

Gender Differences In Psychological Constructs Related To Performance

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Abstract

The present study assesses gender differences in six psychological variables namely motivation, self-confidence, anxiety control, team emphasis, mental preparation, and concentration. Total 150 subjects were included in this study. Out of which eighty were and seventy were female subjects. PSIS(R-5), 5-point Likert type scale, developed by Mahoney et al. (1987) used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics and t-test were employed to analyze the data. Results show that females scored significantly higher than males in all constructs, with the largest disparity in team emphasis. This suggests females demonstrate stronger psychological preparedness, including better emotional regulation, interpersonal orientation, and focus. The findings challenge conventional assumptions about gender and psychological performance, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive approaches in psychological skills training.

Keywords: *gender, psychology, motivation, anxiety, concentration, male, female.*

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I. Introduction

In performance situations, such as athletics, academics, or the performing arts, it is necessary for coaches, educators, and psychologists to have a solid understanding of the psychological differences that exist between members of different genders. Despite the fact that gender-based variances are not universal, they frequently exhibit substantial patterns as a result of a combination of biological predispositions, social influences, and psychological training.

A person's motivation may be defined as the internal and external influences that motivate them to begin, direct, and maintain activities that are geared toward achieving a certain objective. Extrinsic motivation is more prevalent among males, particularly when it comes to competitiveness, recognition, and accomplishment. According to Frederick and Ryan (1993), they frequently find their motivation in the pursuit of victory, domination, and doing better than others.

Women, on the other hand, are often more likely to exhibit higher levels of intrinsic drive. They frequently engage in activities with the goals of bettering themselves, achieving emotional fulfillment, and establishing social connections. For instance, female athletes are more likely to list fun, the advantages to their health, and the togetherness of their team as their primary motivators. Males frequently cited "winning" and "being the best" as the primary motivations for their participation, but girls frequently cited "making friends" and "enjoying the activity" as their primary motivations (Eccles and Harold; 1991).

There is a correlation between self-confidence and the conviction that one is capable of doing satisfactorily. Feltz et.al. (2008) reveal that males tend to report higher levels of self-confidence, particularly in situations that include evaluation or competition. There is a possibility that this is because males are encouraged to take risks and be aggressive at a young age. Women's levels of self-assurance are more likely to be influenced by the feedback they receive from others and the experiences they have had in the past. The way in which females evaluate their own capabilities can be significantly influenced by social comparison (Vealey; 1986). For instance, female athletes may do just as well as male athletes in a talent test, but they may still report having less confidence in their ability to replicate the performance when they are under pressure on themselves.

To effectively manage anxiety, it is necessary to regulate both the bodily (somatic) and cerebral (cognitive) manifestations of stress. Martens et.al. (1990) found that women are more likely to report greater levels of cognitive anxiety, which is characterized by concern and self-doubt, particularly prior to contests or public performances. Males, on the other hand, may report stronger bodily symptoms (such as an elevated heart rate), but they have a tendency to conceal or externalize their worry, employing coping techniques such as violence or distraction (Jones, 1995). As an illustration, female athletes may endure overthinking and self-questioning before to a sporting event, whereas male athletes may channel their nervousness into aggressive warm-up actions. The term "team emphasis" refers to the significance that is put on the collective cohesiveness,

collaboration, and social dynamics of a group.

Generally speaking, females have a higher focus toward the coherence of teams and the harmony of interpersonal relationships. Within the context of group situations, they place a high priority on collaboration, mutual respect, and emotional support (Gill, 1992). In spite of the fact that they value cooperation as well, men may place a greater emphasis on role definition, structure, and leadership hierarchy. According to Eagly and Wood (1991), they frequently place an emphasis on performance duties and compete with one another within the team. For instance, in teams consisting of members of both sexes, females may serve as emotional anchors, assisting in the resolution of disagreements, while males may take the initiative and concentrate on the implementation of tactical strategies.

Visualization, goal planning, having a conversation with oneself, and emotional management are all forms of mental preparation that are utilized before to a performance. Women are more likely to engage in activities that involve mental imagery and emotional management. According to Weinberg and Gould (2019), they frequently prepare by relaxing their anxiety, imagining themselves succeeding, and practicing activities in great detail. It is possible that men are more likely to rely on self-talk and strategic preparation, with an emphasis on authoritativeness, control, and aggressive preparedness. As an illustration, a female athlete could participate in breathing methods and positive imagery before to a race, but a male athlete would engage in hyping self-statements such as "I'm going to crush this."

Having the capacity to concentrate means being able to focus one's attention and steer clear of distractions while performing. According to Williams and Krane (2015), females are often better at multitasking and maintaining attention than males. This is despite the fact that females may be more susceptible to internal distractions such as emotional or relationship concerns. There is a possibility that males have a greater difficulty coping with external distractions such as noise and crowds, but they are able to demonstrate powerful tunnel vision and intense attention when the stakes are high. For instance, a male athlete may be able to block out the audience during a penalty shootout, but he may become upset if a teammate criticizes him because of his performance. In the context of the team atmosphere, a female player may be impacted by the emotional strain that exists.

Although there are variations between the sexes in terms of psychological aspects such as motivation, confidence, anxiety, and preparedness, these differences are not determinative. Personal experiences, training, and social contexts all contribute to the formation of these concepts. When educators, coaches, and therapists are aware of these trends, they are better able to develop individualized solutions that enable both male and female performers to flourish.

II. Methodology

Total One hundred and Fifty subjects consist of eighty male and seventy players from team games and individual games were selected as the subject for this study from various areas of Madhya Pradesh in the present investigation. Both team games and individual sports players were selected as subject in the present study. The age range of the selected both sex players was 14 to 18 years. The random sampling method was used for selection of subjects. Five Psychological Characteristics i.e. Confidence, Anxiety Control, Mental Preparation, Team Emphasis, and Concentration were selected as variables in the study.

TOOL

The PSIS(R-5) is 5-point Likert type scale that prepared and developed by Mahoney *et al.* (1987). This instrument consisted of 45 items and six psychological skills. Out of which, the Motivation has 8 items (1 to 8), followed by Confidence -8 items (9 to 16), Anxiety Control -8 items (17 to 24), Mental Preparation -7 items (25 to 31), Team Emphasis -7 items (32 to 38), and Concentration -7 items (39 to 45). The answer almost never equates to 1, and almost always to 5. Items worded negatively are transformed by reversing the aforementioned 1-5 format. In this way, a high score on each scale corresponds to the psychological skill being present to a large extent. Before completion of the questionnaire informed consent and ethical procedures conforming to standards set by the British Psychological Society were adhered to throughout the research process. The participants were requested to complete the inventory in their respective spare times. Average completion time was less than 20 minutes. For just the record, no participants denied to complete the questionnaire administered. Subjects were contacted personally at competition sites and asked to participate in testing when they are not busy. Confidentiality was guaranteed.

Statistical Analysis

To evaluate the psychological characteristics of male and female statistical analysis namely Means, Standard error, and t-ratio was employed to examine the difference. The significance level was set at 0.05.

III. Results

Table 1: Showing the comparison in characteristics of psychological construct between female and male athletes.

| SN | Variables | Male | Female | <i>t</i> -value | <i>p</i> -value |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | Mean \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | | |
| 1 | Motivation | 2.19 \pm 0.03 | 3.87 \pm 0.04 | 4.91 | $p < 0.05$ |
| 2 | Self Confidence | 2.18 \pm 0.03 | 3.92 \pm 0.04 | 4.69 | $p < 0.05$ |
| 3 | Anxiety Control | 2.12 \pm 0.07 | 3.63 \pm 0.08 | 5.18 | $p < 0.05$ |
| 4 | Team Emphasis | 1.66 \pm 0.04 | 3.01 \pm 0.06 | 7.67 | $p < 0.05$ |
| 5 | Mental Preparation | 2.11 \pm 0.07 | 3.52 \pm 0.07 | 4.11 | $p < 0.05$ |
| 6 | Concentration | 2.03 \pm 0.06 | 3.88 \pm 0.07 | 4.76 | $p < 0.05$ |

Above table 1 depicted the difference in the characteristics of psychology between male and female. In all the studied variables female athlete were found to be better in psychological construct. In motivation, female's athlete demonstrated statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) higher motivation (3.87 \pm 0.04) as compared to their counterparts' males (2.19 \pm 0.03) athletes. This aligns with research showing that females are often driven by intrinsic motivation such as personal growth and social connection. Self-confidence showed that that contrary to some literature suggesting males are more confident, in this sample, females (3.92 \pm 0.04) reported higher self-confidence, possibly indicating a more supportive or encouraging environment for them.

Similar statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference is witnessed in anxiety control. Females (3.63 \pm 0.08) athlete demonstrated better anxiety control than males (2.12 \pm 0.07) athlete in the present study. This suggests they might be using more effective coping or emotional regulation strategies. The team emphasis elaborated that the difference is larger between male and female athlete in the present study. Females (3.01 \pm 0.06) athlete place much greater emphasis on teamwork, cooperation, and group cohesion—consistent with gender research showing relational and interpersonal orientation in females.

Greater ($p < 0.05$) mental preparation is observed in female (3.52 \pm 0.07) athlete than that of male (2.11 \pm 0.07) athlete in the present study. Females engage in more mental preparation, possibly using techniques like visualization and goal-setting more frequently, aiding in readiness and performance. Similarly, the concentration of females (3.88 \pm 0.07) showed significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher concentration levels than male (2.03 \pm 0.06) athlete, which might relate to their mental preparation and better anxiety control in the present study.

IV. Discussion And Conclusion

Result of the present study showed that the psychological characteristics of female athlete indicated the higher mean value in all studied variables namely motivation, self-confidence, anxiety control, team emphasis, and mental preparation than male athlete. The study found that females showed higher motivation and self-confidence compared to males, which contradicts traditional views that males are more confident and externally driven in competitive settings. This may be due to changing social dynamics and increased encouragement of female participation in educational, sports, and leadership activities (Mavin and Yusupova (2020). Intrinsic motivation, which tends to be stronger in females, might have contributed to the higher scores. Females also displayed better anxiety control and mental preparation, which are critical in high-pressure scenarios and likely to contribute to improved performance outcomes (Farhane et.al., 2022).

The most notable difference was in team emphasis, where females scored (3.01 \pm 0.06) compared to (1.66 \pm 0.04) in males. This aligns with gender role theory and existing research indicating that females are generally more relationally oriented, valuing group harmony, communication, and cooperation (Kilby; 2023). Males may prioritize individual roles and competition within team settings, highlighting the need for strategies that enhance collaborative behavior in male groups and leverage the natural team cohesion tendencies in female groups (Kozlowski and Ilgen; 2006).

The findings have practical implications, including incorporating gender-sensitive mental skills training, targeting male participants in emotional regulation, self-confidence building, and team bonding, and nurturing female participants' strengths in mental preparation and team emphasis through leadership development and cooperative goal setting. In conclusion, this study reveals significant gender differences in key psychological variables, with females showing higher motivation, self-confidence, anxiety control, team emphasis, mental preparation, and concentration. Recognizing these gender-specific strengths and challenges is crucial for designing more effective educational, athletic, and professional development programs.

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