

# Analysis of Anxiety Level At School and College Football Players

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**Abstract:** The rationale for this study was designed to examine the level of competitive trait anxiety that were experienced prior to a football competition and to ascertain whether there were any differences between these two age groups. Anxiety was measured using the sport competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) (Martens, Vealey and Burton, 1990). The sample size consisted of two High School Football players with the age ranging from 15 to 17 years and 20 college football players of age ranging between 19 to 21 years. Analysis of trait anxiety showed a significance difference of 0.05 as college football players were found to be less anxious than school football players. But both the anxiety age group players presuppose an average degree of suggestions for future research and practical consideration which are listed in the conclusion.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a gymnast prepares to mount the balance beam, she says to herself, "My Heart is pounding a thousand miles an hour, I can feel my hands trembling and I know I'm to fall." Such statements are quite common among gymnasts and other athlete's perception of the body but also the interpretation they have placed on these changes (Matheson & Mathes 1991). Most athletes enter a competition with some concern about their chances of winning "when an athlete's performance suffers in an important event, he is worried about the outcome... being solely concerned with winning and it causes an increase in anxiety" (Orlick & Partington, 1988). Anxiety has been defined as the negative aspects of experiencing stress. It is the worry that is experienced due to the fear of failure.

Researchers have distinguished between two types of anxiety: state anxiety & trait anxiety. The state anxiety is "characterized by subjective consciously perceived feeling of apprehension and tension, accompanied or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1996) for example; a player's level of state anxiety would change from moment to moment during a football match. They might have a slightly elevated level of state anxiety (feeling somewhat nervous and notching their heart pounding)

prior to kick off, then the Lower level is achieved once they settle down into the match; and once again an extremely high level of state anxiety is attained in the final minutes of a very close game. Trait anxiety is, "a motive or acquired behavioral disposition that predisposes an individual to perceive a wide range of objectively non-dangerous circumstances as threatening, and to respond to these with state anxiety reactions disproportionate in intensity and magnitude of the objective danger." (Spielberger, 1996)

For example, two football players, who normally kick penalties with equal physical skill, may be placed under the identical pressure of having to kick the last minute goal to win a match, and yet have entirely different state anxiety reactions to the situation because of their personalities, that is their levels of trait anxiety. So the researcher was trying to analyze anxiety level at different levels of schools.

## METHODS & PROCEDURES

20 high school football players of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard and 20 college football players respectively from different schools & colleges of Kanpur, U.P. were selected for the study. All players had a minimum of one year experience, and had competed once or twice in a

week during the peak season. The test was completed prior to the start of the competition.

### CRITERION MEASURES

Anxiety can be measured through different means and specific tools. In this study, the Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) was used to measure the competitive trait anxiety (A-Trait). This tool is a self-report psychometric inventory of A-Trait consisting of 15 items, 5 of them being spurious items (Matens et al, 1990; Hinbery & Gould 1999).

### PROCEDURE

Each player was approached separately and the researcher explained that the research inventory would only take a few minutes and asked them to be as honest as possible. Confidentiality was guaranteed and no names were taken revealed.

### ANALYSIS & RESULTS OF DATA

To analyze the collected data, paired t-test was utilized by using the SPSS program.

### RESULTS

	N	M	SP	SED	T
College	20	18.70	2.78	1.16	3.5
School	20	22.85	3.81		

Significant at 0.05 level.

The SCAT values were analyzed by using paired t-test. The result shows through the paired t-test that there exists a significant difference between two means (SCAT- School 22.85 and SCAT College 18.7) at 0.05 level of significance. The result also shows that the college football players have less anxiety level than the school football players. However both age groups have an average degree of competition anxiety.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main aim of the study was to describe the anxiety differences before the competitions in the different age group players. From this investigation, the results obtained were very significant ( $t > 0.05$ ) and the college football players were found less anxious than the school football players.

In this study the result failed to prove the hypothesis that trait anxiety would be greater prior to a competition (both age group players have an average degree of anxiety level). As presented by McKay et al (1997), trait anxiety has been found to be higher in competition than in practice. However, the reason, for our results disclaiming these examined outcomes can be held responsible for several reasons. Firstly increasing the sample size and the period of testing would benefit the validity of our result. This testing should occur four and five times prior to different competitions. By testing a multiple amount of time, will reduce the possibility of situational bias. This means that feelings and emotions that may affect anxiety of the subjects on the day of testing can be eliminated by mean of multifaceted testing protocol. However, due to time restraints, one period of testing was all, that was practical, and lead to an error in results (according) to the other literature (McKay et al 1997, Martens et al. 1990). The contribution of this study is to lay way to further investigation of anxiety levels during practice and competition in different game.

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