

Analysis of Sports Anxiety Levels among Experienced and Inexperienced Collegiate Athletes

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Abstract

The study examined to analyze the different levels of pre-competitive anxiety for inexperienced and experienced athletes. The pre-competitive anxiety factors were evaluated with the help of competitive state anxiety inventory – 2 (Urdu version). CSAI-2 questionnaire is composed of twenty-seven items having three subscales e.g. cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence. A sample of 360 athletes was taken through a stratified sampling technique for the examination of pre-competitive anxiety levels. The data of 360 athletes were further stratified into two sets of 180 experienced and 180 inexperienced athletes between the ages of 16 to 27 years. The questionnaire was distributed one hour before the start of the competition. T-test has been used to assess the data collected for investigation. The results displayed a significant difference in somatic, cognitive aspects of anxiety and self-confidence among the college-level experienced and inexperienced athletes.

Introduction

The impact of competitive anxiety on the performance of athletes is an important field of study for sports psychologists (Craft, Becker, Magyer & Feltz, 2003). In some studies, it is recommended that the concept of “emotion” rather than anxiety and stress be evaluated for the cunning of sports performance (Hanin, 2007). The association of anxiety and performance in sports competitions has given much more attention to sports-related researches (Woodman & Hardy, 2003).

Lazarus (2000) stated that anxiety is an unpleasant state of feeling different from the other types of emotions. The term anxiety is traced back to the European theologians and philosophers, but it was Freud who gave contemplation to anxiety and explained it. According to Freud school of thought anxiety refers to psychic pain and an unpleasant condition. Freud (1926) specified that anxiety originates from the unconscious conflict that helps as a signal that the impulses of unconsciousness might explode into consciousness and therefore, the anxious person fears punishment for thinking about something that the super ego considers bad. The anxious person's ego automatically tries to regain control with the help of defensive progress which can disturb reality.

Greenberg (1990) stated that anxiety is uneasiness and fear which is not found in reality and is coming out from physiological arousal and attended by behavioral signs of avoidance. The anxiety condition is different from individual to individual well as experiencing it is also different, but managing anxiety depends upon the prior experience and the coping approach gained by every individual. Like other cravings anxiety is also part of life, in the right settings sometimes anxiety becomes beneficial. Because it can prepare and alert the body for reactions against any situations. Anxiety can also encourage a person for upcoming unfamiliar events, while on the other side it can harm the person's health also if it is intense and sustained for a lengthy period. Barlow (1988) suggested that what differentiates normal, adaptive anxiety from difficult anxiety is the shift, in reflection away from the relevant task.

The type of anxiety that occurred before the start of a sports competition is termed pre-competitive anxiety.

Endler (1978, 1983) as cited in Cox (2007), the number of predictors for causing anxiety in the condition of achievement are appended:

1. *Failure in performance:* The threat of failure leads to anxiety.

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2. *Fear of spectator's viewpoint:* The self-esteem of an athlete damage when he thinks that the spectators are assessing his performance negatively.
3. *Physical harm fears:* Players also pay more attention to the physical injury threat which can also lead to anxiety.
4. *Situation ambiguity:* Athletes are sometimes feeling stressed before starting the new match.
5. *Disruption of well-learned routine:* Anxiety also arises if the athlete is suddenly asked for a change in his position or style.

Therefore, coaches, trainers, players, and athletes pay more interest to the pre-competitive anxiety. In the current study being a physical educationist, a lot of the athletes approached the researcher for advice regarding how to overcome situations of pressure before and during competition. Most of the athletes experience anxiety e.g. fear of failure, fear of society, and also not performing well during competition being expected by seniors, coaches, and family members.

The performance of immature athletes decreases due to competitive anxiety. Elite athletes use their mental skills e.g. imagination and feelings control and have higher self-confidence and motivation, on the other hand, young new athletes experience a decrease in performance due to an increase in competitive anxiety during the competition (Shinke & Costa, 2001). Similarly, Sangeeta and Manoj (2013) explicated that skills level have a correlation with competitive anxiety and thus highly dexterous sportsmen show different competitive anxiety to those who are less-dexterous. So, this research's conclusions go also to the level of achievement of athletes in sports settings; those who take part in the university level games suffer more from Competitive anxiety than those whose competitions reach the National or International level.

Parnabas et al. (2015) stated that National athletes who participated in swimming performed well as compared to District, University, and State athletes. The high performance of national-level athletes is due to using coping strategies to diminish their cognitive anxiety. They further stated that a high level of cognitive anxiety is the hurdle for higher sports performance. It is also revealed from the study that the skilled district and university swimmers experienced high cognitive anxiety; consequently, their sports performance has been dropped. Likewise, several researchers have confirmed that elevated cognitive anxiety level is a barrier to deteriorate sports performance in other words an exaggerated level of competitive anxiety in players tends to do poorer performance than those who have an abated level of competitive anxiety.

Research objective

To examine the Sports Pre-Competitive Anxiety levels among experienced and inexperienced athletes.

Research hypothesis

Experienced athletes have low Sports Pre-Competitive Anxiety levels and high self-confidence than inexperienced athletes.

Methodology

The study follows a quantitative approach. A survey (cross-sectional survey) is carried out to investigate the research question.

Athletes of different districts of KPK from various colleges during sports competitions were selected and included in the sample. The total number of athletes included in the sample through the convenient sampling technique was 360 which were equally selected among experienced and inexperienced college-level games.

Instruments

A personal information questionnaire has been created and distributed along with CSAI-2 amongst the sportspersons. Personal info composed of name, age, gender, type of sport, number of years playing, number of tournaments participated in, and name of the tournament participated, training schedule. CSAI-2 was initially constructed and used by Marten et al., (1990), which provided to judge the competitive anxiety and used by most of the researchers. The scale is composed of 27 items further divided into 9 each for the three subscales of pre-competitive anxiety. The score is calculated from a low (09) to a high (36) for separately each scale. The score will determine the level of anxiety's subscales and self-confidence level of an athlete. The internal consistency of the subscales in most of the studies is above 0.80 e.g. Alpha coefficient is 0.79 to 0.90 in the study carried out by Edward & Hardy, 1996).

Technique

The personal information questions and CSAI-2 has been distributed amongst the athletes approximately one hour before the start of the competition. The statement constructed by Martens “How are you feeling right now?” was read aloud before the athletes. Several studies have provided satisfactory validity and reliability using the CSAI-2 scale (Martens et al., 1990; Edward & Hardy, 1996). The experience and inexperience athletes’ group has been differentiated with the help of 05 years’ experience in playing a sport, being a contestant in 10 or more tournaments, and at least contributed in provincial or board or intervarsity camp were titled as experienced and vice versa.

Data Analysis

Data analysis has been done using a T-test for each of the aspects of anxiety. SPSS version 11 was used for data analysis.

In the. *Table 1.1: Independent T-Test Cognitive Anxiety*

Pre-Competitive Anxiety	Athletes	N	Mean	SD	Df	T-value	P-value
Cognitive Anxiety	Experienced	180	18.7	4.6	179	-3.32	0.00
	Inexperienced	180	20.2	4.2	179		

The results listed in Table 1.1 illustrates that the mean value of the cognitive aspect of the pre-competitive anxiety in experience and inexperienced athletes are 18.7 and 20.2 respectively. The standard deviation for inexperienced athletes is 4.6, whereas 4.2 for inexperienced athletes. The T-test value for the cognitive anxiety referred to as -3.32 with P-value is 0.00, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the findings for the cognitive anxiety aspect show a significant difference in the experience and inexperienced athletes.

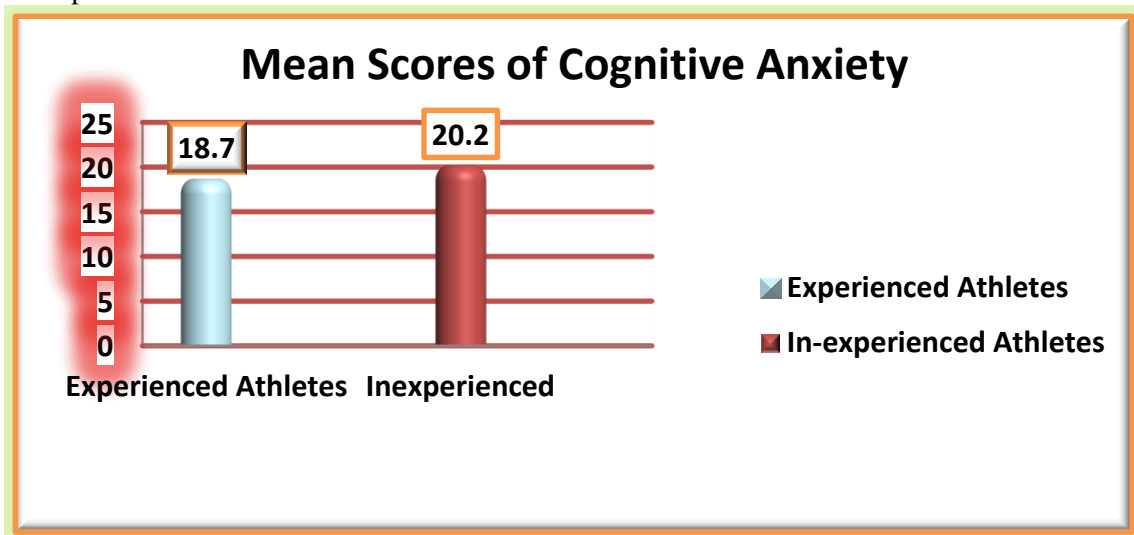


Figure 1.1: shows the mean value of both groups

Table 1.2 appended below shows T-test results of the pre-competitive somatic anxiety amongst experienced and inexperienced athletes.

Pre-Competitive Anxiety	Athletes	N	Mean	SD	Df	T-value	P-value
Somatic Anxiety	Experienced	180	18.2	4.4	179	-3.26	0.00
	Inexperienced	180	19.7	4.1	179		

The outcomes of the independent T-test for the pre-competitive somatic anxiety provides that the mean value of experienced athletes and inexperienced athletes are 18.2 and 19.7 respectively. The T-test value for the somatic anxiety is referred to as -3.26 with a P-value of 0.00, which is less than the significant value of 0.05. Hence, the findings for the somatic anxiety aspect show a significant difference in the experience and inexperience of athletes.

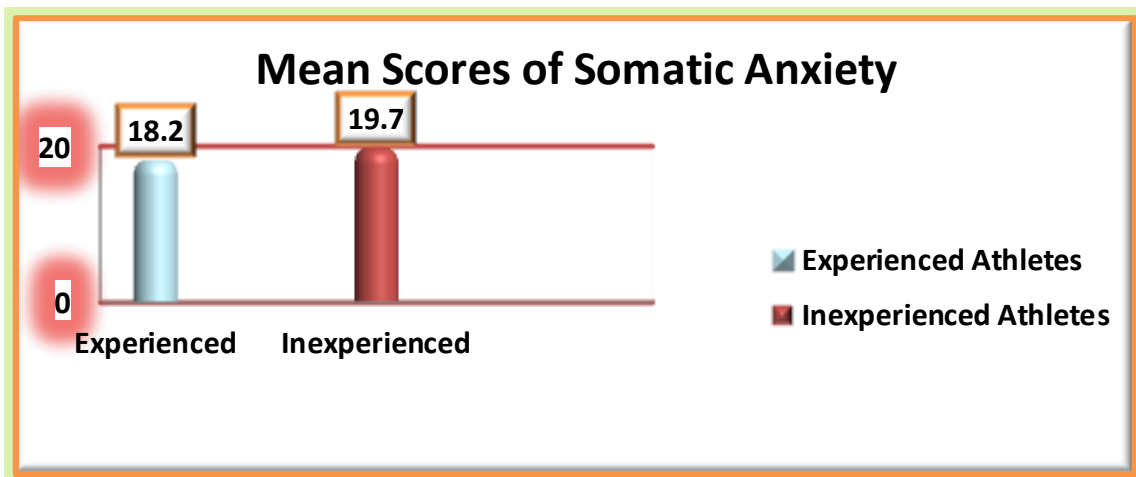


Figure 1.2 indicates the scores of somatic anxiety aspect of CSAI-2, where experience athletes scored less than Inexperience athletes i.e. $18.2 < 19.7$.

Table 1.3 illustrates the results of the pre-competitive anxiety component (self-confidence) amongst experience and inexperienced athletes groups.

Pre-Competitive Anxiety	Athletes	N	Mean	SD	Df	T-value	P-value
Self-Confidence	Experienced	180	30.7	4.6	179	6.8	0.00
	Inexperienced	180	26.8	6.0	179		

The T-test results listed in table 1.3 demonstrates that the means value for self-confidence in experience and inexperienced athletes are 30.7 and 26.8 respectively. Standard deviation inexperienced athletes are found 4.6, whereas 6.0 in inexperienced athletes. The T-value for cognitive anxiety is 6.8 with a P-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the results of experienced and inexperienced athletes are significant.

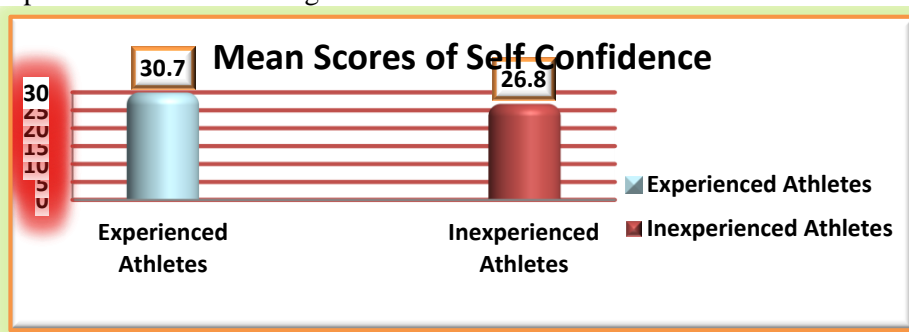


Figure 1.3: Shows the mean value of both groups. It displays that the average (mean) results of self-confidence is high in athletes having experience as compare to inexperienced athletes i.e. $(30.7 > 26.8)$

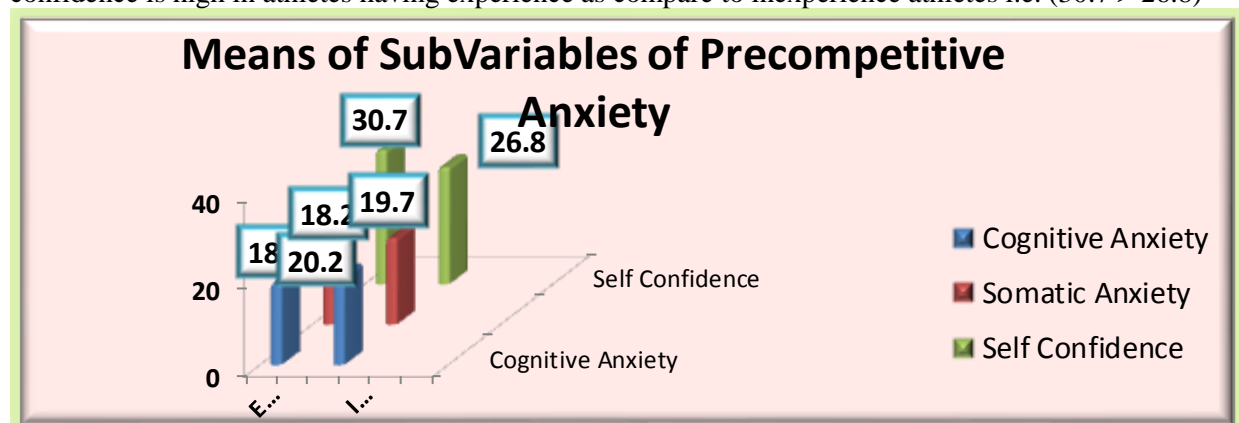


Figure 1.4: mean values of sub-variables of pre-competitive anxiety.

Discussion

The main aim of the study was to examine the significance level of pre-competitive anxiety aspects in experience and inexperienced athletes from the age of 16 to 27 years. The CSAI-2 was operated for the assessment of pre-competitive anxiety amongst a group of 360 athletes. The results of the current study are in line with most of the previous research studies. As it was assumed that experienced athletes have low SPCA levels than inexperienced athletes.

The results in table 1.1 are showing that the average score of the cognitive factor of precompetitive anxiety in Athletes (experience and inexperience) are 18.7 and 20.2 respectively. In the same way, the standard deviation in experience athletes was found 4.6 as compared to inexperienced athletes where it was 4.2, the T-value calculated was -3.32 with the P-value $0.0 < 0.05$. Hence, the result concluded from the study that there was a significant difference between the two groups, in the context of cognitive anxiety.

Similarly, the outcomes of the T-test for somatic anxiety provide that mean values of experienced athletes and inexperienced athletes are 18.2 and 19.7 respectively. Whereas the standard deviation was 4.4 inexperienced and 4.1 in inexperienced athletes. The T-test value for the somatic anxiety was -3.26 with P-value was 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Hence, the findings for somatic anxiety factor showed a substantial difference in the experience and inexperience athletes. The T-test results listed in table 1.3 proved that mean values for self-confidence in experience and inexperienced athletes reared at 30.7 and 26.8 respectively. The standard deviation for inexperienced athletes was 4.6, whereas 6.0 for experienced athletes. The T-value for the cognitive anxiety was 6.8 with a P-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the findings for the self-confidence aspect of anxiety showed significant results. The results suggest that experienced athletes might have better-coping strategies and they might be able to use their somatic anxiety symptoms more facilitative in comparison to elite/inexperienced college-level athletes. The results are in line with the findings of Jones, Hanton, and Swain (1994), and Woodman and Hardy (2001).

Conclusion

It is concluded that all three sub aspects of pre-competitive anxiety have significant differences among both experienced and inexperienced athletes. It is concluded that experienced athletes have better self-confidence and controlled anxiety levels than inexperienced athletes of college-level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Recommendation

The following recommendation should be considered for future studies:

1. A similar research study may be carried out by exploring the intensity, frequency, and direction dimensions of anxiety.
2. Further research study may be carried out on different level of athletes (National level and International level) of different games

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