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## Effect of mental training on anxiety of Kerala men cricket players

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### Abstract

The objective of the study was to assess the effect of mental training on anxiety of Kerala men Cricket players. To achieve the purpose of this study, 30 Male intercollegiate Cricket players were randomly selected as subject from the University of Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi University, Calicut University and Kannur University in the State of Kerala. The selected subjects were divided in to two groups namely Experimental and Control group. The age of the subject was range between 18-25 years. To achieve the purpose of the study, the criterion variable selected for this study was anxiety. The selected participants were divided into two groups such as Group A underwent mental training and group B acted as control group. The training period was one hour approximately. Every week, training given only three alternative days for twelve weeks. Control group was not exposed to any specific training but they were participated in regular activities. The data on anxiety were collected by administering by anxiety questionnaire. The pre and post tests data were collected on selected criterion variables prior and immediately after the training programme. The result indicate that the Experimental Group namely mental training group had significantly improved in selected variables such as Anxiety. A significant difference in improvement was found among mental training groups and control group in the selected criterion variables such as Anxiety.

**Keywords:** Anxiety and mental preparation

### Introduction

Mental skills training is the process that provides the methods and techniques to improve performance by developing self-confidence and creating a positive mind-set through goal setting, positive self-talk, visualization, imagery, and self-efficacy.

The sports community now recognizes that mental factors such as confidence, composure, focus, and motivation are highly significant to athletic performance. As a result, over the year's performance enhancement has become an emerging career track within the field sport psychology. Sport psychology (or sports psychology) is the study of the psychological factors that affect participation and performance in sports. Sport psychology professionals who focus on performance enhancement aim to increase athletic performance by minimizing the psychological effects of poor performance and instilling the mental skill needed to attain peak performance. In order for the field of sport psychology to advance professionals must educate the sports community on the value and benefits of mental training.

The best practice to enhance athletic performance in the field sport psychology is through mental training. Mental training is the segment of sports psychology that concentrates specifically on helping athletes break through the mental barriers that are keeping them from performing up to their peak potential. Many athletes and coaches resist mental training because they do not understand how it can help them. In order for athletes to get the most out of their sport, it is critical for them to understand the value of improving their mental game. Athletes are more likely to embrace mental training when they understand it and its benefits. However, the best way for athletes to embrace into mental training is when they actually experience its power firsthand.

Mental training is about improving one's attitude and mental skills to help them perform their best by identifying limiting beliefs and embracing a healthier philosophy about their sport. Mental skills, just like physical skills, take repetition, practice, and game-time application to develop.

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Helping athletes and coaches understanding the mental barriers that limit performance and the benefits of sports psychology intervention is a critical step in the mental training process. Mental barriers include high expectations, perfectionism, fear of failure, lack of emotional control and attentional focus. Athletes can overcome these barriers through sport psychology intervention that aim to enhance confidence, focus, composure, trust and mental preparation.

Anxiety is a Psychological and Physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. The root meaning of the word Anxiety is 'to vex or trouble'; in either the absence or presence of Psychological stress, anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness and dread. Anxiety is considered to be a normal reaction to stress. It may help a person to deal with a difficult situation by prompting one to cope with it. When anxiety becomes excessive, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder. The intensity and reasoning behind anxiety determines whether it is considered a normal or abnormal reaction.

Anxiety does not only consist of physical effects; there are many emotional ones as well. They include "feelings of apprehension or dread, trouble concentrating, feeling tense or jumpy, anticipating the worst, irritability, restlessness, watching for signs of danger, and feeling like your mind's gone blank "as well as " nightmares/bad dreams, obsessions about sensations, déjà vu, a trapped in your mind feelings, and feeling like everything is scary.

Competitive sport can make even the world's most successful athlete feel nervous. Many factors such as expectations, perfectionism, fear of failure, lack of confidence, induce feelings of anxiety in athletes (Moran, 2004). So from the cricket perspective what is anxiety and mental toughness? (Bull, 2002) gives the example of high intensity between batter and bowler and actually reveals in the situation and the example given in the memorable duel between Michael

Atherton of England and Allan Donald of South Africa in the 1998 Trent Bridge Test Match. The relationship of Anxiety and Cricket, (Bhogle, Harsha 2005) reveals that Ajit Agarkar scoring five straight Ducks in 2000 Australia tour, it was the pressure and fear of failure made it happened partially. How anxiety plays in a mind of a Cricketer, The instant you make your first mistake, it starts: "You SUCK!" When you make another one, the voice gets louder and nastier: "How could you possibly have blown that?!!! Like, what is your problem? Are you really that bad?" A few minutes. (Woolmer, Bob 2006, Art and Science of Cricket).

Behaviour can be affected in the form of withdrawal from situations where unpleasant effects of anxiety have been experienced in the past. It can also be affected in ways which include changes in sleeping patterns, nail biting and increased motor tension, such as foot tapping.

### Methodology

To achieve the purpose of this study, 30 Male intercollegiate Cricket players are randomly selected as subject from the University of Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi University, Calicut University and Kannur University in the State of Kerala. The selected subjects were divided in to two groups namely Experimental and Control group. To achieve the purpose of the study, the criterion variable selected for this study was anxiety. The selected participants were divided into two groups such as Group A underwent mental training (n=15) and group B acted as control group (n=5). The training period was one hour approximately. Every week, training given only three alternative days for twelve weeks. Control group was not exposed to any specific training but they were participated in regular activities. The data on anxiety were collected by administering by anxiety questionnaire. The pre and post tests data were collected on selected criterion variables prior and immediately after the training programme.

**Table 1:** The summary of mean for the pre and post tests data on selected variables of resistance (weight) training group and control group

| Criterion Variables | Mean      | Mental Training Group | Control Group |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Anxiety             | Pre test  | 35.50                 | 40.09         |
|                     | Post test | 46.75                 | 40.20         |

The analysis of covariance on criterion variables of Resistance (weight) training group and control group have been analyzed and presented in the Table II.

**Table 2:** The analysis of covariance on criterion variables of experimental and control group

| Criterion variables | Adjusted Post Test Means |               | Source of Variance | Sum of Square | df | Means Square | F-ratio |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|----|--------------|---------|
|                     | Mental training group    | Control Group |                    |               |    |              |         |
| Anxiety             | 45.51                    | 40.16         | B                  | 205.24        | 1  | 205.24       | 5.83*   |
|                     |                          |               | W                  | 946.34        | 27 | 36.01        |         |

\*Significant at 0.05 level Confidence. Table value at 0.05 level confidence with df 1 and 27 are 4.21 respectively.

From the Table-II, the obtained value of 'F' – ratio for anxiety for adjusted post test means was more than the table value of 4.21 for df 1 and 27 required for significant at 0.05 level of confidence. The result of the study indicated that significant differences exist among the adjusted post test means of experimental and control group on the improvement of anxiety level.

### Conclusions

From the analysis of the data the following conclusions were drawn, The Experimental Group namely mental training group had significantly improved in selected variables such as Anxiety.

A significant difference in improvement was found among mental training groups and control group in the selected criterion variables such as Anxiety.

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