



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COMPETITIVE ANXIETY AMONG JUNIOR AND SENIOR STATE-LEVEL WOMEN VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS

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Abstract - [Aim]:- The purpose of the present study was to compare the level of competitive anxiety between junior and senior state-level women volleyball players. Competitive anxiety is one of the most significant psychological factors influencing sports performance, especially in team games like volleyball where coordination, confidence, and quick decision-making are essential.

Methods:- A total of 60 female volleyball players were randomly selected from various state-level championships conducted in Madhya Pradesh during the session 2025–26. Among them, 30 were junior players and 30 were senior players. Competitive anxiety was measured using the Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) developed by Rainer Martens. Mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were used for statistical analysis.

Result:- The findings revealed a significant difference between junior and senior women volleyball players in competitive anxiety levels. The calculated t-value (2.53) was found to be higher than the tabulated value (2.00) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion:- Junior women volleyball players demonstrated higher competitive anxiety compared to senior players, indicating that competitive experience and psychological maturity help reduce anxiety during competition.

Keywords:- Competitive Anxiety, Women Volleyball, Junior Players, Senior Players, Sports Psychology

Introduction:- Sports psychology has become an important area in modern sports training because mental preparation is equally important as physical conditioning for achieving high performance. Among various psychological variables, competitive anxiety is considered one of the major factors influencing athletes' performance during important competitions. Competitive anxiety refers to the feeling of nervousness, tension, fear, and emotional pressure experienced by athletes before or during competition. High levels of anxiety may negatively affect concentration, coordination, confidence, and decision-making, which are critical in volleyball performance. However, a moderate level of anxiety may improve alertness and readiness for competition. Volleyball is one of the most popular team sports played by women at school, college, university, and professional levels. It requires speed, coordination,

tactical understanding, communication, teamwork, and mental toughness. Since the game involves constant pressure, rapid response, and performance under observation, competitive anxiety becomes an important psychological factor. Junior and senior women volleyball players differ in experience, emotional maturity, and exposure to high-pressure matches. Junior players often face higher anxiety because of limited experience, fear of failure, and performance pressure. Senior players generally develop better emotional stability, confidence, and coping strategies through repeated competition.

Therefore, studying competitive anxiety among junior and senior women volleyball players is important for coaches, trainers, and sports psychologists to improve performance and mental preparedness.

Methodology:- Purpose of the Study - The primary purpose of this study was to compare the level of competitive anxiety between junior and senior state-level women volleyball players and to determine whether playing experience influences anxiety during competition.

Participants - The study consisted of 60 female volleyball players selected randomly from different districts of Madhya Pradesh who participated in state-level championships during the academic session 2025–26.

Group Distribution:

- Junior Players = 30
- Senior Players = 30

Age Range:

- Junior Group: 16–19 years
- Senior Group: 20–27 years

All participants had a minimum of three years of competitive playing experience and were medically fit at the time of testing.

Tool Used

Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT)

Developed by:

Rainer Martens

The SCAT is a standardized psychological test widely used to measure competitive trait anxiety among athletes. It consists of 15 statements, out of which 10 statements are scored and 5 are spurious items.

Scoring Range:

- Minimum Score = 10
- Maximum Score = 30

Higher scores indicate higher levels of competitive anxiety.

The test has high reliability and validity and is widely accepted in sports psychology research.

Hypothesis - It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between junior and senior state-level women volleyball players in competitive anxiety.

Statistical Technique

The following statistical tools were used:

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Independent Sample t-test

The level of significance was fixed at 0.05.

Findings

TABLE – 1

**SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE OF MEAN SCORES ON COMPETITIVE ANXIETY
BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR STATE-LEVEL WOMEN VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS**

Variable	Junior Mean	Senior Mean	Mean Difference	SEDM	t-Ratio
Competitive Anxiety	23.16	21.41	1.75	0.69	2.53*

Significant at 0.05 level

$t_{0.05} (58) = 2.00$

Interpretation of Table - The table indicates that the mean competitive anxiety score of junior women volleyball players (23.16) was higher than that of senior players (21.41). The calculated t-value of 2.53 exceeded the tabulated value of 2.00 at 58 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance.

This shows that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that junior women volleyball players experience significantly higher competitive anxiety than senior players. Several factors may explain this result:

1. Limited Competitive Exposure

Junior players usually have less experience in major tournaments, making them more vulnerable to nervousness and pressure.

2. Fear of Performance Evaluation

Young players often worry more about mistakes, criticism from coaches, and selection pressure.

3. Lower Emotional Stability

Senior players generally develop stronger emotional control and self-confidence through repeated match exposure.

4. Better Psychological Coping

Experienced players adopt effective coping strategies such as concentration control, positive self-talk, breathing exercises, and match preparation routines.

These findings are supported by previous studies conducted in athletics, basketball, hockey, and volleyball where junior athletes showed higher anxiety than senior athletes.

Discussion of Hypothesis

The hypothesis stating that there would be no significant difference between junior and senior women volleyball players in competitive anxiety was rejected because a statistically significant difference was observed.

Junior players were found to have higher competitive anxiety than senior players.

Conclusion:-

- A significant difference exists between junior and senior state-level women volleyball players regarding competitive anxiety.
- Junior players showed higher levels of competitive anxiety compared to senior players.
- Competitive experience and psychological maturity help reduce anxiety in sports performance.
- Coaches should include mental training, relaxation techniques, and confidence-building exercises in regular practice sessions for women volleyball players.

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Global Axis International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies