THE EFFECTS OF SELF-EFFICACY
ON
SPORTS COMPETITION ANXIETY

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The Effects of Self-Efficacy on
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There have been several studies of the effects of different personality traits on anxiety. Nelson and Langer (1963) used the Cattel 16 PF and factor analysis of team profiles to show successful football players tended to be bolder, egotistically stronger and below average in anxiety fluctuations than unsuccessful players. Oglivie (1968) tested college aged students using the Cattel 16 PF and found the highest correlation was between anxiety and emotional stability, indicating a relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety. A study by Scanlan and Passer (1978) found that several intrapersonal factors were related to pregame anxiety in eleven to twelve year olds. An inverse relationship between self-esteem and pregame anxiety was revealed. Studies by Epstein and O'Brien (1974) on college students have led Epstein to theorize that negative changes in self-esteem produce increases in anxiety. He states anxiety is a result of conflict about inner valuation. Sarason has also theorized that anxiety and self-efficacy are negatively correlated.

The Physical Self-Efficacy Scale (PSE) was developed by Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1974) to measure self-consciousness, "the consistent tendency of persons to direct attention inward or outward." (p. 522) The scale considers individual differences in self-consciousness from the extreme of the obsessive person who is constantly assessing his inner feelings to the other
extreme of the person who has an almost absence of self-consciousness.

The Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) is an inventory developed by Martens (1977) to assess competitive trait anxiety. "Competitive A-trait is defined as a tendency to perceive competitive situations as threatening and to respond to these situations with feelings of apprehension or tension." (p. 23) The SCAT measures individual differences in these tendencies.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of self-efficacy on sports competition anxiety. It was predicted that subjects with a higher level of self-efficacy would show a lower level of competitive trait anxiety than those who had a lower level of self-efficacy.

METHOD

Subjects:

A total of 43 introductory psychology students at a large midwestern university were given both the SCAT and the PSE. The students were volunteers from the class who chose to participate in the experiment.

Instruments:

The SCAT was used to measure competitive trait anxiety. The scale consisted of ten items, each scored either 1 point for hardly ever, 2 for sometimes or 3 for often. Thus scores range from 10, which indicates low competitive trait anxiety, to 30, which indicates high competitive trait anxiety.
The PSE was concerned with three aspects of self-consciousness. The private self-consciousness factor measured feelings about the self. The public self-consciousness factor evaluated the self and its social relationship to others. And the social anxiety factor considered the uncomfortable feelings associated with group interactions. The scale consisted of 23 items, each individually scored from 0 (extremely uncharacteristic) to 4 (extremely characteristic).

**Procedure:**
Tests were administered to students from a large introductory psychology class. The SCAT was disguised as the Illinois Competitive Questionaire. The PSE and the SCAT were distributed such that half of the subjects received the SCAT first while the others received the PSE first. Subjects were told to read the instructions and answer the tests as indicated. They were also told that results were confidential and participation was voluntary.

**RESULTS**
Of the 43 subjects, 13 were male and 30 were female. Since there were an insufficient number, the males were disregarded in the study. The scores from the total PSE scale were ranked highest to lowest and divided into thirds (high, medium and low). This was also done for each subscale of the PSE.

When analyzing for the total PSE scores, the mean for the SCAT for the high third was 26.9 (N=10) and for the low third
was 20.4 (N=10). Comparison indicated a significant difference between low self-confidence (high PSE) subjects and high self-confidence (low PSE) subjects, with low self-confidence subjects showing competitive trait anxiety, $t=3.74$, df=18. Similar results were found when the PSE was divided into its subscales. Comparison showed a significant difference between high and low private self-consciousness on competitive trait anxiety, $t=2.53$, df=18, between high and low public self-consciousness on competitive trait anxiety, $t=3.43$, df=18, and between high and low social anxiety on competitive trait anxiety, $t=2.41$, df=18. Table 1 summarizes these results.

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**DISCUSSION**

The findings obtained in this study indicate that females who are high in self-confidence will have low levels of competitive trait anxiety. These results are supported by studies by Epstein and O'Brien (1974) and Kappes (1979) who had found that high scores on the PAI (which indicate negative self-concept)
were associated with high anxiety. The findings from this study also indicate that private and public self-consciousness and social anxiety are all contributing factors in predicting competitive trait anxiety.

The indications are that the PSE could be used as a possible determinant of sports competition anxiety. This would be helpful to coaches who wished to test for sports competition anxiety without letting the players know they were being tested for anxiety. This would eliminate the anxiety introduced when subjects knowingly take anxiety tests.

Further studies should be done to investigate the possibility of these results also occurring for men. Another area of possible study is with younger subjects. This study could help to find if self-confidence is developed at a certain age by determining when self-confidence becomes a factor in predicting competitive trait anxiety.
REFERENCES


Oglivie, B.C. Psychological consistencies within the personality of high-level competition. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1968, vol 205, 156-162.
