

A study of pre and post-competitive anxiety level of inter-university basketball players

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Abstract

The present study compares the pre-competitive and post-competitive anxiety in inter- university basketball players. A group of 30 players (15 of each sex with age group of 18-25) were selected from Amritsar, Punjab, India through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected from athletes using a Sports Competitive Anxiety Test. The result of the study reveals that there was significant difference in 0.01 levels of pre-competitive anxiety and post-competitive anxiety among the male and female inter-university basketball players.

Keywords: Basketball players, anxiety, SCAT, sports, Interuniversity.

Introduction

It has been recognized for many years that psychological factors, in particular anxiety, play an important role in competition (Lizuka, 2005). Competitive sports 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). In sport psychology, anxiety refers to an unpleasant emotion which is characterized by vague but persistent feelings of apprehension and dread (Cashmore, 2002). Anxiety consists of two subcomponents, namely cognitive and somatic anxiety, which influence performance before and during competition (Martens *et al.*, 1990; Lazarus, 1991; Weinberg & Gould, 1999; Jarvis, 2002; Anshel, 2003). Meanwhile, cognitive is the mental component, which is characterized by negative expectations about success or self-evaluation, negative self-talk, worry about performance, images of failure, inability to concentrate, and disrupted attention (Martens *et al.*, 1990; Jarvis, 2002). The somatic is the physiological element which is related to autonomic arousals, and negative symptoms such as feelings of nervousness, high blood pressure, dry throat, muscular tension, rapid heart rate, sweaty palms, and butterflies in the stomach (Martens *et al.*, 1990; Jarvis, 2002). Sport is littered with the broken dreams of those who wavered when they most needed to be in control of themselves and focused on the task at hand. When a competitor 'freezes' in the big moment or commits an inexplicable error, anxiety, in one of its many guises, is very often the root cause. The precise impact of anxiety on sporting performance depends on how you interpret your world. Unfortunately, far too many athletes accept high levels of anxiety as an inevitable part of the total sporting experience and fail to reach their potential.

Material and Methods

To achieve the purpose of the study a group of 30 basketball players (boys=15 and girls=15) were selected from Amritsar, Punjab, India through purposive sampling technique. Their age ranged from 18 to 25 years.

Sports Competition Anxiety Test - (SCAT), an evaluation that measures the competitive anxiety levels of athletes (Marten *et al.*, 1990), was used to measure the anxiety level of basketball players. The test consists of fifteen items which include 5 spurious items, 8 positive items and 2 negative items. The odd-even reliability of the test in the present study was found to be .80. The lowest possible score on this test and the highest possible score is 27. A low score indicates higher anxiety and a high score indicates low anxiety. The t-test was used to test the effect of anxiety level between pre and post completion. The significance level was determined as $p < 0.01$.

Table 1. The pre-competitive and post-competitive anxiety of inter-University male basketball players

Group	Mean	Variance	df	't' value
Pre competitive anxiety	24	7.29	14	7.01*
Post competitive anxiety	19.47	7.84		P>0.01

**significant at 0.01 level*

Results

Table 1 reveals that the mean scores of pre competitive and post competitive anxiety of inter university male basketball players are 24 and 19.47 respectively. The t-value is 7.01 which were significant at 0.01 level of confidence which indicates that there is significant difference between the 2 groups.

Table 2. The pre-competitive and post-competitive anxiety of inter-University female basketball players

Group	Mean	Variance	df	't' value
Pre competitive anxiety	23.13	7.12	14	8.60
Post competitive anxiety	18.80	3.89		P>0.01

*significant at 0.01 level

The inspection of Table 2 indicates the mean scores of pre competitive and post competitive anxiety of inter university female basketball players are 23.13 and 18.80 respectively. The t-value is 8.60 which was significant at 0.01 level of confidence.

Discussion

Most psychologists believe that the highest level of competitive anxiety will deteriorate athletes' performance in sport (Martens *et al.*, 1990; Weinberg & Gould, 1999; Ortiz, 2006). On the contrary, a lower level of anxiety was found to have enhanced the performance of athletes (Martens *et al.*, 1990; Krane & Williams, 1994). In sports, higher levels of anxiety before any competition can deteriorate performance. On the other hand, athletes with low levels of skill, like those whose highest achievement is taking part in school or university competitions, normally experience higher levels of competitive anxiety. Meanwhile, those athletes whose highest achievement is taking part in national or state level competitions, experienced low levels of anxiety. It is very common that low level skilled. In the present study the pre competitive anxiety was higher than the Post competitive anxiety in inter college female basketball players. The findings supported by Evans (1983) who examined the acute response of female basketball players and anxiety to competitions. The results of the study were that pre competitive level of anxiety in inter college basketball female players is high and post competitive anxiety in inter college basketball female player is low. In male inter college basketball players the pre competitive level of anxiety was higher than post competitive anxiety and the findings are in supportive of previous reports (Boutin, 1983; Singh, 1986).

Conclusion

The present study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its contributions. Since the level of anxiety after the competition is not related to the athletes' performance, this study merely focused on the level of anxiety pre and post competitions only. Based on the current results, it is recommended that sport psychologists, sport counsellors, and coaches use the findings to design appropriate training programmes to help athletes acquire suitable coping strategies so as to reduce their anxiety levels and enhance their performance.

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