

Anxiety Levels Among Male Tennis Players in Sabah: A Survey

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Abstract

Tennis players often experience anxiety due to the pressure of performance expectations, the competitive nature of the sport, and the intense environment of tournaments, which can impact their mental well-being and on-court performance. This paper aims to do a survey identifying the levels of anxiety among tennis players in Sabah and identifying the differences in anxiety levels based on age among tennis players in Sabah. This survey study is an inferential study that utilizes quantitative data collected through questionnaires. In this study, the sample consists of 60 male tennis players. The instrument used to measure anxiety is the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 Revised (CSAI-2R) (Cox et al., 2003), which has been translated by Norsilwati (2011) and will be utilized in this study. Meanwhile, the level of anxiety among tennis players was measured through 25 items contained in the questionnaire. Cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence were measured in this study. The findings showed that the level of cognitive anxiety is high with a mean score of 3.89 (SD=0.898), followed by somatic anxiety with a mean score of 3.69 (SD=0.258), and self-confidence is at a low level with a mean score of 1.59 (SD=0.186). Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to answer the second research question, which is to identify differences in anxiety levels based on age among tennis players in Sabah. The calculated F-value is 27.38 with a p-value of 0.152; $p > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences in anxiety levels based on age. In conclusion recognizing and addressing anxiety can help players maintain their mental well-being and optimize their performance on the court. Seeking support and employing effective coping strategies are key to managing anxiety effectively.

Keywords: Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, Somatic Anxiety, Tennis

Introduction

Anxiety is a common psychological phenomenon that affects individuals in various aspects of life, including sports. In the context of sports, anxiety refers to the feelings of apprehension, worry, and nervousness experienced by athletes before, during, or after competition. It can have a significant impact on an athlete's performance, overall well-being, and enjoyment of the sport (Brandt et al., 2019).

Anxiety in sports is a psychological phenomenon that affects athletes at various levels of competition. It is characterized by feelings of apprehension, worry, and nervousness, which can significantly impact an athlete's performance and overall well-being. Understanding anxiety in sports is crucial for coaches, athletes, and sports psychologists to effectively manage and support athletes in their pursuit of success, (Ismailova et al., 2023)

Meanwhile, anxiety in tennis is a prevalent issue that many players, both professional and recreational, face. Tennis is a sport that requires mental focus, physical skill, and strategic thinking, making it susceptible to triggering anxiety in players. Understanding anxiety in tennis is essential for players, coaches, and sports psychologists to help athletes manage their emotions and perform at their best on the court, (Khilman & Sriwahyuniati, 2019)

One common form of anxiety in tennis is pre-match anxiety. Before a match, players may experience feelings of nervousness, worry, and tension. The pressure to perform well, the fear of making mistakes, and the anticipation of the upcoming competition can all contribute to heightened anxiety levels. This pre-match anxiety can have physical manifestations, such as increased heart rate, sweaty palms, and butterflies in the stomach. These symptoms can potentially interfere with a player's ability to concentrate, execute shots effectively, and make sound decisions during gameplay. Another type of anxiety in tennis is performance anxiety, which occurs during the match itself. Performance anxiety can arise when players feel overwhelmed by the expectations placed upon them, either from themselves or from others. The fear of failure, the desire to meet or exceed past performances, and the scrutiny from spectators or coaches can all contribute to performance anxiety. When experiencing performance anxiety, players may become self-conscious, overly critical of their mistakes, and struggle to maintain focus and confidence, ultimately affecting their overall performance on the court, (Fuentes-García et al., 2022)

Situational anxiety is also prevalent in tennis, particularly in critical moments during a match. Serving for the match, facing break points, or competing in tiebreakers can create intense pressure and trigger situational anxiety. The fear of losing or the importance of the moment can lead to heightened stress levels, making it challenging for players to execute their shots with precision and composure. Moreover, tennis players may also experience anxiety related to their ranking, future opportunities, or the potential judgment from others. The competitive nature of the sport, where players are constantly striving for improvement and success, can contribute to an ongoing sense of anxiety about performance and future outcomes.

To address anxiety in tennis, players can benefit from various strategies and techniques. Sports psychologists often work with tennis players to develop mental skills that help manage anxiety, such as relaxation techniques, visualization, positive self-talk, and goal setting. These strategies can assist players in calming their minds, staying present, and maintaining focus during matches.

Coaches also play a crucial role in supporting players' mental well-being. Creating a positive and supportive training environment, fostering open communication channels, and providing constructive feedback can help alleviate anxiety and build confidence in players. Additionally, incorporating mindfulness practices and emphasizing the enjoyment of the game

rather than solely focusing on results can help reduce anxiety levels in tennis players. Encouraging players to focus on the process, rather than fixating on outcomes, can shift their mindset and alleviate unnecessary pressure.

Overall anxiety in tennis is a common challenge that affects players at all levels of the sport. Pre-match anxiety, performance anxiety, and situational anxiety can all impact a player's performance and enjoyment of the game. By understanding the different forms of anxiety in tennis and implementing effective strategies, players, coaches, and sports psychologists can help athletes manage their anxiety, maintain focus, and perform at their best on the tennis court.

Objective and Significance

So, this survey study focused on identified answers for objectives and research questions as mentioned in table 1.

Table 1

Research Objective with Its Significance

Research Objective	Research Questions
Identifying the levels of anxiety among tennis players in Sabah.	What is the level of anxiety among tennis players in Sabah?
Identifying the differences in anxiety levels based on age among tennis players in Sabah.	Are there any differences in anxiety levels based on age among tennis players in Sabah?

Material and Method

A) Design of Study

The design of this study is quantitative and utilizes the survey research method. This method is employed to measure the levels of anxiety among tennis players. This survey study is an inferential study that utilizes quantitative data collected through questionnaires. The data obtained from the random sample is then analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics and significance tests. The results of the statistical tests will provide conclusions regarding the characteristics of the studied population.

B) Sampling Method

Sampling is related to the process of selecting subjects from a population to be participants in the study. In this study, the sample consists of 60 male tennis players. All of these players represent their respective clubs and academies. The study was conducted during the Sabah Games Competition held in 2019. These tennis players have more than 10 years of experience and have participated in several national and international tournaments.

C) Research Instrument

The instrument used to measure anxiety is the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 Revised (CSAI-2R) (Cox et al., 2003), which has been translated by Norsilwati (2011) and will be utilized in this study. This questionnaire has been found to have validity coefficients Cox et al (2003) and reliability values reported by Norsilwati (2011) for each construct, namely, cognitive anxiety 0.91, somatic anxiety 0.85, and self-confidence 0.86, with an overall validity coefficient

of 0.95. The questionnaire employs a four-point scale to determine the subjects' responses to the presented items, ranging from Not at all (1), a Little (2), Moderately (3), to Very much (4). The CSAI-2R questionnaire, version 2, is used to measure state anxiety. The questionnaire consists of 25 items that measure three constructs: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence.

D) Research Findings

A total of 60 tennis players who participated in the Sabah Games competition were involved in this study. Out of the 60 players, 12 players were under 15 years old, 18 players were between 15 and 18 years old, and 30 players were between 18 and 21 years old. However, the research findings indicate that only five players had less than three years of experience in tennis, while 55 players had more than three years of experience.

Meanwhile, the level of anxiety among tennis players was measured through 25 items contained in the questionnaire. Cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence were measured in this study. The findings in Table 1 indicate that the level of cognitive anxiety is high with a mean score of 3.89 (SD=0.898), followed by somatic anxiety with a mean score of 3.69 (SD=0.258), and self-confidence is at a low level with a mean score of 1.59 (SD=0.186).

Table 2

The Level of anxiety among tennis players

Anxiety	Min	Sisihan Piawai
1. cognitive anxiety	3.89	0.898
2. somatic anxiety	3.69	0.258
3. self-confidence	1.59	0.186

Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to answer the second research question, which is to identify differences in anxiety levels based on age among tennis players in Sabah. The research findings indicate that there are no significant differences in anxiety levels among tennis players based on age. The mean score for players under 15 years old is 3.56 (SD=0.301), for players under 18 years old is 3.68 (SD=0.202), and for players under 21 years old is 3.63 (SD=0.173). The calculated F-value is 27.38 with a p-value of 0.152; $p > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences in anxiety levels based on age.

Table 3

Differences in anxiety levels among tennis players based on age.

Anxiety	N	Min	Standard deviation	F	Sig
1. Under 15 years old	12	3.56	0.301	27.38	0.152
2. Under 18 years old	18	3.68	0.202		
3. Under 21 years old	30	3.63	0.173		

Motivation and Contribution

The study on anxiety levels among male tennis players in Sabah has significant motivation and contribution to the field of sports psychology and athlete well-being

The study aims to provide insights into the anxiety levels experienced by male tennis players in Sabah. By assessing anxiety, researchers can gain a better understanding of the psychological well-being of athletes in a specific region or sport. This information is crucial for identifying potential areas of concern and developing targeted interventions.

The study's findings can contribute to the development of tailored support and interventions for male tennis players in Sabah. Different athletes may have unique anxiety triggers and coping mechanisms, and understanding these factors can help sports psychologists, coaches, and trainers design effective strategies to manage anxiety. By addressing anxiety at the regional level, the study contributes to enhancing athlete well-being and performance in the specific context of Sabah. The study can inform the development of training programs that target anxiety management in male tennis players.

Coaches and trainers can utilize the findings to incorporate specific mental skills training and relaxation techniques into their coaching practices. By integrating psychological support alongside physical training, the study promotes a holistic approach to athlete development and performance enhancement. Anxiety is a prevalent mental health concern in sports. By shedding light on anxiety levels among male tennis players in Sabah, the study contributes to raising awareness about the importance of mental health in athletic populations. This awareness can help reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues, encourage open discussions, and foster a supportive environment for athletes to seek help when needed. The study focuses on male tennis players in Sabah, providing insights into anxiety levels within a specific geographic and sport-related context. This localized perspective is valuable as it highlights the unique challenges and factors that may influence anxiety in this particular group. The findings can serve as a basis for further research and contribute to the body of knowledge on anxiety in sports. In summary, the study on anxiety levels among male tennis players in Sabah is motivated by the desire to understand the psychological well-being of athletes in a specific region and contribute to tailored support, training programs, mental health awareness, and knowledge expansion in the field of sports psychology. By addressing anxiety within this context, the study aims to enhance the overall well-being and performance of male tennis players in Sabah.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study focused on examining anxiety levels among tennis players in Sabah and their potential association with age. The findings revealed interesting insights regarding the prevalence of different types of anxiety and the influence of age on anxiety levels. Firstly, the results indicated that cognitive anxiety was reported to be high among the tennis players, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.89 (SD=0.898). Cognitive anxiety refers to the psychological aspect of anxiety, such as worrying thoughts and fear of failure. This finding suggests that the players may experience a significant amount of mental pressure and apprehension while participating in tennis activities. Secondly, somatic anxiety, which relates to the physical symptoms of anxiety like increased heart rate and muscle tension, was reported to have a mean score of 3.69 (SD=0.258). This implies that the players may also experience physiological manifestations of anxiety during their tennis performance.

On the other hand, self-confidence levels were found to be relatively low among the tennis players, with a mean score of 1.59 (SD=0.186). Self-confidence is an important psychological factor that contributes to optimal performance in sports. The low self-confidence levels suggest that the players may have doubts about their abilities and may struggle with maintaining a positive mindset on the tennis court. Furthermore, the study investigated the potential influence of age on anxiety levels among the tennis players. A one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted, and the results revealed a calculated F-value of 27.38 with a p-value of 0.152 ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that there were no significant differences in anxiety levels based on age. In other words, age does not appear to be a determining factor when it comes to anxiety levels among the tennis players in Sabah.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for tennis players to recognize and address anxiety in order to maintain their mental well-being and optimize their performance on the court. Strategies to manage anxiety can include seeking support from coaches, sports psychologists, or other mental health professionals who can provide guidance and support. Additionally, implementing effective coping strategies such as deep breathing exercises, visualization techniques, and positive self-talk can help players manage anxiety more effectively. Moreover, efforts should be made to enhance self-confidence among the players. This can be achieved through various means such as goal-setting, positive reinforcement, and building a supportive team environment. Boosting self-confidence can have a positive impact on anxiety reduction and overall performance improvement. It is important to note that this conclusion is based on the specific context of tennis players in Sabah and the findings of this particular study. Further research is encouraged to explore anxiety levels among tennis players in different regions or populations, as well as to investigate other potential factors that may influence anxiety in the sport of tennis.

In conclusion, recognizing and addressing anxiety is crucial for tennis players in Sabah to maintain their mental well-being and optimize their performance. While cognitive anxiety was found to be high, somatic anxiety was also prevalent, and self-confidence was reported to be low. However, age was not found to be a significant factor influencing anxiety levels. By seeking support and employing effective coping strategies, tennis players can effectively manage their anxiety and strive for improved performance on the court.

Overall, the study on anxiety levels among male tennis players in Sabah contributes to the understanding of anxiety in sports and provides valuable insights for the development of targeted interventions. By addressing anxiety at the regional and sport-specific level, the study aims to enhance the overall well-being and performance of male tennis players in Sabah, while also contributing to the broader field of sports psychology.

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