

**SPORTS COMPETITIVE ANXIETY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON
STUDENT ATHLETES OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.**

BY

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

AUGUST, 2023

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A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN KINITICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (EDUCATION) B.Sc(Ed) DEGREE IN HUMAN KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this project was carried out by **LUCKY OMOROGBE LUCKY** with the matriculation number EDU1510368 in the Department of Human Kinetics and Sport Science, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of B.Sc.(Ed) Degree in Human Kinetics and Sports Science.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife, Mrs. Idahosa Osatohanmwun and my children, Imuetinyan-osa, Osazee, Adaeze, for their unending love, support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine sports competitive anxiety and its influence on University of Benin Athletes for Head of Department, Dean's and Vice-Chancellor cups. In order to carry out the task four research questions were raised to guide this study. The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The population of this study comprised all the undergraduate student athletes in the University of Benin. A sample size of one hundred and thirty (130) undergraduate student athletes was randomly selected for this study. The research instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was subjected to scrutiny and the test-retest reliability technique was used to ascertain its reliability. The correlation coefficient computed was 0.63 indicating that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistics using frequency, percentage, and the mean in tables were used in the data analysis of the study, while Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics was used to test the hypothesis.

Results revealed that there is a high extent of sports competitive anxiety among the student athletes and there is a significant difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female student athletes in University of Benin, Benin City. In conclusion, Competitive anxiety in sports is such a huge issue for many athletes, student athletes inclusive.

It was recommended among others that Coaches should provide quality personal relationships that can increase student athletes' sense of belonging, self-respect and self-

acceptance. With this kind of personalized relationship, coaches can make informed decisions about which performance strategies and game plans may be the most appropriate in a particular game and what to focus on in training. This can help dispel all forms of anxiety among student athletes and University administrators should provide a positive climate for learning and sports participation devoid of stress and anxiety.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Sport is a vital part of life that binds people together, regardless of barriers such as ethnicity, language and culture. Sport events unite us by introducing harmless competition between people, thereby providing entertainment, recreation and discovering talents that would not have been discovered if sport did not exist. The success of every sports event depends on the participation of both athletes and volunteers who ensure that everything goes according to plan (Kusuma & Bin, 2017). However, University of Benin boasts of numerous young talented athletes and the responsibility is on the University of Benin to provide platforms where this talent can be nurtured, such as Head of Department (HOD) cup, Dean's cup and the Vice Chancellor (V.C) cup.

The NUGA Games is a yearly University level sports events in Nigeria with more than 16 games approved for the events. They include; Track and Field, Badminton, Basketball, Chess, Cricket, Handball, Judo, Soccer, Squash,

Swimming, Table tennis, Taekwondo, Tennis and Volleyball. The competitions provide opportunities for student athletes' training in University of Benin, and also organize games to identify the best that can represent the University of Benin in inter college games. The competition environment of these games place many demands on student athletes. Student athletes that participate in Head of Department (HOD) cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cup, Dean's cup games are thus expected to make their Department or Faculty proud in the games.

However, sports events such as Head of Department (HOD) cup, Dean, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games is littered with broken dreams of those whose performance collapsed when they are most needed to be in control of themselves and focus on the task at hand. It is not uncommon to see student athletes "freeze" in such big games or commit unexplainable error in the course of their performance (Hatzigeorgiadis, Galanis & Theodorakis, 2014). The game can indeed cause excessive emotional pressure so that the concentration of athletes is greatly reduced. This means that when the performance of the athlete decreases, accuracy will also decrease, thus affecting the performance of the athlete. Anxiety associated with a

competition or competitive situation is commonly referred to as competitive anxiety (Mousavi & Meshkini, 2011).

Sports competitive anxiety is one of the most pressing problems in modern sports psychology (Kanniyan, 2015). It has been recognized for many years that psychological factors, in particular anxiety, play an important role in competition. In competitive sports, every athlete experience fear before, during and after events (Kaur & Singh, 2016). Anxiety could make even the world most successful athlete feel nervous. According to Kusuma and Bin (2017), factors such as fear of failure and lack of confidence induce feeling of anxiety in student athletes. Anxiety is like worry; it is an unpleasant emotion that most athletes feel at sometimes when they are faced with challenges.

In the experience of sports competitive anxiety, three main dimensions have been differentiated: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence (Khabiri, Zadeh, Kalash, Asadi & Mehrsafari, 2018). Cognitive anxiety involves cognitions about possible failure, while somatic anxiety involves the perception of bodily symptoms and heightened negative arousal. Self-

confidence, on the other, involves cognitions that one is up to the task and able to give one's best possible performance. Consequently, self-confidence prior to and during competitions usually indicates low competition anxiety and is often associated with higher performance (Kaur & Singh, 2016).

With regards to student athletes, it is known that student athletes who present with a high level of competition anxiety worry more often about committing errors, about not playing well, or about losing than those student athletes who have lower levels of anxiety. They also are more concerned about how they will be evaluated by their coaches, their peers, and their parents, and often believe that failure will lead to criticism from those individuals (Mousavi & Meshkini, 2011). Hence, it becomes necessary to examine sports competitive anxiety and its influence on student athletes.

Statement of the Problem

Sports competitive anxiety is among the most pressing problems in modern sports psychology. Psychological factors, particularly anxiety, play a great role in competition as every athlete experience fear and nervousness before, during and after events. Anxiety in sports is such a huge issue for many

athletes. Anxiety can have a devastating effect on the performance of an athlete. It does not matter how much skill or talent anyone may have, he can never perform at his best if he feels fear before the event. In the world today, nearly every concern of human endeavor is believed to be affected by anxiety, including students' athletic events. However, it has not always been found that competitive sports anxiety has a negative impact on athletic performance, given that some studies have not established an effect and some have even observed positive effects (Khabiri et al, 2018; Hatzigeorgiadis, Galanis & Theodorakis, 2014). However, the majority of studies note the obstructive role of competitive anxiety in sport events and in the enjoyment of sport, as well as its effect in increasing the probability of abandonment (Mousavi & Meshkini, 2011; Kusuma & Bin, 2017). There is therefore no clarity in the findings from various studies as to the influence of sports competitive anxiety on athletes. It is based on this that this study decides to examine sports competitive anxiety and its influence on University of Benin athletes for Head of Department (HOD), Deans, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games.

Research Questions

1. What is the level or extent sports competitive anxiety among University of Benin athletes preparing for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games?
2. What is the influence of fear on University of Benin athlete preparing for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games?
3. Do significant differences exist in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female University of Benin athletes preparing for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games?
4. What are the measures/techniques student athletes can employ in coping with sports competitive anxiety?

Hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in sport competitive anxiety between male and female student athletes.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between sports competitive anxiety and student athlete sports performance.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in sports competitive anxiety between student athlete of individual and team sports/games.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine sports competitive anxiety and its influence on University of Benin athletes for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games as a case study.

Specifically, the objectives of this study will be to:

1. Determine the level of sports competitive anxiety among University of Benin athletes preparing for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games.
2. Examine the influence of fear on University of Benin athletes preparing for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games.

3. Determine if significant differences exist in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female University of Benin athletes preparing for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games.

4. Identify measures/techniques students athletes employ in coping with sports competitive anxiety.

Significance of the Study

The findings in this study will be useful to University authorities and all stakeholders in Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games as this will assist stakeholders to intensify effort towards devising strategies for improving the students athletes' performance in interscholastic or intercollegiate competitions.

This study will benefit student athletes as it will make them to be aware of the influence of sports competitive anxiety on their performance. This will make them to effectively manage their anxiety levels before, during and after sporting competitions.

Lastly, it is expected that the findings of the study will contribute to the existing literature in the field of athletics and other sports as this study will be a resource material for future studies by human kinetics researchers and academicians.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is focused on sports competitive anxiety and its influence on University of Benin athletes. The variables of the study include: level of sports competitive anxiety among student athletes; influence of fear on student athlete sports performance; difference in significance between male and female student athletes based on sports competitive anxiety; and significance in relationship between sports competitive anxiety and student athletes sports performance. Hence, this study will be delimited to undergraduate student athletes training at the Sports Complex in Ugbowo campus of University of Benin, Benin City in preparation for Head of Department (HOD) cup, Deans cup, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups games.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used in the course of this study:

Influence: This refers to the capacity of sports competitive anxiety to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of student athletes.

Sports competitive anxiety: This refers to anxiety associated with a sports competition or competitive situation.

Student athlete: This refers to a student participant in an organized competitive sport sponsored by the educational institution in which the student is enrolled.

Head of Department (HOD), Dean's, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cups: This refers to as for Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, Vice-Chancellor cups that provide opportunities for students athletes' training in various levels, Departments, faculties and organizes games to identify the best that can represent the University in the Inter college games.

Undergraduate student: This refers to an individual who has registered to study an undergraduate programme at a higher institution such as University.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature will be discussed under the following sub-head

- Concept of Competitive Anxiety and its Causes
- Aspect of Competitive Anxiety and its Symptoms
- Competitive Anxiety and its influence on Athletes
- Sports competitive anxiety among student athletes based on gender
- Techniques for Controlling Competitive Anxiety
- Review of Empirical Literature
- Summary of Related Literature

Concept of Competitive Anxiety and its Causes

Competitive Anxiety is something that nearly every athlete faces in his or her career. When the demands of training or competition exceed athlete's perceived ability, their stress level elevates, and anxiety is the inevitable outcome. Thus competitive anxiety has received considerable attention with investigating athlete performance as athletes are well known to either thrive

or deteriorate when performing under pressure. According to Kanniyar (2015), the term “competitive anxiety” was coined to refer to the emotional reaction which regularly emerges before or during sports competitions. Competitive anxiety has been succinctly defined by Ali (2015) as “a specific negative emotional response to competitive stressors.” This response is specific to sport participation and is often preceded by athletes’ high expectations of self, fear of being evaluated by others and fear of the unknowns associated with performance. Additional contributors to competitive anxiety include the importance of the competition, previous performance, the athlete’s personality, and the current situation of the athlete (Parnabas, Parnabas & Parnabas, 2015).

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that sports competitive anxiety is an athlete’s behavior towards negative emotional reactions, such as anxiety, worry, uneasiness, tension, and fear when his pride is threatened and considers the match as something dangerous that results in defeat, Psychologically, anxiety is an unpleasant feeling and is the personality of the athlete (trait anxiety) and subjective feelings from outside the athlete (state anxiety) (Sajedi & Kirkbir, 2020). There are many factors in the world of

sports that contribute to an athlete's anxiety (Rivera, Quintana & Rincon, 2014). Firstly, games and matches provide a considerable amount of uncertainty. It's not just the outcome that is unpredictable. An athlete never knows what variables will impact how they will perform. Uncertainty is a major cause of anxiety, whether in sports or any other aspect of life (Noetel, Zanden & Lonsdale, 2017). The significance of the event also affects anxiety levels (Chen, Tsai, Lin, Chen & Chen, 2019). The higher the stakes, the higher one's anxiety is likely to rise (Bagherpour, Hashim, Saha & Ghosh, 2012). Expectations also play a role in how anxious athletes feel (Khan & Sorate, 2016). There is a lot of pressure to win, but often the person that holds the highest (and sometimes impossible) expectation is the athlete. Someone with a perfectionist personality is likely to feel anxious before a game because the thought of losing or messing up is not acceptable to them (Zadkhosh & Hemayattalab, 2019).

Aspects of Competitive Anxiety and their Symptoms

Sports competitive anxiety does not look the same for every athlete, and for that reason, symptoms differ for each individual (Elliot, Polman & Taylor, 2012). However, it is important to understand some of the common

symptoms of competitive anxiety, that way one can recognize it in oneself. Competitive anxiety has four measurable aspects (Permadi and Nuwianti, 2018), namely; cognitive, affective, somatic, and motoric.

Cognitive anxiety is an event in the mind of an individual that reflects symptoms and anxiety disorders in exercising so that it affects actions in competitions, such as being unable to concentrate, thinking about unrelated things, and negative thoughts that disturb concentration (Walter, Nikoleizig & Alfermann, 2019). The second aspect is an affective anxiety. That is, an event in an individual's feelings that reflects symptoms and anxiety disorders in sports that affect action in competition, such as feeling hopeless, reckless and having self-doubt (Hussain, Zaman & Idris, 2014). The third aspect is somatic anxiety (Hussain, Zaman & Idris, 2014). It is a perceptual event of physiological excitement in an individual reflecting symptoms and anxiety disorders in exercising so that it affects actions in competition, such as heart palpitations, urination, cold sweating, and difficulty sleeping (Kusuma & Bin, 2017). The last aspect is motoric anxiety, that is, a physical occurrence (muscles) in individuals that improperly reflect symptoms and anxiety disorders in sports such that it affects actions in competition, such as

face and forehead wrinkle, trembling, feeling heavy in the feet, scratching head repeatedly, and aching muscles (Rivera, Quintana & Rincon, 2014).

The factors that influence competitive anxiety in athletes include fear of failure in a match, fear of social consequences for the quality of performance, fear of injury or injury of an opponent, physical fear of not being able to complete their duties to compete properly, and demands to change something without training (Khabiri, Zadeh, Asadi & Mehrosfar, 2018). Experiencing some of the symptoms is not necessarily a cause for concern (Kaur & Singh, 2016). According to Kaur and Singh (2016), the trick is learning how to see one's anxiety to succeed, rather than letting it overtake oneself.

Competitive Anxiety and its Influence on Athletes

Research investigations have often questioned whether increases in competitive anxiety experiences are actually detrimental to sports performance (Parnabas & Mahamood, 2011; Hatzigeorgiadis, Galanis & Theodorakis, 2014). Consequently, Khan and Sorate (2016) proposed a directional dimension of competition-related cognitions that are interpreted

as having either positive or negative effects on performing along a facilitative-debilitative continuum. Research findings showed that intra-individual differences in anxiety states are not always reflected by changes in the intensity of response. Rather, between-group alterations in the direction of anxiety have rather been shown when the intensity reaction of each group is similar (Bagherpour et al, 2012; Kusuma & Bin, 2017). Additionally, the direction of anxiety appears to play a vital role in terms of how anxiety operates to influence behaviour, especially across time (Lotfi, Tahmasebi & Rabavi, 2016; Chen et al, 2019).

Although research has been unclear (Baltzell, Caraballo, Chipman & Hayden, 2014), many studies have suggested both somatic and cognitive forms of anxiety have the potential debilitating effect on performance (Georgakaki & Karakasidou, 2017; Kanniyar, 2015). Less frequently acknowledged, however, is the potential for competitive stressors to have positive consequences on athletes' performance and psychology pending an athlete's facilitative interpretation of their competitive anxiety symptoms. This positive interpretation is as a result of an athlete's appraisal of their ability to control the stressor, effectively cope with the demands, and

achieve the goals associated with the task (Navaneethan & Soundara, 2010).

This may supposedly be taken as eustress (positive stress).

Context and group characteristics are important when examining athletes' competitive anxiety responses (Hussain, Zaman & Idris, 2014). Differences have been uncovered in comparing the competitive anxiety experiences of females versus males, athletes participating within team versus individual sports programs, and more experienced athletes versus less experienced athletes (Baltzell et al, 2014; Khabiri et al, 2018). Sajedi and Kirkbir (2020) recent meta-analysis of 27 studies revealed female athletes displayed higher levels of anxiety than the males athletes as well as noting increased anxiety levels for athletes of individualized sports in comparison with team sport athletes. Similarly, higher levels of somatic and cognitive anxiety have been reported by Zadkhosh and Hemayattalab (2019) in a sample of tennis players competing in singles matches compared to players competing in doubles. The emphasis on the individuals in achieving favourable performance outcomes is thought to contribute to individual athletes' higher perceived competitive anxiety (Nguyen & Brymer, 2018). Athletes' perceived anxiety levels have also been shown to decrease as competitive experience increases

(Kusuma & Bin, 2017) suggesting athletes may learn to cope with their competitive anxiety as they gain experience competing in high pressure situations.

Antecedents of competitive anxiety and subsequent reductions in performance can be examined to provide further insight to student athletes' response to competitive games such as Head of Department (HOD), Dean, Vice Chancellor (V.C) cup games. Student athletes' performance has the potential to be adversely affected by fear of failure and fear of evaluation of parents, friends, and others (Noetel, Zanden & Lonsdale, 2017) and could potentially be a source of competitive anxiety and stress. Evaluative concerns appear to be especially salient to the student athlete in a structured demonstration of skill competence. Specifically, the emphasis on peer approval and successful demonstration of sport ability has previously been found to be positively correlated with pre-performance anxiety in a population of student athletes (Quinton, Cumming, Allsop, Gray & Williams, 2018). Research conducted with student athletes revealed their evaluation concerns specific to their performance was related to levels of cognitive anxiety while their levels of somatic anxiety were related to more

general evaluative concerns. An examination of descriptive data, various studies revealed that student athletes' greatest concerns were related to the performance-specific evaluations of parents and friends (Georgakaki & Karakasidou, 2017; Chen et al, 2019).

One moderating variable that has been shown to discriminate against competitive state anxiety responses is the use of basic psychological skills (Ponseti, Sese & Garcia-Mas, 2016). For instance, self-confidence is reported to influence anxiety interpretation by offering individuals protection against the debilitating effects of anxiety (Walter, Nikoleizig & Alfermann, 2019). Evidence from other studies further suggest that highly successful athletes have better concentration, high self-confidence, have more task-oriented and positive thoughts, use more positive imagery to visualize success, and have lower levels of anxiety. These athletes' have more developed plans for competitive and performance evaluation (Parnabas & Mahamood, 2011; Ali, 2015).

Regarding competitive experience, athletes with high competitive experiences, report lower levels of cognitive and somatic anxiety, as well as

higher levels of self-confidence, in comparison to athletes with low anxiety competitive experience (Hussain, Zaman & Idris, 2014). Therefore, the level of competitive experience seems to influence the interpretation of symptoms usually experienced by athletes in the competitive situation. More recently, Sajedi and Kirkbir (2020) confirmed these results and pointed to competitive experience as a variable of fundamental importance in the study of multidimensional anxiety.

Sport competitive anxiety among student athletes based on gender

Sport competitive anxiety is a psychological condition that can affect athletes of all genders, ages, and levels of experience. However, there is a growing body research that suggest that male and female athletes experience competitive anxiety differently. This literature review aims to explore the existing research on sport competitive anxiety among students athletes based on gender. Studies on male athletes have found that they commonly experience sport competitive anxiety. However, they tend to use coping strategies such as positive self-talk, goal setting, and relaxation techniques to manage their anxiety. The factors that contribute to competitive anxiety

among male athletes can include fear of failure, pressure to perform well, and the expectations of coaches, teammates, and fans.

Research has suggested that female athletes may experience higher levels of sport competitive anxiety than male athletes (Pappas & Wlodkowska-Migala, 2020). This gender difference can be attributed to a range of social and cultural factors, including gender stereotypes, socialization, and cultural expectations placed on female athletes (Philipp & Schnell, 2016). Female athletes have also been found to be more likely to experience negative self-talk, self-doubt, and physical symptoms of anxiety such as tension and nausea (Jones et al., 2019). On the other hand, studies on male athletes have found that they commonly experience sports competitive anxiety (Vardhan, 2015). However, they used to use coping strategies such as positive self-talk, goal setting, and relaxation techniques to manage their anxiety (Smith et al., 2016). The factors that contribute to competitive anxiety among male athletes can include fear of failure, pressure to perform well, and the expectation of coaches, teammates, and fans (Hanton et al., 2018). When comparing the experiences of male and female athletes, studies have found that female athletes are more likely to perceive their anxiety as interfering

with their performance than male athletes (Pappas & Wlodkpwska-Migala, 2020). This perception of anxiety can lead to a negative impact on performance, making it difficult for female athletes to perform at their best. Therefore, gender-specific interventions and support programs are crucial for helping student athletes manage their sport competitive anxiety effectively.

Sport competitive anxiety is a common phenomenon among athletes of all levels and can be defined as a Psychological condition characterized by feelings of apprehension, nervousness, and tension in response to competitive situations (Hanton et al., 2018). Although competitive anxiety can motivate athletes to perform better, excessive anxiety can interfere with their performance, leading to negative outcomes. Gender differences in sport competitive anxiety have been widely studied , and research has consistently found that female athletes tend to experience higher levels of anxiety than male athletes (Pappas & Wlodkowska-Migala, 2020). This gender difference can be attributed to various social and cultural factors, including gender stereotypes, socialization, and cultural expectations placed on female athletes (Philipp & Schnell, 2016).

One factor that contributes to the gender differences in sport competitive anxiety is the perception of threat. Female athletes may perceive a higher level of threat in competitive situations due to the expectations placed on them by society, coaches, and teammates. This perception can lead to increased self-doubt, negative self-talk, and physical symptoms of anxiety such as tension and nausea (Jones et al., 2019). In contrast, male athletes are more likely to use coping strategies to manage their sport competitive anxiety (Smith et al., 2016). This coping can be attributed to factors such as socialization and the cultural expectation that men should be strong and competitive. Male athletes may also receive more support from their coaches and teammates, which can help them to cope with anxiety effectively.

Despite the gender differences in Sport competitive anxiety, it is important to note that each athlete is unique, and their experiences may differ. Therefore, it is crucial to develop gender-specific interventions and support programs to help male and female athletes manage their anxiety effectively. Overall, the literature review highlights the need for further research to explore the underlying causes of gender differences in Sport competitive anxiety and to develop more effective interventions to support student

athletes. By addressing the gender-specific challenges that athletes face, we can help them to perform at their best while promoting their mental health and well-being.

Technique for Controlling Competitive Anxiety

To manage the emotional experiences of sports competitive anxiety, athletes ought to have a repertoire of different coping options available to them. These athletes can then build on what they believe to be the most effective strategy depending on the competitive circumstances (Quinton et al, 2018). Based on the literature review, below are several treatments undertaken to reduce competitive anxiety felt by athletes that proved effective:

- i. Imagery: It is a cognitive technique where an individual uses all of his senses to create or re-create experiences in his mind (Khan & Sorate, 2016). In the field of sports, there have been many studies on the effectiveness of imagery in reducing competitive anxiety, especially in young athletes aged 12 to 19 years (Quinton et al, 2018).
- ii. Self-Talk: It is one's talk with himself by speaking loudly and from within (Noetel, Zanden & Lonsdale, 2017). Several studies have shown that

self-talk can overcome competitive anxiety in athletes in the field of sports (Ali, 2015). Self-talk consists of three types, namely positive, negative and neutral (Hatzigeorgiadis, Galanis & Theodorakis, 2014). Among these self-talk, positive self-talk is used to reduce anxiety in athletes. In contrast, negative self-talk must be avoided to improve the performance of athletes (Lotfi, Tahmasebi & Rabavi, 2016). Not only in elite athletes, self-talk is also effective in reducing anxiety in junior athletes and young athletes (Kanniyan, 2015).

iii. Relaxation: This is one of the methods used to overcome competitive anxiety in athletes. This type of progressive muscle relaxation was found effective to reduce anxiety in athletes (Ali, 2015; Bagherpour et al., 2012). Although muscle relaxation can reduce competitive anxiety in athletes, progressive muscle relaxation can be even more effective if used in conjunction with guide imagery (Bagherpour et al., 2012). Whereas, in other studies, it was found that relaxation by listening to relaxing music was able to control and reduce the anxiety in athletes (Elliot, Polman & Taylor, 2012). In addition to relaxation, yoga has also proven effective in reducing competitive anxiety in athletes (Kusuma & Bin, 2017). However, the

application of yoga in the field of sports psychology is very limited. Only a few researchers have examined the effectiveness of yoga to overcome competitive anxiety in athletes.

iv. Mindfulness: Research results show that effective mindfulness can reduce competitive anxiety in athletes (Noetel, Zanden, & Lonsdale, 2017). Although mindfulness therapy is not intended to reduce anxiety, it can actually reduce the level of anxiety (Parnabas, Parnabas & Parnabas, 2015). The mindfulness skills of athletes are related to their ability to resolve negative emotions and increase focus when facing competition, thereby reducing their level of competitive anxiety (Baltzell et al, 2014). In addition, mindfulness proved even more effective in reducing anxiety in soccer players (Zadkhosh & Hemayattalab, 2019). A study found that mindfulness did not show a significant change in depression and anxiety reduction, but could still cause an increase in depression mean scores and anxiety scales at the post workshop and follow-up time points (Permadi & Nurwianti, 2018). It is assumed that mindfulness can help symptoms of depression and anxiety, but further studies with a greater number of cases and control groups are needed to provide more evidence (Kaur & Singh, 2016).

Review of Empirical literature

Hussain, Zaman and Idris (2014) study aimed to investigate the differences in levels of pre-competition in athletes of male and female senses, in team and in individual sports. The components of pre competitive anxiety were assessed by using the instrument of competitive state anxiety inventory-2 (CSAI-2) developed by Martens, Vealey and Burton in 1990. CSAI- was a set of questionnaire consisting of 27 items equally divided into 3-sub scales of cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety & self-confidence. The subject (N=720), included male (360) & female (360) athlete of team sports, Volley ball, Basket Ball, Hand Ball and individual sports, Table Tennis (single), Badminton (single) & Athletics between the ages of 16 and 27 years. The CSAI-2 was administered one hour before the competition. The results were analyzed by t-test statistics. The finding showed there were no significant difference in cognitive anxiety & self-confidences and significant difference in somatic anxiety levels among male and female collegiate athletes; while the three sub-scale (cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and self-confidence) were not significant in athletes of team and individual games.

Parnabas, Parnabas and Parnabas (2015) investigated the effect of cognitive anxiety on sport performance among football players. The instrument used for the study comprised of 27-item Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 and the Psychological Performance Inventory which had been distributed during sport between universities competition. The sample consisted of 119 football players, including the national athletes (N=37), state athletes (N=23), district athletes (N=23) and university athletes (N=36). The results showed that elite or national football athletes exhibited lower levels of cognitive anxiety, $F(3, 119) = 16.310, p < .01$. The results showed that there exist negative correlation between cognitive anxiety and sport performance among football players, ($r = -0.73; p < 0.05$). It was recommended in the study that sports psychologists, sport counselors and coaches should use the present findings to recommend coping strategies to university and district level athletes that are appropriate for dealing with their athletes' cognitive anxiety. Ponseti, Sese and Garcia-Mas (2016) study examined the relationship between competitive anxiety (in its cognitive and somatic components) and managerial behaviours, pressure, support, understanding, and the active involvement of parents in their children's sports activities.

Thirty-seven competitive young swimmers with a mean age of 12.22 years were studied based on records of their athletic performance in two official competitions during the 2012-2013 Season. To analyze the psychological variables, the athletes were administered the Spanish-adapted version of the Sport Anxiety Scale (SAS-2) and the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (PISQ), with the effect size analyzed in terms of gender and the performance of the swimmers. The results show the influence of competitive anxiety on performance, mostly centered in the worry, and the gender differences, but no significant relation to parental influence was found.

Nayek and Chatterjee (2013) study was to find out pre-competitive anxiety between national and state level women athletes. For the purpose of the study the subjects were selected randomly from 63rd State Athletic Championships of West Bengal to measure the pre-competitive anxiety by a questionnaire Sport Competitive Anxiety Test (SCAT) developed by Rainer Marten. 25 national level and 25 state level women athletes were selected randomly from the said Athletic Championships. To find out pre-competitive anxiety between national level and state level women athletes, t-

test statistics was applied. The result of the study showed that there was significant difference on pre- competitive anxiety between national level and state level women athletes. The national level women athletes had less pre-competitive anxiety than the state level women athletes.

Khan and Sorate (2016) study was to analyze and compare the sports competitive anxiety between Jimma university players. For the purpose of this study 50 players (Football, Basketball, Table Tennis, Athletics and Gymnastics) were selected from Jimma University, Ethiopia as the subject. All these players were going to represent Jimma University in 9th Ethiopian Governmental Higher Institutions Sports Festival in 2016. For this study, sports competitive anxiety test (SCAT, Martens et al., 1990) questionnaire as was used to measure sports competition anxiety. Descriptive Statistic (Mean, Standard Deviation), Independent t-test was applied to analyzed and compare the degree of sports competitive anxiety between Jimma university male players. The level of significance was set at 0.05. Results indicated that there are significant differences found within Jimma University male players (Football, Basket Ball, Table Tennis, Athletics and Gymnastics) in their Sports Competitive Anxiety.

Sajedi and Kirkbir (2020) study investigated the effects of competitive anxiety on the injury level of student-athletes of Karadeniz Technical University. The method of this research is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population includes all athletes of Karadeniz Technical University, which are equal to 320 people. To determine the sample size, Cochran's sample size estimation formula was used and the number of samples was 175, the gender random sampling method selected. First, to report sports injuries to describe the extent of injuries in the limbs (upper limbs, lower limbs, and trunk) and different parts of the body (joints, muscles, and bones), the report form of sports injuries was used and SCAT questionnaire was used to measure competitive anxiety. Data analysis was carried out with the aid of SPSS software. Regression statistics was used because of the normality of the data in competitive anxiety tests and the occurrence of sports injuries. The research findings showed that the average competitive anxiety of male athletes is 14.11 and the competitive anxiety of female athletes is 14.49. Competitive anxiety also has a significant positive effect on sports injury. The beta coefficient also shows that competitive anxiety predicts 0.33 changes in sports injury. Therefore, it can be said that as the

level of competitive anxiety of athletic students increases, so does their level of injury. It was recommended that to control sports injuries, mental skills should be increased and the competitive anxiety of athletes should be controlled.

Summary of Related Literature

This chapter reviewed literature related to this study. This chapter carefully reviewed the concept of competitive anxiety and its influence on the performance of athletes. Competitive anxiety is something that nearly every athlete faces some time in his or her career. When the demands of training or competition exceed an athlete's perceived ability, their stress level elevates. Anxiety is the inevitable outcome. Hence, competitive anxiety is seen as the emotional reaction which regularly emerges before or during sports competitions.

It was revealed in the literature review that competitive anxiety has four measurable aspects, namely; cognitive, effective, somatic, and motoric. Many studies have suggested both somatic and cognitive forms of anxiety have the potential to have a debilitating effect on performance. Less

frequently acknowledged, however, is the potential for competitive stressors to have positive consequences on athletes' performance and psychological states. One moderating variable that often cited shown to discriminate against competitive anxiety responses is the use of basic psychological skills. For instance, self-confidence is reported to influence anxiety interpretation by offering individuals protection against the debilitating effects of anxiety.

In the literature review, it revealed that athletes with high competitive experience, report lower levels of cognitive and somatic anxiety, as well as higher levels of self-confidence, in comparison to athletes with low competitive experience. To manage the emotional experiences of competitive anxiety, athletes ought to have a repertoire of different coping options available to them. These coping strategies or techniques as revealed in the literature review include; imagery, self-talk, relaxation, and mindfulness. Athletes can then build on what they believe to be the most effective strategy depending on the competitive circumstances.

Also, different scholarly literature on the relationships that exist between the content variables was reviewed. Thus, it was seen in the literature review that different scholars and authors have varying opinions as regards the relationship that exist between competitive anxiety and athletes performance. The results of empirical literatures that were reviewed showed that there exists negative correlation between cognitive anxiety and sports performance among athletes in majority of the studies. The results show the influence of competitive anxiety on performance, mostly centered in the worry, and gender differences, but no significant relation to parental influence was found.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research method and procedures used in this study, and are discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. This involves the process of identifying the variables that exist in a given situation and describing the relationship that exist among the variables, as well as examining the factors that link these variables together.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all the undergraduate student athletes in the University of Benin who train daily at the various sporting facilities within the Uniben Ugbowo main campus such as: Uniben sport complex, Education training pitch, Uniben Golf course, etc.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

To ensure a representative sample for this study, sampling was done using the purposive sampling technique. First, the numbers of student athletes across the different faculties were identified and a representative proportion was then sampled for this study. Consequently, the sample size for this study is one hundred and thirty (130) undergraduate student athletes in the University of Benin main campus, Ugbowo.

Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used in this study was a structured questionnaire that sought information from the students that participate in sports in the sampled training facilities. The instrument was designed in two (2) sections, sections A, and B. Sections A sought information from the

student athletes as regards their demography. Section B sought information from the student athletes as regards the variables of the study. Questions were raised in each of the research questions where the respondents was required to select the most appropriate options. The responses was rated on a four (4) point Likert scale ranging from Very High Extent (VHE) = 4; High Extent (HE) =3; Low Extent (LE) = 2; Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.

Validity of the Instrument

The measuring instrument for this study was subjected to face and content validity and was by experts in the field of study. To ensure the face and construct validity, the instrument was subjected to scrutiny by the researcher's supervisor. And two other experts who are knowledgeable in test construction and instrumentation. Also, necessary correction and modification was made and effected to erase any form of ambiguity in the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach alpha method of reliability test. A reliability coefficient that is

greater than 2.50 is desirable. This is because a reliability coefficient of greater than 2.50 indicates that the research instrument is reliable.

Methods of Data Collection

Primary data was relied upon to source for data in the study and as such Questionnaires as administered to students athletes in Uniben through face to face and on the spot retrieval of the completed questionnaires. Explanations were made to those who could not really understand what the questions require of them.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviations. The decisions point for the mean statistics was 2.50 since a four-point likert scale was used to measure responses from the respondents. Also, inferential statistics was used to test the differences that exist in the anxiety level between male and female student athletes. Hence, parametric statistics like t-test was used to test the hypothesis of the study at a significance level of

0.05. All statistical tests were carried out with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter present the analysis of data collected from self-administered questionnaires to 130 undergraduate student athletes in the University of Benin main campus, Ugbowo. Frequencies, percentages and mean were used to analyse the data in tables. The analysis was carried out with the aid of IBM SPSS statistical software version 25.0.

Respondents' Demographic Variables

The demographic variables that pertained to this study and assessed by the researcher were age, sex, faculty, and academic level. Table 1 that follows shows the demographic variables with respect to the afore-listed variables.

Table 1: Demographic Information

S/N	Variables	Attribute	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Age	Less than 20 years	30	23.1
		20-24 years	59	45.4
		25-29 years	37	28.5
		30 years and above	4	3.1
2	Sex	Male	89	68.5
		Female	41	31.5
3	Faculty	Physical Sciences	25	19.2
		Agricultural Sciences	21	16.2
		Education	20	15.4
		Management Sciences	17	13.1
		Social Sciences	22	16.9
		Law	10	7.7
		Basic Medical Sciences	15	11.5
4	Academic Level	100 level	26	20.0
		200 level	26	20.0
		300 level	26	20.0
		400 level	26	20.0
		500 level	26	20.0

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Table 1 revealed that out of 130 respondents that were sampled in this study, the age distribution of the respondents as shown in table 1 revealed that 30 (23.1%) of the respondents are less than 20 years old, 59 (45.4%) are between 20 and 24 years, 37 (28.5%) are within the age bracket of 25 to 29 years while 4 (3.1%) of the respondents are 30 years old and above. Majority of the respondents are therefore less than 30 years old. In terms of gender,

89 (68.5%) of the respondents are males. While 41 (31.5%) are females. Therefore more male student athletes participated in this study than their female counterparts.

In terms of the respondents' faculties, 25 (19.2%) are in the faculty of Physical Sciences, 21 (16.2%) are in Agricultural sciences, 20 (15.4%) are in education, 17 (13.1%) are in Management sciences, 22 (16.9%) are in social sciences, 10 (7.7%) are in Law faculty, while 15 (11.5%) of the respondents are in Basic Medical Sciences. In terms of the distribution of the respondents based on their academic level, 26 respondents were selected from each academic level of 100 to 500 level.

Analysis of Research Questions

The analysis of this study was based on the research questions. Consequently, the four (4) research questions of the study were duly analysed.

Research Questions 1: What is the level or extent of sports competitive anxiety among University of Benin athletes?

Table 2 contain responses from the respondents as regards their level or extent of sports competitive anxiety. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question one (1).

Table 2: Description statistics on student athletes’ level or extent of sports competitive anxiety

KEY: Very High Extent = VHE; High Extent = HE; Low Extent = LE; Very Low Extent = VLE

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remark
1	I am worried that I may make mistakes during sports competitions	19 (14.6%)	86 (66.2%)	25 (19.2%)	-	2.95	High
2	I tend to dwell on shortcomings in my performance	44 (33.8%)	54 (41.5%)	32 (24.6%)	-	3.09	High
3.	I am conscious about the way I will look to others in sports competitions	7 (5.4%)	44 (33.8%)	75 (57.7%)	4 (3.1%)	2.42	Low
4	I feel physically nervous when participating in sports competitions	7 (5.4%)	44 (33.8%)	44 (33.8%)	7 (5.4%)	2.82	High
5	I believe in my ability to perform well in sports competition	54 (41.5%)	54 (41.5%)	22 (16.9%)	-	3.25	High

6	I am worried about the uncertainty of what may happen during sports competitions	23 (17.7%)	78 (60%)	8 (6.2%)	21 (16.2%)	2.79	High
7	I am conscious that others will be judging my performance in sports competitions	26 (20%)	32 (24.6%)	33 (25.4%)	39 (30%)	2.81	High
8	I find myself trembling when participating in sports competitions	15 (11.5%)	43 (33.1%)	47 (36.2%)	25 (19.2%)	2.35	Low
9	I feel tense in my stomach during sports competitions	44 (33.8%)	58 (44.6%)	21 (16.2%)	7 (5.4%)	3.07	High
10	I am prepared for my upcoming performance in any sports competitions	44 (33.8%)	58 (44.6%)	21 (16.2%)	7 (5.4%)	3.07	High
11	I am worried about the outcome of my performance in sports competitions	83 (63.8%)	40 (30.8%)	7 (5.4%)	-	3.58	High
12	I am worried that I may not meet the expectations of parents, coaches, etc. during sports competitions	69 (53.1%)	57 (43.8%)	4 (3.1%)	-	3.50	High
13	I normally have a slight tension headache in sports competitions	7 (5.4%)	39 (30%)	47 (36.2%)	37 (28.5%)	2.12	Low
14	I am worried about	69	61	-	-	3.53	High

	the consequences of failure in sports competitions	(53.1%)	(46.9%)				
15	My body feels tense during sports competitions	51 (39.2%)	65 (50%)	7 (5.4%)	7 (5.4%)	3.23	High
	AVERAGE MEAN					2.93	High

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Response to the 15 items in Table 2 showed that the mean response to all items is between the range of 2.12 and 3.58. However, 12 out of the 15 items were above the decision point of 2.50, thus indicative that there is a high extent of sports competitive anxiety as regards these items. Only four items had mean scores of less 2.50, hence, respondents had low extent of sports competitive anxiety to these items. The average mean score of 2.93 which was computed for all 15 items in the table indicates that there is a high extent sports competitive anxiety among the respondents to this study.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of fear on University of Benin athletes?

Table 3 contain responses from the respondents as regards the influence of fear. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question three (3).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on the influences of fear on student athletes

KEY: Very High Extent = VHE; High Extent = HE; Low Extent = LE; Very Low Extent = VLE

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remark
1	The fear of failure often affects my performance in sport competitions	32 (24.6%)	52 (40%)	25 (19.2%)	21 (16.2%)	2.73	High
2	The level of my panic during sports competition influences my performance	19 (14.6%)	93 (71.5%)	11 (8.5%)	7 (5.4%)	2.95	High
3.	Tension during sporting events affects my performance in sport competitions	54 (41.5%)	56 (43.1%)	17 (13.1%)	3 (2.3%)	3.24	High
4	Anxiety have a	65	57	5 (3.8%)	3	3.42	High

	way of hindering my optimum performance in sports	(50%)	(43.8%)		(2.3%)		
5	Lack of confidence in my abilities affects my performance in sport competitions	45 (34.6%)	56 (43.1%)	21 (16.2%)	8 (6.2%)	3.06	High
6	Thoughts of mistakes during sports competitions affects my optimum performance	63 (48.5%)	51 (39.2%)	12 (9.2%)	4 (3.1%)	3.33	High
7	Uncertainty about what may happen during sports competitions affects my performance in sports	70 (53.8)	53 (40.8%)	5 (3.8%)	2 (1.5%)	3.47	
	AVERAGE MEAN					3.17	High

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Responses to the 7 items in table 4 showed that the mean response to the seven items lies between 2.73 and 3.47, which were all above the decision point of 2.50, thus indicating an agreement with all the items in the table.

The average mean score of 3.17 computed for all seven items in table 3 showed that there is a high extent to which fear influences student athletes.

Research Question 3: Do significant differences exist in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female student athlete?

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics presented in Table 4 was used to answer research question four.

Table 4: Table showing the ANOVA test

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	31.13	4	2.951	15.126	.021
Within Groups	53.272	125	.252		
Total	15.810	129			

Result: $F = 15.126$, $p = < 0.05$, it is thus conclude that there is significant difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female student athletes.

Research Question 4: What are the measures/techniques student athletes can employ in coping with sports competitive anxiety?

Table 5: Descriptive statistics on the measures/techniques student athletes can employ in coping with sports competitive anxiety

KEY: Very High Extent = VHE; High Extent = HE; Low Extent = LE; Very Low Extent = VLE

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remark
1	I performed best in sport competition when I am agitated	22 (16.9%)	57 (43.8%)	44 (33.8%)	7 (5.4%)	2.72	High
2	When I am calm, I perform best in sporting	29 (22.3%)	73 (56.2%)	21 (16.2%)	7 (5.4%)	2.95	High
3	My worries during competitive sports always affect my performance in sporting events	58 (44.6%)	40 (30.8%)	18 (13.8%)	14 (10.8%)	3.09	High
4	Anxiety have a way of hindering my optimum performance in sport	14 (10.8%)	63 (48.5%)	46 (35.4%)	7 (5.4%)	2.65	High
5	Over confidence in my abilities affects my performance in sport competitions	14 (10.8%)	58 (44.6%)	51 (39.2%)	7 (5.4%)	2.61	High
6	The feeling of nervousness during sports competitions influences my performance	22 (16.9%)	75 (57.7%)	29 (22.3%)	4 (3.1%)	2.88	High
7	Uncertainty about what may happen during sports competitions affects my performance in sports	21 (16.2%)	70 (53.8%)	35 (26.9%)	4 (3.1%)	2.83	High
AVERAGE MEAN						2.82	High

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Responses to the seven items in table 5 showed that the mean response to the seven items lies between 2.61 and 3.09, which were all above the decision point of 2.50, items lies between 2.73 and 3.47, which were all above the decision point of 2.50, thus indicating an agreement with all the items in the

table. The average mean score of 2.82 computed for all seven items in table 5 showed that there is a high extent to which measures/techniques student athletes can employ in coping with sports competitive anxiety.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study for research question one revealed that there is a high extent of sports competitive anxiety among the student athletes. In line with this finding, Ponseti, Sese and Garcia- Mas (2016) study examined the relationship between competitive anxiety (in its cognitive and somatic components) of young swimmers and their performance, behaviours, pressure, support, understanding, and parental involvement. Results confirmed that there is influence of competitive anxiety on student athletes' performance. Also in line with this study, Nayek and Chatterjee (2013) study examined the competition anxiety between national and state level of women athletes. The result of the study showed that there is significant relationship between sports competitive anxiety and the sports performance of the women athletes in the study.

In regards to research question two, the study discovered that there is a high extent to which fear influence student athletes. Contrary to the finding, Parnabas, Parnabas, and Parnabas (2015) investigated the effect of cognitive anxiety on sports performance among football players. The study revealed that elite or national football athletes exhibited lower levels of fear. It was

also found that negative correlation existed between restlessness and sport performance in the study. In a separate study, Sajedi and Kirkbir (2020) study investigated the effect of competitive anxiety (restlessness and worry) on the injury level of student-athletes of Karadeniz Technical University and it was found that there are lower levels of restlessness among the student athletes sampled in the study. In line with this finding, Noetel, Zanden and Lonsdale (2017) study was carried out among students in some selected Swedish Universities and found that student athletes' performance has the potential to be adversely affected by fear of failure and fear of evaluation of parents, friends, and others. Similar to this finding, Hussain, Zaman, and Idris (2014) study investigated the differences in levels of pre-competition anxiety in athletes of male and female sexes, in team & in individual sports. The study found that fear was a significant factor in student athletes' performances in sports.

Results obtained in this study revealed that there is a significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female student athletes. In line with this study, Nayak and Chatterjee (2013) in their study examined the competition anxiety between national and state level of

student athletes. The result of the study showed that there was significant difference on pre-competition anxiety between male and female athletes. The national level student athletes had less pre-competition anxiety than the state level student athletes in the study. Also in line with this study's findings, Elliot, Polman, and Taylor (2012) study revealed that sports competitive anxiety does not look the same for every and for that reason, symptoms differ for each individual. In a similar study, Sajedi and Kirkbir (2020) study revealed that the female athletes displayed higher levels of anxiety than male athletes. Contrary to the study's findings, Hussain, Zaman, and Idris (2014) study found that there is no significant difference in competitive anxiety levels among male and female collegiate athletes.

Students athletes can employ different measures and techniques to cope with sports competitive anxiety. Athletes apply his or her proven measure or technique that work for that particular athlete. So the Athlete know themselves better and should be able to apply measure or technique to cope with sports competitive anxiety. There are many coping measures or techniques to choose from, the athletes are to choose the best suitable for them. Some of the measure are as follows

- A. Positive Self-talk
- B. Deep Breathing and Revelation
- C. Goal setting
- D. Visualization
- E. Mental and physical preparation
- F. Seek support
- G. Focus on the process e.t.c

Remember, every athlete is unique and it may take some trial and error to find the techniques that works best for each individual. It can be beneficial to work with a sport psychologist or mental skills coach who specializes in performance anxiety to develop a personalized plan for coping with competitive anxiety.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of findings, conclusions as well as the necessary recommendations.

Summary

This study was carried out to examine sports competitive anxiety and its influence on University of Benin athletes for NUGA. Four research questions were raised in the study and three hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level.

Related literatures were reviewed to gather information and eminent scholars' view on the variables under the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The population of this study comprised all the undergraduate student athletes in University of Benin. A sample size of one hundred and thirty (130) undergraduate student athletes making a census population was selected for this study. Descriptive statistics using frequency, percentage, and mean in tables were used in the data analysis of the study.

Findings

- There is high extent of sports competitive anxiety among the student athletes
- Fear influences student athletes to a high extent
- There is a significant difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female student athletes.
- There is high extent of measures and techniques student athletes can employ in coping with sports competitive anxiety

Conclusion

Competitive anxiety in sports is such a huge issue for many athletes, student athletes inclusive. Hence, this study examined sports competitive anxiety and its influence on University of Benin athletes for Vice Chancellor games, Deans, Head of Department cups. Results obtained in this study revealed that there is a high level of sports competitive anxiety among the student athletes preparing for Vice Chancellor games, Deans, Head of Department cups and that fear influences student athletes in University of

Benin. The study thus concluded that significant differences exist in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female student athletes.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations become necessary:

1. Coaches should provide quality personal relationships that can increase student athletes' sense of belonging, self-respect and self-acceptance. With this kind of personalized relationship, coaches can make informed decisions about which performance strategies and game plans may be the most appropriate in a particular game and what to focus on in training. This can help dispel all forms of anxiety among student athletes.
2. University administrators should provide a positive climate for learning and sports participation devoid of stress and anxiety.
3. Student athletes should feel safe to share ideas and establish healthier levels of thinking, feelings, and behaviour that can reduce their anxiety levels.

4. Student athletes need to be more self-aware of their own anxiety level, rather than just taking a rhythm of their team's anxiety.
5. Sport psychologists, sports counselors, and coaches should design appropriate training programmes to help student athletes acquire suitable coping strategies so as to reduce their sports competitive anxiety levels and enhance their performance.
6. Athletes who experience sport related anxiety should be managed in consultation with sports or clinical psychologist, depending on the local community resources and available expertise.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

QUESTIONNAIRE

DEAR Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above named institution and I am carrying out a research study on the topic: “sport competitive anxiety and its influence on student athletes of university of Benin as a case study” Kindly assist me by indicating your opinion where necessary.

This study is strictly for academics purpose and you are hereby assured that all information supplied will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully.

Researcher

Instruction: Please tick () appropriately in the sections that follow.

SECTION A (DEMOGRAPHIC DATA)

1. Age: less than 20 years (); 20-24years(); 25-29years(); 30 and above ().

2. Sex: Male (); Female().

3. Faculty: _____

4. Level: 100 (); 200 (); 300(); 400 (); 500 ().

5. Religion: Christianity (); Muslim (); Other specify _____

6. Marital Status: Single (); married (); separated (). _____

7. Ethnic Background: Benin (); Esan (); Etsako (); Igbo (); Yoruba ()
Urhobo ().

SECTION B

Please indicate the level of extent to which you agree with the following items in the table:

KEY: Very High Extent = VHE; High Extent = HE; Low Extent = LE; Very Low Extent = VLE

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
RQ 1	What is the extent of sports competitive anxiety among University of Benin athletes?				
1	I am worry that I may make mistakes during sports competitions				
2	I tend to dwell on shortcoming in my performance				
3	I feel physically nervous when participating in sports competition				
4	I believe in my ability to perform well in sports competitions				
5	I am worried about the uncertainty of what may happen during sports competitions				
6	I find myself trembling when participating in sports competitions				
7	I feel tense in my stomach during sport competitions				
RQ2	What is the influence of sport competitive anxiety on University of Benin athletes				
8	My worries during sporting event affect my performance in sporting events				
9	Tension during sporting event affect my performance in sport competitions				
10	Anxiety have a way if hindering my optimum performance in sports				
11	Lack of confidence in my abilities affects my performance in sport competitions				
12	Over confidence in my abilities affects my performance in sport				

	competitions				
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S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
13	Thoughts of mistakes during sports competitions affects my optimum performance				
14	The feeling of nervousness during sports competitions influences my performance				
RQ3	Do significant differences exist in the level of sports competitive anxiety among University of Benin athletes?				
15	There is difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety across the different age groups of University of Benin athletes				
16	There is difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety among male and female University of Benin athletes				
17	There is difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety across the different faculties of University of Benin athletes				
18	Differences exist in the level of sports competitive anxiety across the different academic levels of University of Benin athletes				
19	There is difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety and the religion of University of Benin students				
20	There is difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety across the marital state of University of Benin athletes.				
21	There is difference in the level of sports competitive anxiety across the difference ethnic groups of University of Benin athletes				