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## ► To cite this version:

Caroline Jannes, Boumédine Bouriche, Bachir Zoudji. The emotions joy and anger as part of the psychological momentum in soccer coaches during game management. 14th European Congress of Sport Psychology, Jul 2015, Berne, Switzerland. 2015. hal-01693549

**HAL Id: hal-01693549**

**<https://hal-amu.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01693549>**

Submitted on 18 Mar 2019

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# The emotions anger and joy as part of psychological momentum in soccer coaches during game management



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## INTRODUCTION

Every soccer game is characterized by a great variability due to unexpected events which might endanger the competition goals the coach wants to reach. The process of reaching goals and the resulting affects could be explained by a dynamic interaction between player and environment, and more precisely by action regulation and control. Psychological momentum (PM) can have an influence on this interaction, and is characterized by an acceleration or deceleration of the progression towards the goals (Gernigon, Briki, & Eykens, 2010). Affects are present during PM because the coach is confronted with the reality of succeeding in his expectations or not. The purpose of this article is to test a theoretical framework of action regulation, and to analyse the relationship between two emotions 'Joy' and 'Anger' with PM in soccer coaches during a game.

## HYPOTHESES

(1) The level of perceived progression towards the game goals (PPG) will predict the nature of emotions felt by soccer coaches.

(2) Based on the relationship between PPG and PM, it is expected that PM leading to joy is an effect of action regulation and happens at the end of the game. The PM leading to anger is expected when the coach questions the actions, and will be present during the game, probably sooner than joy.

## METHODS

**Participants.** In total, 64 French soccer coaches with an average age of 40 years participated. They all obtained a diploma of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> level, coached senior players at national level, and had an average experience of 13.

**Measures.** Several demographic variables were used, as well as the Emotional Expression Scale (ESS; Phase 1) and two questionnaires on Joy and Anger with three characteristics during the game: (a) general game context, (b) game match preparation, and (c) evaluation of the game process and emotion based on the Self-Assessment Manikin Scale (SAM; Phase 2 and 3). The SAM scales were transformed into one scale called Fulfillment Emotional Level Tendency (FELT).

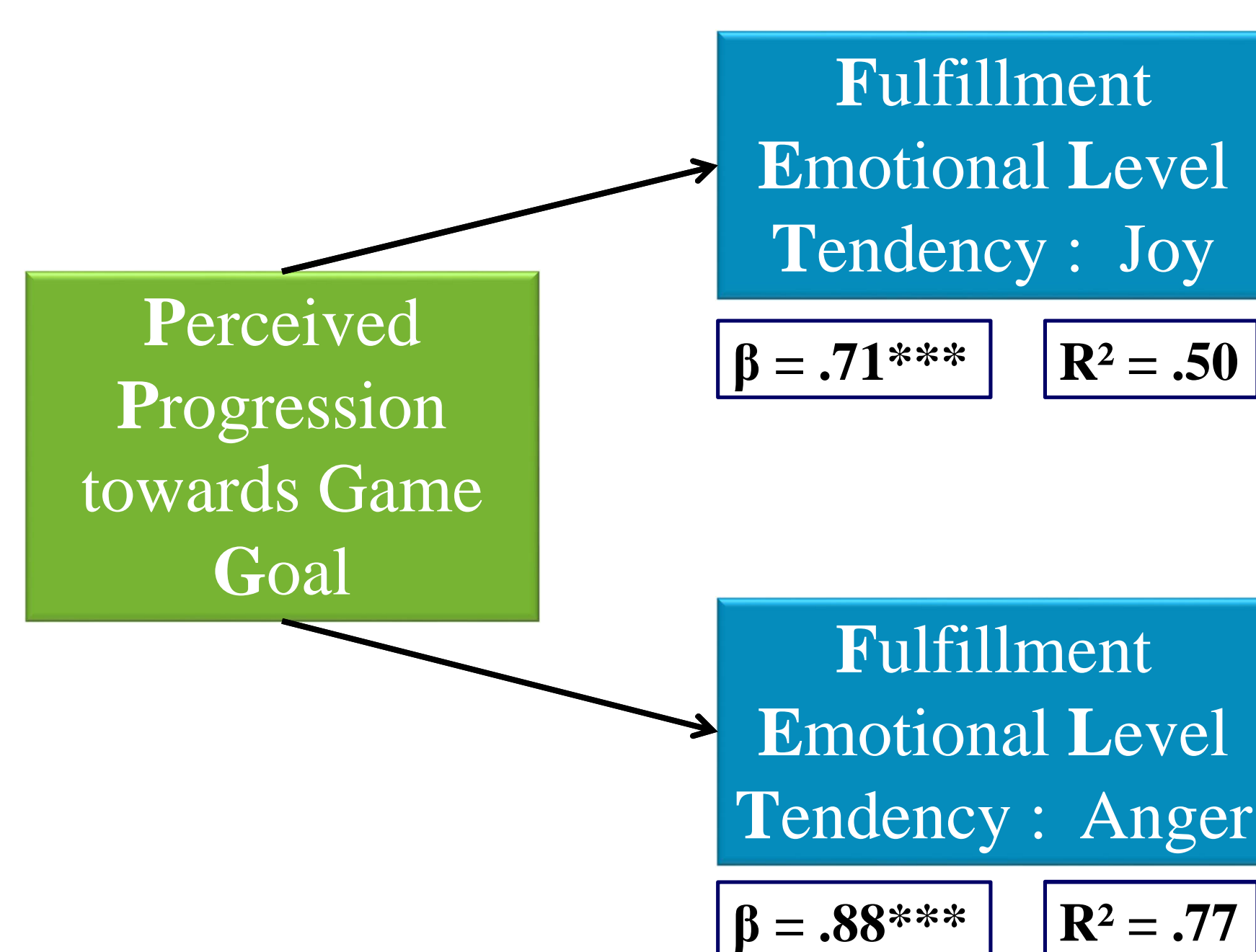


Figure 1. Multiple Linear Regression PPG to nature of Emotional Level when Reaching the Goal

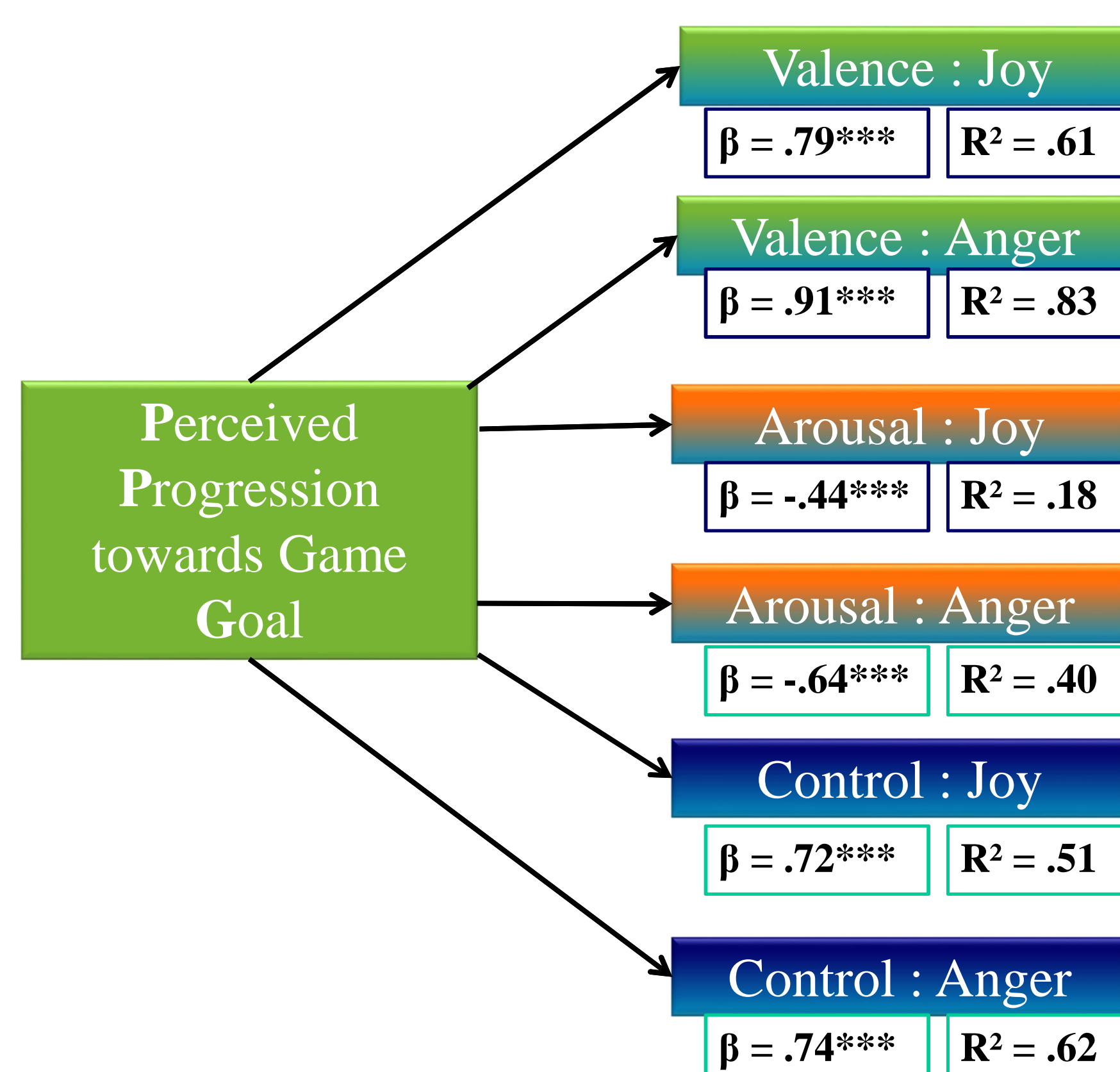


Figure 2. Multiple Linear Regression PPG to nature of emotions

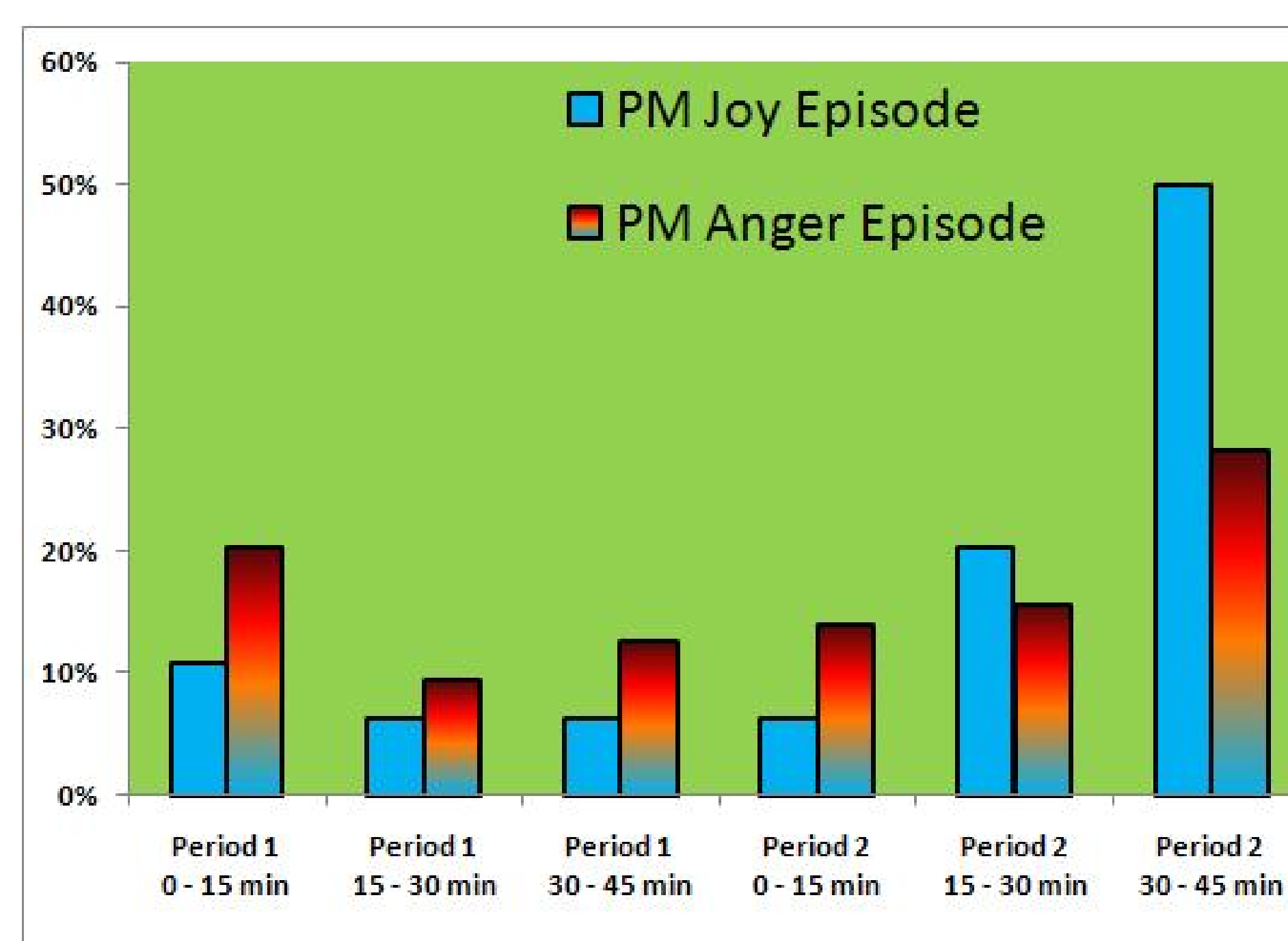
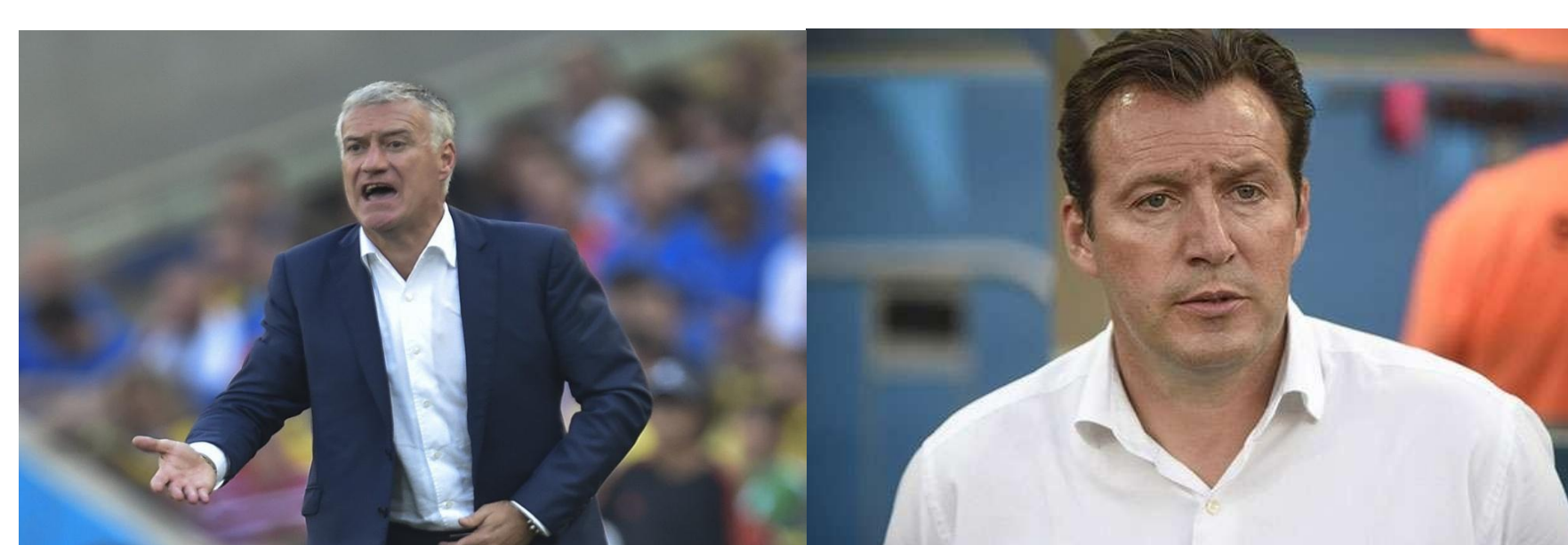


Figure 3. PM Joy and Anger during the game periods



## RESULTS

**Before PM.** Simple Linear Regression confirms hypothesis 1 and indicates that the level of PPG contributes significantly to the coaches' FELT (See Figure 1). Moreover, when looking in detail to the different characteristics of SAM, we see significant contributions of PPG to Valence and Control for both Joy and Anger, and of PPG to Arousal for Anger and to a lesser extent for Joy (See Figure 2).

**PM characteristics.** Chi Square analysis of the frequency of PM during the game periods shows a significant difference between Joy and Anger episodes. Joy seems to manifest itself at the end of the game ( $\chi^2(5) = 56.94, p < .001$ ), while Anger is dispersed during the whole game ( $\chi^2(5) = 8.56, ns$ ). The difference is little, but it seems that Anger manifests itself earlier than Joy. Moreover, ANOVA analysis shows significant differences in Joy PM and Anger PM characteristics in the process of reaching the goal. Joy PM is significantly different from Anger PM as it has more positive Valence, less intense Arousal, and higher perception of Control.

## DISCUSSION

(1) A confrontation between the coach's cognitive framework, based on the perception of the progression of the game goals, and the real evolution of the game results in certain affective responses. Levels of FELT during the two emotional episodes are significantly correlated with PPG. Therefore, the results suggest acceleration and deceleration (Carver & Scheier, 1990 ; Hsee et al., 1994) in the variation of speed towards the goals. A sudden acceleration could cause euphoria and continuation of the game plan. A sudden deceleration could cause negative feelings and hinder continuity. The coach will have to redirect his attention to the game plan and adapt it to the new situation.

(2) Results for the second hypothesis show differentiated cognitive and affective manifestations for the PM characteristics of Joy and Anger. It is observed that PM Joy is characterized by a better perceived progression towards reaching the goals, a positive valence, less intense arousal, and better control of emotions compared to PM Anger .

The results of the present study have several limitations. First, retrospective questionnaires were used. Second, two emotions were chosen, namely Joy and Anger. Future research is needed to further address (1) real situations via video-analysis, and (2) other specific emotions.