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タイトル	A Comparison of Stressors on Junior Soccer Players in Japan and The Netherlands
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公開者	東邦大学
発行日	2023.02.28
ISSN	03877566
掲載情報	東邦大学教養紀要. 54. p.65 81.
資料種別	紀要論文
内容記述	論文
著者版フラグ	publisher
JaLCDOI	info:doi/10.14994/toho.liberal.arts.rev.54.65
メタデータのURL	https://mylibrary.toho-u.ac.jp/webopac/TD28213177

A Comparison of Stressors on Junior Soccer Players in Japan and The Netherlands

Hideyuki YUDA¹, Martin RIPPE², Franc MEIJERMAN²

Abstract

Aims: This study was conducted to compare the stress of junior soccer players in Japan and The Netherlands and intended to clarify the causes of this stress. Furthermore, the relationships between the stress and the players' enjoyment of the sport, their willingness to continue playing soccer, and their victory orientation were explored.

Methods: The research subjects in this study were as written below.

768 players who participated in the Final stage (National level) of the 22nd All Japan Boys Soccer Tournament.

The high-performance level group in The Netherlands: 114 players who were registered to local 1st division clubs (C1, D1, E1).

Questionnaires on stresses for players were performed by the coach of each team in both countries.

Results: Questionnaires were used to measure degree of the three aspects mentioned above and stress level in eight areas (training, match, manager or coach, teammate, injury or sickness, own play, family and close to players, except soccer). The results indicated that the mean score of stress was not significantly different for high-performance level soccer players in both countries. High-performance level players in the Netherlands tended to experience more stress than those in Japan. Overall, the level of stress for both The Netherlands and Japanese players was relatively low.

As for the eight causes of stress, significant differences could be found in relation to the three groups of people surrounding them (manager or coach, teammates, family, and people close to players). The reasons regarding stressors in eight specific areas have some differences in both countries. In particular, the cause of stress such as teammates, coach and training do play significant role for the development of junior soccer players. Regarding the relationship between the enjoyment of sport and stress, there were no significant differences in both countries. However, regarding the

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relationship between the willingness to continue playing soccer and stress, there were significant differences in Japan. These findings are useful for the stress management of junior soccer players.

Keywords: junior soccer player, stressor, enjoyment of sport, willingness to continue soccer

I. Introduction

Studies on stress in sports have been conducted in various areas from a psychological perspective. For example, one study suggests that psychological aspects such as personality and motivation may have a strong impact on the performance improvement and growth of players as the game level goes up, the physical and technical differences between players decrease (Vaeyens et al., 2008); while another study shows that parental pressure and concerns about negative evaluations by parents and coaches contribute to pre-match stress (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984); and yet another study focusing on wrestling players and figure skaters indicates that communication with coaches and teammates could be a stress factor (Gould, Jackson, et al., 1993). Similarly, it is shown that interpersonal stress within a team varies depending on the degree of parental support, as well as the player's performance level (Van Yperen, 1995). Furthermore, in the study looking at 10 youth golfers aged 15 to 17 years old, it was found that stress from over-practicing and over-playing, lack of enjoyment, and excessive pressure from oneself and others led to player burnout (Cohen, 1990). As such, some specific and useful insights about the psychological importance and stress factors in sports have been obtained. However, few of these studies focused on stress factors in a comprehensive manner, and there are not many studies that focus on junior players.

From the perspective of physical development, it can be said that the junior period is very important in order to enjoy sports for the rest of one's life. Naturally, this also applies to soccer players. This is an important period when they can have moving experiences, improve their skills, cooperate with teammates and people close to them, understand the importance of teammates through soccer, and develop an interest in playing more and continuing to perform in the future. On the other hand, young players will also have negative experiences such as difficulty in making progress, relationships with teammates, injuries, and pressure from coaches and parents. These negative experiences can make children feel stressed, leading to low motivation and dropout.

In order to create a better environment for young soccer players who are still in the process of development, it is necessary to first understand specifically what kind of stresses each player endures. Yuda et al. (1998) studied the actual kinds of stress experienced by top-level youth soccer players in Japan to reveal their stress levels

and the specific reasons for those stresses. In addition, Yuda et al. (2006) studied the stress factors for low-performance level teams to clarify the level of stress according to different performance levels, as well as the differences in the specific reasons that affect stress.

From a broader perspective, the stress of these young soccer players can be attributed not only to the influence of coaches and teams they belong to but also to the development system, including the nationwide coaching policy and environment. It seems that the development system of young soccer players in wealthy countries (mainly in Europe) is more advanced than the development system in Japan in many respects. For example, in Spain, the Spanish Football Association has established a coaching system that enables every player—from children to A team players—to perform the same style of soccer. In the Netherlands, the Dutch Football Association is putting its utmost effort into the development of children, and even amateur clubs have advanced sports facilities with soccer fields, clubhouses, and licensed coaches (Kouji, M, 2000). In addition, coaching manuals certified by the Dutch Football Association were created to provide consistent coaching from children to adults. Against the backdrop of such a development system, the Netherlands has achieved excellent results, including three World Cup runner-up titles and one European Championship victory, which make its development system highly respected worldwide. Comparing the stresses that young soccer players experience under such a development system to the situation in Japan will likely provide extremely important insights from the perspective of strengthening and developing the future of the Japanese soccer world.

As described above, several studies on sports stress have been published, but the number of such studies is generally small. Especially international comparative studies on stress in junior soccer players have been rarely implemented.

This study aims to clarify the following:

- 1) The causes of stress by country by comparing eight areas of stress between high-performance level junior soccer players from Japan and The Netherlands.
- 2) The connection between stress and things like the players' degree of enjoyment, their willingness to continue playing soccer, and victory orientation, and furthermore how the players from both countries differ.

II. Methods

1. Subjects

The research subjects in this study were as written below.

The high-performance level group in Japan (hereinafter called "HPGJ"): 768 players from 48 teams (one team from each prefecture except Chiba, which has two teams) who participated in the Final stage (National level) of the All Japan Boys Soccer Tournament (M=11.34 years old, SD=.63). Almost all of the 768 players were

surveyed.

The high-performance level group in The Netherlands (hereinafter called "HPGN"): 114 players who were registered to local 1st division clubs (C1, D1, E1). (M=13.13 years old, SD=1.32).

2. Implementation

Questionnaires for players were performed by the coach of each team in both countries.

3. Contents

In this study, Kaga's method (1995) was adapted. It is thought to enable researchers and educators to find stressors among 8 areas of factors including sports-related stressors and to easily understand sports stress. But, it was refined in order to see the qualitative aspects. The subject was asked to write down the specific reasons. It was also added questions in order to survey the relationship between stress and the degree of three factors: enjoyment in playing soccer, willingness to continue soccer, and victory orientation.

The contents in detail are as follows:

1) Degree of enjoyment in playing soccer

Respondents were required to choose one from the following choices.

(1) Very enjoyable (2) Enjoyable (3) Not so enjoyable (4) Not enjoyable at all.

2) Willingness to continue soccer

Respondents were required to choose one from the following choices.

(1) I will continue to play. (2) I don't know if I'll continue or not. (3) I'll stop playing.

3) Victory orientation

Kaga et al. examined victory orientation (1994) reviewing the investigation by Ishii et al. (1984, 1987) and produced 5 questions below with a choice of 4 answers:

[Totally agree - Fairly agree - Fairly disagree - Totally disagree]

- (a) In soccer, winning is the most pleasing thing.
- (b) Soccer is meaningless if you don't win.
- (c) I don't want to lose.
- (d) Soccer is interesting because you may win or lose.
- (e) Whether you win or lose is not important.

4) Stressors (8areas)

This study focused on cognitive and emotional out of mental stress aspects. Each

question required a yes-or-no answer and reasons for it.

- (1) When I'm training I sometimes have negative feelings.
- (2) During my team's matches I sometimes have negative feelings.
- (3) Sometimes I have negative feelings about my manager or coach.
- (4) I sometimes have negative feelings about my teammates.
- (5) I sometimes have negative feelings because I'm injured or sick.
- (6) Sometimes I have negative feelings about my own play.
- (7) I sometimes have negative feelings about my family and people close to me.
- (8) I sometimes have negative feelings because soccer conflicts with my other concerns and interests except for soccer.

III. Results

1) A Comparison of stress in two countries

Stressors in this study are divided into eight different areas. "Yes" was calculated as 1 point (pt.) and "No" as zero points. The evaluation for each area was calculated by the sum of the scores. The mean scores of stress were 3.67 pt. (SD: 1.71) in the HPGN and 3.37 pt. (SD: 1.76) in the HPGJ. No significant differences were observed in the mean scores of stress between the subjects in either country. The scores in the two countries are shown in Figure 1. The mean scores of stress tended to be low in both countries.

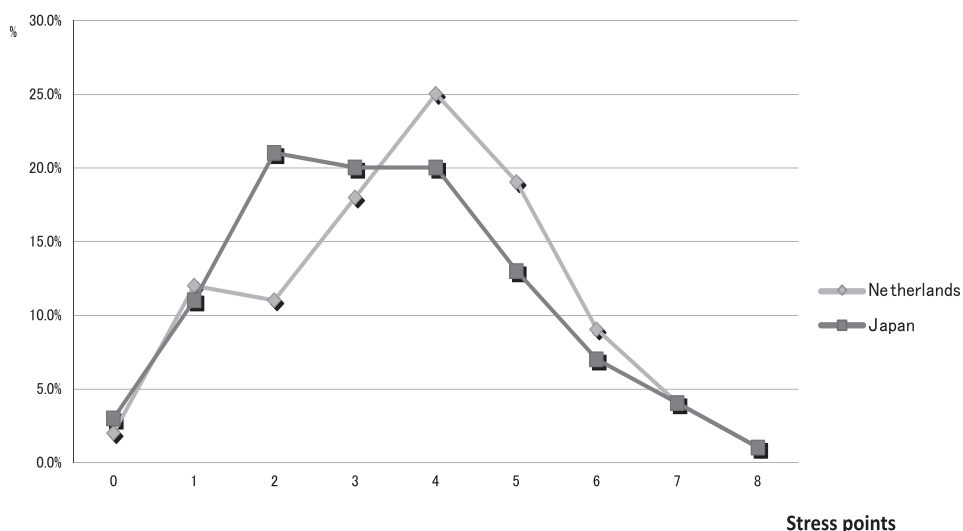


Fig. 1 Height of stress

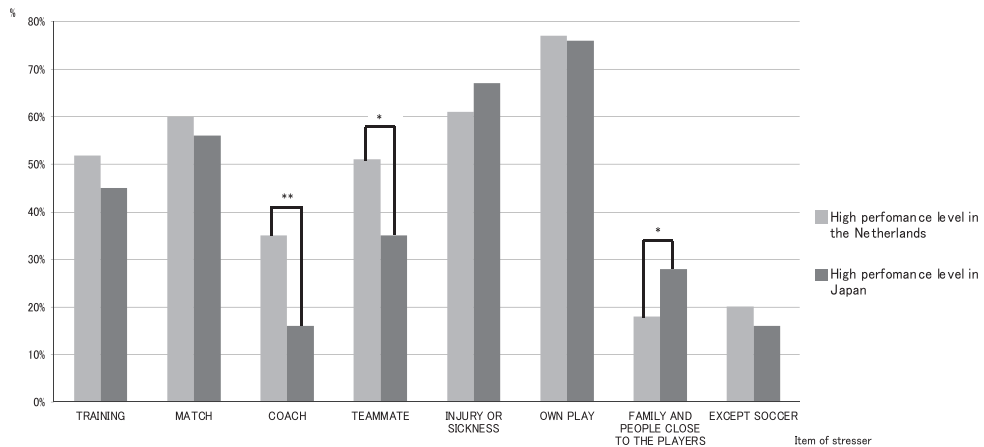


Fig. 2 The frequency of stressors in 8 areas between Japan and The Netherlands
* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

Regarding whether they experienced stress in training, 332 players (45.1%) answered “yes” and 404 players (54.9%) said “no” in the HPGJ. The number of players who answered “yes” was not a majority, however, it was observed that nearly half of the players felt stressed during training in this group. In the case of the Netherlands group, 58 players (51.8%) answered “yes” and 54 players (48.2%) said “no”. No significant difference between both levels was observed from the viewpoint of stress in training. It is necessary to assess each case of the stress regardless of the numbers and performance levels.

In terms of the stress in matches, 411 players (56.0%) answered “yes” and 323 players (44.0%) said “no” in the HPGJ. Compared to the data from stress in training, it was obvious that the players felt more stressed in the matches. In the HPGN, 67 players (59.8%) answered “yes” and 45 players (40.2%) said “no”. These results indicated that the players in both countries experienced more stress in the matches than in the training sessions.

Regarding the stress with managers or coaches, 121 players (16.5%) answered “yes” and 613 players (83.5%) said “no” in the HPGJ. The scores were less in comparison to the data in the other areas, and the players tended to have no major stress with managers or coaches. In the HPGN, 39 players (34.8%) answered “yes” and 73 players (65.2%) said “no”. The data indicated that the players in the Netherlands had a tendency to be more stressed with managers or coaches than the HPGJ ($p < 0.01$).

The area of the stress with teammates produced 255 pt. (35.0%) for “yes” and 474 pt. (65.0%) for “no” in the HPGJ, 57 pt. (50.9%) for “yes” and 55 pt. (49.1%) for “no” in the HPGN. The results showed that the HPGN tended to experience more stress with their teammates than Japanese players ($p < 0.01$).

Regarding injury and sickness, 487 players (66.7%) answered “yes” and 243 players

(33.3%) said “no” in Japan. In the Netherlands, 69 players (61.1%) answered “yes” and 44 players (38.9%) said “no”. No large difference between both countries was observed from the viewpoint of stress in relation to injury and sickness.

In relation to stress felt about their own performance during games, 561 players (76.3%) answered “yes” and 174 players (23.7%) answered “no” in the HPGJ, 86 players (77.5%) for “yes” and 25 players (22.5%) for “no” in the Netherlands. A strong majority of players from both countries showed very high stress in relation to their own gameplay, but there was no significant difference between the two countries.

In regards to the stress with family and people close to the players, 203 players (27.8%) answered “yes” and 527 players (72.2%) said “no” in Japan. In The Netherlands, 20 players (18.0%) answered “yes” and 91 players (82.0%) said “no”. The data indicated that the players in the HPGJ had a tendency to be more stressed with family and people close to the players than the HPGN ($p < 0.05$).

Regarding stress in relation to things other than soccer 116 players (15.9%) answered “yes” and 613 players (84.1%) answered “no” in the HPGJ; 22 players (20.4%) answered “yes” and 86 players (87.7%) answered “no” in the HPGN.

No difference was observed in either country from stress in relation to things other than soccer. Reviewing all the areas, the stress with players themselves was especially high in the scores, with injury and sickness following second and stress with matches as the third in the HPGJ. These areas also produced more than half of the total score. In the HPGN, the order of the ranking was the same as the HPGJ and the scores were over the half in players themselves area with 86 pt. (77.5%), in the injury and sickness area with 69 pt. (61.1%) and in the matches area with 67pt. (59.8%).

The stress with family and people close to the players resulted only in 20 pt. (18.0%) in the HPGN. One of the areas with a lower score compared to the others was the stress with other things than soccer with 22 pt. (20.4%). In the HPGJ, other things than soccer with 116 pt. (15.9%), and managers or coaches with 121 pt. (16.5%) were considered fairly low scores as conditions of the stress.

The ranking of stressors in the two countries were shown in Table 1.

2) The causes of stress in eight areas

In order to compare the degrees of stress between HPGN and HPGJ, an analysis of variance using the χ^2 test was conducted on the eight stressors.

It was found that the two factors “manager or coach” and “teammates” caused significantly more stress on HPGN than HPGJ.

However, “family and people close to the players” caused significantly more stress on HPGJ than HPGN.

The main reasons that cause stress in 8area are shown in Table 2.

There are different stress factors related to training between the two countries. For

Table 1 The ranking of stressors in the Netherlands and Japan

Ranking	The Netherlands	Japan
1	OWN PLAY	OWN PLAY
2	INJURY OR SICKNESS	INJURY OR SICKNESS
3	MATCH	MATCH
4	TRAINING	TRAINING
5	TEAM MATE	TEAM MATE
6	COACH	FAMILY AND CLOSE TO THE PLAYERS
7	EXCEPT SOCCER	COACH
8	FAMILY AND CLOSE TO THE PLAYERS	EXCEPT SOCCER

example, in the Netherlands, dissatisfaction with others, such as “I am dissatisfied with my training” and “My teammates don’t play game seriously”, are the top causes of stress, while in Japan, the comments and actions of others, such as “My coach and manager scold me” and “Someone scolds me when I make a mistake”, lead to stress, and it was found that characteristic reasons of each country are stress factors for children as well.

Similar to training, stressors related to matches have different reasons between the two countries. In the Netherlands, “A referee is unfair” and “My performance is not good enough”, are the top two reasons, and there are characteristic reasons such as “My team lost the match” and “The coach replaced me.” While in Japan, there are similar reasons such as “I cannot take part in the match” and “I make mistakes”, while “I am scolded by coach” is a reason that was not chosen by Dutch children.

In both countries, for the reasons that cause stress related to managers and coaches, many children chose “I am scolded by manager or coach”. However, in the Netherlands, “I am dissatisfied with my coach’s methods” was selected as the top reason, which is very characteristic.

As for reasons that cause stress related to teammates, the top reasons for players in both countries were “They criticize me” and “They criticize me when I make a mistake”. However, in The Netherlands, there were many reasons concerning dissatisfaction with the comments, and actions of teammates such as “They aren’t good players”, “They don’t try hard”, and “They don’t listen to what I say”.

As for stressors concerning injury and sickness, both countries list reasons such as “I cannot play soccer,” “I cannot practice or play in a match.”

Regarding stressors concerning players’ own gameplay, they felt stressed with their shortcomings in technical skills, mentioning that “I cannot play well,” “I cannot play as I imagine,” and “I make mistakes”.

As for stressors concerning family and people close to the players, both countries list

Table 2 The main reasons that cause stress

Stressor	The Netherlands N = 114	%	JAPAN N = 768	%
Training	I am dissatisfied with contents of training.	24.1%	I can't play well.	12.0%
	I can't play well.	19.0%	Training is too hard.	9.9%
	I make mistakes.	12.1%	I am scolded by my manager or coach.	7.8%
	My teammates don't play seriously.	12.1%	I am scolded by someone when I make a mistake.	6.9%
	I don't like practice.	10.3%	I don't like running training.	6.6%
Match	A referee is unfair.	37.3%	I can not take part in the match.	10.9%
	I can't play well.	35.8%	I am scolded by coach when I make a mistake.	9.5%
	My team lose the match.	17.9%	I can't play as well as I want to.	9.2%
	I make mistakes.	11.9%	I make mistakes.	8.0%
	I injured in a match.	7.5%		
	I can not play soccer in a match.	6.0%		
	The coach replaced me.	4.5%		
Manager or Coach**	I am dissatisfied with the method of coach.	74.4%	My coach scolds me.	52.1%
	My coach scolds me.	25.6%	My coach nage me.	4.1%
Teammate**	They complain to me.	29.8%	They complain to me.	15.3%
	They are poor.	19.3%	They complain to me when I make a mistake.	10.6%
	They don't play hard.	19.3%	They scold me when I make a mistake.	8.6%
	They make mistakes.	14.0%		
	They don't listen to what I say.	3.0%		
Injury or sickness	I can not play soccer.	94.2%	I can not play soccer.	48.9%
	I can not practice.	11.6%	I can not practice.	15.6%
			I can not play in a match.	13.1%
Own play	I can't play well.	76.7%	I can not play as I imagine.	17.1%
	I make mistakes.	23.3%	I make a lot of mistake.	11.6%
			I can't play well.	10.3%
Family and people close to the players*	They say various things to me.	75.0%	They say various things to me.	30.0%
			They scold me when I make a mistake.	8.4%
			My family compares my sibilings with me and	7.9%
			They say various things to me.	
Except soccer	I have to study.	27.3%	I don't heve time to study.	16.5%
	I have home work.	18.2%	I don't like school work.	10.4%
	It is difficult to balance soccer and study.	9.1%	I can not do homework.	10.4%

*p < .05, **p < .01

the fact that such people “They are always annoying me” as a major reason.

However, in Japan, characteristic reasons were “They scold me when I make a mistake” and “My family compares me to my siblings”.

As for stressors other than soccer, “homework” was cited as a common reason in both countries, with subjects saying: “I cannot do homework,” and “I have homework.” In The Netherlands the reason “I have to study” accounts for 27.3%, while in Japan, the reason, “I don’t have time to study” accounts for 16.5%. Although we don’t know whether these different reasons are due to differences inherent in the two countries, it is worth considering in the future.

As described above, reasons regarding stressors in eight specific areas have some differences in both countries and it can be said that there are characteristic reasons that have to do with the culture and national character of each country.

3) The relationship between the degree of enjoyment and stress in both countries

The scores were summed with a calculation of “yes” as 1 pt. and “no” as nil in eight areas of the stress.

The degree of enjoyment was categorized into four answers: (1) Very enjoyable (2) Enjoyable (3) Not so enjoyable (4) Not enjoyable at all. Answer (3) was only selected by one person. Answer (1) was defined as high enjoyment, and answers (2) and (3) as low enjoyment. Performance levels were categorized into HPGN and HPGJ and compared the stress scores of each country (Fig. 3). The high-enjoyment group in the Netherlands consisted of 87 players and they produced stress scores of 3.63 (M) and 1.74 (SD). The low-enjoyment group in the Netherlands consisted of 16 players and they scored 4.0 (M) and 1.55 (SD). On the other hand, the high-enjoyment group in Japan consisted of 593 players and produced stress scores of 3.29 (M) and 1.60 (SD). The low-enjoyment group in Japan consisted of 103 players who scored 3.80 (M) and 2.05 (SD). For the two-way ANOVA with country and the degree of enjoyment, no significant differences were observed.

4) The relationship between willingness to continue soccer and stress in both countries

The degrees of willingness to continue playing soccer (here in after called “WC”) were defined as high-WC with “I want to continue”, and low-WC with “Not sure to continue” and “Going to quit soon”. The high-WC group in the HPGJ consisted of 646 players and produced stress scores of 3.30 (M) and 1.75 (SD) (Fig. 4). The low-WC group of 58 players scored at 4.14 (M) and 1.72 (SD).

On the other hand, the high-WC group in the HPGN consisted of 77 players and produced the stress scores of 3.72 (M) and 1.74 (SD). The low-WC group of 24 players scored at 3.54 (M) and 1.69 (SD).

For stress scores, when an analysis of variance was conducted for the two factors of

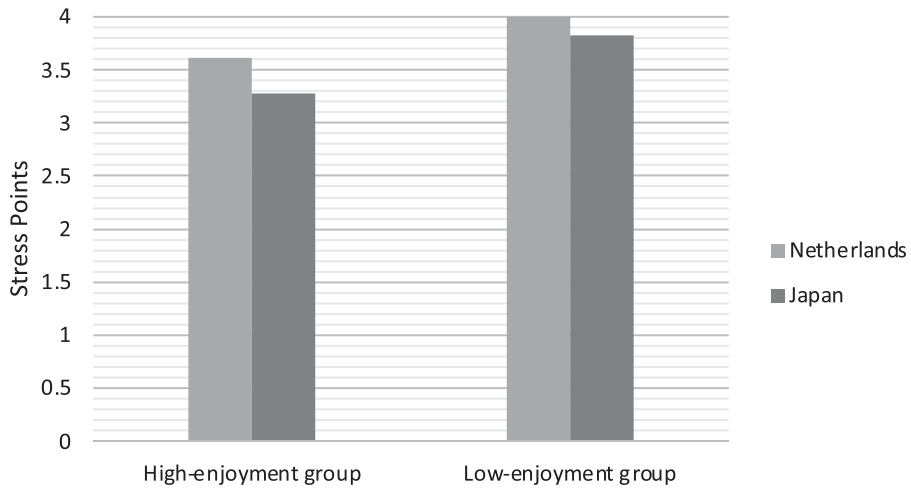


Fig. 3 Country, degree of enjoyment and stress

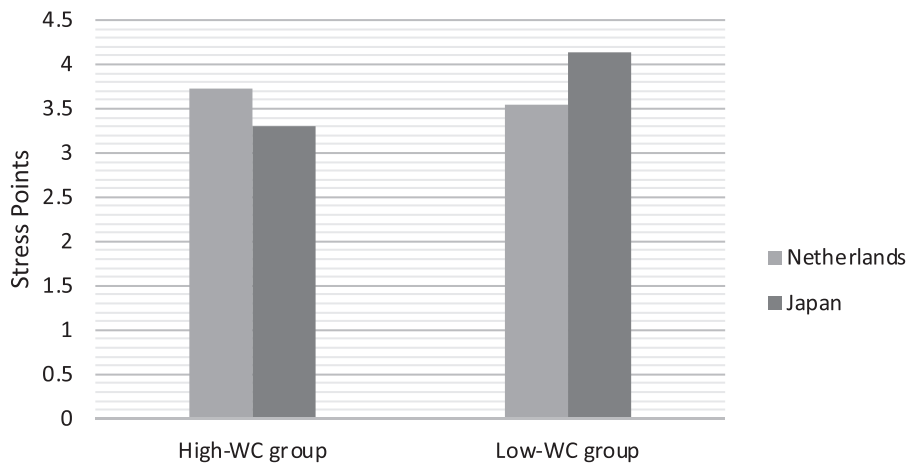


Fig. 4 Country, willingness to continue soccer (WC) and stress

country and willingness to continue soccer, a significant interaction ($F = 1.804 = 4.67, p < .05$) was found.

Furthermore, the main effect of the high willingness group and low willingness group for continuing soccer by country was examined. In Japan, those who have a low willingness to continue tended to feel stress more than those who have a high willingness to continue ($F = 1.702 = 12.2, p < .001$), but the difference was not significant in the Netherlands.

5) The relationship between victory orientation and stress in both countries

The degrees of victory orientation (here in after called "VO") were divided into the

following five statements: (a) In soccer, winning is the best, (b) Soccer is meaningless if you don't win, (c) I don't want to lose, (d) Soccer is interesting because you may win or lose, (e) Whether you win or lose is not important. Regarding the 4 items of (a), (b), (c), and (d), there are 4 choices to answer, and different points are given to each answer: 4 pt. for answer "Totally agree", 3 pt. for "Fairly agree", 2 pt. for "Fairly disagree", and 1 pt. for "Totally disagree". Regarding the (d), 1 pt. is given for the answer "Totally agree", 2 pt. for "Fairly agree", 3 pt. for "Fairly disagree", and 4 pt. for "Totally disagree". Victory orientation was computed by 3 items of (a), (b), and (c), because of reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .52$).

The high-VO group in Japan of 385 players produced stress scores of 3.30 (M) and 1.73 (SD) and the low-VO group of 138 players scored 3.47 (M) and 1.88 (SD). The high-VO group in the Netherlands of 29 players produced 3.45 (M) and 1.68 (SD) and the low-VO group of 43 players scored 3.49 (M) and 1.68 (SD) (Fig. 5).

For the two-way ANOVA with country and the degree of victory orientation, no significant differences were observed.

6) Victory orientation and the stress in 8 areas

The analysis was implemented on victory orientation and the stress in 8 areas; training, matches, coaches, teammates, injury and sickness, own play, family and people close to the players, and other areas. In terms of high-VO and low-VO, scores in all the areas were compared respectively. ANOVA produced no relationship between victory orientation and the stress scores. That is to say, the degree of victory orientation does not likely affect the severity of the stress.

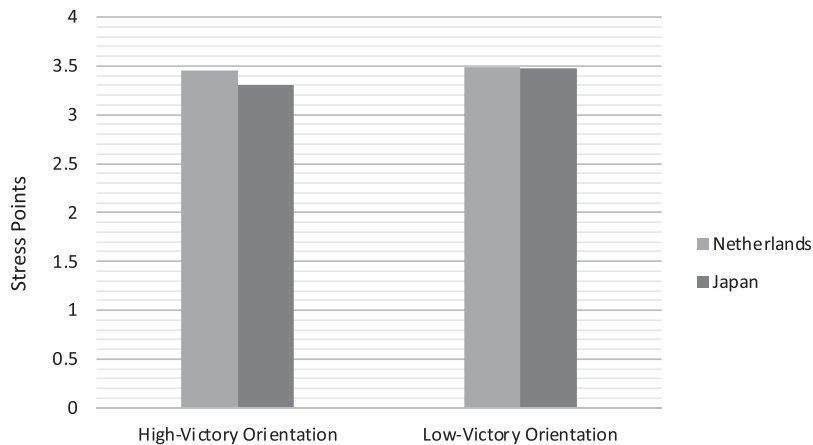


Fig. 5 Country and Victory Orientation and Stress

IV. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to clarify the actual conditions of stress amongst junior soccer players in the Netherlands and Japan and compare the two countries. In addition, we also wish to focus on the relationships between the stress and three aspects; enjoyment of the sport, the relationship between willingness to continue soccer and stress, and the relationship between victory orientation and stress.

Firstly, analyzing the severity of the stress, the mean score was 3.67 pt. in the Netherlands and 3.37 in those in Japan. No significant differences were observed in mean scores between the players in either country. The mean scores were low in both countries.

From the viewpoints of every stressor, the ranking of stressors was in the same order from 1st to 5th for both countries. Thus, it is considered that the degrees of the stress in respective areas are almost similar regardless of the country.

However, it should be noted that the stressor concerning "family and people close to the players", which was the lowest in the Netherlands, was ranked higher in Japan.

Out of 8 areas, the scores of "manager or coach" and "teammates" in the players in the Netherlands tended to be higher than in those in Japan. However, "family and people close to the players" caused significantly more stress on players in Japan than on those in the Netherlands.

Players in both countries felt a great deal of stress regarding their own performance. High-performance level players perform at a high technical skill level, both individually and collectively in a team, and usually have ambitious goals concerning soccer. High-performance level players set ambitious targets and when they are unable to achieve these, they tend to feel more stress than low-performance level players. Players should set appropriate targets according to their skill level and have a realistic view of achieving their targets. Without such a process, players may lose self-confidence, feel more stress, and lose motivation. It is important for coaches and families to carefully observe the player's situation and encourage them to play better with good communication and guidance.

Regarding "injury or sickness", stress scores tended to be high in both countries. Similar to one's own play, this is likely to be affected by the inability to achieve ambitious targets. For players who are stressed because they are unable to show their performance due to an injury, physical and mental care is extremely important to prevent dropout.

Regarding stress related to "teammates", Dutch players are more stressed than Japanese players. The reasons for feeling stressed about their teammates in the Netherlands reflect their dissatisfaction with the behavior of their teammates: "They complain to me", "They aren't good players", "They don't try hard" and "They make

mistakes". While in Japan, reasons such as "They criticize me" and "They criticize me when I make a mistake" were given high scores, which suggests that unlike the reasons given by Dutch players, Japanese players feel stressed by the comments made by their teammates about their performance. This reveals that, in Japan, players feel more stressed when comments about their performances are made by teammates rather than a competition to be a regular player and interpersonal relationships. High-level players have higher expectations about the performance of their teammates, and, as a result, demand better performance from them. If a player makes a mistake, other teammates will often express dissatisfaction with their poor performance. In such cases, it is important for the coach to pay close attention to the way that players speak to each other, and to intervene if an inappropriate expression or hurtful comment is made.

In the Netherlands, the most common reason for feeling stressed about a coach or manager was "I am dissatisfied with my coach's method". The next most common reason was "My coach scolds me", which is the same answer as in Japan. The most common reason given by the Dutch players suggests that there is an environment in the Netherlands where young soccer players can have firm opinions about the methods and ways of thinking of their coaches, and also that they can express such opinions. In this regard, it has been pointed out that, in Japan under the uniform education system, accepting what teachers say, doing the same thing as everyone else, and valuing harmony are emphasized, while little effort is made to encourage them to understand the importance of individuality. This fact makes the Japanese system significantly different from that of the Netherlands. In a magazine interview, Hidetoshi Nakata, a world-famous soccer player who played for the Japan national team, stated, "I would never follow my coach's or parents' advice if I didn't agree with it." In other words, it seems that in order to become a good player there is a connection between the words and actions of the young Dutch soccer players and those of Nakata's in his youth. As adults involved in coaching youth, we must consider the reasons causing stress of the Dutch youth soccer players and Nakata's words and work to establish an environment for developing soccer players who can think and act on their own. We must also work to build an education system where voicing individual opinions is encouraged. In order to do this, it is essential to analyze and examine the relationship between the soccer player development system and the education system in Japan in more detail in the future.

Japanese players feel more stressed than the players in the Netherlands when it comes to "family and people close to the players". For players in Japan, the "expectations" of their families are higher than those for the players in the Netherlands. Family expectations may sometimes put pressure on players and as such causes a lot of stress. Good communication between parents and coaches is necessary so that parents do not place excessive expectations on their children. The main problem in the relationship between "family and people close to the players" and the players in Japan lies in the

gap between the expectations of the player and the expectations of the family. In the Netherlands, parents often assume a supporting role for their children. The relationship between parents and children in Japan often differs significantly from this way of thinking. In any case, families have an extremely important role for young soccer players. There are few studies on this subject, and we would like to examine this further in our future research.

In terms of “enjoyment of the sport and stress”, the players in the Netherlands felt more stressed than in Japan and the low-enjoyment group was subjected to more stress than the high-enjoyment group. In this study, the majority of the players answered with “Very fun” and “Fairly fun”, and only a few selected “Not very fun” or “Not fun at all”. Therefore there were no big differences between the degrees of enjoyment. It might be necessary to assess the degree of enjoyment with another method for a future study.

In Japan, the group with a low willingness to continue soccer has a higher stress score than the group with high motivation. However, in the Netherlands, the group with a high willingness to continue soccer has a higher stress score than the group with low motivation. In addition, it was revealed that the willingness of young Japanese players to continue playing was under more stress than that of the young Dutch players. It seems that more detailed research on stress factors is necessary in order to prevent promising players in Japan from being subjected to various stresses that lead to dropouts.

Such players also have a high performance level and are likely to continue playing at a high level in the future. In that case, since they will have various opportunities to evaluate their own performance, and compare it with other players, we need to study the relationships with target setting, self-confidence, and self-efficacy as well.

“Victory orientation” and the stress were not related to the country. As the mean scores were high in both countries, victory orientation is likely to be strong regardless of the country. Furthermore, after analyzing victory orientation and 8 areas of the stress, It was found a low relationship between victory orientation and the scores of the 8 areas. That is to say, high scores of victory orientation are not likely to influence the severity of the stress. These results show that most children want to win regardless of their country when they play sports and that the degree of victory orientation will not influence the level of stress. The scale of victory orientation in this study does not measure the extreme tenacity to win such as the supremacy of winning. Analyzing from such a viewpoint, there may be a connection between the supremacy of winning and stress.

V. Concluding Remarks

This study was conducted to compare stresses between high-performance level junior soccer players in the Netherlands and those in Japan and intended to clarify the causes of stress.

Furthermore, the relationships between the stress and enjoyment of the sport, the relationship between willingness to continue soccer and stress, and the relationship between victory orientation and stress were explored. The findings were as follows:

- 1) There was no significant difference in the stress scores between the two countries, but players in the Netherlands tended to have a slightly higher stress score than Japanese players. The mean scores of the stress had a tendency to be low in both countries.
- 2) The players in the Netherlands tended to experience more stress related to their manager or coach and teammates, compared to those in Japan. On the other hand, Japanese players tended to experience more stress in relation to family and people close to them compared to players from the Netherlands.
- 3) In the case of Japan, the group with a low willingness to continue soccer felt more stressed than highly motivated players.
- 4) It was revealed that the relationship between victory orientation and stress was not related to national or cultural differences, and that victory orientation was strong in both countries.
- 5) The major contribution of this study is that it has shown that players from both countries have different reasons for feeling stress regarding some stressors in this study.

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