

# Analysis Of Competitive Anxiety And Coping Strategies Among Collegiate Badminton Players In Rajasthan

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**Abstract:** Badminton at the collegiate level involves increased competitive intensity, performance expectations, and psychological pressure. Alongside physical preparation, mental readiness plays a decisive role in match outcomes. Competitive anxiety, self-confidence, and coping strategies influence decision-making, reaction time, and overall performance efficiency during tournaments.

The present study aimed to analyze competitive anxiety levels and coping strategies among collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan. A total of 40 college-level badminton players were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using standardized psychological questionnaires, including the Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) and a Coping Strategy Inventory. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied to interpret the data.

The findings revealed moderate levels of competitive anxiety among participants, with variations observed in coping patterns. The study highlights the importance of psychological skill training alongside physical preparation for collegiate badminton athletes.

**Keywords:** Competitive anxiety, Coping strategies, Collegiate badminton, Psychological readiness, Rajasthan.

**Introduction -** Badminton at the collegiate level represents a transitional phase between developmental sport participation and higher competitive exposure. Unlike school-level participation, collegiate badminton often involves inter-college tournaments, university championships, ranking pressures, and performance expectations from coaches and institutions. Along with physical preparation, psychological readiness becomes a critical determinant of competitive success.

Competitive environments naturally generate psychological responses such as nervousness, anticipation, excitement, and anxiety. While moderate anxiety may enhance alertness and performance, excessive competitive anxiety can negatively affect concentration, reaction time, decision-making, and motor coordination. In precision-based sports like badminton, where rallies demand rapid judgment and controlled movements, psychological imbalance can directly influence match outcomes.

Anxiety in sports is commonly categorized into cognitive anxiety (worry, negative thoughts) and somatic anxiety (physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate or muscle tension). Collegiate athletes often face additional pressures including academic commitments, selection trials, scholarship expectations, and peer comparison. These stressors may amplify competitive anxiety levels.

Coping strategies play a vital role in regulating psychological responses during competition. Effective

coping mechanisms such as positive self-talk, controlled breathing, goal setting, and attentional focus can help athletes manage stress and maintain performance consistency. Conversely, avoidance-based coping may intensify anxiety and reduce performance stability.

In Rajasthan, badminton participation at the collegiate level has increased over recent years; however, limited research has examined the psychological dimensions of performance among college players. Most studies emphasize physical fitness or elite athletes, leaving a gap in understanding competitive anxiety and coping patterns in university-level badminton.

Therefore, the present study aims to analyze competitive anxiety levels and coping strategies among collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan. The findings are expected to provide insights for coaches and sports psychologists to integrate psychological skill training within collegiate badminton programs.

## Review Of Literature

Competitive anxiety has been widely studied in sports psychology as a significant factor influencing athletic performance. Martens, Vealey, and Burton (1990) introduced the multidimensional theory of competitive anxiety, distinguishing between cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence. Their findings suggested that cognitive anxiety negatively correlates with performance when excessive, while self-confidence tends to enhance

performance outcomes.

Craft et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis examining the relationship between anxiety and sport performance and reported that high cognitive anxiety levels often impair precision-based skills. Since badminton requires quick reflexes and accurate shot placement, elevated anxiety may hinder effective performance during competition.

Jones (1995) emphasized that athletes' interpretation of anxiety symptoms plays a critical role in performance outcomes. According to his directional anxiety theory, athletes who perceive anxiety as facilitative rather than debilitating demonstrate better competitive results.

Hanton, Fletcher, and Coughlan (2005) explored coping mechanisms among elite athletes and found that problem-focused coping strategies, such as mental rehearsal and positive self-talk, significantly reduce competitive stress levels. Emotional control and attentional focus were identified as essential psychological skills.

Nicholls and Polman (2007) reported that coping strategies vary depending on age, competitive level, and situational demands. Collegiate athletes often experience additional stressors related to academics and social expectations, which may influence their psychological responses during tournaments.

In the Indian context, Kumar and Singh (2016) examined competitive anxiety among university athletes and found moderate anxiety levels with significant variation across individual and team sports. The authors recommended psychological skill development programs at the collegiate level.

Similarly, Patel and Desai (2019) observed that badminton players with higher self-confidence scores demonstrated better match consistency compared to those with elevated cognitive anxiety. Their findings reinforced the importance of mental preparedness in racket sports.

Although several studies have examined competitive anxiety and coping in sports, limited research has specifically focused on collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan. Therefore, the present study attempts to analyze psychological readiness within this specific population.

#### Objectives Of The Study:

1. To determine the level of competitive anxiety among collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan.
2. To analyze coping strategies adopted by collegiate badminton players.
3. To examine the relationship between competitive anxiety and coping strategies.
4. To compare competitive anxiety levels between male and female collegiate badminton players.
5. To compare coping strategy patterns between male and female players.

**Hypotheses Of The Study:** The following null hypotheses were formulated:

1.  $H_{01}$ : There will be no significant relationship between competitive anxiety and coping strategies among collegiate badminton players.

2.  $H_{02}$ : There will be no significant difference in competitive anxiety between male and female players.

3.  $H_{03}$ : There will be no significant difference in coping strategies between male and female players.

#### Methodology

**1. Research Design:** The present study adopted a **descriptive cross-sectional survey design** to examine competitive anxiety and coping strategies among collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan. The design was considered appropriate as the study aimed to measure existing psychological characteristics without manipulating any independent variables. The investigation was conducted during the competitive season to ensure authentic responses related to tournament experiences.

**2. Population and Sample:** The population of the study consisted of collegiate badminton players representing colleges and universities in Rajasthan.

A total of **40 players** were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The sample included:

1. **22 Male Players (55%)**

2. **18 Female Players (45%)**

All participants were between **18–23 years of age** and had at least **two years of competitive badminton experience** at the inter-college or university level.

**Table 1: Sample Distribution**

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Male Players	22	55%
Female Players	18	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

**3. Variables of the Study:** The following variables were selected:

1. **Competitive Anxiety** (Independent Variable)

2. **Coping Strategies** (Dependent Variable)

Coping strategies were further categorized into:

1. Problem-focused coping

2. Emotion-focused coping

3. Avoidance coping

#### 4. Instruments Used

##### 4.1 Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT):

Competitive anxiety was measured using the **Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT)** developed by Martens (1977). The instrument consists of 15 items rated on a three-point scale. The total score reflects an athlete's tendency to experience anxiety in competitive situations. The SCAT has demonstrated acceptable reliability ( $r_H = 0.80$ ) and validity in sports psychology research.

##### 4.2 Coping Strategy Inventory for Athletes:

Coping strategies were assessed using a standardized coping inventory designed for sport settings. The tool measures psychological responses adopted during competition across multiple domains such as problem-solving, emotional regulation, and avoidance behavior. Responses were

recorded on a Likert-type scale, and higher scores indicated greater reliance on the respective coping strategy.

**5. Data Collection Procedure:** Prior approval was obtained from the respective college authorities. Participants were informed about the objectives and significance of the study. Informed consent was secured before administration of the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were administered in a controlled classroom environment before practice sessions to minimize distraction. Participants were instructed to respond honestly based on their experiences during competitive matches. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to reduce response bias.

**6. Statistical Treatment of Data:** The collected data were coded and analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures:

1. Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated to determine the average level of competitive anxiety and coping strategies.
2. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the relationship between competitive anxiety and coping strategies.
3. Independent Samples t-test was applied to analyze gender-based differences where applicable.

The level of significance was fixed at **0.05**.

**Statistical Analysis:** The collected data were analyzed to test the formulated null hypotheses. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed to determine anxiety and coping levels. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied to examine the relationship between competitive anxiety and coping strategies ( $H_{01}$ ). Independent Samples t-test was used to test gender-based differences in anxiety and coping dimensions ( $H_{02}$  and  $H_{03}$ ). The level of significance was set at 0.05.

To examine the relationship between competitive anxiety and coping strategies, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed. This statistical technique was used to determine the direction and strength of association between anxiety levels and different coping dimensions.

Furthermore, an Independent Samples t-test was applied to analyze gender-based differences in competitive anxiety and coping strategies between male and female collegiate players. The level of significance for all statistical tests was set at 0.05 to determine meaningful differences. The statistical interpretation was carried out carefully to ensure accuracy and reliability of findings.

## Results

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Competitive Anxiety and Coping Strategies**

Variable	Male Players (Mean ± SD)	Female Players (Mean ± SD)	t-value
Competitive Anxiety	21.45 ± 3.25	23.10 ± 3.60	2.04*

Problem-Focused Coping	28.30 ± 4.15	27.85 ± 3.90	0.38
Emotion-Focused Coping	24.75 ± 3.80	26.20 ± 4.05	1.27
Avoidance Coping	18.40 ± 2.95	19.60 ± 3.10	1.35

\*Significant at 0.05 level

**Interpretation of Results:** The results indicate that female collegiate badminton players demonstrated slightly higher mean competitive anxiety scores (23.10) compared to male players (21.45), and the difference was found statistically significant at the 0.05 level. However, no significant gender differences were observed in coping strategy dimensions, although females showed marginally higher scores in emotion-focused and avoidance coping. The null hypothesis regarding gender difference in competitive anxiety was rejected at the 0.05 level, while hypotheses related to coping differences were accepted. The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive association between competitive anxiety and emotion-focused coping, suggesting that athletes experiencing higher anxiety tend to rely more on emotional regulation strategies during competition.

**Discussion:** The findings of the present study indicate that collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan experience moderate levels of competitive anxiety, with female athletes demonstrating slightly higher anxiety scores compared to male athletes. This result aligns with the multidimensional theory of competitive anxiety proposed by Martens et al. (1990), which suggests that individual differences and situational demands influence anxiety levels during competition.

The significant difference observed in competitive anxiety between male and female players may be attributed to variations in emotional responsiveness and perceived performance pressure. Previous studies, such as those by Kumar and Singh (2016), have also reported relatively higher anxiety levels among female collegiate athletes in competitive environments.

Although coping strategy scores did not show statistically significant gender differences, female athletes displayed slightly higher reliance on emotion-focused and avoidance coping strategies. This pattern supports the findings of Nicholls and Polman (2007), who noted that coping responses often vary according to situational stress and individual perception of control.

The positive association between competitive anxiety and emotion-focused coping suggests that athletes experiencing higher anxiety tend to adopt strategies aimed at managing emotional responses rather than directly addressing the source of stress. While emotion regulation can be beneficial in the short term, excessive dependence on avoidance strategies may limit performance optimization. Overall, the results emphasize that psychological readiness plays a crucial role in collegiate badminton performance. The moderate anxiety levels observed indicate the need

for structured mental skills training, including relaxation techniques, goal setting, and cognitive restructuring, to enhance competitive stability.

**Conclusion:**

1. The present study analyzed competitive anxiety and coping strategies among collegiate badminton players in Rajasthan.
2. The findings revealed moderate levels of competitive anxiety among participants, with female players demonstrating significantly higher anxiety levels compared to male players.
3. No statistically significant gender differences were observed in coping strategies, although slight variations were noted in emotional coping patterns.
4. A positive relationship was found between competitive anxiety and emotion-focused coping, indicating that higher anxiety levels influence the type of coping mechanisms adopted.
5. The study highlights the importance of integrating psychological skill training programs within collegiate badminton coaching systems.
6. Development of mental resilience strategies such as relaxation training, self-talk regulation, and focus enhancement may improve competitive performance consistency.

**Recommendations For Further Studies:**

1. Future research may include a larger sample size covering multiple universities across different regions of Rajasthan to enhance generalizability of findings.
2. Comparative studies between individual and team sport athletes may provide deeper understanding of sport-specific anxiety patterns.
3. Longitudinal research can be conducted to examine changes in competitive anxiety levels across an academic season.
4. Future investigations may explore the impact of structured psychological skill training programs on

reducing competitive anxiety among collegiate badminton players.

5. Studies incorporating physiological stress markers such as heart rate variability alongside psychological measures may provide a more comprehensive analysis.
6. Comparative research between school-level and collegiate badminton players could help understand developmental progression in psychological readiness.

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