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## Evaluation of selected psychological skills of male and female sportsperson in different sport domains

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### Abstract

The aim of the present study was to analyse the selected psychological skills of male and female participants in different sport domains. For this reason, 320 sportsperson from different sport domains (individual and team sports) were selected as subjects from Meerut district, Uttar Pradesh, India. These subjects were in the age group of 18 to 21 years, and they were tested for their level of achievement motivation and competitive anxiety using standardized instruments. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis by means of Two-way ANOVA, and simple effect test. The confidence interval was fixed at  $P < 0.05$  in all cases. The research findings imply that difference in gender and participation in different sport domains contributes to the variation in developmental process on achievement motivation and anxiety.

**Keywords:** Psychological skills, sports domain, ANOVA, anxiety etc.

### Introduction

Every human being is born with specific physical and psychological strengths and weaknesses, yet the skills are learned and developed through day to day endeavours. Irrespective of the sport in question, an athlete's success or failure is dependent on a combination of physical and mental abilities (Dewey, 1871). Psychological, social and physical development process project powerful influences on sport participation, defined broadly as engagement, learning, and performance in sports. Sport experiences often foster citizenship, social success, positive peer relationships, leadership skills, and a sense of initiative in participants.

The highly desirable benefits of a physically active lifestyle are mastery of motor and sport-specific skills that contribute to competence in lifelong physical activities, attaining social and psychological life skills (e.g., interpersonal skills, resistance skills), and improving developmental outcomes such as confidence, self-regulation, character, motivation, and perseverance. Developmental sport psychology is the term for the area of study focused on determining the role of sport participation experiences in developing psychological, social, and physical competencies. The acquisition of sport skill expertise is both a product of development and a process for development, meaning that psychological development affects sport skill acquisition and that the sport skill acquisition process results in psychological changes.

Youth sports are adult-organized sports programs for children and youth, typically between the ages of 7 and 18 years which have designated coaches, organized practices, and scheduled competitions. An estimated 22 million youth in the USA participate in non-school youth sports programs. There are equally high percentages of children and youth in Australia, Brazil, Canada, and many Asian and European countries, who participate in youth sport programs through clubs or schools. Most of these programs are aimed at mass participation rather than focused on developing elite athletes. The psychology of youth sports as an area of scholarly inquiry is relatively new. Research in this field did not start to proliferate until the 1980s. The research developed out of concern by professionals for the educational value of youth sport participation and the well-being of the children involved. The topics that have been most often addressed on the psychology of youth sports include psychological readiness for youth sports participation, the benefits and detriments of youth sports participation, participant motivation, and adult involvement in youth sports.

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However, few systematic lines of research have been conducted, and not many have been theoretically based. Probable future directions regarding psychological aspects of youth sports include more bio-psycho-social perspectives, more longitudinal, prospective, and experimental designs, and more wide-scale evaluation research.

Youth sport participants themselves give many specific reasons or motives for sports participation, and typically have higher perceptions of competence and control than those who drop out. Competence motivation theory suggests that mastery behaviour in activities such as sport is predicted by one's perceptions of ability and sense of control over performance situations. Achievement goal theory shows that behaviour is often predicted by children's perceptions of their abilities and their goal perspectives, meaning their views on what it means to be successful in sport.

Contemporary thinking views stress as a dynamic relationship between athletes and their practice and competition environment. Specifically, performers appraise the demands to cope with these demands. Inherent within this approach is the perspective that performers will encounter many different demands that tax their resources and it is the athletes' perceived ability to cope with these that form the process of stress. If athletes feel that they cannot cope with the demands then they are then likely to experience different levels of competition anxiety.

Elite athletes repeatedly have to perform under high pressure, and it is therefore not surprising that psychological characteristics often distinguish those successful at the highest standard from their less successful counterparts (Morris, 2000)<sup>[6]</sup>. Early research evidence already supported an association between psychological characteristics and sports performance (Morgan & Pollock, 1977; Morgan, 1979; May *et al.*, 1985)<sup>[2, 4, 5]</sup>. Further research evolved with an emphasis in identifying psychological skills relevant to sport (Meyers *et al.*, 1996)<sup>[3]</sup>. Yet, it is not self-evident that the relation between psychological skills and performance level is similar for different types of sports or for males and females.

The conceptualization of sport structure plays a vital role in the modification of psychological skills. Furthermore, gender differences play a prominent role in the enhancement of psychological skills of athletes participating in different sports. Thereby, the analysis of psychological skills of male and female athletes participating in different sports is necessitated to understand the gender difference and nature of activity in developing the psychological skills. The main aim of this investigation was to analyse the selected psychological skills (achievement motivation and competitive anxiety) of male and female participants in different sport domains.

### **Benefits of sport**

Participation in organized sports during childhood and adolescence has important benefits for physical, psychological, and social health. Sport-based youth development programs outside of school promote a wide range of learning and life skill development. Involvement in youth athletics encourages youth to live a healthy and happy lifestyle, foregoing the common issues many youth face such as obesity and depression. However, sport involvement goes beyond health, other benefits allow them to form and strengthen affective relationships, teach youth to value self-

improvement over winning, how to be competitive in a competitive society, and to work culturally with different peers and authorities. In the classroom, high school student athletes are far less likely to drop out of school and 15% more likely to attend college.

The practice of sport fosters young people's physical and emotional health and builds valuable social connections. It also offers opportunities for play and self-expression especially for those young people with few other opportunities. Sport also acts as a healthy alternative to harmful actions such as drug abuse, and involvement in crime. Beyond the individual, sport involvement cuts barriers that divide societies, making it a powerful tool to support conflict prevention both symbolically on the global level and practically within communities.

### **Concerns in sport participation**

The number of dropouts reaches a peak in the adolescent years. The most important reason for not playing sport are "not having enough time," "no interest anymore," and "other leisure activities".

### **Negative experiences**

Negative experiences can be created through a sport that is overly focused on competition and winning at all costs or that fails to place the healthy development of youth at the center of the experience. Such negative experiences may result in a young person's low self-esteem, involve them in negative relationships, encourage poor sportsmanship, permit aggression and violence, allow racism, perpetuate gender discrimination, or expose them to psychological, sexual and commercial exploitation and abuse. Many of these negative experiences can be avoided when parents and coaches are chosen carefully, ensuring that programs offer a positive development experience for youth. In response to the evidence of negative experiences in sport for many youth, especially low-income youth, youth of colour, overweight youth, and LGBTQ youth, sports-based youth development (SBYD) emerged. Sports-based youth development is a theory and practice model for programs to place the mental and physical health of a youth over their athletic success. Programs that use SBYD to define program activities and train staff members generally provide free or reduced-cost programming to reduce the barriers low-income youth face when playing sports. These programs are typically found in low-income and under-served neighbourhoods, but any sports coach or sports program can apply SBYD principles.

### **Injuries**

Injuries have always been of concern in terms of sport but youth are much more susceptible to injury considering both their immature musculoskeletal system and increasingly high intensity training. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, participation in organized sports is on the rise. Nearly 30 million children and adolescents participate in youth sports just in the developed countries. This high rise in sport participation has led to some startling statistics, high school athletes account for an estimated 2 million injuries, 500,000 doctor visits, and 30,000 hospitalizations each year. The most common types of sports related injuries among youth are sprains, muscle strains, bone or growth plate injuries, and overuse injuries.

Early sports specialization has long been typical among

children and teenagers in gymnastics, swimming, diving and figure skating, especially if they have aspirations of being competitive at elite levels. Undeniably, the main purpose for athletes to specialize in sport is to become a better player in order to increase their chances of making it to the big leagues or to become an elite athlete. Unfortunately, the data does not prove that specializing as a youth will be enough to make a child into a successful athlete later on (Latorre-Roman, Pinillos, & Robles, 2018). Youth athletes that are considered less specialized have been found to exhibit more all-around athleticism and other advantages that specialized athletes do not benefit. (Rugg, Kador, Feley, & Pandya, 2018). Studies have supported that decreasing specialization at a young age will lower the rates of injuries for the players while increasing playing times and length of careers compared to athletes who specialized as a youth (Rugg, Kador, Feley, & Pandya, 2018). Still, sport specialists tend to dramatically outweigh those who stayed multi-sport athletes because of the standards people place on sports and how valuable a sports career can be. As youth athletes exhibit skills at higher levels than their peers at a young age, parents, coaches, and the athletes themselves tend to focus on that sport in order to take advantage of their natural skills. Parents, coaches, and athletes should know that showing promise in sport from a young age does not guarantee future success as competition levels rise and the athlete develops as a person.

Noting that specializing in a sport at a young age by no means guarantees success, it is most important understand that sport specialization in youth can lead to higher injury rates throughout ones sports career (Mcguine *et al.*, 2017). Research has found that high school athletes that specialize in one sport are more likely to be injured than athletes that play multiple sports. Further, students who were classified to play moderate amount of sports were found to have less injuries than those who specialized in only one. This helps to emphasize the importance of sport diversity in youth athletes and its impact on preventing injuries. Looking at sport specialization more in depth, researchers have suggested that athletes, coaches, and parents monitor the weekly, monthly, and yearly participation rates for youth athletes in a single sport. It is generally recognized that athletes should not participate in more than 8 months' worth of intense sport practice and no more than an athlete's age in hours of practice a week (Post *et al.*, 2017). Also, experts recommend that all athletes engage in a wide variety of athletic activities, including unstructured athletic activities such as playing outside, until at least the age of 15.'

### Over-involvement

Teenage athletes have been pushed by parents and sport programmes to train excessively and to dedicate an enormous amounts of time and money to sport. Some youth report playing up to eight football games per week, sometimes in the hope of earning one of a few university scholarships. Sleep, schoolwork, family time, and other normal activities are sacrificed to sport.

A few countries are beginning to regulate sport programmes to reduce this problem. Finland, which has a strong track record in the Olympics Games, is seen as a model. In 2018, after the death of an apparently healthy but exhausted teenage athlete, the government of Puerto Rico required that

all youth sport programmes be regulated. Under the initial rules in Puerto Rico, children under the age of 9 cannot play in tournaments or officially keep score, and youth under the age of 16 cannot play more than three games per week. As of 2020, there is widespread sentiment that the overall system must change, but programmes in each of the regulated sports, and the coaches and other staff whose pay depends upon operating these lucrative tournaments and expensive travel teams, are lobbying for exemptions that will permit their own businesses to continue as before.

### Methodology

In this study, 320 sportsperson from different sport domains (individual and team sports) were selected as subjects from Meerut district, Uttar Pradesh, India. The subjects selected in the domain of individual sports consist of 74 male and 58 female sportsperson, whereas, 105 male and 83 female sportsperson considered as subjects from that of team sports. The subjects selected were position holders in the district level tournament in respective sports. The age of the subjects were ranged between 18 and 21 years. The participants in athletics, badminton, table tennis, power lifting and weight lifting were considered to be as subjects categorized as individual sports in this study, while the hockey, basketball, cricket, football, handball, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and volleyball players were considered as subjects belonging to team sports.

These sports of different domains were chosen considering the popularity and achievement of the sportsperson in State level tournaments. The selected subjects were tested for their level of achievement motivation and competitive anxiety using standardized instruments. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis by means of Two-way ANOVA, and simple effect test. The confidence interval was fixed at  $P < 0.05$  in all cases.

### Results

The data on achievement motivation and competitive anxiety were analysed for statistical significant gender difference and the influence of participating in individual and team sports. And all those results were tabulated in tables from 1 through 6.

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation on achievement motivation among sportsperson of different

Gender	Sports domain	Mean	Std. deviation	N
Male	Individual sports	26.689	3.420	74
	Team sports	24.962	3.905	105
Female	Individual sports	25.431	3.550	58
	Team sports	27.289	2.878	83

It is obvious from Table 1 that female has more achievement motivation than their counterpart irrespective of their sports. Furthermore, it is observed that participants in individual sports are highly motivated to achieve compared to those engaged team sports.

The data on achievement motivation have been analyzed by two-way analysis of variance to determine the gender difference and the influence of participation in different sports domains, and the obtained results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Two-way analysis of variance on achievement motivation

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Gender	21.843	1	21.843	1.799	.181
Sports Domain	.327	1	.327	.027	.870
Gender * Sports Domain	245.670	1	245.670	20.232	.000
Error	3836.983	316	12.142		

It is observed from Table 2 that the achievement motivation between gender (male and female) irrespective of sports domain is  $F(1, 316) = 1.799, (p=0.181)$ , which indicates that no significant differences exist between male and female irrespective of sports domain (individual and team sports) on achievement motivation. Moreover, the achievement motivation between sports domain (individual and team sports) irrespective of gender is  $F(1, 316) = 0.027, (p=0.870)$ , which indicates that no significant differences exist between individual and team sports irrespective of gender on achievement motivation.

But, the obtained  $F(1, 316) = 20.232, (P<0.05)$  value for the two-way interaction of gender (male and female) and sports domain (individual and team sports), reveals a significant difference on achievement motivation. It establishes the existences of significant differences in the two way interaction effect on achievement motivation. Since, the interaction effect is significant, the simple effect test has been applied as follow up test and it is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The simple effect test on achievement motivation among sportsperson of different sports domain

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F ratio	Sig.
Gender and Individual Sports	51.470	1	51.470	4.239	.040
Gender and Team Sports	251.071	1	251.071	20.677	.000
Sports Domain and Male	129.508	1	129.508	10.666	.001
Sports Domain and Female	117.879	1	117.879	9.708	.002
Error	3836.983	316	12.142		

Table 3 reveals that statistically significant difference on achievement motivation exists between male and female sportsperson participating in individual sports, as the obtained  $F(1, 316) = 4.239, (P<0.05)$ . Likewise, considerable difference on achievement motivation between male and female sportsperson participating in team sports is observed, as the obtained  $F(1, 316) = 20.677, (P<0.05)$ . It also shows that there is a statistically significant difference on achievement motivation between individual and team male sportspersons as the  $F(1, 316) = 10.666, (P<0.05)$ , per se, considerable difference on achievement motivation exists between individual and team female sportspersons as the  $F(1, 316) = 9.708, (p<0.05)$ .

**Table 4:** Mean and standard deviation on anxiety among sportsperson of different sports domain

Gender	Sports domain	Mean	Std. deviation	N
Male	Individual Sports	19.649	3.677	74
	Team Sports	20.391	2.669	105
Female	Individual Sports	15.862	3.247	58
	Team Sports	18.349	2.662	83

It is obvious from Table 4 that male are more anxious than female irrespective of their sports. Furthermore, it is

observed that participants in team sports are highly anxious compared to those play individual sports. The data on anxiety have been analyzed by two-way analysis of variance to determine the gender difference and the influence of participation in different sports domains, and the obtained results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Two-way analysis of variance on anxiety

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Gender	649.028	1	649.028	70.488	.000
Sports Domain	199.275	1	199.275	21.642	.000
Gender* Sports Domain	58.226	1	58.226	6.324	.012
Error	2909.619	316	9.208		

It is observed from Table 5 that the anxiety between gender (male and female) irrespective of sports domain is  $F(1, 316) = 70.488, (P<0.05)$ , which indicates that significant differences exist between male and female irrespective of sports domain (individual and team sports) on anxiety. It also shows that the anxiety between sports domain (individual and team sports) irrespective of gender is  $F(1, 316) = 21.642, (P<0.05)$ , which indicates that significant differences exist between individual and team sports irrespective of gender on anxiety. Furthermore, the obtained  $F(1, 316) = 6.324, (p=0.012)$  value for the two-way interaction of gender (male and female) and sports domain (individual and team sports), reveals a significant difference on anxiety.

A finding of the study establishes the existences of significant differences in the two way interaction effect on anxiety. Since, the interaction effect is significant, the simple effect test has been applied as follow up test and it is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6:** The simple effect test on anxiety among sportsperson of different sports domain

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Gender and Individual Sports	466.208	1	466.208	50.633	.000
Gender and Team Sports	193.121	1	193.121	20.974	.000
Sports Domain and Male	23.888	1	23.888	2.594	.108
Sports Domain and Female	211.229	1	211.229	22.941	.000
Error	2909.619	316	9.208		

Table 6 shows that there is a statistically significant difference on anxiety between male and female sportsperson participating in individual sports, as the obtained  $F(1, 316) = 50.633, (P<0.05)$ . Per se, considerable difference on anxiety between male and female sportsperson participating in team sports is noticed, as the obtained  $F(1, 316) = 20.974, (P<0.05)$ . However, it also demonstrates that statistically significant difference on anxiety didn't exist between individual and team male sportspersons as the  $F(1, 316) = 2.594, (p=0.108)$ , whereas, considerable difference on anxiety exists between individual and team female sportspersons as the  $F(1, 316) = 22.941, (P<0.05)$ .

**Conclusion**

The research findings of this study imply that difference in gender and participation in different sport domains contributes to the variation in developmental process on achievement motivation and anxiety.

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