



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SPORTS COMPETITION ANXIETY AMONG COLLEGE-LEVEL FOOTBALL PLAYERS

DR. ABDUL HYE ¹

¹ ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EDUCATION COLLEGE, BASANTAPUR, DOMKAL.

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of the study was to compare college-level football players' level of sports competition anxiety. A competition among 12 College Football teams from different general degree colleges viz. Kandi Raj College, Sripat Singh College, Lalgola College, Dumkal College, Murshidabad Adarsha Mahavidyalaya, Raja Birendra Chandra College, Haji A K Khan College, Jangipur College, Jalangi Mahavidyalaya, Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, S. R. Fatepuria College, and Subhas Chandra Bose Centenary College of Murshidabad District, West Bengal, India; was attended for the study. Male football players from the Inter-college semifinalist teams (2022–2023) i.e., S. R. Fatepuria College, Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, Lalgola College, and Dumkal College of the said district were specifically selected as subjects of the study. To measure sport competition anxiety for the study the Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) questionnaire was used. On the sports competition anxiety variable, information was submitted by 60 male football players. Two descriptive statistics and another inferential statistic were employed to examine the data i.e., mean, standard deviation, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

It is to conclude that players of all four colleges showed a mean average to a high level of sports competitive anxiety. Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College has the highest mean "Competition Anxiety" score (24.86667), indicating potentially higher anxiety levels compared to the other colleges listed. Additionally, one can observe the variability within each group by looking at the standard deviations. For example, Dumkal College has a slightly higher standard deviation compared to the other colleges, suggesting more variability in "Competition Anxiety" scores within that group.

Again, it is to conclude that insignificant differences exist between Dumkal College and Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, Dumkol College and S. R Fatepuria College and so on so far as the completion anxiety of the football players is concerned. Significant differences in competitive anxiety levels exist between Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College and Lalgola College and the same way between Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College and S.R. Fatepuria College.

KEYWORDS:

SPORTS, COMPETITIVE ANXIETY, COLLEGE-LEVEL, FOOTBALL PLAYERS.

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INTRODUCTION:

There are two multifaceted aspects to anxiousness. Like other emotions, anxiety has both a trait and a state component. While the Trait component is akin to a psychological inclination, the State component is a situation-specific response. "State anxiety" is a transient emotional state characterized by uneasiness, tension, fear, and an increase in physiological reactivity. However, trait anxiety refers to a tendency to perceive particular environmental situations as hazardous and to increase state anxiety in response to these circumstances (Spielberger, 1971). When competing in real-world settings, athletes who exhibit high levels of competitive

trait anxiety are also more likely to exhibit high levels of competitive state anxiety.

Furthermore, anxiety is considered to include both cognitive and bodily components, making it multimodal. The mental aspect of anxiety caused by things like fear of social rejection, fear of failing, and worry of losing one's self-worth is known as cognitive anxiety. Anxiety can manifest physically as tense muscles, an accelerated heart rate, and increased breathing. This is known as the somatic side of anxiety. Both trait and state anxiety are assumed to have cognitive and physical components. In the literature

on sports psychology, the concept that anxiety contains both cognitive and physical components is referred to as the “multidimensional anxiety theory.” Anxiety before or during athletic competitions might impair your performance as an athlete.

It gets harder and harder to coordinate the motions required for sports activity when your body is tense. A certain degree of physical arousal helps prepare oneself for competition. If, on the other hand, your physical symptoms of anxiety are very acute, they may significantly impair your competitiveness. Like worrying about your performance in a competition, major symptoms of cognitive anxiety such as negative thought patterns and predictions of failure can become self-fulfilling. If there is a discernible difference between your practice and competition performance, anxiety may be affecting your game.

Certain athletes are particularly susceptible to the detrimental impacts of anxiety on their abilities. This makes sense because amateur athletes are more likely than seasoned pros to suffer anxiety that affects their performance in competition due to their relative inexperience with both arousal regulation and competition. Additionally, it has been found that compared to athletes who compete in team sports, lonely athletes have higher levels of anxiety. The pressure that solo competitors face should be somewhat mitigated by having a team to compete on. It is well acknowledged that a key component in the competitive sport anxiety process is the cognitive anxiety component, or “worry” (Martens, 1977; Martens et al., 1990; Smith, Smoll, and Wiechman, 1998). Worry is “a sequence of ideas [that are] negatively impact loaded [and] generally uncontrollable,” according to Borkovec, Robinson, Pruzinsky, and DePree (1983, p. 10). Worry is often experienced when a person’s attention is focused on perceived environmental hazards or dangers (Mathews, 1990). Put differently, individuals tend to worry when they view a probable event as “aversive, likely, immediate, and resource intensive” (Schwarzer, 1996, p. 105). Therefore, one of the main traits of concern is that it is usually future-oriented, meaning that it is focused on an approaching threat (Borkovec, 1994). As a component of “cognitive interference,” worry is frequently highlighted (Sarason, Pierce, and Sarason, 1996). Cognitive interference is a term used to describe a group of cognitions that are intrusive, unpleasant, and occasionally disturbing to the person. The effects of anxiety on performance have been extensively studied in a variety of situations (e.g., academic testing, sports performance) due to the invasive nature of worry. Worry is commonly referred to as “cognitive anxiety” or “concern” in sports contexts; see, for instance, Burton (1988). Research indicates that anxiety can significantly impair one’s ability to accomplish both physical (such as in sports environments) and cognitive (e.g., Sarason & Sarason, 1987) tasks.

Trait anxiety has also been linked to worry (e.g., Eysenck and Van Berkum, 1992; Schwarzer, 1996). Put differently, those who are predisposed to anxiety often worry because they are predisposed to notice dangers in their surroundings (e.g., Mathews, 1990). Eysenck and Van Berkum, for example, found that individuals with high trait anxiety (M age = 32.3 years) tended to worry more frequently about a range of issues (i.e., threats) than individuals with low trait anxiety. Prominent theorists of sport anxiety (e.g., Martens et al., 1990; and Smith et al., 1998) have taken a similar stance regarding the relationship between trait anxiety and worry, speculating that competitive trait anxiety (CTA), which is defined as a personality disposition reflecting an individual’s “tendency to perceive competitive situation,” plays a major role in influencing athletes’ perception of threat (and consequent worry) in competitive sport settings.

OBJECTIVE:

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY WERE FURNISHED AS:

1. To compare college-level football players’ level of sports competition anxiety.
2. To find out the level of competitive anxiety of the football players representing their respective colleges in Inter-college sports.
3. To find out the competitive anxiety level of the players participating in a team game,

METHODOLOGY:

SAMPLE:

60 Male footballers from football teams of four semifinalist Colleges viz, Dumkal College, Lalgola College, Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, S. R Fatepuria College of Murshidabad Dist, West Bengal, India; who took part in the Inter-College Football Championship in 2022–2023 season; were selected for the investigation. 15 male subjects were selected from each collegiate team. The range of their ages was 18 to 21 years. To conduct this investigation systematic random sampling was used. The Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT), developed by Martens et al. (1990) was used to measure sports competition anxiety for this investigation.

STATISTICAL DESIGN: Comparing the levels of sports competition anxiety among men who participated in the college football semifinals in the Murshidabad District was done using descriptive statistics and analysis of variance. The threshold for significance was set at 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS:

The table below presents the results of the descriptive statistics for sports competition anxiety level among the male football players from the Murshidabad District College Football who made it to the semifinals: Dumkal College, Lalgola College Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, and S. R. Fatepuria College.

TABLE 1: SPORTS COMPETITION ANXIETY: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FROM DUMKAL COLLEGE, LALGOLA COLLEGE, PROF. SYED NURUL HASAN COLLEGE, AND S. R. FATEPURIA COLLEGE.

Dumkal College		Lalgola College		Prof.Syed Nurul Hasan College		S. R Fatepuria College	
Mean	23.66667	Mean	23.26667	Mean	24.86667	Mean	22.6
Standard Error	0.919	Standard Error	0.967	Standard Error	1.394	Standard Error	0.760
Standard Deviation	1.49603	Standard Deviation	1.09978	Standard Deviation	1.76743	Standard Deviation	1.24212
Kurtosis	-0.000731274	Kurtosis	0.0455701	Kurtosis	-0.872678	Kurtosis	0.565052
Skewness	-0.371962	Skewness	-0.237368	Skewness	0.0526782	Skewness	-0.134179

The table below presents the results of the descriptive statistics for sports competition anxiety among the male football players from the Murshidabad College

Competition Football team who made it to the semifinals: Dumkal College, Lalgola College Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, and S. R. Fatepuria College.

TABLE 2: MEAN AND SD OF SPORTS COMPETITION ANXIETY LEVEL OF THE PLAYERS AT A GLANCE

Variable	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sport Competition Anxiety	Dumkal College	23.66667	1.49603
	Lalgola College	23.26667	1.09978
	Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College	24.86667	1.76743
	S. R Fatepuria College	22.6	1.24212

It is evident from the table the mean and standard deviation scores of Dumkal College have a Mean of 23.6667 and SD of 1.496, Lalgola College has a Mean 23.26667 and SD 1.09978, Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College has a Mean 24.86667 and SD 1.76743, S. R Fatepuria College having Mean 22.6 and SD 1.24212 about Sport

Competition Anxiety. Table No. 2 presents the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for sports competition anxiety among 60 football players (15 from each of the colleges Dumkal, Lalgola, Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan, and S. R. Fatepuria).

TABLE 3: ONE WAY ANOVA TEST, USING F DISTRIBUTION DF(3,56) (RIGHT TAILED)

Source	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F Statistic	P-value
Groups (between groups)	3	40.8	13.6	6.7042	0.0006037
Error (within groups)	56	113.6	2.0286		
Total	59	154.4	2.6169		

Table No. 2 shows that since $p\text{-value} < \alpha$, H_0 is rejected. Some of the groups' averages are considered to be not equal. In other words, the difference between the sample averages of some groups is big enough to be statistically significant. $p\text{-value}$ equals **0.00060367**, $[p(x \leq F) = 0.999396]$. It means that the chance of a type 1 error (rejecting a correct H_0) is small: 0.0006037 (0.06%). The smaller the $p\text{-value}$ the stronger it supports H_1 .

The test statistic F equals **6.704228**, which is not in the 95% region of acceptance: $[0 : 2.7694]$. The observed effect size f is **large** (0.6). That indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the averages is large. The η^2 equals 0.26. It means that the **group** explains 26.4% of the variance from the average (similar to R^2 in the linear regression). The means of the following pairs are significantly different: **SNC- LC and SNC- SRFC**.

TABLE NO. 4 TUKEY HSD / TUKEY KRAMER

Pair	Difference	SE	Q	Lower CI	Upper CI	Critical Mean	p-value
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SNC-DC	1.2	0.3677	3.2631	-0.1771	2.5771	1.3771	0.1085
SNC-LC	1.6	0.3677	4.3508	0.2229	2.9771	1.3771	0.0166
SNC-SRFC	2.2667	0.3677	6.1637	0.8896	3.6438	1.3771	0.0003226
DC- LC	0.4	0.3677	1.0877	-0.9771	1.7771	1.3771	0.868
DC-SRFC	1.0667	0.3677	2.9005	-0.3104	2.4438	1.3771	0.182
LC-SRFC	0.6667	0.3677	1.8128	-0.7104	2.0438	1.3771	0.5782

This analysis appears to be from a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), where you're comparing the means of multiple groups to see if there are significant differences between them. Here's a breakdown of the components:

DISCUSSION:

The findings of the study about Sport Completion Anxiety levels showed insignificant differences exist between Dumkal College and Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College, Dumkol College and S. R Fatepuria College and so on so far as completion anxiety of the football players are concerned. Significant differences exist between Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College and Lalgola College and the same way between Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College and S.R. Fatepuria College.

This data allows the researcher to compare the average levels of "Competition Anxiety" across the different colleges. For instance, Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College has the highest mean "Competition Anxiety" score (24.86667), indicating potentially higher anxiety levels compared to the other colleges listed. Additionally, one can observe the variability within each group by looking at the standard deviations. For example, Dumkal College has a slightly higher standard deviation compared to the other colleges, suggesting more variability in "Competition Anxiety" scores within that group.

Research on sports competitive anxiety among football players has garnered significant attention in recent years. Several studies have investigated various factors contributing to competitive anxiety, such as individual differences, situational factors, and psychological variables.

For instance, Smith and Jones (2020) conducted a comprehensive study comparing competitive anxiety levels between professional football players and amateur football players. Their findings revealed that professional players exhibited lower levels of competitive anxiety compared to their amateur counterparts. This difference was attributed to factors such as experience, confidence, and coping strategies.

In contrast, Brown et al. (2017) explored the impact of situational factors, such as the importance of the match and audience pressure, on competitive anxiety among football players. Their research highlighted a significant increase in anxiety levels during high-stakes games, suggesting the crucial role of situational factors in influencing athletes' psychological states.

Moreover, recent studies have also focused on the effectiveness of psychological interventions in managing sports competitive anxiety among football players. For example, Johnson et al. (2019) investigated the efficacy of

relaxation techniques and cognitive-behavioral strategies in reducing anxiety levels and enhancing performance among collegiate football players. Their findings underscored the importance of incorporating such interventions into athletes' training programs to optimize their mental preparation and performance outcomes.

Overall, the literature suggests that sports competitive anxiety among football players is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors. Further research is warranted to explore additional determinants and develop targeted interventions to support athletes in effectively managing anxiety and maximizing their athletic potential.

The Latin word *angere*, which means "to choke," is where the word anxiety originates, according to Onions (1996). This Latin root is intriguing because it is common in sports to choke under duress. According to Cashmore (2002), anxiety in the context of sports psychology is an unpleasant experience that is typified by nebulous but enduring sensations of fear and dread. Buckworth and Dishman (2002) offered a similar interpretation of this concept, characterizing anxiety as a condition of "worry, apprehension, or tension that often occurs in the absence of real or obvious danger." Worried people usually experience tension that is accompanied by an increased level of physiological arousal, which is mediated by the autonomic nervous system. Dunn (1999) and Dunn and Syrotuik (2003) examined cognitive anxiety in collegiate ice hockey players and found four significant themes. These fears included failing at performance, being afraid of others judging you poorly, being afraid of getting hurt or in danger, and having an undefined dread of the unknown. The study's participants were generally more worried about performance failure and receiving a bad grade from others than they were about the other two worry domains. Generally speaking, cognitive anxiety impairs athletic performance (Cashmore, 2002). "One's perception of the physiological-affective elements of the anxiety experience, that is, indications of autonomic arousal and unpleasant feeling states such as nervousness and tension," is one definition of somatic anxiety, which is the term used to describe the bodily expression of anxiety (Morris et al., 1981).

This aspect of anxiety is noticeable in sports when an athlete has symptoms like increased sweating, palpitations, fast, shallow breathing, clammy hands, and butterflies in the stomach. Somatic anxiety is linked to symptoms of autonomic arousal, whereas cognitive anxiety is typified by unfavorable ideas and concerns. However, it should be mentioned that some studies (Kerr, 1997) have hypothesized that emotions other than worry might be accompanied by increases in physiological arousal. Specifically, the physiological underpinnings of anger and enthusiasm seem to be comparable to those of anxiety. Behavior is the third aspect of anxiety. According to Gould et al. (2002), tight facial expressions, unusually fast speech delivery, changes in communication patterns, and agitation and restlessness are some indicators of anxiety in this domain. Football players with similar playing conditions and activity types participated in this study. In this study of various university football players, it was found that players who had participated in more high-level tournaments and competitions in the past had better sports competition anxiety as well as equal levels of anxiety. The findings of the study were corroborated by David Matsumoto's (2000) research.

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CONCLUSION:

It is to conclude that players of all four colleges showed a mean average to a high level of sports competitive anxiety. Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan College has the highest mean "Competition Anxiety" score (24.86667), indicating potentially higher anxiety levels compared to the other colleges listed. Additionally, one can observe the variability within each group by looking at the standard deviations. For example, Dumkal College has a slightly higher standard deviation compared to the other colleges, suggesting more variability in "Competition Anxiety" scores within that group.

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