



International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health

P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (ISRA): 4.69
IJPESH 2016; 3(1): 133-134
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www.kheljournal.com
Received: 11-11-2015
Accepted: 13-12-2015

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A comparative study on competition anxiety between male and female national level basketball players

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Abstract

Anxiety is a psychological condition which influenced the sports performance of an athlete. Purpose of the present study was to compare the competition of male and female national level basketball players. A total of 62 national level basketball players (23 male and 39 female) within the age of 15-19 years were selected randomly as subject for this study. Competition anxiety was the criterion measure in this study. It was measured by Illinois Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) Questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive statistics and t-test was used to find out the difference between two means. Only 0.05 level of significance was considered for the present study. All calculations were done by the standard statistical software. Result revealed that female player had higher level of competition anxiety than male basketball players. But the difference between means (t-value) was not significant statistically. From above findings it was concluded that there was no significant difference in competition anxiety between male and female national level Basketball players.

Keywords: Competition anxiety, Basketball players, National level

1. Introduction

Anxiety is a negative emotional state with feelings of worry, nervousness and apprehension that is associated with the activation of the body. It leads to stress on our body. The issue of anxiety and stress are important aspect of health and sports performance. Recently, individual differences in stress reactivity have been proposed as a potentially important risk factor for gender-specific health problems in men and women, in addition to genetic, socio-cultural, hormonal and developmental factors (Hamann and Canli, 2004; Young and Altemus, 2004; Goldstein *et al.*, 2005; Kajantie and Phillips, 2006) ^[1-4]. It can affect performance in many ways. Whether it is during the tense moments of a championship game or amidst that dreaded History exam, anxiety affects our performance via changes in the body, which can be identified by certain indicators such as cutting nail by teeth, moving around aimlessly, headache, cold and clammy hand, constant need to urine etc. Sports performance is not simply a product of physiological factors and biomechanical techniques but psychological factors also play a crucial role in determining performance. Every athlete has a certain anxiety level that is a key factor to affect his or her performance. This anxiety or stress level also depends on factors such as past experiences, coping responses and genetics.

In recent research, the factor of competitive anxiety has been dissected into two segments - somatic and cognitive anxiety. Cognitive anxiety is characterized by negative expectations, lack of concentration, and images of failure. Somatic anxiety refers to physiological symptoms such as sweaty hands and tension and other physiologic changes. In order to chalk out optimal performance, the precursors of anxiety need to be sought out. The temporal patterning of anxiety, before, during and after competition has been receiving a lot of attention in research.

A certain level of stress is needed for optimal performance. Too little stress expresses itself in feelings of boredom and not being challenged. Several studies reported that a certain level of stress is needed for optimal performance. Competitive stress does not necessarily impair performance and can in certain circumstances enhance it. At an optimum level of stress one gets the benefits of alertness and activation that improves performance. But even while making such statements, it is important to realize that there is currently no conclusive evidence except for the fact that stress and anxiety do have an influence in performance. The purpose of the present study was to find out the anxiety level of male and female Basketball players during competition and compare them.

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2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Subject

A total of 62 national level basketball players within the age of 15-19 years were selected randomly as subject for this study. Among them 23 were male players and 39 were female player.

2.2 Criterion measure

Competition anxiety during basketball match was the criterion measure in this study.

2.3 Test and Tools used

Competition anxiety was measured by Illinois Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) Questionnaire (1977) [5].

2.4 Statistical procedure

Mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive statistics and significance between two means was analysed by t-test. Only 0.05 level of significance was considered for the present study. All calculations were done by using standard statistical software.

3. Results and Discussion

The mean value and standard deviation of competition anxiety of male and female basketball players have presented in table-1. Difference between mean values of anxiety level for male and female group was analysed by t-test and result has also been presented in Table-1.

Table 2: Mean and SD of competition anxiety for male and female Basketball players

Statistical parameters	Male	Female
Mean	17.13	18.05
Standard Deviation	2.83	2.93
N	23	39
SED	0.75	
Mn ₁ -Mn ₂	(-) 0.92	
t-value	1.23 [^]	

[^] Not significant at 0.05 level only.

The mean values of competition anxiety for male and female Basketball players have presented graphically in Figure-1, which clearly shown that competition anxiety for female basketball player is higher than the male basketball player.

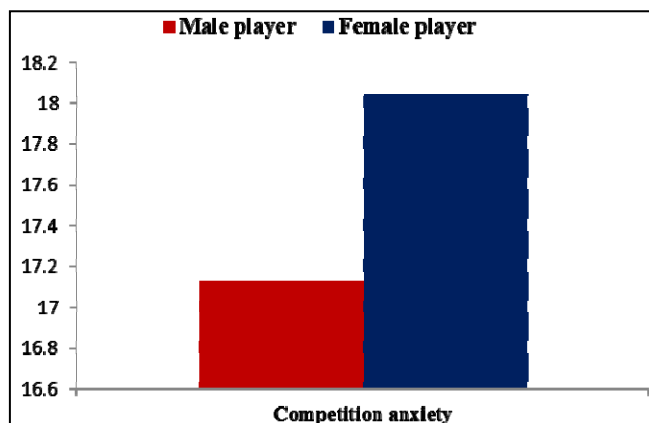


Fig 1: Comparison of competition anxiety between male and female player

Present study revealed relatively higher competition anxiety for female basketball player than their male counterpart, though the difference was not statistically significant. Seo *et al.* (2010) reported sex differences in neural processing of

stress [6]. Other study reported greater cortisol elevation in females than males, when a social rejection task was adopted as the stressor instead of achievement tasks (Dickerson and Kemeny, 2004) [7]. Wang *et al.* (2007) found women experienced increased cognitive demand relative to men during stress tasks [8]. They revealed systematic gender differences in the neural response for mild to moderate stress. Some other studies, however, reported either no gender difference in stress reactivity (Stroud *et al.*, 2002) [9]. As per Hardy (1992) little difference in competition anxiety found in this study between male and female players might be due to the difference in fear of failure, concerns about social evaluation by others (particularly the coach, the team mates), lack of readiness to perform, and loss of internal control over one's environment between them [10].

4. Conclusions

Present study found relatively higher competitive anxiety among female national level basketball players than their male counterpart though, the difference was not significant statistically.

5. References

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