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ANALYZING EFFECTS OF ANXIETY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE ON ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Self-confidence is another important psychological index in sport. In addition, it is a unique experience of athletes so as to achieve different things, and as a result, Specific expectations for success in future activities are to be felt. Moderate level of anxiety results in better athletic performance, whereas low and great anxiety results in degradation of athletic performance. There is no athlete who can claim that its performance has not been affected by psychological or mental factors. In competitive situations, one tries to achieve the best results and it is based on these frame work of efforts that one experiences rate of signification and effect on psychological potency and infirmity. Uncertainty, anxiety, jealousy, fear, self-confidence and positive feedback in terms of one's abilities has meaningful outcomes over its performance. The purpose of this study is analyzing the effects of anxiety and its positive and negative aspects regarding the performance of athletes.

Keywords: *Anxiety, Self-Confidence, Athlete's Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Spielberg was the first one who divided anxiety into state and trait anxiety. State anxiety is a temporary emotion associated with stress and tension, in addition, it is a relatively stable behavioral tendency acquired and defined as one of personality traits. Such anxiety enables an individual to comprehend a wide broad of dangerous and threatening conditions. State anxiety is a state of mental anxiety which is created due to negative evaluation and negative expectation and it is related to the feeling of individuals in physiological states in response to stress (Robert and colleagues, translated by Vaezmusavi and Shajahi, 1927). Martens and colleagues presented the state anxiety in venture for the assessment of physical and cognitive state anxiety and self-confidence (Robert and colleagues, translated by Vaezmusavi and Shajahi, 1927), (Strachan and Manrochandler, 2006) concluded that using illustration can cause significant differences at disparate levels of self-confidence and anxiety.

For athletes who work in high-level activities there is a slight difference in terms of skill, therefore, a vital factor which probably distinguishes the winner from the loser is the ability of athletes in encountering mental pressures (Martenz, translate by Xabiri, 1931). In a study by (Ampungan, 2004) examined the effects of depression on Taekwondo adolescent performance, reported that young Taekwondo players who have less experience participating in competitions due to their misgiving thought of failure and false evaluating opponents abilities suffer from turmoil and stress which by itself leads to reduced performance, confusion and finally results in athletes failure in doing their duties which causes them to lose.

According to (Angell, 2008) lacking mental preparation for critical events is a major factor in reducing self-confidence and focus of Athletes, in addition, factors such as: Stress, depression, confusion and fatigue in previous competitions have a negative impact on athletes performance, however it can even provide conditions for the emergence of serious injury (Dust, 1927) and (Jafhari, 1931) also believe that a major factor in elite athletes success is having an appropriate psychological preparation in coping with stressful events. The relationship among the behavioral characteristic of karate players participating in world championships shows that high-levels of energy and strength along with lower levels of stress, depression, confusion and fatigue are characteristics of successful karate players (Rabeka, 2006),

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(Moskul, 2004) by categorizing athletic fields into contact and non-contact sports concluded that contact athletes such as: rugby, karate, American football, hockey, boxing in comparison to other athletes involve in higher level of turmoil. But (Lazarouse, 2000) considers turmoil as biological tendencies in encountering unusual conditions and he believes that competitive anxiety provides initial conditions for that matter.

Optimal performance is achieved in sport through combination of technical skills (technical and tactical), Physical (strength, speed, etc.) and mental (concentration, self-confidence, control ling anxiety...). Many athletic psychologists believe that coaches and athletes in recent years came to this conclusion that in order to achieve expected goals, mental skills are more important than physical skills. A vast number of studies devoted a great deal of researches to self-confidence and anxiety among effective psychological factors in championship. International elite athletes consider self-confidence as one of the most important mental skills in determining their success and mental strength. Self-confidence in sport is called athletic self-confidence which is the level of guarantee in achieving success in sport. Probably we can say that athletic self-confidence is one of the effective factors in athletic performance. Sources in athletic self-confidence are important factors in shaping athletic self-confidence. Sources of athletic self-confidence found by Willie (1998) are composed of 9 sources: Mastery of skills, abilities displaying, physical fitness, mental, physical self-device, Social support, coach leadership behavior, alternative experience, environmental peace and desired status. Sources in self-confidence are recognized as vital factors in developing and holding athlete’s self-confidence. Wiley and colleagues in (1998) found that sources of self-confidence for athletes before any intervention are important factors for enhancing self-confidence in athletes.

Findings

Anxiety occurs whenever neurotic pressure is felt, which is rooted in high level of arousal. Anxiety can have positive or negative effects such as: Including drives, fear, motivation, stress and excitement, etc. This form of anxiety defined as subjective component or cognitive anxiety which is caused through negative expectation in success or negative self-evaluating (Kraft *et al.*, 2003). In other words, cognitive anxiety is fear of failure based on expected results (Hardy and Parfyt, 1991). Fear of negative evaluation in relation to cognitive anxiety leads to excessive physical stress, which in turn results in decreased exercise performance. It appears that the severe reaction from thinking about the loss and negatively evaluated by others moves toward a dramatic increase in physical symptoms of anxiety (Garfield, 1985; Lvhr, 1982; Foster, 1986). The excessive physiological arousal associated with reduced performance rarely occurs without pressure during training sessions, which means that an athlete shows anxiety related to reduced performance in completions where being a winner or a loser is important. On the whole, anxiety has disparate effects on athletic performance; these effects vary according to gender, level of experience, or background. For providing high-performance facilities athletic psychology it must consider three factors anxiety: Cognitive, physical and self-confidence anxiety.

Successful athletes		Less unsuccessful athletes		Unsuccessful athletes		Slight comparison
<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
<u>19.63</u>	1.87	24.51	2.69	25.73	2.33	chronic state anxiety
<u>17.52</u>	1.28	23.73	1.62	27.96	1.56	Acute personality anxiety
18.81	1.36	222.19	1.70	27.28	1.42	Showing anxiety
17.29	1.44	20.59	2.39	21.65	1.16	Self confidence

1: State Anger(emotional state) 2:Trait Anger 3:Expression of Anger

Subscale of mean scores of turmoil

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Researchers have shown that those successful athletes who consider their anxiety as being helpful acquire higher grades in self-confidence and lower grades in physical and cognitive anxiety. Athletic psychologies should work on their customers so as to achieve ideal status. Researchers also clearly show the importance of athlete's abilities in controlling their anxiety when they are trying to create a high performance.

It seems that based on the researches results state or occasion anxiety associated with environment or situation differs in response to (the presence of a passive audience, the host or the guest) and it is out of athlete's control. In less successful athletes (25.73) who have little experience in participating sensitive events, anxiety is in higher levels. Also, unsuccessful athletes are less willing to express their confusion (21:46) compared to less successful athletes (22.19) and successful athletes (18.81). In the subscale of trait anxiety which is one of the characteristic of athletes personality, unsuccessful athletes showed strong tendency toward state turmoil which in turn can be related to the rate of experience and the importance of the event. Successful athletes in acute subscales of anxiety, chronic and states anxiety had lower grades. Although the differences between unsuccessful and less successful athlete's mean scores were low, it showed a meaningful difference of ($P \leq 0.05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

Anxiety and self-confidence are important factors in creating mental strength and psychological pressure. Anxiety is a state of negative emotions accompanied by anger, sadness and perturbation associated with Physical activity or arousal (Abdoli, 1384). Anxiety in sport reflects athlete's feelings lest something wrong happens, and as a result, this performance ends up in failure. Anxiety can have adverse effects on athletic performance in two ways:

A) Anxiety causes the contractions of unneeded muscles in the muscles. When a person's name is called to receive his reward, till he reaches the scene if he becomes anxious, walking which is one of the natural activities of human being will be hard for him.

B) In general, when all our mental activities are slow and inaccurate we will become anxious. Often when anxiety is considerable, one's attention becomes limited and narrow, and the athlete cannot observe the whole field (Jaruvays, translated by Khajavand, 1380).

By examining several articles the definition of self-confidence were classified in four categories, some of which are such as: Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) and Willie Sports Trust (1986) reported by (Jones and Gould, 1384).

In the self-efficacy theory, Bandura (1977) believes that behavioral factors, cognitive, and physiological and also environmental impacts act as determiners that interact with each other. Self-efficacy in confidence, associated with athlete's ability regarding success in one special field over a specific time. He also believed that self-efficacy can be evaluated in three dimensions: "Level" means the performance expected, "Power", which reflects the certainty and due to its success is expected from the individual and "generalized" refers to the number of areas that person thinks of him worthy of the winning position. Self-efficacy in confidence is predicted by four factors: "Success in implementation", "field experience", "verbal encouragement", and "emotional arousal". Success in implementing has the greatest impact on self-efficacy because these successes are based on personal experiences.

In athletic confidence, self-confidence is divided into state trait self-confidence and state self-confidence. Trait self-confidence is trust or extent of guarantee that person has regarding its ability to succeed in time and in state self-confidence is a belief or degree of assurance that the person in a particular moment has regarding its ability to achieve athletic success. This model which is added to, pivotal purpose and pivotal competition suggests that trait self-confidence and pivotal competition interact in order to create state self-confidence. This state is the most important regulator of behavior. But according to some theorists, such as Jones (1991) physical component of anxiety and self-confidence are independent factors from each other. Researches of Ahangar (2005), shows that competitive anxiety has negative impacts on open skills, but it has minimal effect on closed skills.

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Athletes often become anxious for various reasons such as; the importance of obtaining success or differences in their abilities and capabilities required for the athletic performance which usually intervenes as a negative factor in their performances. Many research results show the effects of excitement and arousal on athletic performance and it indicates the importance of excitement and anxiety in particular (Martens and Rainer, 1995). Ability in controlling anxiety and creating mental relaxation might give an athlete a significant strength and ability that can prepare him physically to encounter his opponent (Hushmand, 1989). In addition, more research findings show that the more athletes are proficient in their skills the less anxiety they have.

Anxiety has two separate component, but inter-dependent on each other. Cognitive and physical anxiety, cognitive anxiety is created through concerns over negative consequences or negative evaluations and it is realized due to concern and negative self-discussion. Physical anxiety on the other hand, is an effective component of emotional anxiety or physiological arousal which might be composed of constricts blood flow, muscle contraction (Hardy and Parfyt, 1991). Physical and cognitive anxiety often studied separately, but they behave in detractively (Leary, 1982)

Researches also pay attention to the place of the competition, since place of competition can lead to considerable physical anxiety and low self-confidence. Adolescents regardless of their gender usually experience higher levels of cognitive and physical anxiety and on the other side experience lower self-confidence (Toot and Colleagues, 1998). This notion has been supported by a research on anxiety and gender. Among men, cognitive and physical anxiety is affected by understanding the potential abilities and possibilities of winning (Jones *et al.*, 1991). The serener difference syndicate the need for medical interventions tailored to individual needs and the importance of all the factors to be considered when treatment is provided.

Individual athletes had more anxiety in comparison with athletes in team sports which it conforms to Saymon's findings. Maybe it can be defined that those with more trait anxiety, have more tendency toward individual sports and participate in individual sports more, or in other word we can say in team sports, the team act as a source for reducing anxiety and the role of environment is effective.

Conclusion

A moderate level of anxiety leads to a best sport performance but a high or low level of it will result in degradation in performance. Results show that the individuals with low experiences (amateur athletes) have their anxiety increasing even during the performing, however professional athletes also have a level of anxiety before the performance, but it decreases just before starting and during the performance.

Based on the model of optimal functioning which considers the relationship between anxiety and sport performance, every athlete has a unique optimal anxiety range which his performance improves properly in it (Hanin, 1980).

It means that every athlete in a certain range of anxiety performs best. The athlete has the best performance when his anxiety is in a range of optimal performance and when his performance is reduced. The results suggest that low levels of anxiety leads to a poor performance and by being anxious the performance improves. After having a high level of anxiety, the performance decreased. So it can be concluded that for improving sport performance, an optimal level of anxiety is required. High level of anxiety as well as a low level, results in degradation of performance.

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