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The relationship between sport orientation and competitive anxiety in elite athletes

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between sport orientation and competitive anxiety in elite athletes in Fars province. In order to do this study, 688 subjects were selected by using systematic sampling and they filled Gill's Sport Orientation and Martin's Competitive Anxiety Questionnaires. The results of enter multiple regression analysis and MANOVA indicated that sport orientation could predict competitive anxiety. It was showed that when competitiveness and goal-oriented increase, competitive anxiety reduces, but increasing desire to win causes increasing competitive anxiety. Finally, the results showed that male athletes were more competitive and winning than female athletes, while female athletes were more goal-oriented than male athletes ($P \leq 0/05$). However, there is no significant difference between sport orientation team and individual sports ($P > 0/05$).

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Key words: Sport orientation, competitive anxiety, competitiveness, win orientation, goal orientation

1. Introduction

One of the important psychological factors that severely affect athletes' performance, particularly in critical and determining situations, is anxiety (Jamshidi, 2006; Jamshidi, Bagherzadeh, Arab Ameri, & Rastegar, 2009). Anxiety is the concept of unsafe or a threat of which the person clearly does not understand the resource (Spielberger, 1966; Dadsetan, 1991). Type of anxiety that in recent years in the field of sport psychology have been considered, is competitive anxiety occurring in competitive sport situations, and is defined as the desire to understand the competitive position as a threatening factor that the response to this situation is associated with a sense of worry and stress (Jamshidi, Arab Ameri, Zare, & Eskandari, 2005; Reteguiz, 2006). When discussing competitive anxiety, even professional players who have high anxiety, compared with players who have low anxiety, when placed in a state of anxiety, they show large increase in physiological arousal, so they are more prone to drop on the run (Har, 2006).

Some researchers believe that some psychological aspects (e.g. competitive anxiety, self-esteem, sense of competitiveness and ...) can have great impacts on the motivation and why people exercise (Anne, Jenny, & Monica,

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2006). Therefore, considering that competition causes anxiety in most people and on the other hand, the people's reasons for exercising and sports are different (Finkenbergh, & Modedinucci, 1998), one of the factors that may predict competitive anxiety is sport orientation. Spence and Helm Reich say that the sport orientation is multidimensional, and it is associated with dimensions of activity, competitiveness and dominance and they point out that some people show their tendency to progress in making attempt to be superiority over others (Roberts, & Daniel, 1999). The theoretical foundations of sport orientation originated from the theory of achievement goals. The achievement goal theory considered both personal factors (perceptions, values and emotions) and situational factors for the people's performance (Meece, Blumenfeld, & Hoyle, 1988; Rastegar, Hejazi, & Jamshidi, 2008). Murray, in 1938, raised achievement motivation as a personality factor and defined it as needs to achieve dreams (FrankEirik, Glyn, & AnneMarte, 2008; Stephanie, & Ester, 2009).

Nicholls in achievement goal theory stated that in achievement contexts people strive to display high ability and avoid exhibiting low ability. To this end, individuals construct particular orientations, which they use for self-assessment. Gill and Deeter's Sport Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) (1988) measures the different processes that people use to judge competence and evaluate success within a sport context. They distinguished between win, goal, and competitive sport orientations. Win and goal orientations reflect individuals' choices and responses during exercise and sport activities. Athletes who have the win orientation desire to win and avoid losing in sport; they evaluate success in compared with the others. Those with a goal orientation focus on achieving personal goals in sport and evaluate success in compare with themselves. Individuals holding either a win or a goal orientation are interested in performing well; however, these two orientations indicate different bases for evaluating one's performance. In contrast to win and goal orientations, competitive orientation strongly influences on one's selection to participate in competitive sports. Individuals who are strongly oriented toward competition are motivated to join and seek achievement in competitive sport. The SOQ discriminates competitiveness, which is a component of any sport activity, from win and goal orientations. It, therefore, permits a more nuanced investigation into sport orientations for individuals involved in a range of sport activities from competitive to noncompetitive (Elizabeth, 2005). Researchers found that athletes with higher scores than athletes with lower scores in competitiveness have lower levels of competitive anxiety (Gones, & Swain, 1992; Kang, 1990).

Therefore, the queries of this study are: Can sport orientation and its components predict athletes' competitive anxiety? Is sport orientation different between male and female athletes? Is sport orientation different between team and individual athletes?

2. Method

According to the research relationship between variables, present study is descriptive and correlation.

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 688 elite athletes (352 males & 336 females) in Fars province chosen through simple random sampling.

2.2. Measures

Participants completed two questionnaires. Sport orientation was measured by using standardized Questionnaire Gill and Dieter (1988) that validity and reliability obtained by Wartenberg (1988) and in Iran it have been established by Bahram and colleagues (Wartenberg, & Mccocheon, 1998; Bahram, ShafiZadeh, Khalaji, & Sntkaran, 2003). Also, competitive anxiety was measured by using Martinz Competitive Anxiety Scale (1990) that validity and reliability has been obtained by Martnz (1990). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for subscales of competitiveness, goal orientation, win orientation and competitive anxiety in this study are respectively 0.89, 0.86, 0.87, and 0.77. For analysis of relationship between sport orientation and competitive anxiety in athletes using the simultaneous multiple regression analysis and for the comparisons between the sports orientation of male and

female athletes and also for comparison orientation between athletes' team and individual sports was used multivariate analysis of variance test (MANOVA).

3. Results

Average variables are presented in table 1. (336 females and 352 males)

Table 1. Means and standard deviations

Variables	Male	Female	Team	Individual
	Mean & SD	Mean & SD	Mean & SD	Mean & SD
competitiveness	56.79± 6.34	51.55± 3.93	53.18± 5.21	52.97± 3.14
Goal orientation	21.82± 3.33	26.45± 3.42	23.36± 2.86	23.29± 3.01
Win orientation	29.14± 2.32	25.94± 4.06	28.93± 3.27	29.11± 3.80
Sport orientation	107.76± 9.01	103.94± 9.87	105.38± 7.01	104.99± 8.52
competitive anxiety	18.06± 3.24	19.10± 3.51	17.63± 2.45	19.22± 3.73

As can be seen in table 2 and table 3, amount of R square is 0.619 (R= 0.619) for competitive anxiety by the dimensions of sport orientation. This means that 61.9 percent of the changes competitive anxiety is explained by the dimensions of sport orientation. As well as, being a significant F is representing linear relationship between sport orientation and competitive anxiety (F= 369.671).

Table 2. Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.787 ^a	.619	.618

Table 3. ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	382378.7	3	127459.570	369.671	0.000
Residual	235148.0	682	344.792		
Total	617526.7	685			

^b Dependent variable: competitive anxiety

As can be seen in table 4, considering the significant level, competitiveness and goal orientation components can be predict to changes in the competitive anxiety ($P \leq 0.01$). Standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = -0.366$) and ($\beta = -0/346$) orderly in competitiveness and goal orientation component show that with increase competitiveness and goal orientation, competitive anxiety is reduced. Standardized regression coefficient in win orientation ($\beta = 0/191$) show that with increase in the win orientation, the competitive anxiety is increased, too.

Table 4. Coefficients^a

Model	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Competitiveness	-2.886	-0.366	-11.925	0.000
Win orientation	1.278	0.191	4.929	0.000
Goal orientation	-2.417	-0.346	-9.385	0.000

^a Dependent variable: competitive anxiety

Table 5 shows that there are significant differences between the orientation of male and female sports athletes (.000). Considering the average, male athletes were more competitive and winning than female athletes, but female athletes were more goal-oriented than male athletes (See table 1).

Table 5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
sex	Competitiveness	315.782	1	315.782	15.738	.000
	win	298.257	1	298.257	15.152	.000
	goal	273.180	1	273.180	15.133	.000
Error	Competitiveness	14526.293	685	20.506		
	win	13484.180	685	19.685		
	goal	12365.406	685	18.052		

Table 6 is considered a kind of sport in the sport orientation is not significant. In other words, there is no significant difference between the team and individual athletes in sport orientation.

Table 6. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
field	Competitiveness	2.063	1	2.063	.143	.705
	win	1.338	1	1.338	.067	.796
	goal	51.335	1	51.335	2.800	.095
Error	Competitiveness	9618.477	669	14.377		
	win	13367.753	669	19.982		
	goal	12265.058	669	18.333		

4. Discussion

Overall, the study showed that there is a linear relationship between sport orientation and competitive anxiety and changes in competitive anxiety are forecast by the sport orientation and its components. In fact, with increasing goal orientation and competitiveness variables, competitive anxiety is reduced. These findings are consistent with research results Kang (1990), Sally & Scott (1996), Flood SE, Hellstedt (1991) and Hall & Ker (1998) (Kang, 1990; Sally, & Scott, 1996; Flood, & Hellstedt, 1991; Hall, & Kerr, 1998). Hall & Ker, in 1998, with the research on athletes, found that competitiveness has relationship inversely with competitive anxiety (Hall, & Kerr, 1998). Martnz states that competitive are trends prepared for individual satisfaction and happiness in competition. Atkinson, in his theory of achievement motivation, states that the achievement motivation make up resultant or behavior, emotional reactions and behavior constitute progress or success (Williams, 2000).

Athletes who have a high level of achievement motivation than athletes who have low levels of achievement motivation, they are thought to enable its and thus they do more efforts (Wartenberg, 1998). Also, some previous studies have shown, when goal orientation athletes is higher, they have more confidence and prepared and probably this causes that they experience less competitive anxiety in racing (Gill, Kelley, Martin, & Caruzo, 1991).

One of the research results showed that with increasing in win orientation, competitive anxiety is increased. Hall and Kerr looked athletes 30 minutes before competing; they found that higher scores in the win orientation lead to feelings of more competitive anxiety. Based on their research, athletes with high scores in win orientation, because they focus on win and feeling more stress in their self, so were competitive anxious (Hall, & Kerr, 1998).

also research results showed that there are significant differences between the orientation of male and female sports athletes and male athletes were more competitive and wining than female athletes while female athletes were more goal-oriented than male athletes. This finding is consistent with research results Emmanuel (2001), Sally & Scott (1996), Hall & Ker (1998) Daniel R.Czech,et a(1990) and Gill(1988) (Sally, & Scott, 1996; Hall, & Kerr, 1998; Emmanuel, 2001; Gill, 1988) but it is inconsistent with research results Kang & et al (1990), Ramezannezhad & et al (2006) (Kang, 1990 & Ramezannezhad, & et al, 2006). Nichols, in his theory, refers to the impact of situational factors and individual differences on the type of target dominance. Thus, oriented goals are more when the environment contains the competition between individual, social assessment and normative feedback and assessment. If emphasizing on learning, dominate the individual skills and personal effort to be spent, task oriented

will be more, conversely (Ramezannezhad, & et al, 2006). And finally, this study result showed that there is no significant difference between sport orientation team and individual sports. These findings are consistent with research results Ramezani and et al (2006) that the sport orientation studied in Gilan university student athlete.

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