

Effect of Competitive Anxiety on sports Performance among College Level Players

Ramaprabou. V^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The present investigation was undertaken to study the Effect of Competitive Anxiety on sports Performance among College Level Players. For this 100 student players of sports like cricket, volley ball, shuttle, kho-kho, kabadi and the like studying in different Arts and Science Colleges of Puducherry region were identified and selected on the basis of their performance in different competitions during the last three years. Sports Competition Anxiety Test, constructed and standardized by Rainer Marten (1990) was used to assess the anxiety level of the players. Analysis was done by using one way ANOVA. Findings of the study reveals that high level of competitive anxiety lowers the sport performance of the student players studying in arts and science colleges of in and around Puducherry.

Keywords: *Anxiety, sports Performance, College Level Players*

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by cognitive, somatic, emotional, and behavioral components (Seligman, Walker & Rosenhan, 2001). Anxiety is a subjective feeling of apprehension and heightened physiological arousal. Anxiety is a tendency found in all human beings, some may deny this, associating it with fear. Fear can lead to disastrous consequences whereas anxiety urges a person to enhance his/her performance thereby contributing to the person's advancement or development. Anxiety is dynamic, because it is consternation, a person's concern and enthusiasm to excel and is therefore constructive.

Sportspersons learn early in their careers how important focus and concentration are to their performance. Equally important, a player who manifests anxiety before and during competition will experience an elevated level of arousal and feelings of tension and apprehension (Levitt, 1980). Performance anxiety among sports person has been recognized by mental health practitioners for many years. Choking during competition is described as a decrease in performance due to excessive stress. So anxiety among sportspersons produces mistakes and errors in judgment. However, Performance anxiety can in fact provide a positive race-day boost

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Tagore Arts College, Puducherry, India

*Responding Author

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if sportspersons learn to channel their anxiety into better performance. Anxiety does indeed produce positive effects on performance. Sportspersons may also find it helpful if their anxiety is reframed as anticipation, passion, and excitement for the upcoming competition.

A major theoretical model used to investigate anxiety intensity levels associated with performance has been the Multidimensional Anxiety Theory (**Martens, Burton, Vealey, Bump, & Smith, 1990**). According to this theory, anxiety can be separated into a cognitive or psychological reaction, and a somatic or physiological reaction. Cognitive anxiety is defined as the negative expectation and concern an individual has about performing, while somatic anxiety is defined as bodily symptoms or feelings associated with stress, such as nervousness or tension. In addition, cognitive anxiety is theorized to have a negative linear relationship with performance, while somatic anxiety is theorized to have an inverted-u or curvilinear relationship. In the past 10 to 12 years, investigators have expanded upon the MAT model by including an anxiety direction dimension to go along with the original intensity dimension. **Jones and Swain (1992)** first introduced the concept of anxiety direction, and operationally defined it as the player's facilitative and debilitating interpretation of the anxiety symptoms related to performance. Past research indicates that the direction of anxiety may be the most important dimension when comparing elite versus non elite performers, with elite athletes having more positive anxiety perceptions (**Jones, Hanton, & Swain, 1994; Jones & Swain, 1995**). Research has also investigated anxiety direction from a trait perspective. Competitive trait anxiety is concerned with general anxiety feelings associated with performance. It has been defined as perceived anxiety symptoms that predispose someone to interpret circumstances as threatening (**Weinberg & Gould, 2003**).

Research investigating state anxiety intensity and direction has demonstrated gender differences, although results have been equivocal. For instance, some researchers have reported gender differences when examining temporal patterns of anxiety and self-confidence (**Jones & Cale, 1989; Jones, Swain, & Cale, 1991**). In a study **Swain and Jones (1993)** reported cognitive and somatic state anxiety symptoms increased significantly for both males and females as the competition approached. Females reported higher state somatic anxiety scores than males. **Wiggins (1998)** reported gender differences investigating anxiety across time, with females reporting higher cognitive anxiety intensity 24 hours prior to competition, but found no anxiety direction differences.

Objective

1. To study the effect of competitive anxiety among Low, Medium and High performers in sports.
2. To study the gender difference on competitive anxiety among Low, Medium and High performers in sports.

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Hypotheses

1. High, Medium and Low achievers do not differ in competitive anxiety on the basis of their performance.
2. Male players do not differ in competitive anxiety than the female players.

METHOD

Population

The population of the study was the student players studying in different Arts and Science Colleges of Puducherry region. The population includes all kinds of players of sports like cricket, volley ball, shuttle, kho-kho, kabadi and the like. About 100 student players were identified and selected on the basis of their performance in different competitions during the last three years. The data were collected individually from the subjects through face to face interview. Each player was contacted at the playground just an hour before the intercollegiate matches.

Tool used

Sports Competition Anxiety Test, constructed and standardized by **Rainer Marten** (1990), was used to assess the anxiety level of the players. The scale consists of 15 statements with 13 positive statements and 2 negative statements. It is a three point Likert type scale ranging from hardly ever, sometimes and often. Higher the score indicates higher the anxiety and lower the score indicates lower the anxiety (reliability co-efficient ranged from 0.86 to 0.89).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Anxiety was considered one of the main important psychological factor influence performance (**Raglin&Hanin, 2000**). In sport psychology, the relation between competitive state anxiety and performance has been the subject of many sport psychologist researches (**Hardy & Jones, 1994**). Studies made by (**Cox (2011); Tsorbatzoudis, Barkoukis, Sideridis and Grouios, (2002); Beilock and Carr (2001); Ntoumanis and Biddle (1998); Wann (1997); Krane and Williams (1994); Nideffer (1993); Martens et al. (1990) and Rodrigo, Lusiardo and Pereira (1990)**) also proved that players who experience higher competitive anxiety tend to have lower level of sport performance. In the present study also it has been observed from the Table No.1, that Low performers tend to show higher competitive anxiety (33.69) than the Medium performers (27.76) and High performers (16.27). It clearly advocates that higher the level of competitive anxiety lowers the level of performance among the student players studying in arts and science colleges of in and around Puducherry. The difference between the groups was also established by the obtained F value (31.42) which is statistically significant at 0.05 level. Hence it may be concluded that higher level of competitive anxiety may bring down the performance of the college level student sport players.

Players who manifest anxiety before and during competition will experience an elevated level of arousal and feelings of tension and apprehension (**Levitt, 1980**). **Swain and Jones (1993)** also

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found in their research study that there was an increase in the cognitive and somatic anxiety among both males and females as the competition approached. In particular **Wiggins (1998)** found higher cognitive anxiety among females. In the present study it is observed (Table No.2) that the mean scores of the competitive anxiety among girls (28.05) have been found higher than the boys (25.67). and the difference was also statistically established by the obtained t value (3.14) which is significant at 0.01 level. Hence it may be concluded that student players studying in arts and science colleges of in and around Puducherry do differ in their competitive anxiety level on the basis of their gender.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study reveals that high level of competitive anxiety lowers the sport performance of the student players studying in arts and science colleges of in and around Puducherry. Hence it may be concluded that lowering the anxiety may increase the performance of the players.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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Table No.1 showing the Mean, SD, and F value of competitive anxiety of student players on the basis of their performance level

| Performance level | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | F | LS |
|-------------------|----|-------|----------------|------------|-------|------|
| Low performers | 26 | 33.69 | 4.939 | 1.370 | 31.42 | 0.05 |
| Medium performers | 42 | 27.76 | 6.913 | 1.509 | | |
| High performers | 32 | 16.27 | 5.351 | 1.382 | | |

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Table No.2 showing the Mean, SD, and t value of competitive anxiety of student players on the basis of their gender.

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | t | LS |
|--------|----|-------|----------------|------------|------|------|
| Male | 62 | 25.67 | 9.053 | 1.653 | 3.14 | 0.01 |
| Female | 38 | 28.05 | 9.204 | 2.112 | | |

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