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ANXIETY LEVEL AMONG NATIONAL FOOTBALL REFEREES

BY

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A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to identify the anxiety level and the type A personality among national football referees. It will enhance the researcher's understanding (who himself is a FIFA referee) of factors affecting anxiety among football referees, and later suggest appropriate coping strategies. Martens' SCAT, Spielberger's STAI and Jerabek's Type A Personality instruments were adopted to measure the trait anxiety, state anxiety and personality types, respectively. Factors affecting the anxiety as perceived by respondents were also identified. Out of the 90 referees, 73 responded to the instruments (SCAT and Type A Personality) administered simultaneously, while STAI was administered a few hours before the respondent refereed a football match. Post hoc analysis suggests that there is significant correlation between the trait anxiety and state anxiety among the national football referees. However, There is significant difference in the trait anxiety level between the older and younger referees, and in the state anxiety level among the more nationally experienced referees and the less experienced referees. The findings matched some of past studies. Type A personality is not related to the trait and state anxiety level. Besides, there is no significant difference in the trait anxiety and state anxiety among referees in terms of age, fitness level and experience. Factors perceived by referees to affect the anxiety level are internal (personal) variables and external (situational) variables. This finding matched past studies which suggested that individual perception, past experiences and situational factors do affect the anxiety level. The study recommends that other instruments may be employed to further enhance future study in this field. Suggestions are also given to reduce the anxiety level of the national referees through more match exposure and stress management techniques.

APPROVAL PAGE

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I hereby declare that this project paper is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and a bibliography is appended.

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DEDICATION

This project paper is specially dedicated to my mum,
my beloved wife and loving children.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
SCAT	Sports Competitive Anxiety Test
STAI	State-Trait Anxiety Inventory
T-Anxiety	Trait Anxiety
S-Anxiety	State Anxiety
FA	Football Association
FAM	Football Association of Malaysia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of anxiety and other emotional and personality factors in sports competition has been recognized for many years (e.g., Kroll, 1970; Martens, 1971, 1975; Singer, 1975). Consider the following observation of Howard S. Slusher in his influential book, *Man, Sport and Existence* (1967, p.192):

> *As it is in most aspect of life, anxiety is present in sport... Each time man "takes the field," he not only lives with anxiety, he embraces it. It allows him and, in fact, motivates him, toward greater realization of his skill in the contest...Sport encourages man to live anxieties as opposed to the psychiatric school advocating the "cure" of anxiety.*

Interest in the role of anxiety in sports competition has stimulated a substantial amount of research among sports psychologists over the past twenty years (Hackfort and Spielberger, 1989).

Anxiety, stress, and worry about the athletic experience on the part of athletes, is a major area of concern. It is estimated that many young athletes drop out of organized sport each year due to frustration and fear of failure. Many young athletes thrive on the pressure and tension associated with competitive sport. However, far too many find that

the experience precipitates feelings of apprehension and stress (Cox, 1985). Sport psychologists often use the term stress and anxiety interchangeably. Hans Seyle (1975) defined stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it". Seyle (1975) and Humphrey (1986) further differentiated the nature of stress by referring to positive affect (joy, exhilaration, and happiness) in sport as 'eustress', while Martens (1982) defined anxiety in terms of negative affect (fear, apprehension, worry). In other words, Seyle's use of the term distress is virtually identical to Martens' use of the term anxiety.

We experienced the feeling of anxiety or fear in different situations. Actually, if one do not have the sense of anxiety, one can be said to undergo an abnormal personality (Spielberger, 1966). Athletes, like other human beings, also often show inconsistent performance either improved or declined when undergoing the feeling of stress or anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most common mental and emotional stress producers (Arnheim, 1985). It is reflected by the most script fear, a sense of apprehension and restlessness. Typically the anxious athlete is unable to describe the problem. The athlete feels inadequate in a certain situation but is unable to say why. Heart palpitations, shortness of breath, sweaty palms, constriction in the throat, and headache may accompany anxiety.

Spielberger (1966) added that apprehensive feeling and uncertainty, and physical signs like upset tummy manifest this feeling of anxiety, sweaty palms, cold or the increasing heartbeat. This phenomenon, which is the tendency of individual to anxiety,

has initiated researchers to study and see how individuals differ in their perception towards anxiety and its effects.

Spielberger (1966) defined anxiety as an existing emotional situation, which is characterized by the apprehension and stress or the influence to perceive a situation as threatening and react to the stimuli or situation in different level of anxiety. Generally, anxiety can be seen as a trait and a state. As a trait, this anxiety is suggested to us that within ourselves there is a tendency to fear depending on different stimulus and situations. As a state, this anxiety usually refers to anxious situation or the tendency to be frightened only in specific situation or towards certain stimulus only.

Among a number of theorists (Cattell & Scheier, 1961; Eysenck, 1992; Izard, 1972; Spielberger, 1972) who have espoused the view that anxiety has state and trait components, Spielberger (1972) is the one best known for clarifying and refining the distinction between state and trait anxiety. He defined state anxiety as a transitory emotional state that may vary in intensity and fluctuate over time. State anxiety is characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, and by activation of the autonomic nervous system. Alternatively, trait anxiety is viewed as relatively stable individual differences in the tendency to perceive a wide range of stimulus situations as threatening and to respond to such threats with state anxiety reactions. Theoretically, trait anxiety is considered as anxiety proneness.

Anxiety as a trait is characterized as a stressed feeling, apprehension and worry, which is seen consciously and subjective and is followed by or related to the outcome of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1966, 1972). While anxiety as a state is referred to as stable anxiety tendency differences which is the differences among individuals in their tendency to perceive situations as threatening and react towards these situations in different level of state anxiety.

Numerous studies have been conducted to compare anxiety level among athletes and non-athletes, and also individuals that are involved in various types of sports. Their results showed that there is no significant or consistent differences that exist in the trait anxiety among athletes and non-athletes, or other individuals of different skills (Kroll, 1970; Martens, 1975). Kroll and Martens assumed that anxiety is specific to situation or state, not trait. Therefore, it is more logical to decide whether the anxiety related to sports is consistent in the context of the sport only.

Situations in games or competitions often provide various circumstances that will induce anxiety among athletes and this partly will influence their performance and behavior. This was proven by studies that the increasing failure experienced had increased one's state anxiety level (Gaudry & Spielberger, 1971; Hodges & Durhan, 1972; McDoo, 1970). The studies above found that the high threats and high state anxiety level are more significant among those who have high level of trait anxiety. These signs of anxiety will be reflected by athletes when they complain of the competition environments, like the

unleveled surface of the track, unsuitable lighting in the hall, the different types of throwing equipment, and other excuses, reasons or complaints. Anxiety will be more prominent when it's level peak.

People differ in an infinite variety of ways-from their physical structure to their thoughts, feelings, and behavioral patterns (Brody, 1988). Scholars tend to define personality on the basis of their interpretation of a particular theoretical perspective and methodology. And, because personality theory has not developed anything resembling a consensus, there is as yet no classic or even widely accepted definition of personality. For years psychologists disagreed about whether consistencies of behavior, usually referred to as traits, or situational factors were the primary determinants of behavior (Dienstbier, 1984). He viewed personality traits as the products of both inherited dispositions and learning gained through interaction with the environment. Does this personality trait influence the trait or state anxiety level of an individual?

The Type A behavior pattern is of considerable interest and importance to the exercise professional. Friedman and Rosenman (1974) found that the Type A behavior pattern involved a chronic sense of time urgency, an excess of competitive drive, and an easily aroused hostility. The antitheses of Type A behavior pattern is called Type B. Type B individuals do not exhibit the same degree of time urgency nor excessive competitiveness or free-floating hostility. One of the more promising lines of research in the study of the stress-illness relationship is one that considers the role of personality as a

mediator of illness-producing effects of stress (Gentry and Kobasa, 1979). Kobasa (1979) conceptualized "hardiness" as a personality style that enables one to withstand or effectively cope with potentially stressful situations with minimal debilitating effects.

Officials in competitive matches are not spared from having this anxious feeling, as felt by a referee when refereeing a football[1] match. Besides the trait anxiety in an individual, environmental settings before, during and after a competition do influence the level of anxiety. Do their personality type assist them in their coping with stress and anxiousness? Other factors like the competing teams, venue or stadium, spectators, match inspectors, physical fitness level of individual, adequate rest or fatigue will partly influence the referee when handling a football competitive match. The question is what really influences the level of anxiety of the football referee? In particular, does the trait anxiety or state anxiety level influence the performance of refereeing?

[1] Football, as it is call in Malaysia rather than soccer, is the most popular sport in the country. The national governing body is the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM).

1.1 Statement of Problem

This study wishes to know the level of trait anxiety, state anxiety and personality type among national football referees when refereeing the inter-state football competitions in Malaysia and to compare the significant differences among the variables.

1.2 Objectives

This study is aimed to:

a. Determine the relationship between trait anxiety, state anxiety, and personality type among national level football referees.

b. Determine the factors that cause anxiety among national level football referees.

c. Suggest ways to reduce and probably overcome anxiety effectively among football referees and also athletes.

1.3 Hypotheses

Based on the limitations to be observed when carrying out of this study, it is hypothesized that:

Table 1.1: Summary of Hypotheses and Hypotheses Testing Method

Hypothesis	Hypotheses Statement	Statistical Methods
1	There is significant relationship between the trait and state anxiety level among national football referees.	Correlation
2a	There is no significant relationship between the trait anxiety level and the personality type among national football referees.	Correlation
2b	There is no significant difference in the trait anxiety level between the older and the younger referees.	One-way ANOVA
2c	There is no significant difference in the trait anxiety level between the fitter and the less fit referees.	One-way ANOVA
2d	There is no significant difference in the trait anxiety level among the experienced and the less experienced referees.	One-way ANOVA
3a	There is no significant relationship between the state anxiety level and the personality type among national football referees.	Correlation
3b	There is no significant difference in the state anxiety level between the older and the younger referees.	One-way ANOVA
3c	There is no significant difference in the state anxiety level between the fitter and the less fit referees.	One-way ANOVA
3d	There is no significant difference in the state anxiety level among the experienced and the less experienced referees.	One-way ANOVA

1.4 Significance of the Study

From the result of this study, the researcher hopes to get a clear picture about the psychological aspect of anxiety among national level football referees in Malaysia. Findings from this study will assist the researcher in his career as a football referee himself, and to help his colleagues, the referees to face and overcome their anxiety level. This study will also help the researcher to understand and assist his athletes in schools to overcome anxiety and stressful situation often faced in competitions. The result and findings of this study may also be of significant to administrators in the Football Association of Malaysia in planning programs and system that will enhance the development and improvement of refereeing further.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to 90 subjects from the list of national qualified football referees chosen to officiate in the national level competition in the month of August, September, and October 1998, organized by the Football Association of Malaysia.

1.6 Delimitation of Study

In implementing this study, the researcher expected and was faced with the following delimitation:

a. Implementing the Anxiety Measurement Instrument

Instrument used to measure the trait anxiety level and personality type was administered personally by the researcher whereby, the subjects will give their personal confession to the items in the self-administered instrument for measuring trait anxiety (Form A – Sport Competition Anxiety Test), after receiving instructions and information from the researcher. However, the instrument for measuring state anxiety level, was carried out by post with the assistance of colleagues who are not officiating the matches concerned. This is because, the study needs the respondents to give their confession to the questionnaires in the instrument (Form B – State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Form X-1) a few hours (preferably one or two hours) before the matches. The venues of the matches are situated throughout Malaysia. Time, distance and expenses do not permit the researcher to administer the instrument personally or through interviews or observations.

b. Translation of Instruments

The instruments for this study were adopted from Martens (1977) 'Sport Competition Anxiety Test', Spielberger's 'State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Form X-1', and the Type A Behavior Inventory from the Cyberia Shrink's Test site[2] and were translated into the Malaysian language. Defect may occur in the translation in term of precise and suitable use of terminology.

c. The Use of the Instruments

Instruments adopted in this study, (Martens' SCAT and Spielberger's STAI Form X-1) were formulated originally to be administered to athletes and sports participants. Therefore, the suitability of these instruments to be administered to referees may be questionable.

d. Time in Administering the Instruments

Though clear and precise instructions were enclosed with each instrument, the time or moment the respondent takes to answer the questionnaires may influence the responses. This is especially true in Form B, to measure the state anxiety whereby the respondents are preferably needed to give their responses to the items one or two hours before the match. This situation is beyond the control of the researcher because the instrument was administered by post. Therefore, the moment or time for answering the instrument was subjected to the trustworthiness of the respondents.

[2] http://queendom.com/psychometrics, 22/8/1998

e. Sampling

Samples chosen in administering the instruments was beyond the control of the researcher as the appointment of officials for all the matches were done by the authority in FAM. Convenient sampling was carried out from all the respondents acquired.

1.7 Definition of Terms

In this study the researcher the following terms were used:

a. Anxiety

Anxiety is perceived as an emotional situation that exist in an individual which is characterized by perception of stress that influenced him to perceive a situation as threatening or dangerous (Spielberger, 1966).

b. Trait Anxiety

Trait anxiety is the tendency of fear that differentiates to most existing natural stimuli in an individual (Spielberger, 1966). This is the extent to which an individual is generally anxious in most situations (Davies, 1989). Trait-anxiety (T-Anxiety) refers to a relatively stable predisposition to perceive situations as dangerous or threatening.