

Sport Competition Anxiety with reference to Gender and performance

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Abstract: *The present study was designed to analyse sports competition anxiety with reference to gender and performance. The purpose of study was to evaluate the differentials among male and female softball players and first four position holders of inter collegiate softball tournament with regard to sports competition anxiety. To achieve this aim one hundred and twenty softball male and female players who achieved first four position in Inter college softball tournaments of man and women respectively were taken as subjects. To assess the level of anxiety among male and female softball players: Sports competition anxiety test developed by Dr. Ravikant and Dr. V.N. Mishra (2003) was used the data was tabulated and analyzed through t-test. The results found show that significant difference was found between male and female athletes on sports competition anxiety. The comparative differentials were also significant among all the position holders of male and female groups respectively.*

Yuri Hanin a noted Russian Sports Psychologist found that top athletes each have a zone of optimal state anxiety in which their best performance occurs (1980, 1986, 1997).

Some anxiety is a good thing. Mature, higher skilled players need a sense of concern-even urgency- before and during the contest (Mahoney et al. 1987) when Mahoney examined the psychological characteristics of athletes and non- athletes, they found that both groups experienced anxiety, However, elite athletes were better able to manage anxiety than non-athletes.

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is inherent in competitive sport Martens et al. (1990) define competitive State anxiety as conscious feelings of apprehension and tension due mainly to the individual's perception of the present or upcoming situation as threatening Spielberger (1972) was probably the first to categorise anxiety as having either State or trait qualities. Trait and State anxiety tend to be moderately to highly correlated, usually about, 60 or above (Gould & Krane 1992). State anxiety is transitory in that it fluctuates over time. Trait anxiety on the other hand, is a relatively stable and acquired behavioral disposition, often depicted as personality trait. For many years most researchers had assumed that anxiety has only negative effects on performance. But English sport psychologists Graham Jones 1992, Jones Hanton and Swain 1994, have recently shown that an individual's interpretation of anxiety symptoms is important for understanding the anxiety- performance relationship. So how an athlete interprets the direction of anxiety has a significant effect on the anxiety-performance relationship. Therefore coaches should try to help athletes learn psychological skills that allow them to interpret their anxiety as facilitative. They should help athletes view anxiety as conditions of excitement instead of fear. As this is not easy to do. Hanson and Gould

(1988) found that only one of four college cross country coaches accurately read their athletes State and trait anxiety levels. It is important to individualize teaching and coaching practices. At times state anxiety levels need to be reduced, at other times maintained and at still other times facilitated. So the teacher or coach should recognise when and with whom state anxiety need to be enhanced, reduced or maintained. Various research studies have been conducted to find out the anxiety performance relationship. In one of such studies McGown (1969) found that basketball player, scoring moderately high in a test of anxiety performed better in competitive situation than did those with lower anxiety scores. Hammer (1974) got similar results when measuring anxiety among wrestlers.

The results found from these studies are equivocal. Hence the present study is an effort to provide the understanding of level of state anxiety experienced by softball players with respect to gender and performance. The objectives of the present study were:

Objectives

1. To study the level of sports competition anxiety with reference to sports performance.
2. To study the level of sports competition anxiety with reference to gender.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant difference among male and female softball players with reference to anxiety.
2. There will be no significant difference among first four position holders with regard to anxiety.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Keeping in view the objective of study the sports competition anxiety questionnaire of sports competition anxiety inventory by Dr. Ravikant and Dr. Vibhuti Narain Mishra (2003) was used. The study examines the male and female softball players of Kurukshetra University. Kurukshetra who won first four positions in intercollege softball competition conducted by Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra. The sample consisted of 120 softball players between the age group of 19 to 25 years. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items. The reliability coefficient of the test for males by split half method was 0.91 and for female was 0.89 and validity coefficient for males was 3.12 and for female was 2.24, t-test was applied to compare the subjects.

RESULTS:

Table-1 show comparative differentials between male and female softball players with regard to anxiety.

Table-1

COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCE AMONG MALES AND FEMALES

Sr. No.	Male			Female			t
	Mean	SD	SED	Mean	SD	SED	
1.	7.60	2.13	0.55	12.40	2.74	0.71	4.21*
2.	10.40	1.72	0.44	10.53	1.87	0.48	1.41
3.	7.80	1.26	0.32	11.13	1.72	0.44	8.33*
4.	8.20	1.82	0.47	11.33	2.69	0.69	2.47*

From the above table it is clear that the first position holders female softball players registered higher levels of anxiety as compared to male players with mean score 11.13. Statistically significant difference has been found between male and female first position holders on anxiety with $t = 4.21$. Whereas no statistically significant difference was found between second position holders female softball players and male softball players on anxiety with $t = 1.41$. Statistically significant difference has been found between males and females of third position holders and fourth holders of inter college softball competition.

Table 2

COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCE AMONG FIRST FOUR POSITION HOLDERS OF FEMALE SOFTBALL PLAYERS

		Mean	t-ratio matrix				
1.	S.A. Jain Ambala	12.40	I	-	.22	1.51	.60
2.	D.A.V. YNR	10.53	II	-	-	1.62	.94
3.	G.N. Khalsa YNR	11.13	III	-	-	-	2.25*
4.	G.M.N College Ambala	11.33	IV	-	-	-	-

Table 2 shows comparative differences among all the four position holders of female softball players through t-ratio matrix statistically significant difference has been found between third and fourth position holders of female players. Whereas no statistically significant difference was found between first and second position holders of female group with $t = .23$.

Table-3

**COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCE AMONG FIRST FOUR POSITION
HOLDERS OF MALE SOFTBALL PLAYERS**

		Mean	t-ratio matrix			
1.	G.N. Khalsa YNR	7.60	-	3.95*	.31	.82
2.	S.A. Jain Ambala	10.40	-	-	4.70*	3.39*
3.	S.D. Panipat	7.80	-	-	-	.69
4.	GMN Ambala	8.20	-	-	-	-

Table 3 indicates comparative differentials between all the first four position holders of male softball players of inter college competition statistically significant difference has been found between first and second position holders of male group with $t= 3.95$. Second position holders of male group also differed significantly from third and fourth position holders with $t=4.70$ and 3.39 respectively. Whereas no statically significant difference was found among others.

DISCUSSION:

The results from above tables clearly show two things. One there is significant difference among males and females in their level of anxiety. Two, the difference of level of competition as well as performance does make difference in their level of anxiety also. The same results have been supported by Singh (1985) who conducted study on top-level Indian sportsmen of difference game regarding anxiety. Significant differences were found between male and females players on the competitive anxiety with regard to athletics and team games. The females are found to have more competitive anxiety than male. Ford (1995) also found up positive correlation between measure of anxiety and performance. However, he found the some competitors did where their anxiety level were high and that moderate level of anxiety seems to elicit increase in performance.

Implication of the study

In the performance of mental and physical tasks, anxiety plays an important role. It has been observed that anxiety can have both a fascilitating as well as debilitating effect. Individual differences, gender role, type of task, situation and degree of difficulty of the task plays an important role in the occurrence and outcome of anxiety. The present study also shows that there are statistically significant difference in the male and females as far as level of anxiety is concerned females are found

to be more anxious than males. The level of competition and performance also has played an important role in the arousal of anxiety. The present study also highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between anxiety and performance. The results of the study will be of great help for the individuals, players, coaches, trainers and psychologists to manage the anxiety for higher level of performance. As performance is the key aspect in sports so anxiety- performance relationship has important relevance in sports psychology. Anxiety performance theories typically predict that high anxious individuals will perform less well than low anxious individuals (eg. Deffenbacher, 1980, Easter brook 1959, Mandler and Sarason 1952).

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