

# EXAMINING SPORTS ANXIETY ACROSS GENDER: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BADMINTON AND TENNIS PLAYERS

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## Abstract

This research aimed to evaluate sports-related anxiety among athletes, considering gender variations and the specific sports they engage in. The study involved 100 participants chosen based on their representation at the national level in either tennis or badminton. Anxiety levels were assessed using the Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) questionnaire. Independent t-tests were utilized to compare anxiety levels between male and female athletes in their respective sports, with a significance threshold set at 0.05. The analysis revealed that females demonstrated higher anxiety levels compared to males. These results affirm the tendency for women to experience more anxiety than men. The study also noted that girls' utilization of thought control strategies and metacognitive beliefs contributes to their susceptibility to emotional and neurotic issues. Thus, it is imperative for girls to adopt alternative coping mechanisms for dealing with challenging circumstances. The research suggests that females could benefit from learning techniques to manage metacognitive concerns. Additionally, adjusting negative and positive metacognitive beliefs about worry could enhance mental well-being. In summary, this study provides evidence supporting the notion that female athletes encounter elevated levels of anxiety compared to their male counterparts. It underscores the importance of addressing mental health issues among female athletes and underscores the necessity of teaching them effective anxiety management strategies. By fostering the development of adaptive metacognitive skills and altering their beliefs about worry, girls can bolster their psychological resilience and overall mental well-being.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Badminton, Tennis, Mental health, Sports

## Introduction

Sports Competition Anxiety is recognized as a significant psychological factor within the realm of Human Emotion Psychology. It is widely acknowledged as a key aspect that can negatively impact the performance of elite-level athletes (Sharma, A., & Purashwani, P. 2021). Human anxiety is a multifaceted phenomenon that intrigues our curiosity. We are compelled to understand the reasons behind our experiences of pleasure, sadness, and fear, as

well as the motivations driving our actions and reactions. Each person operates at their own pace, with some being swift and others more deliberate. As we delve into the intricacies of human nature, experience, and behavior, numerous questions arise. Researching anxiety helps us provide reasoned answers to these inquiries. Anxiety studies delve into human behavior, with sports anxiety being a specialized field focusing on the anxiety experienced by athletes and other participants in competitive sports. As a subset of psychology, sports anxiety heavily concentrates on the apprehension's athletes face on and off the field, encompassing both practice sessions and competitive events (Arya et al., 2023). Athletes often find themselves needing to perform under high-pressure circumstances that can influence their performance, with sports representing a competitive environment fraught with stress-inducing situations. Various psychological factors may influence or be associated with athletes' performance in sports events, with anxiety being a prominent risk factor that significantly impacts athletes' physiological, psychological, and behavioral performance (Sharma & Prasad, 2023). Estimates suggest that 52 million children engage in sports, which offer numerous benefits for both physical and mental health, including improved cardiovascular fitness, heightened self-esteem, and increased overall well-being. Despite the potential enjoyment and rejuvenation associated with sports participation, the competitive nature of sports often induces anxiety and apprehension in players. An athlete's ability to effectively manage their anxiety directly influences their performance in competitions. Anxiety is characterized by negative emotional states such as worry, tension, apprehension, and physiological arousal. While it may occasionally enhance performance, more often than not, it has a detrimental impact (Iwuagwu et al., 2021). Hence, the primary aim of this study was to analyse the anxiety levels of badminton and tennis players based on their gender and sport through statistical analysis.

## Methodology

### *Selection of the subjects*

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, a total of 100 participants were carefully selected from the prestigious Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education (LNPE) in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. The participants consisted of 50 state-level tennis players, including 25 males and 25 females, as well as 50 state-level badminton players, again with 25 males and 25 females. The selection of these individuals was done with great attention to ensure a diverse and representative sample. The age range of the participants was set between 18 and 25 years, ensuring a relatively homogeneous group in terms of age. By including both male and female participants from both sports, we aimed to capture a broad perspective and account for potential gender-based differences in the study's findings. Additionally, focusing on state-level athletes ensured a certain level of expertise and proficiency in their respective sports, making them suitable candidates for the study.

### *Procedure*

The Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) was the instrument utilised for the study's goal of examining sports anxiety. The subjects had given their response to 15 statements of the questionnaire related to trait anxiety. The test monitored the Sports Competition Anxiety of

the athletes for their respective sport. There was no time limit provided for the response and instructions were clearly given before filling the questionnaire.

#### Statistical Technique

First, normality assumption of data was checked by kolmogorov Smirnov (Das & Jhajharia, 2022b) and Shapiro-Wilk test (Das et al., 2023). The assumptions of normality were not violated, thus parametric test was implemented (Das & Jhajharia, 2022a), to compare between games and gender independent 't' test was applied with the help of SPSS Version 26.

## Result

**Table 1 General Characteristics of the subjects**

Game	Gender	N	Age (Mean±SD)
Tennis	Male	25	20±4.2
	Female	25	19±3.5
Badminton	Male	25	21±2.2
	Female	25	20±1.2

Table 1 represent the general characteristics of the subjects and this table revealed the mean and standard deviation of age.

**Table 2 Mean Comparison of Anxiety of male and female (independent t-test)**

Game	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Sig
Tennis	Male	25	21.53	4.54	0.04
	Female	25	24.73	3.11	
Badminton	Male	25	22.02	4.10	0.03
	Female	25	25.22	2.23	

Table 2 represent the mean difference of anxiety between male and female in their respective games and this table revealed that there was significant difference between male and female as the p-value is less than 0.05.

**Table 3 Mean Comparison of Anxiety of tennis and badminton Players (Independent t-test)**

Game	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Sig
Tennis	Male	25	21.53	4.54	0.07
Badminton	Male	25	22.02	4.10	
Tennis	Female	25	24.73	3.11	0.06
Badminton	Female	25	25.22	2.23	

Table 3 represent the mean difference of anxiety between their respective games, and this table revealed that there was no significant difference between tennis and badminton games as the p-value is greater than 0.05.

## Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis revealed a noteworthy finding, indicating that females exhibit a higher prevalence of anxiety issues compared to males, and there is no significant difference found between tennis and badminton players in their anxiety level. Consequently, it is imperative for coaches, physical educationists, and sports trainers to prioritize the mental well-being of female athletes (Bahrami & Yousefi, 2011; Schaller et al., 2016). Moreover, previous studies have consistently supported these findings by demonstrating that females generally experience higher levels of anxiety than males. This further underscores the importance of addressing and managing anxiety-related concerns among female athletes (Bahrami & Yousefi, 2011; Schaller et al., 2016). In relation to the type of sport, it was observed that athletes participating in individual sports reported significantly higher levels of general sport anxiety. These findings align with previous research, which has consistently indicated that athletes engaged in individual sports tend to be more susceptible to competitive anxiety when compared to those involved in team sports (Kirkby & Liu, 1999; Ramis et al., 2015). This could be attributed to the fact that individual athletes bear the sole responsibility of achieving desired outcomes, intensifying anxiety symptoms. However, the worry subscale of the study revealed a contradictory result, with team sports athletes demonstrating significantly higher levels of worry compared to individual sports athletes. This suggests that athletes in team sports experience greater worry compared to their counterparts in individual sports (Turman, 2003). The desire for good performance in team sports is closely tied to acceptance and approval by team members, fostering positive interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, team members, along with spectators, parents, and coaches, constantly assess and evaluate each other's performance and contribution to the team's success or failure. These additional pressures are likely to trigger feelings of anxiety, particularly in the form of worry.

## Conclusion

The study findings revealed a notable disparity in anxiety susceptibility between females and males. This elevated vulnerability observed in females can be ascribed to the intricate interplay of thought control strategies and metacognitive beliefs, which contribute significantly to emotional and neurotic challenges. Hence, it becomes imperative to introduce and educate females on alternative cognitive frameworks for navigating threatening scenarios. Building upon the insights garnered from this investigation, it is plausible to advocate for equipping females with comprehensive knowledge of effective techniques tailored to managing metacognitive worries. Additionally, imparting skills aimed at modifying both negative and positive metacognitive beliefs associated with worry holds promise for enhancing overall mental well-being.

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