually due to external factors or teammates' errors.					
5	My mistakes are rare and mostly due to bad luck or referee errors. I don't need extra training because I'm already a good player.					
6	No team can beat us if we play at our full potential, and I'm always ready to face any challenge with full confidence.					
7	I tend to blame external factors (like referees or field conditions) when I make a mistake during a match.					
8	I find it difficult to admit when I make a bad decision on the court.					
9	I believe I'm often better than my opponents, even if the score doesn't reflect it.					
10	I sometimes take shortcuts in training because I believe my natural talent is enough.					

(Continued)

No.	Statements	Always Applies to Me	Often Applies	Sometimes Applies	Rarely Applies	Never Applies
11	I believe my individual performance is usually more important than the overall team result.					
12	I believe I can achieve any sports goal easily.					
13	I consider myself superior to my teammates in all technical and physical aspects.					
14	I don't need additional training to improve my performance.					
15	I don't need my coach's guidance to improve my game.					
16	I consider myself the best player on the team regardless of actual performance.					
17	I believe other teams are not a real threat to mine.					
18	I believe that my opponents are nowhere near my level.					
19	I believe I can outperform any player without much effort.					
20	I don't need to analyze other teams' performances because I'm always better than them.					
21	I believe I can win even if I'm not fully prepared.					
22	I refuse to accept feedback from the coach because I trust my abilities.					
23	I don't see the value in reviewing my mistakes after matches.					
24	I don't think my teammates can give me helpful advice.					
25	I believe referees are usually the reason for any loss I face.					
26	I don't need to develop my playing style because I already possess complete skills.					
27	I prefer individual play even when the team needs collective effort.					

(Continued)

No.	Statements	Always Applies to Me	Often Applies	Sometimes Applies	Rarely Applies	Never Applies
28	I don't need to follow the tactics set by the coach.					
29	I prefer making my own decisions during the match without consulting others.					
30	I face strong and weak teams the same way, without adjusting my strategy.					

Appendix 2

Behavioral-psychological balance scale.

No.	Statements	Always Applies to Me	Often Applies	Sometimes Applies	Rarely Applies	Never Applies
1	I can stay calm even when the referee makes a decision I disagree with.					
2	I can quickly regain my focus on the game.					
3	I think before reacting in tense situations on the court.					
4	I can resist the urge to make aggressive tackles when I feel frustrated.					
5	I generally expect positive results from my efforts in futsal.					
6	When my team is losing, I still believe we have a chance to win.					
7	I feel confident in my ability to handle the pressure of important matches.					
8	I have strategies to calm myself down when I feel exhausted during the match.					
9	I have a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses as a futsal player.					
10	My assessment of my skills usually aligns with my actual performance.					
11	I communicate effectively with my teammates during matches.					
12	I feel supported by my teammates even when I make mistakes.					
13	I can recover quickly after a poor performance.					
14	I view losses as opportunities for learning and improvement.					
15	I easily accept responsibility for my role in team losses.					

(Continued)

No.	Statements	Always Applies to Me	Often Applies	Sometimes Applies	Rarely Applies	Never Applies
16	I keep my composure under match pressure.					
17	I don't let anger influence my decisions on the court.					
18	I can control my emotions after unfair referee decisions.					
19	I don't show excessive emotions whether we win or lose.					
20	I remain calm even in critical moments of the match.					
21	I easily accept tactical changes imposed by the coach.					
22	I can adapt to any position on the team without stress.					
23	I don't get overly frustrated after defeats.					
24	I can quickly regain focus after making a mistake.					
25	I can face strong teams without fear or excessive anxiety.					
26	I follow rules and regulations without unjustified objections.					
27	I do not engage in unsportsmanlike behavior toward opponents.					
28	I ensure cooperation with my teammates without selfishness.					
29	I don't resort to physical or verbal aggression during matches.					
30	I respect referees' decisions even when they are not in my favor.					
31	I feel calm and confident before the start of the match.					
32	I do not suffer from excessive tension before important matches.					
33	I can focus on playing regardless of external pressures.					

(Continued)

No.	Statements	Always Applies to Me	Often Applies	Sometimes Applies	Rarely Applies	Never Applies
34	I don't let anxiety affect my performance during the match.					
35	I feel psychologically at ease when playing with my team.					