

ISSN: 2584-0142

PSYCHOPEDIA
JOURNALSInternational Journal of
Interdisciplinary Approaches
in Psychology (IJIAP)

Relationship between Competitive Anxiety and Confidence among Athletes

Madhu¹

¹ Psychology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.

Primary Contact : madhudeswal6@gmail.com

Abstract

Competition in athletes is important to motivate them for better performance which in turn is focused on gaining superiority over an opponent. Competition is good among athletes because it has an impact on self-discipline, and attitude toward other fellow athletes. Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes. It is a subjective feeling of apprehension and heightened physiological arousal. Confidence is the ability of an individual to deal and face the situation. It helps an individual to develop self and abilities. The research aimed to study the relationship between competitive anxiety and confidence in athletes. Standardized tools were used to measure anxiety and confidence among athletes. A total sample of 30 in the age group of 18 - 25 years was collected. The results found out that there is a negative correlation between competitive anxiety and confidence. It is suggested for athletes to practice positive self-talk, deep breathing exercise to get themselves back from negative thoughts and channelize all the energy in an effective way.

Key Words: Anxiety, Confidence, Athletes, Sports psychology.

Introduction

"You are never really playing an opponent. You are playing yourself, your own highest standards, and when you reach your limits, that is real joy."

- Arthur Ashe

Today's athletes face serious and unique challenges. The standards are excessively high, the competition is tough and so are the stakes. Among the best, the physical preparation is more complete and the psychological component more important than ever. An athlete's performance

in sports competition is determined by a combination of many factors. These factors may include a player's technical ability, tactics used, and the player's state of mind. All these are important for best performance. Today, sports performance requires not only physical, physiological variables, and systematic training but also demands training and consideration of psychological characteristics for success in the field. A lot of strains and stressors come while being an athlete. Anxiety is one of the psychological elements that affects an athlete's motivation in terms of their psychological makeup. Athletes experience competitive anxiety before games and during competitions, which has an impact on their performance. When an

athlete experiences symptoms of anxiety when participating in high stakes competition, this condition is known as competitive anxiety. Anxiety can be a positive motivator or a hindrance to athletic performance. As a positive motivator, it helps motivate athletes to work hard in order to improve performance and find new and better ways to set goals which helps increase athleticism and confidence. As a negative motivator, fear can hinder both productive and constructive thinking. Confidence is defined as the strength or belief that one can successfully perform the action required to achieve a certain result. Confidence is the state of a person that makes one realize one's positive abilities; full of energy to carry out successful work in all areas leading up to one's peak. It is a belief that one can access necessary resources to successfully engage in a particular activity and accomplish a specific goal. Confident athletes are more skillful and systematic in using resources.

A study was conducted where; state sport-confidence and result self-efficacy were predicted by trait sport-confidence. Yet, competitive orientation had no effect on how well state measurements were predicted. As was hypothesized, performance was predicted by state sport confidence and self-efficacy. Interestingly, outcome self-efficacy outperformed performance self-efficacy as a predictor, and neither factor helped with the prediction of performance time or location. It's possible that the runner's inexperience and lack of competitive track experience prohibited them from making correct judgments about their performance self-efficacy. On the other hand, the comfortable and condensed competitive environment might have enabled these athletes to make accurate outcome self-efficacy assessments (Martin et al., 1991).

Mellalieu et al. (2006) carried out a study in order to determine if self-confidence mediated the connection between competitive anxiety severity and direction. Participants from the elite ($n = 102$) and non-elite ($n = 144$) groups completed the Competitive Trait Anxiety Inventory-2's self-confidence subscale as well as the Sport Anxiety Scale's concern and somatic subscales. Linear regression analyses were done in accordance with the methodology provided by Baron and Kenny (1986). Worry intensity was found to significantly predict self-confidence and worry direction in elite athletes. However, when self-confidence was adjusted for, worry intensity did not predict worry direction, as well as self-confidence, did. Only self-confidence was found to predict the direction of somatic symptoms in the analysis. Worry and somatic symptom severity predicted both self-confidence and direction for non-elite athletes when self-confidence was controlled. For top athletes, the data show that self-confidence influences the connection between concern symptoms and subsequent directional interpretations. However, the data show that non-elite athletes require high levels of self-confidence and modest symptom intensity to demonstrate a less debilitating interpretation.

Parfitt and Pates (1998) carried out research to determine the impact of competitive anxiety and self-confidence state components on performance. A total of 12 Basketball players were taught to self-report their cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence as a single response many times before stepping on the court to play. Performance was videotaped, and areas of performance that required either predominantly anaerobic power (height leaped) or working memory (successful passes and assists) were measured. These measurements were used to construct intra-individual performance ratings, and the data from seven matches were subjected to regression and then hierarchical regression analysis. The findings revealed that, as expected, somatic anxiety influenced performance with anaerobic demands. The major predictor of performance scores with working memory demands was self-confidence, not cognitive distress. It appears that measures of competitive state responses have varying effects on features of real performance. Identifying these variations will be useful in developing intervention techniques to improve performance.

Competitive Anxiety

According to Smith et al. (1990) “competitive anxiety is an athlete’s negative emotional reaction when his self-esteem is felt threatened because he considers the match to be a formidable challenge, and will always remember his performance abilities, which have an impact on competitive behavior”.

“Competitive anxiety consists of cognitive and somatic subcomponents. The cognitive component of anxiety arises due to fear of negative evaluations of the social environment, fear of failure, and lack of self-esteem” (Martens et al., 1990).

According to Lewthwaite and Scanlan (1989) “competitive trait anxiety is a personality disposition, akin to (trait) test anxiety, that reflects an individual's tendency to perceive threat and experience stress in situations that involve sport competition”.

To compare the competitive state anxiety levels of individual sports, dual sports and team game participants a study was conducted by Patel (2010). For the study, 60 male students from LNIPE, Gwalior, were chosen as participants. Depending on their activity, these participants were classified into three groups for individual sports, dual sports, and team games. The following conclusions were reached based on the findings and within the constraints of the study. The results stated that individual, dual, and team games did not significantly differ from one another in terms of competitive state anxiety components. Individual sports, dual sports, and team games did not significantly differ from one another either.

Competitive anxiety is a type of anxiety that occurs during competition and is characterised by apprehension about the outcome of the competition. 35 top-ranked powerlifters, 22 men and 13 women, from the 2009 Agra University intercollegiate power lifting championship held at Shri Varshaney Degree College Aligarh were chosen for this study. SCAT, a tool created by Martens (1977), was used to quantify athletes' competition anxiety. The t-test was used to compare the levels of competition anxiety experienced by intercollegiate male and female powerlifters, and coefficient-correlation was used to determine how these levels of anxiety related to their performance at the .05 level of confidence. The study's objective was to compare anxiety levels between students and non-students. The findings made it abundantly evident that anxiety levels differ significantly between participants and nonparticipants. The findings of the current study showed that players experienced less anxiety than non-players. As a result of the findings analysis, it can be said that players appear to have less anxiety than non-players (BrijBhushan, 2010).

Confidence

According to Vealey (1986) sports confidence is defined as “an athlete’s belief or the degree of certainty that he or she has the abilities to perform successfully in sports”.

According to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy is defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments”.

According to Thomas et al. (2011) robust self-confidence is “a set of enduring, yet malleable positive beliefs that protect against the ongoing psychological and environmental challenges associated with competitive sport”.

Ashwini et al. (2015) had finished a study on self-confidence in handball and volleyball players. The study's goal was to discover the difference in self-confidence between volleyball and handball players. A total of 60 players were chosen as subjects, with 30 being handball players and 30 being volleyball players. The psychological variable, self-confidence was chosen as a variable to fulfill the study's goal. The Self-confidence questionnaire was used to assess self-confidence. The authors' proposed answer key was used to assess the data collected from the subjects. After using the statistical technique 't' test to the data, the results revealed that handball players have 13.3%, 76.6%, and 10% of low, average, and better self-confidence, respectively. Volleyball players have 20%, 63.3%, and 16.6%, respectively, of low, average, and higher self-confidence.

Arun (2014) investigated a comparison of self-confidence levels among Kho-Kho and Kabaddi players at Bangalore University. A total of 60 subjects were chosen at random from various Bangalore University connected colleges, including 30 Kho-Kho and Kabaddi players. All of

the selected players competed in All India Inter University Board-organized state, national, and inter-university tournaments. The participants' ages varied from 19 to 25. To test self-confidence, a standard scale and a questionnaire were employed. He used both descriptive and comparative analysis in his statistical study. He calculated the mean and standard deviation in descriptive analysis and used the t-test in comparative analysis. Following adequate statistical analysis, the discussion, conclusions, and results were examined. The study's key finding was that self-confidence among Kho-Kho and Kabaddi players was low. The study's essential finding was that self-confidence among Kho-Kho and Kabaddi players was strong. Athletes had to go through various progressive therapeutic procedures in training as well as in reducing stress and anxiety levels while participating in sports.

Praveen (2014) investigated the effect of self-confidence on the physical fitness of Gulbarga District intercollegiate volleyball players. The current study attempted to investigate the impact of self-confidence on physical fitness among Intercollegiate Volleyball players. The self-confidence inventory created by Basavanna was utilized by the researcher to assess self-confidence. Volleyball players' fitness levels were assessed using the Measure Scale and the AAHPERD fitness test. The study's sample consisted of one hundred intercollegiate volleyball players (all male). To determine and examine the effect of self-confidence on physical fitness, statistical mean, standard deviation, and t-value were calculated. Finally, high self-confidence volleyball players outperformed low-self-confidence volleyball players in the physical fitness test.

Sample

A total sample of 30 athletes in the age group of 18 to 25 years of age was collected. The sample was collected from the Tricity, Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali.

Measures

Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT): The questionnaire was developed by Martens (1997). The scale consists of 15 statements in which there are 13 positive statements and 2 negative statements, 10 of these 15 items are related to anxiety, 5 of them are testing items which aim to reduce subjective answers. It is a 3-point Likert scale that ranges from rarely, sometimes, and often. Higher score indicates higher anxiety, and lower score indicates lower anxiety. The scale includes questions like: Competing against others is socially enjoyable, before I compete I feel uneasy, before I compete I worry about not performing well. The scoring of the scale is done using the answer key provided in the manual. The validity for the test is .90. The reliability for the test is .77.

Trait Robustness of Sports-Confidence Inventory (TROSCI): The questionnaire was developed by Beattie et al. (2011). The scale has 13 items which are rated on a 7-point Likert

scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Scores are calculated by adding all the responses. The scale includes questions like: “a bad result in competition has a very negative effect on my self-confidence”, “my self-confidence goes up and down a lot”, “if I perform poorly my confidence is not badly affected” and so on. The validity of the scale is .90 and the reliability of the test is .88.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were acknowledged about the confidentiality of the data. The questionnaires were filled through Google forms. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Results

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation

	ANXIETY	CONFIDENCE
N	30	30
Mean	19.7	39.8
Standard deviation	3.72	10.6

Table 2

Correlation Table

	ANXIETY	CONFIDENCE
ANXIETY	—	
CONFIDENCE	-0.031	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion of Results

The results in table 2 depicted that there was no significant difference between anxiety and confidence. Though the results show a negative correlation between the two, the difference is not significant.

Pineda-Espejel et al. (2013) attempted to investigate the strength and direction of pre-competitive anxiety indicators (both physical and cognitive) as well as self-confidence in gymnasts competing in the 2011 Pan American Games. 60 male and female artistic gymnasts aged 15 to 30 years ($M = 21.04$ years, $SD = 4.016$) competed. Both the Revised Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2) and the Jones and Swain direction scale were used. The findings revealed that the intensity and direction of cognitive anxiety were positively correlated with the intensity and direction of somatic anxiety ($r = .55$ and $r = .53$, respectively), whereas self-confidence was negatively correlated with and predicted the intensity of cognitive anxiety ($r = -.305$). Women reported considerably higher levels of somatic anxiety (2.79) than men (2.48). Finally, a high level of self-confidence reduced the sense of cognitive worry as a debilitating factor in gymnasts competing at the American level.

A study was conducted by George et al. (1998) to assess pre competition anxiety and self-confidence. A significant increase in somatic anxiety and a significant decrease in self-confidence were found as a competition approach in a combined group of females and males. There was no significant change in cognitive anxiety as time to compete neared. A significant interaction effect between groups and time prior to competition for self-confidence was observed. Additionally, there was a significant negative correlation between cognitive anxiety and self-confidence at all four pre-race time points for the combined group of subjects.

Conclusion

The research aimed to study the relationship between competitive anxiety and confidence in athletes. Standardized tools were used to measure anxiety and confidence among athletes. A total sample of 30 in the age group of 18 - 25 years was collected. The results found out that there was a negative correlation between competitive anxiety and confidence.

Pre-Performance routines such as mental warm-up, with action items for athletes to check off before starting practice or competition. It can include visualization, positive self-talk, listening to music, and more. The goal is to clear the mind of distractions and to perform with a positive

mindset and confidence. Positive Self-Talk, also referred to as “self-coaching,” is a way for athletes to look at any situation in a positive light. . Mental skills and CBT-based interventions on stress and anxiety are effective ways. Watching videos of past performances- either of others or self. By watching others' performance, the individual will be able to analyze the positives and negatives and can compare to their own performance. Praising or social approval will also increase confidence. Goal setting, motivational self-talk and growing instinct motivation will help in increasing motivation among athletes.

References

- Arun, M. N. (2014). A Comparative study of Self-Confidence between Kho-Kho Players and Kabaddi Players of Bangalore University. *International Journal of Health, Physical Education and Computer Science in Sports*, 15(1), 495- 496.
- Ashwini, K. N., & Virupaksha, N. D. (2015). Self-Confidence among Handball and Volleyball Players. *Academic Sports Scholars*, 4(8), 1-5.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.
- Beattie, S., Hardy, L., Savage, J., Woodman, T., & Callow, N. (2011). Development and validation of a trait measure of robustness of self-confidence. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, 12(2), 184-191.
- BrijBhushan, S. (2010). A study on sports competition Anxiety and Performance of Intercollegiate Top Ranking Male and Female Power lifters. *J. Health and Fitness*, 2(1), 66-70.
- George, E., Albuquerque, and Sullivan, W. (1998). Ultramarathon Runners; Assessment of Pre-competition Anxiety and Self Confidence. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, Vol. 20. Supplement, June 1998.p.s -88.
- Lewthwaite, R., Scanlan, T. K. (1989). Predictors of competitive trait anxiety in male youth sport participants. *Med. Sci. Sports Exerc.* 1989;21(2):221-229.
- Martens, R., Burton, D., Vealey, R. S., Bump, L. A., & Smith, D. E. (1990). Development and validation of the competitive state anxiety inventory-2 (CSAI-2). In R. Martens, R. S. Vealey, & D. Burton (Eds.), *Competitive anxiety in sport* (pp. 117–213). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martin, Jeffery J., and Gill, Diane L. (1991). The relationship among competitive orientation, sport-confidence, self-efficacy, anxiety, and performance. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 13,149-159.

- Mellalieu, S. D., Neil R., Hanton, S. (2006). Self-confidence as a mediator of the relationship between competitive anxiety intensity and interpretation. *Research Quarterly Exercise Sport* (Jun 2006) 77(2), 263-270.
- Parfitt, G., and Pates, J. (1998). The effects of cognitive and somatic anxiety and self-confidence on components of performance during competition. *Journal of Sports Sciences* (1998), 17, 351-356.
- Patel, S. (2010). Comparison of competitive state anxiety components among individual, dual and team sports. *Asian Journal of Physical Education and Computer Science in sports*. Volume. 4, No. 1 pp. 148-150.
- Pineda-Espejel, A., & López-Walle, J. (2013). Pre-competitive anxiety and self-confidence in pan American gymnasts” *Science of Gymnastics Journal* (2013) 5:1, 39 – 48.
- Praveen, A. (2014). Impact of Self-Confidence on the Physical Fitness of Inter Collegiate Volleyball Players of Gulbarga District. *International Journal of Health, Physical Education and Computer Science in Sports*, 15(1), 585-586.
- Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., & Schutz, R. W. (1990). Measurement and correlates of sport-specific cognitive and somatic trait anxiety: The sport anxiety scale. *Anxiety Research*, 2(4), 263–280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08917779008248733>.
- Thomas, O., Lane, A., & Kingston, K. (2011). Defining and contextualizing robust sport confidence. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 23, 189-208.
- Vealey, R. S. (1986). Conceptualization of sport-confidence and competitive orientation: Preliminary investigation and instrument development. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 8, 221–246.