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## Competitive state anxiety in male & female university basketball players

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### Abstract

This study was designed to examine the level of competitive state anxiety among south zone university basketball players. Three components of anxiety i.e., the level of cognitive, somatic anxiety and self-confidence were assessed between the genders. The samples include 50 male and 50 female basketball players between the ages of 18 to 25 years from various universities in South India. Anxiety was measured using the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) by Martens et al. The results indicated that there was significant difference according to cognitive and somatic anxiety between male and female. And also it revealed that there was no significant difference in self-confidence between the genders. Recommendations for future research were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Competitive state anxiety, cognitive, somatic anxiety and self-confidence

### Introduction

Clearly, anxiety exerts a variety of effects on athletic performance. These effects vary based on sport, gender and level of experience. In order to facilitate peak performances of athletes, sport psychologists must consider the three different facts of anxiety” cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and self-confidence.

Competitive anxiety to contain two subcomponents: cognitive and somatic anxiety. Cognitive anxiety is characterized by negative thoughts, inability to concentrate and disrupt attention. Somatic anxiety is ones perception of their physiological arousal such as rapid heart rate, tense muscles, and butterflies in the stomach. Self-confidence is an emotion or state of mind commonly associated with athletic success. Confidence is usually a result of an athlete anticipating success in their upcoming event. Early research was limited due to the lack of clear operational definitions for the construct of anxiety. The development of the multidimensional theory of anxiety and the catastrophe model provides future researchers with a theoretical framework for better understanding the relationship between cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, self-confidence and their effect on performance.

A great deal of research has been devoted to the effect of anxiety on sport performance. Cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety have been found to exert a powerful influence on performance. Self-confidence has been found to account for a greater proportion of variance in performance than cognitive or somatic anxiety.

The research conducted focusing on cognitive anxiety and self-confidence provides some insight into their effect on athletic performance, the interaction of these variables in conjunction with somatic anxiety provides a better understanding of the true effects. Important gender differences have also been found by researchers focusing on the relationship between cognitive anxiety, self-confidence, and somatic anxiety. Females had lower self-confidence and higher somatic anxiety scores than males (Thuot, Kavouras, & Kenefick., 1998) [3]. Among males, cognitive and somatic anxiety was more strongly affected by their perception of opponent’s ability and probability of winning. Female’s cognitive anxiety and self-confidence is determined by readiness to perform and the importance they personally placed on doing well (Jones, Swain, & Cale, 1991) [1]. These gender differences are indicative of the need to develop interventions that are tailored to individual needs and the importance of considering all factors when developing an intervention.

### Methods

**Subjects:** Participants of the study were 100 male & female basketball players who had played for the South Zone University Basketball tournament.

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## Measures

The Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) developed by Martens et al (1990). The CSAI-2 contains three subscales of cognitive, somatic anxiety and self-confidence. CSAI-2 consisting of 27 sport related, multidimensional items. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 ('not at all') to 4 ('very much so'). The lowest score possible for each subscale was 9 and the highest score was 36.

## Results

The t-test analysis indicated the differences in cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety between male and female basketball players. Table 1 reported the results of the t-test analysis. Female players had recorded higher scores in cognitive and somatic anxiety than male players did. It also indicated that both male and female players had same level of self-confidence.

**Table 1:** Showing the t-test comparing the male and female players pertaining to cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and self-confidence

Gender	Male	Female			
N	50	50			
Variable	Mean	Mean	T	Sig	Mean difference
Cognitive anxiety	8.360	20.840	5.59	.000	2.480
Somatic anxiety	6.740	19.940	6.97	.005	3.200
Self-confidence	1.020	30.720	0.50	.617	0.300

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the anxiety differences between the genders. Clearly, the cognitive interpretation an individual gives to a situation exerts an effect. Results show that there was a significant difference between the cognitive and somatic anxiety i.e., female had more cognitive and somatic anxiety than male. The reason may be related to differences in personality, mode of thinking or cognitive structure between males and females, and also physiological arousal can influence performance as a result of individual's interpretation of their physiological symptoms.

But in the self-confidence aspect, both male and female players had the same level of confidence. This shows that the strongest predictor of self-confidence has been found to be the amount of ability that an individual believed he or she had. Here, both male and female players believed that they have the high level of self-confidence in the competitive sport situation.

## Conclusion

It was proven that competitive and somatic anxieties are higher in males than in their female counterparts. From this investigation, result was insignificant for self-confidence. This is contrary to several previous researches, which states that self-confidence was higher in males than in females. Future inquiries need to explore the effects of anxiety and along with several other variables.

## Recommendations for future research

In future, research should include the effect of a player's knowledge of his/her anxiety level on performance in the large samples. In addition, future research should focus on the development of treatment methods within the athletic environment in order to reduce the anxiety.

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