



Assessment of Psychological Parameters among the Soft Tennis Players: An Investigation

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ABSTRACT

The study's goal was to evaluate and contrast the ways in which male and female soft tennis players dealt with adversity, to evaluate and contrast the male and female soft tennis players' capacity for coping with adversity, coaching ability, concentration, confidence and achievement motivation, goal setting and mental preparation, peaking under pressure and freedom from worry. Purposive sampling method was employed to choose the 76 subjects (N=76) for this study, of which 41 were male and 35 were female. The subjects were amongst the ages of 18 and 24. These individuals all came from numerous states and contended at various levels, including state and national championships. The coping skills inventory (ACSI-28), developed by Smith et al. (1995), was used to examine the variables of this study following a thorough discussion with the supervisor and after a review of relevant literature. The independent t-test was incorporated to assess the meticulously documented data. The study's findings show that, at the significance level of 0.05, there was a significant difference in concentration and peaking under pressure, but not in other variables such as coping with adversity, coach ability, confidence and



achievement motivation, goal setting and mental preparation, and freedom from worry.

Introduction

Particularly for elite athletes, the stress that an athlete may endure throughout their career may be too great to handle. Plentiful studies have demonstrated the wide range of demands made on professional athletes, according to Fletcher & Hinton (2003). According to Frey (2007), a specific player may observe the expectations as intimidating if there is an imbalance amid the demands and the coping resources available. According to Thelwell et al. (2017), coach stress may negatively affect the athlete-coach connection. The coach may be the foundation of stress for players. Thelwell and associates (2017) Elite athletes and coaches have been the emphasis of sport environment studies.

Rather of taking a methodical line, the assessment will take a narrative approach. A systematic review involves a detailed search for evidence and a specific focus on the question (Collins & Fauser, 2005). All the outcomes are discussed in connection with these components as well as theories.

Psychological groundwork is a section that has often been neglected by athletes and coaches. Whereas the optimal psychological care and psychological preparation of an athlete leads to a gigantic confidence among athletes and this paper draws a contemporary opinion about the psychological parameters among the soft tennis players. Particularly about Coping with adversity, Coach Ability, Concentration, Confidence and achievement motivation, Goal setting and mental preparation, Peaking under pressure, Freedom from worry.

Selection of Subjects

For the study the total number of 76 subjects $N=76$, with males=41 and females=35, were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The subjects selected for the study were 18-24y of age. All these subjects were from different states of India and had played at state and national level tournaments.

Selection of the Variables

The coping skills inventory **ACSI-28** by **smith et al. (1995)** was designated for the purpose of the study which comprises of following variables:



Selection of the questionnaire

The (ACSI-28) **Smith et al. (1995)**, that assesses the psychological skill set of a player was utilized for data collection.

Administration of the questionnaire/collection of the data

Soft tennis players who have contested at the state and national levels were chosen by the purposive sampling method for this study. Before the test was administered, the subjects received the necessary directions. It was plainly clarified to the subjects that the overall resolution of the study was to allow each subject to offer information concerning problems throughout sports training or participation. Privacy of responses was promised as certain so that the subject would not camouflage their real state of mind. The subjects were asked to answer as quickly as possible without brooding over any statement, once the instructions were understood clearly. None of the subjects met any trouble in understanding the statements and all the subjects finished it appropriately as per the instructions.

Statistical technique

A thorough descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) was computed for the investigation. The independent t-test was used to determine whether the selected psychological aspects among the soft tennis players of various skill levels varied significantly. A significance level of 0.05 was established.

Table no: 01

Descriptive statistics of all the variables employed of male and female soft tennis players.

VARIABLE	Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std.error mean	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Coping with adversity	Male	41	8.51	2.86	.44	1.01	74	.314
	Female	35	7.88	2.45	.41			
Coaching_ ability	Male	41	8.46	2.35	.36	1.01	74	.312
	Female	35	9.00	2.20	.37			
Concentration	Male	41	8.82	2.10	.32	2.47	74	.016
	Female	35	7.57	2.32	.39			
Confidence and achievement motivation	Male	41	9.56	1.83	.28	1.39	74	.168
	Female	35	8.91	2.21	.37			
Goal setting and mental preparation	Male	41	9.09	2.30	.35	.298	74	.767
	Female	35	8.94	2.20	.37			
Peaking under pressure	Male	41	8.73	1.94	.30	3.32	74	.001
	Female	35	7.00	2.60	.43			
Freedom from worry	Male	41	6.46	1.97	.30	1.05	74	.295
	Female	35	6.91	1.70	.28			

1. The result showed that there was insignificant difference at all in coping with adversity between male and female soft tennis players, $t(74) = 1.01$, $P = .314$, which is greater than 0.05. That is the average score of male players ($M = 8.51$, $SD = 2.86$) was not statistically different from that of female players ($M = 7.88$, $SD = 2.45$). Thus, it could be concluded that there was no significance difference in coping with adversity between male and female soft tennis players.
2. The result designated that there was an insignificant difference in coach ability between male and female soft tennis players, $t(74) = -1.01$, $P = .312$, which is greater than 0.05. That is the average score of male players ($M = 8.46$, $SD = 2.35$) was not statistically different from that of female players ($M = 9.00$, $SD = 2.20$). Thus, it could be concluded that there was no significance difference in coach ability between male and female soft tennis players.
3. The result indicated that there was a clear significant difference in concentration amongst male and female soft tennis players, $t(74) = -2.47$, $P = .016$, which is less than 0.05. That is the average score of



male players (M=8.82, SD=2.10) was statistically different from that of female players (M=7.57, SD=2.32). Thus, it could be concluded that there was significance difference in concentration between male and female soft tennis players.

4. The result specified that there was no significance difference in Confidence and achievement motivation between male and female soft tennis players, $t(74) = -1.39, P = .168$, which is greater than 0.05. That is the average score of male players (M=9.56, SD=1.83) was not statistically different from that of female players (M=8.91, SD=2.21). Thus, it could be concluded that there was no significance difference in Confidence and achievement motivation between male and female soft tennis players.
5. The result shown that there was an insignificant difference in Goal setting and mental preparation between male and female soft tennis players, $t(74) = .298, P = .767$, which is greater than 0.05. That is the average score of male players (M=9.09, SD=2.30) was not statistically different from that of female players (M=8.94, SD=2.20). Thus, it could be concluded that there was no significance difference in Goal setting and mental preparation between male and female soft tennis players.
6. The findings showed that male and female soft tennis players differed significantly in their peaking under pressure ($t(74) = -3.32, P = .001$, which is less than 0.05). That is, there was a statistically significant difference between the average score of male players (M=8.73, SD=1.94) and female players (M=7.00, SD=2.60). Therefore, it might be said that male and female soft tennis players differed significantly in their peaking under pressure.
7. $T(74) = -1.05, P = .295$ (more than 0.05) showed that there was no significant difference in freedom from concern between male and female soft tennis players. In other words, there was no statistically significant difference between the average score of male players (M=6.46, SD=1.97) and female players (M=6.91, SD=1.70). Therefore, it could be said that there was no discernible difference in the freedom from worry between soft tennis players who were male and female.

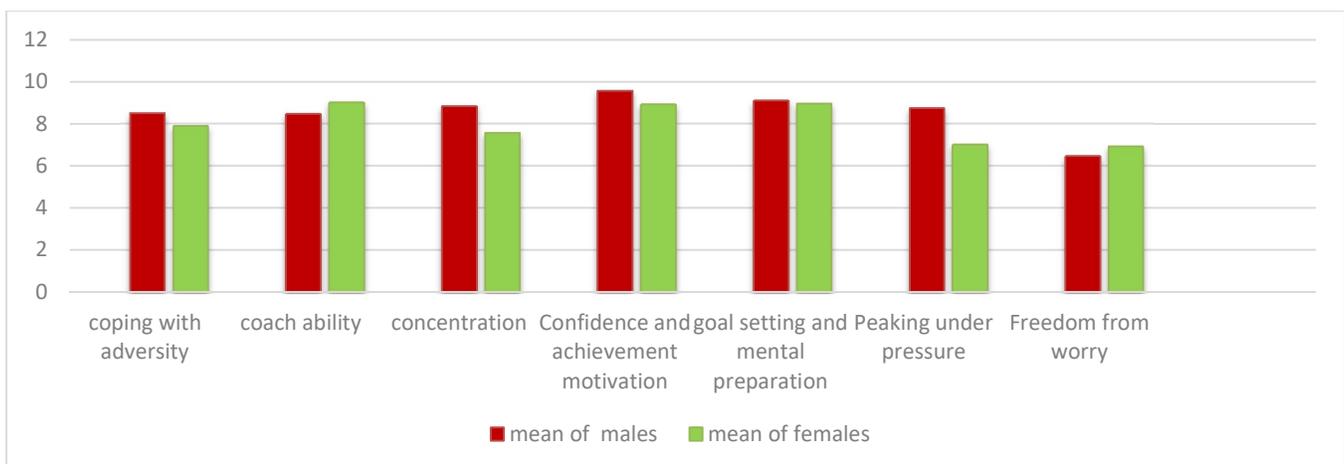




Figure no: 01

Graphical depiction of designated variables of the study

Discussion of Finding

The findings revealed no significant differences between male and female soft tennis players in coping with adversity, coachability, confidence and achievement motivation, goal setting and mental preparation, and freedom from worry. However, significant differences were observed in concentration and peaking under pressure, with male players outperforming females. This aligns with previous research suggesting that males tend to be more goal-directed and mentally prepared for challenging situations. For instance, **Cosma et al. (2020)** found that men typically display greater confidence in their abilities and higher motivation to handle stressful conditions than women.

Culturally, women are often perceived to use emotion-focused or passive coping strategies more frequently than men. Empirical evidence supports this notion, indicating that women are more likely to regulate their emotional responses to stress, whereas men tend to adopt problem-solving approaches (**Billings & Moos, 1984; Endler & Parker, 1990; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Stone & Neale, 1984**). As **Thoits (1995)** observed, “Studies consistently suggest that men have an inexpressive, stoic style of responding to stressors and women have an emotional expressive style.” Despite extensive theoretical and empirical exploration, gaps remain in our understanding of how gender and coping interact and the broader implications of these differences.

One enduring debate concerns the adaptiveness of coping strategies. Emotion-focused coping is often perceived as maladaptive, especially due to its association with internalizing disorders such as depression. Several scholars argue that women's higher rates of depression may partially stem from their tendency toward such coping styles (**Aneshensel & Pearlin, 1987; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987**). Nevertheless, the assumption that emotion-focused coping is inherently inferior to problem-focused strategies lacks consistent empirical support.

Drawing from social psychological theories of stress and strain, recent studies have applied the **stress process model** to examine coping differences in relation to mental health and criminological outcomes. For instance, a study conducted on a sample of 1,803 young adults in Miami-Dade County, Florida, explored gender differences in coping styles—specifically, problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance-focused coping (**Endler & Parker, 1990**). The research further examined whether gender differences in coping were explained by disparities in chronic strain and whether coping styles could predict outcomes such as depression and crime.



Given such consistent findings on gendered coping patterns, scholars have proposed two key frameworks: the socialization hypothesis and the structural hypothesis. The socialization hypothesis posits that gender role expectations and sex-role stereotypes guide men and women toward different coping styles. Women are typically socialized to express emotion and use emotion-focused coping strategies, while men are encouraged to approach stress instrumentally through problem-solving (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1991, 1993; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Rosario et al., 1988; Ptacek et al., 1994). According to this view, men and women will cope differently regardless of context due to internalized social norms.

In contrast, the structural hypothesis argues that coping differences emerge not from socialization but from the nature of stressors each gender typically encounters (Billings & Moos, 1981). For example, women are often in domestic or caregiving roles that are less amenable to change, making problem-focused coping less applicable. This perspective overlaps with the exposure–vulnerability framework in sociology (Thoits, 1987), which explains gender differences in mental health by emphasizing either differential exposure to stress or differential vulnerability to its effects. The vulnerability hypothesis specifically suggests that women may experience higher levels of depression because they react more intensely to similar stressors than men.

In conclusion, this body of research illustrates that gender differences in coping are shaped by a complex interplay of socialization, structural contexts, chronic strain, and social roles. While emotion-focused coping has been historically viewed as less effective, its outcomes may depend on broader situational and gendered factors rather than inherent flaws in the strategy itself.

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