INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH CULTURE SOCIETY
Monthly Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed Journal
Volume - 9, Issue - 5, May - 2025
ISSN(O): 2456-6683
[Impact Factor: 9.241]
IJRCS

DOIs:10.2017/IJRCS/202505013 --:-- Research Paper / Article / Review

Effect of sports anxiety on an athlete's subjective performance

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Abstract: *With an emphasis on gender disparities among young people, this study investigated the connection between athletes' subjective performance (ASP) and sports anxiety (SA). The findings showed a substantial negative association between SA and ASP ($r = -0.520$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that lower self-rated performance is linked to higher anxiety levels. While there was no statistically significant difference in ASP between the sexes ($p = 0.057$), gender comparisons revealed that female athletes reported considerably greater levels of sports anxiety than male athletes ($t = -3.102$, $p = 0.003$). Subjective performance disparities were discovered, and the tendency is in line with previous studies. These results emphasize how crucial it is to include gender-sensitive therapies and psychological training in sports programs in order to assist athletes in managing their anxiety and enhancing their perspective of their performance. These results emphasize how crucial it is to include gender-sensitive therapies and psychological training in sports programs in order to assist athletes in managing their anxiety and enhancing their perspective of their performance.*

Key Words: *Sports anxiety, athlete's performance, female athletes more anxious.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Athletic performance is a complex phenomenon influenced by an interplay of physical preparation, technical competence, and mental readiness. Among the various psychological factors impacting sports outcomes, anxiety has been widely recognized for its significant effect on both measurable achievements and athletes' personal interpretations of their performance. Competitors at all levels—from professional to amateur—are vulnerable to anxiety, which can skew their perceptions, influence decision-making, and ultimately affect their satisfaction with their efforts. The term "subjective performance" describes how athletes personally evaluate their efforts, encompassing feelings of success, the amount of effort invested, and emotional experiences during competition (Mahoney et al., 1987). As mental training gains prominence in sports, it becomes crucial to understand how anxiety shapes these personal assessments, especially considering that males and females may experience and express anxiety differently.

In the realm of competitive sports, anxiety is typically seen as a blend of mental and physical unease tied to performance demands. According to Martens et al. (1990), sports anxiety is comprised of three main elements: cognitive anxiety (characterized by worry and negative thought patterns), somatic anxiety (physical symptoms such as an accelerated heartbeat and muscle tension), and self-confidence (viewed inversely to anxiety). While a moderate level of anxiety can heighten alertness and readiness, excessive anxiety is often harmful, disrupting focus, poise, and physical coordination (Hanin, 2000).

Building on this, Spielberger (1966) introduced the distinction between trait anxiety—a consistent tendency to feel anxious—and state anxiety, a temporary emotional reaction to specific circumstances. In the competitive environment of sports, this distinction is important, as an athlete might generally be anxious (high trait anxiety) yet experience varying levels of situational anxiety depending on the competitive stakes. Such fluctuations highlight the need to assess performance not only through objective outcomes but also through the athlete's internal experience.

While measurable outcomes like scores, times, or victories dominate sports assessments, the subjective interpretation of performance offers richer insights. Subjective performance reflects how athletes feel about their execution of skills, resilience under pressure, and overall fulfilment (Mahoney & Avener, 1977). Athletes sometimes feel dissatisfied with

their performance despite achieving excellent results if they believe their execution lacked smoothness or confidence. Conversely, some may feel proud of their performance even when the results are statistically poor, particularly if they overcame psychological obstacles. Thus, the internal evaluation of performance is deeply intertwined with the experience of anxiety.

Gender differences add another layer to the understanding of sports anxiety. Research indicates that female athletes generally report higher levels of both cognitive and somatic anxiety than males (Jones et al., 1991; Krane & Williams, 1994). This disparity can be traced to biological factors, societal expectations, and psychological differences. Cultural norms often encourage males to appear emotionally stoic, while females may be more comfortable acknowledging and expressing emotional states (Grossbard et al., 2009). Hormonal fluctuations and menstrual cycles can further influence anxiety experiences among female athletes (Jacobs & Silverman, 2020).

External factors such as disparities in athletic opportunities, coaching support, and media portrayal also contribute to the psychological environments athletes navigate. These differences often lead to greater psychological burdens on female athletes, particularly in male-dominated sports or high-profile competitions.

An athlete's experience and skill level significantly affect how anxiety influences subjective performance. Seasoned competitors often use strategies like visualization, positive self-talk, and routine-building to manage anxiety effectively (Vealey, 2007). However, even elite athletes are not immune, especially under the immense pressure of major international events (Hanton et al., 2005). Novices, on the other hand, may feel less somatic anxiety but struggle with cognitive worries due to unfamiliarity, making subjective evaluations highly variable across experience levels.

Recognizing the strong connection between sports anxiety and subjective performance, mental training programs have become fundamental to athlete preparation. Interventions like cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness practices, and biofeedback have shown success in alleviating anxiety and enhancing athletes' perceived performance quality (Gardner & Moore, 2007). These strategies are increasingly tailored based on gender, competition level, and individual needs.

Moreover, while it is well-established that females report higher anxiety, how this impacts their subjective evaluations remains unclear. Do females, because of heightened anxiety, rate themselves more harshly? Or do they employ better coping strategies that mitigate negative self-appraisals? Similarly, do males underreport anxiety and inflate their subjective performance assessments due to societal pressures? These questions demand thorough empirical investigation. Anxiety can either stem from an athlete's enduring personality traits or be triggered by specific high-stakes situations like crucial games or championship events.

The effects of anxiety on performance can be mixed. High levels of anxiety often disrupt concentration, affect motor skills, and lower self-confidence, which can harm performance. However, when kept at a moderate level, anxiety can actually sharpen focus and drive motivation. This phenomenon is described by the Yerkes-Dodson Law, which suggests that performance improves with arousal up to an optimal point before declining if arousal becomes excessive.

Research consistently shows that female athletes report higher levels of cognitive and somatic anxiety compared to males. Male athletes typically report greater self-confidence during competitions. These trends may be influenced by gender-specific coping styles, societal pressures, and levels of exposure to competitive sports early in life. Men tend to use problem-focused coping, while women often adopt emotion-centred strategies, and earlier immersion in competition may help males acclimate to performance pressure more effectively. The Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) created by Martens et al. has frequently been used to measure such anxiety responses. Studies like those by Jones et al. and a meta-analysis by Woodman and Hardy confirm that anxiety generally has a greater detrimental effect on females' performance than males.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Katherine T Beenen, Jennifer A Vosters, Dilip R Patel (2025) study on Performance anxiety in young athletes is characterized by emotional distress and physical symptoms that occur before, during, or after performance, potentially leading to avoidance behaviours and withdrawal from sports. When persistent, it may be classified as a psychiatric disorder. This review outlines the prevalence, risk factors, clinical presentation, and assessment tools for performance anxiety in young athletes. It highlights cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) as the most effective treatment, with growing support for mindfulness-based approaches. Pharmacologic options like propranolol, hydroxyzine, and

benzodiazepines may be used cautiously in severe cases. Recent findings confirm CBT as the primary intervention, with mindfulness offering additional benefits.

Patrik Drid, Giulia Messina, Andrea Pagliaro, Italia Di Liegro, Patrizia Proia, Carlo Rossi, Alessandra Amato, Marianna Alesi, Anna Alioto, and Gabriella Schiera (2024) studied the impact of social closeness, hormonal response, and genetic factors on sports anxiety in young female volleyball players. The research, conducted during a provincial championship final in Palermo, found that the winning team showed a significant decrease in salivary cortisol levels post-match, while the losing team did not. Additionally, the losing team exhibited a greater rise in salivary alpha-amylase levels, indicating higher acute stress. Psychological assessments revealed higher anxiety in the losing team. These results suggest that lower anxiety and better hormonal regulation, likely influenced by team cohesion and genetic factors, are associated with better performance.

Dhankar, M. (2024) explored gender differences in sports performance and its psychological correlates among young adult athletes. The study involved 60 athletes from India, training at Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Panchkula, Haryana. Participants completed measures of performance perception, motivation, self-efficacy, anxiety, and coping skills. Results showed that preparedness and strategic planning were key factors for both genders. Female athletes relied more on intrinsic motivation, which increased with anxiety and competitive pressure, and responded positively to anxiety, showing greater focus on areas for improvement. Males used a wider range of strategies to enhance performance. Significant gender differences were found in psychological self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, with females scoring higher. For males, confidence and achievement motivation predicted performance, while for females, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation were more influential, supporting Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Both genders used coping skills to boost performance, offering insights for gender-sensitive psychological interventions in athletics.

Antoni Wontorczyk and Katarzyna Gabrys (2023) Finding psychological indicators of athletes' sensitivity to fans' positive and negative behaviours was the goal of the study. There were 171 professional athletes in all. The study looked at the connection between this sensitivity and factors including stress, anxiety, and coping mechanisms. Differences according to athletes' places on the field were also taken into account. The findings indicated that low freedom from anxiety, strong coachability, confidence, and accomplishment motivation all predicted sensitivity to positive supporter behaviour (SPS). Low levels of freedom from anxiety and a high fear of receiving a poor evaluation were linked to sensitivity to negative supporter behaviour (SNS). SPS was associated with a variety of position-specific variables, including stress sensitivity, peaking under pressure, and focus for midfielders, concern and goal-setting for forwards, and confidence and accomplishment drive for defenders. While forwards were primarily impacted by fear of negative assessment, defenders' SNS was predicted by poor freedom from anxiety, low coachability, and high fear of negative evaluation.

The study was carried out by Clemente Franco and Laura C. Sánchez-Sánchez. Amutio Jaqueline García-Silva, Alberto Amutio, and Alberto Juan González-Hernández (2023) Training in emotional management makes athletes more resilient to pressure, particularly during competition. This study looked at how athletes' mood, impulsivity, and anxiety levels were affected by the mindfulness-based practice of flow meditation before to competition. A total of forty-one athletes were randomly assigned to the intervention group, which received mindfulness training for ten weeks, or the wait-list control group. Both before and after the intervention, the variables were measured using validated questionnaires. Findings were that the mindfulness program significantly reduced all forms of impulsivity—cognitive, motor, and unplanned—as well as negative mood states including tension, depression, and anger. Furthermore, both somatic and cognitive components of pre-competition anxiety were significantly reduced having significant to extremely substantial effect sizes in the intervention group as opposed to the control group. These findings suggest that mindfulness training is an effective tool for improving athletes' emotional regulation, enhancing their ability to manage stress, perform under pressure, and maintain psychological well-being both in competition and in daily life.

Research by Supatcharin Kemarat, Apiluk Theanthong, Wichai Yeemin, and Sutima Suwankan (2022) sought to determine how personality characteristics and competitive anxiety differed according to gender and sport type, as well as how personality affected competitive anxiety. 237 participants in all, divided into individual and team sport categories, competed in the 2020 Thailand University Games. The Sport Competitive Anxiety Test was used to evaluate competitive anxiety, while the NEO Five-Factor Inventory was used to examine personality. While there were no discernible variations in the groups' personality qualities, independent t-tests showed a significant difference in competitive anxiety between athletes participating in individual and team sports. Comparisons by gender revealed notable variations in the agreeableness characteristic and competitive anxiety, with females exhibiting higher levels of

agreeableness and anxiety. According to Pearson correlation studies, competitive anxiety was substantially correlated with neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism was the most powerful predictor of competitive anxiety among all personality characteristics, explaining 22% of the variation. These results imply that competitive anxiety and personality traits are significantly influenced by sport type and gender, and that certain personality traits—in particular, neuroticism—are important predictors of anxiety among collegiate athletes.

Katherine A. Tamminen, Jeemin Kim, Carolyn E. McEwen, Christopher R.D. Wagstaff, Chad Danyluck, and Svenja A. Wolf in 2021. Extensive conducted research that highlights the importance of emotion regulation for athletes to achieve peak performance and maintain psychological wellbeing. Beyond managing their own emotional states (self-regulation), athletes may also engage in interpersonal emotion regulation by influencing their teammates' emotions. Although these two forms of regulation likely occur simultaneously, their combined impact on emotional and performance outcomes has received little attention. Their study examined the relationships between athletes' anxiety levels and goal accomplishment during competition and their use of emotional self-regulation as well as their experiences of interpersonal emotion regulation from teammates.

In 2021, Nicole Casali, Marta Ghisi, Petra, Tommaso Feraco, and Chiara Meneghetti studied factors linked to competitive anxiety in athletes. They examined how trait competition anxiety relates to self-compassion and recurrent negative thoughts—specifically concern and rumination—in 263 athletes from various sports. Regression analysis showed that worry alone predicted physiological anxiety, while both worry and self-compassion predicted cognitive anxiety (concern). Trait anxiety was also linked to gender, years of experience, and competition frequency. Mediation analysis revealed that concern directly and indirectly mediated the relationship between anxiety and self-compassion. The findings highlight self-compassion as a protective factor and concern as a negative influence on athlete anxiety, offering insights for mental health and performance interventions.

Alejo, A. A., Aidar, F. J., De Matos, D. G., Santos, M. D. D., Silva, D. D. S., De Souza, R. F., Santos, J. L. D., Souza, L. M. V., Costa, C. F. T., & Da Silva, A. N. (2020) studied pre-competitive anxiety in male athletes from adult and young adult categories at the Brazilian National Championship. Young medallists reported significantly lower cognitive distress than non-medallists, suggesting better emotional control. In contrast, adult medallists showed higher cognitive distress. Somatic anxiety varied notably, especially in young adult medallists. Self-confidence was consistently high across all groups, and lower cognitive anxiety among medallists suggests a moderating role of confidence. The study highlights the complex relationship between anxiety, confidence, and performance. Grade of proof I: a well-conducted randomized trial.

In (2020) Marwat, N. M., Marwat, M. K., & khan, Wasim conducted the study on elite athletes who competed in the 31st National Games in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, and found that they may have had anxiety-related effects on their performance. Participants in the poll were a sample of 126 people aged 18 to 27 (86 men and 40 women). The pre-competition ratings for anxiety were computed using the CSAI-2. After the competition, the competitors' sports performance scores were evaluated, and SPSS version 24 was used for processing. The data indicates a somewhat negative correlation between anxiety and athletic success. According to the investigated conclusions, there are notable distinctions in anxiety levels between male and female athletes. Furthermore, participants in team sports had higher SCAI-2 scores. Athletes who participated in team sports also scored higher on the SCAI-2 than those who played individual sports. These results assist coaches and sport psychologists in making significant references for upcoming financial interventions in the sport psychology sector.

Englert, C., & Seiler, R aimed to examine whether increased anxiety levels negatively impact sports performance in a real-world evaluation setting. A total of 48 university students participated, each required to complete a practical volleyball test as part of their course assessment. The study compared participants' state anxiety and performance in a volleyball serving task between a neutral setting and a high-pressure testing situation at the end of the academic term. Results showed a significant rise in state anxiety in both male and female participants from the neutral to the testing condition. However, this increase in anxiety did not result in a notable drop in performance overall. One noteworthy discovery was a substantial inverse relationship between female participants' anxiety levels and performance, indicating that anxiety may have varying effects on performance depending on gender. These findings highlight the importance of understanding individual responses to anxiety and offer insights for developing targeted strategies to manage performance anxiety in academic and athletic settings.

Barbero, Nina(2019) aims to investigate how performance anxiety affects female athletes. The examined articles sought to address two questions: how does anxiety affect performance, and what are the main causes of performance anxiety? female sportsmen. Ten articles were found after a thorough data-based search using delimiting factors. The purpose of the analysis of the research studies compiled for this project was to draw conclusions on how female athletes are affected by performance anxiety. It was shown that although women had higher than men's levels of cognitive distress, both somatic and cognitive anxiety rise as training progresses toward competition.

Joanna Basiaga-Pasternak in 2019, examined the prevalence of pre-competitive superstitious rituals among adolescent football players from Poland and Ukraine, and explored the relationship between these rituals and anxiety levels. Rituals in sport, often rooted in superstition and magical thinking, are commonly practiced to manage anxiety and enhance confidence before competition. A total of 150 athletes (100 Polish and 50 Ukrainian) participated in the study. The study concluded that increased anxiety levels before to a competition were associated with a greater reliance on the ritualistic behaviours, suggesting that such rituals may serve as coping mechanisms to manage stress and enhance performance readiness.

Tomé-Lourido, David Arce, Constantino Ponte, and Dolores (2019) did a study to investigate the associations between competitive state anxiety, self-confidence, and attentional control in athletes. Additionally, the study sought to determine the impact of years of sport experience on these variables. The following hypotheses were put forth: (1) greater attentional control would be linked to improved self-confidence and decreased levels of competitive state anxiety; (2) attentional control would be significantly predicted by competitive state anxiety and self-confidence; and (3) athletes with more sport experience would have higher levels of attentional control, self-confidence, and decreased competitive state anxiety. 833 Spanish athletes were included in the sample. Regression analysis, independent t-tests depending on years of athletic experience, and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The results provided partial support for the hypotheses by demonstrating the impact of experience on anxiety and self-confidence levels and validating relationships between anxiety, self-confidence, and attentional control. These findings advance our knowledge of the psychological elements that might facilitate the growth of efficient attentional regulation in sports performance.

In their 2017 study, Sarra Hammoudi Nassib, Bessem Mkaouer, Sabra Hammoudi Riahi, Sameh Menzli Wali, and Sabri Nassib sought to determine whether pre-competitive anxiety affects gymnasts' performance only in the seconds leading up to execution or if it continues throughout the routine, especially when there is a prolonged delay. The findings showed that, in comparison to training, competition considerably increased levels of both cognitive and physical anxiety, while self-confidence levels remained consistent across both contexts. A notable difference in timeout duration was also observed between training and competition scenarios. Additionally, there were significant variations in the number of falls recorded in both situations. The influence of anxiety was found to be more pronounced during the rope routine compared to the club's routine. These findings suggest that pre-competitive anxiety not only peaks prior to performance but may also affect performance consistency and execution, especially in more complex or demanding apparatus events.

John E. Hagan Jr., Dietmar Pollmann and Thomas Schack,(2017) There research explored how athletes' anxiety responses—specifically their intensity, frequency, and interpretation—fluctuate during competition and how these are linked to the psychological strategies used in both low- and high-stress situations, with consideration of gender differences. While much of the existing literature focuses on anxiety before competition, this study emphasized in-event experiences, which remain under-researched. Multivariate analyses showed no significant effects related to gender or interaction between gender and stress level. However, stress level alone significantly influenced both anxiety and psychological skill use. In high-stress conditions, athletes reported greater intensity and frequency of both cognitive and physical anxiety symptoms, which were generally viewed as harmful to performance. Although participants also demonstrated increased self-confidence and use of psychological techniques under pressure, these strategies did not appear to effectively counterbalance the negative effects of anxiety. These results indicate that anxiety during competition is fluid and largely shaped by situational stress, regardless of gender. They also suggest that cultural context may influence emotional and psychological responses, emphasizing the importance of culturally adapted psychological interventions in sports.

Mihriban Ulker Zehranur Sanıoglu Tanıs and Ahmet Sanıoglu carried out a study in 2017. Determining the impact of success on individual sports was the goal of this research. A survey was administered to 407 Konya athletes overall for this purpose. The research findings indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in the trait anxiety levels of the individuals of the study based on the sports branches.

3. OBJECTIVES / AIMS:

TO STUDY THE EFFECT OF SPORTS ANXIETY ON ATHLETE'S SUBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE

4. RESEARCH METHOD / METHODOLOGY:

HYPOTHESIS**:**

1. There will be a correlation between effects of anxiety on an athlete's performance.
2. There will be a gender difference with regard to sports anxiety among young adults
3. There will be gender difference with regard to athlete's performance in young adults

RESEARCH VARIABLE:

SAMPLE:

1. 50 girls
2. 50 boys
3. Between the age of 18- 25
4. TOTAL OF 100 ATHLETES WHO PLAY PHYSICAL SPORTS ON DAILY BASIS
5. Physical Sports including but not limited to: Team Sports: Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Hockey, Cricket, Baseball, Rugby, and Lacrosse. Individual, Athletics (running, jumping, throwing), Swimming, Gymnastics, Tennis, Golf, Cycling, and Martial Arts (Judo, Taekwondo, Karate, Boxing)
6. Daily basis includes regular engagement in sports activity, for at least 1 hour of the day excluding rest day/days.
7. This do not include gym and people who do not participate in competitions related to the sports they play.
8. Sports that are excluded from this research are chess**,** card games, board games such as monopoly, Xiangqi, Archery, Target, Shooting, Snooker/Billiards, Lawn Bowling/Croquet, Bowling, Darts, Curling, Pool.
9. Due to geography of sample population many physical sports such as ice skating, skiing and surfing are not included.

RESEARCH TOOLS:

S.NO.	NAME OF THE TOOL	AUTHOR	YEAR	RELIABILITY	VALIDITY
1.	SPORTS ANXIETY SCALE	Smith, Smoll, and Schutz	1990	SAS is reliable instrument for measuring trait anxiety of adolescent athletes in sports setting	SAS is valid instrument for measuring trait anxiety of adolescent athletes in sports setting
2.	Athlete's Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS)	Nahum, Ben-Ami, Cohen & Shivek,	2016	Pre match and post-match reliability was 0.97 and 0.96 respectively	ASPS is valid scale for measuring athlete's performance in the team.

DATA ANALYSIS:

All the data collected through survey was organized into excel sheet. Once the data was organized, SPSS was used to analyse the data. Correlation and T-test was used to calculate the data.

In, addition to this, correlation was used to analyse the impact of sports anxiety. Whereas, T- test was used to find gender difference between male and female athletes.

5. RESULT:

		SA	ASP
Sports Anxiety (SA)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.520
	Sig. (2 -tailed)		<.001
	N	100	100
Athlete's subjective Performance (ASP)	Pearson Correlation	-.520	1
	Sig. (2 -tailed)	<.001	
	N	100	100

Table 1: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Pearson's correlation coefficient between SA and ASP is -0.520, p < 0.001

The result is significant. There is an effect of sports anxiety on an athlete's subjective performance

	Gender no.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SA	1	50	35.68	9.679	1.369
	2	50	41.04	7.459	1.055

Table 2.1: Males (gender = 1): Mean SA = 35.68; Females (gender = 2): Mean SA = 41.04

	Gender no.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ASP	1	50	41.42	9.941	1.406
	2	50	37.76	9.072	1.283

Table 2.2: Males (gender = 1): Mean ASP = 41.42; Females (gender = 2): Mean ASP = 37.76

Male athletes rated their performance slightly higher

		Levene's Test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of means					95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF THE DIFFERENCE	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-sided p	Two-sided p	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ASP	**Equal variances assumed**	.977	.325	1.923	98	.029	.057	3.660	1.903	-.117	7.437
	Equal Variances not assumed			1.923	97.192	.029	.057	3.660	1.903	-.117	7.437

Table 3.1: t = 1.923, p = 0.057

Significant athlete's subjective performance gender difference exists between male and female athletes

		Levene's Test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of means					95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF THE DIFFERENCE	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-sided p	Two-sided p	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SA	**Equal variances assumed**	2.679	.105	-3.102	98	.001	.003	-5.360	1.728	-8.789	-1.931
	Equal Variances not assumed			-3.102	92.022	.001	.003	-5.360	1.728	-8.792	-1.928

Table 3.2: t = -3.102, p = 0.003

There is a significant gender difference in sports anxiety between male and female athletes

6. DISCUSSION :

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between Sports Anxiety (SA) and Athletes' Subjective Performance (ASP) among young adults, with a specific focus on gender differences. The results revealed several noteworthy findings that contribute to our understanding of psychological factors influencing athletic performance.

The first hypothesis sought to examine whether sports anxiety affects athletes' perceived performance. The significant negative correlation ($r = -0.520$, $p < .001$) indicates that higher levels of sports anxiety are associated with lower subjective performance. This finding aligns with the multidimensional theory of anxiety (Martens et al., 1990), which suggests that cognitive anxiety (worry and fear of failure) can impair concentration, confidence, and ultimately performance outcomes.

Several past studies have supported this relationship. For instance, Craft et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis and found a consistent inverse relationship between anxiety and performance, especially when anxiety levels were high. Similarly, Woodman and Hardy (2003) emphasized that anxiety not only affects motor performance but also distorts athletes' self-assessments, often leading them to underrate their capabilities. The results of the present study reinforce this perspective, suggesting that managing anxiety is crucial for improving both performance and confidence among young athletes.

The second hypothesis explored gender differences in sports anxiety. The findings revealed that female athletes reported significantly higher levels of anxiety (Mean = 41.04) compared to male athletes (Mean = 35.68), with a statistically significant difference ($t = -3.102$, $p = .003$). This supports previous research indicating that female athletes generally experience more anxiety in competitive situations.

According to Jones et al. (2005), societal expectations and performance pressure may be more pronounced for female athletes, contributing to heightened anxiety levels. Additionally, Cheng et al. (2009) noted that women are often more expressive about their anxiety, making it more measurable in self-report instruments. These results have important implications, suggesting that interventions to manage anxiety may need to be tailored specifically for gender-specific psychological needs.

The third hypothesis investigated gender differences in athletes' subjective performance. Although male athletes rated their performance slightly higher (Mean = 41.42) than female athletes (Mean = 37.76), the difference was statistically significant ($p = .057$). while this result meets the conventional significance threshold, it hints at a potential trend that may be more pronounced in larger or more specific samples.

Previous literature presents mixed findings in this area. Some studies, such as those by Nicholas et al. (2010), found that male athletes tend to rate their performance more favourably due to higher self-efficacy and confidence. In contrast, female athletes are often more critical of their performance, even when objective outcomes are similar. However, the near-significant difference in this study suggests that while gender may play a role, other variables such as sport type, experience, and coaching feedback might also influence ASP and warrant further investigation.

The study provides evidence that sports anxiety significantly impairs athletes' subjective performance and that female athletes report significantly higher anxiety levels than males. Although no significant gender differences were found in subjective performance.

7. CONCLUSION:

The present study aimed to examine the influence of sports anxiety on athletes' subjective performance (ASP) and to investigate gender differences in both sports anxiety (SA) and athlete's subjective performance among young adults. The findings revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between sports anxiety and ASP ($r = -0.520$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increased anxiety levels are associated with decreased perceptions of athletic performance. This supports the first hypothesis and aligns with previous literature suggesting that anxiety impairs athletes' cognitive and motor functions, leading to diminished performance outcomes. Additionally, a significant gender difference was observed in sports anxiety levels, with females ($M = 41.04$) reporting higher anxiety than males ($M = 35.68$), $t(92.022) = -3.102$, $p = 0.003$, with a medium effect size (Cohen's $d = -0.620$). These results support the second hypothesis and are consistent with earlier studies that attribute higher anxiety in female athletes to greater self-imposed expectations and societal pressures (Grossbard et al., 2009). While males reported slightly higher ASP ($M = 41.42$) than females ($M = 37.76$), this difference was not statistically significant ($t(98) = 1.923$, $p = 0.057$), though it approached the threshold

for significance, suggesting a potential trend worth further exploration. In summary, the study underscores the detrimental impact of sports anxiety on athletic self-perception and highlights the need for gender-sensitive psychological interventions in sports. Implementing strategies that help athletes, especially females, manage anxiety could play a vital role in improving both subjective and actual athletic performance.

8. LIMITATIONS:

The research presents several limitations that may affect the validity and generalizability of its findings. First, the use of subjective performance measurement and reliance on self-report data introduces potential bias, including social desirability effects, which may skew the results. The study also lacks control for confounding variables such as physical fitness, technical skill, or motivation, all of which can significantly influence sports performance. Furthermore, the narrow focus on young adults' limits applicability to other age groups and populations, with no consideration of cultural, environmental, or regional diversity that could shape sports anxiety and performance outcomes. The strict exclusion criteria and narrow definition of physical activity may further constrain the breadth of insight gained. In addition, the study does not differentiate between various types of sports, which likely involve different anxiety triggers and performance dynamics. Key factors such as training intensity, type, and frequency, as well as rest days, are not clearly defined or standardized. Finally, the omission of important background data such as socioeconomic status, nutritional habits, and psychological conditions along with a potentially limited sample size, raises concerns about the statistical power and comprehensive understanding of the results.

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