



## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANXIETY STATE AMONG DIFFERENT LEVELS OF FOOTBALL PLAYERS

(Received on: 14 Jan 2016, Reviewed on: 17 Feb 2016 and Accepted on: 22 March 2016)

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess anxiety levels among football players at varying tiers. We selected a total of 80 male football players, consisting of 40 from the State level and 40 from the CBSE cluster level. The subjects' ages ranged from 15 to 19 years. We measured the subjects' anxiety levels using a questionnaire developed by Neary and Zuckerman (1976). To determine the differences in anxiety levels among football players at different tiers, we employed a t-test. The results indicated a significant distinction between football players at different tiers, with a significance level of 0.05. Specifically, the study found that football players at the State level exhibited higher levels of anxiety compared to their CBSE cluster level counterparts.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Cluster, CBSE and Football.

### Introduction

In today's world, sport has gained immense importance due to widespread media exposure and significant financial incentives. Players are now in the spotlight globally, transcending boundaries of wealth, nationality, race, and religion. Meeting the high expectations and maintaining a top position on the international stage is crucial. To excel, Players must rely on self-confidence, determination, the ability to accept defeat gracefully, and experience. Anxiety is a natural part of the journey, not

an ailment to be permanently cured. Instead, it can serve as a catalyst for performance improvement, leading to sporting success.

Anxiety in sports can be categorized into two forms: trait and state anxiety. State anxiety arises from situational stress within the context of games and sports, triggering the body's natural response. On the other hand, trait anxiety reflects an individual's overall approach to handling stress. In sports, individuals with high state anxiety and low trait anxiety tend to consistently deliver strong performances in challenging situations. Conversely, Players with high trait anxiety, compounded by state anxiety, often under perform.

The ability to manage anxiety is a fundamental aspect of players' training. Those who can effectively overcome anxiety often outperform even the most physically gifted competitors in games and sports. Sports pushes individuals to unleash their fullest potential, both physically and mentally. In today's world, the standards for sports have significantly risen. Elite football players face growing challenges in maintaining their excellence in their respective fields. A player's mental state plays a pivotal role in their performance. Anxiety creeps in when individuals begin to question their ability to handle a situation, leading to increased stress. In many cases, it's not just talent that determines performance; rather, it's how one manages



the inevitable ups and downs of the game that truly counts.

Several factors contribute to a player's pre-competition anxiety. It's important to note that players participating in aesthetic sports tend to experience more competition anxiety compared to those in non-aesthetic sports. This heightened anxiety can be attributed to the well-established connection between physical attractiveness and success in aesthetic competitions, which can lead players to feel more anxious if they perceive their physique as inadequate. When it comes to understanding competitive anxiety, Martens, Vealey, and Burton (1990) emphasized the importance of using common terminology. They incorporated Spielberger's (1966) state-trait anxiety theory into their competitive anxiety framework.

Spielberger (1966) provided distinct definitions for state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety was described as "subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system". On the other hand, trait anxiety was defined as "a motive or acquired behavioral disposition that predisposes an individual to perceive a wide range of objectively non-dangerous circumstances as threatening and to respond to these with state anxiety reactions disproportionate in intensity to the magnitude of the objective danger".

To improve clarity, it is vital to provide definitions for concepts like cognitive and somatic anxiety. As described by Martens et al. (1990) with reference to Morris, Davis, and Hutchings (1981), cognitive anxiety can be characterized as the "conscious recognition of unpleasant emotions about oneself or external stimuli, including concerns and distressing mental images".

On the other hand, somatic anxiety relates to the perceived physical manifestations of anxiety resulting directly from autonomic arousal, including a rapid heart rate, sweaty palms, and tense muscles.

Furthermore, there are two other relevant concepts to consider: arousal and stress. Arousal is typically described as the quantification of the intensity and activation of the body's physiological system. According to Martens et al. (1990), arousal exists on a continuum, spanning from deep sleep to heightened excitement. Stress, as outlined by Martens et al. (1990), represents a complex concept that encompasses stimuli, intervening factors, and responses. Stress can function as a trigger, an intermediary, and an outcome of behaviour.

### **Methodology**

Eighty male football players were randomly chosen for this study, with 40 at the State level and 40 at the CBSE cluster level. The selected subjects fell within the age range of 15 to 19 years. The Anxiety State Test (AST), created by Neary and Zuckerman in 1976, was employed by the investigators to collect data on the subjects' sensation seeking. Information was collected from football players who had participated in both State-level and CBSE cluster level competitions. The assessment instrument consisted of 15 statements related to Anxiety State (AS) and employed a scoring scale ranging from 1 (indicating no anxiety) to 5 (indicating very high anxiety) for each statement. This scoring system yielded a total score range from 15 to 75 and followed a Likert-type scale with 5 points. A t-test was employed to assess variations in the means of scores among football players at different levels. The significance level was established at 0.05.



### Finding and Results

Table 1: The mean differences between football players at different levels in terms of their anxiety state were assessed.

Football players	Mean	SD	T-ratio
State level	59.50	5.90	5.7
CBSE cluster level	47.02	12.52	

\*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Upon reviewing Table 1, it becomes evident that the calculated "t" value exceeded the tabulated "t" value, indicating a significant difference between football players at different levels in their anxiety state at a significance level of 0.05. Graphical representation of above table is made in fig no 1.

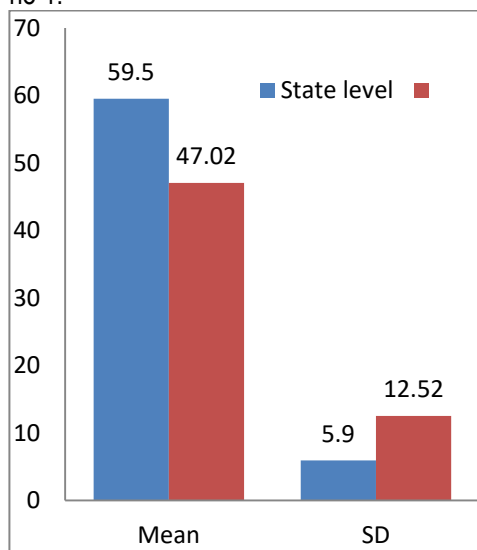


Fig. no. 01: Mean and standard deviation values football players at different levels in terms of state anxiety.

### Discussion of findings

The findings of the study indicated a notable disparity in anxiety levels among football players at various tiers. Football players at the State level demonstrated a notably higher level of anxiety when compared to their CBSE cluster level counterparts. This contrast may be linked to the fact that football players at the State level have embraced their sport as a profession, while CBSE cluster level football players tend to approach their competitions with a more amateur mind set.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found a significant difference in anxiety levels among football players at different levels. State football players showed higher anxiety compared to CBSE cluster level football players. This highlights the importance of addressing anxiety in football players based on their competitive level.

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