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Perfectionistic Traits, Competitive Anxiety, and Self-esteem among Cricket Players

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Abstract

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem in cricket players. It was hypothesized that; (a) There is likely to be a significant relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem in cricket players; (b) Perfectionistic traits and competitive anxiety are likely to predict self-esteem in cricket players; and (c) There is likely to be gender differences in perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players. The study employed correlational research design and non-probability purposive sampling for data collection from (N=100) cricket players, both males (n=50) and females (n=50). The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Competitive Sport Anxiety Inventory-2, and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale measures were used. Results showed a significant positive correlation between perfectionistic traits on the levels of high personal standards, and concern with precision (perfectionistic striving) and self-esteem. Whereas, self-esteem is significantly negatively correlated with concern over mistakes and doubts, and concern with parents (perfectionistic concerns). The results also showed a significant negative correlation between competitive anxiety and self-esteem. Additionally, the results also indicated that high personal standards (subscale of perfectionist traits) positively predict self-esteem, while worry concerns (subscale of competitive anxiety) negatively predict self-esteem. Furthermore, the results indicated significant gender differences between excessive concerns with parents and high personal standards. Females were higher on the level of concerns with parents and high personal standards than males. The current study would be helpful in providing the basis for further empirical research.

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Keywords: competitive anxiety, cricket players, perfectionist's traits, self-esteem

Introduction

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) governs all official domestic competitions. Pakistan holds recognized status within both the Asian Cricket Council and the International Cricket Council. Throughout Pakistan, local cricket teams and informal contests are arranged in nearly every city. Children begin to play cricket at a very young age in Pakistan. Some of them pursue it professionally (as career) and strive for perfection to attain national or international recognition (Chunying & Ahmad, 2023).

Perfectionism, as a personality trait, is characterized by the pursuit of flawlessness and often involves a critical attitude towards imperfections (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). While moderate levels of perfectionism may serve as a positive motivator, it can hinder performance and may lead towards stress when becomes excessive. Thus, the ability to discern between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is crucial to understand its impact.

Perfectionism comprises two dimensions: one is perfectionist striving and second is perfectionist concerns. Perfectionist striving involves the pursuit of excellence and setting of high standards (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Conversely, Perfectionist concerns encompass self-criticism and anxiety regarding meeting these high standards (Gadde et al., 2017). A perfectionist is often driven by the desire for flawlessness, however, is simultaneously troubled by the fear of falling short of their expectations. Perfectionist striving embodies the adaptive aspect, or at least the absence of maladaptive traits, of perfectionism, reflecting the desire for perfection and the pursuit of excessively lofty goals. Conversely, Perfectionist concerns entail an ongoing and severe self-criticism, persistent worries about external criticism and expectations, as well as the inability to derive satisfaction from successful achievements, representing the maladaptive aspect of perfectionist tendencies (Vicent et al., 2022).

In cricket, players who aim for perfection may become overly fixated on their opponents while bowling or batting, preoccupied with their own performance (Brown, 2018). They perceive scrutiny from teammates, coaches, parents, and others in their circle, often leading towards self-doubts and fluctuating confidence levels (Brown, 2018). These individuals adhere to stringent standards, which may contribute to uncertainty, doubt,

and performance anxiety. Consequently, while excelling in practice sessions, they may falter during the actual competition (Sampson & Smith, 2019).

Competition anxiety refers to the state in which an athlete experiences symptoms of anxiety when confronted with high-stakes competition. In such instances, they may exhibit physical signs of anxiety including sweaty palms, shallow breathing, racing heart, and negative internal dialogues (Thander, 2023). Despite their skills and extensive physical trainings over months or even years to prepare for competition, the anxious athlete's mental state undermines their efforts. While training routines may replicate anxiety-inducing situations (Endo et al., 2023), situational factors, particularly high demanding conditions, such as the final putt in golf or the decisive throw in a basketball game, are challenging to replicate. This anxiety can be influenced by self-esteem and personality traits. Low self-esteem may contribute to heightened levels of competitive anxiety, as individuals may question their abilities and fear failure or negative assessment (Sanader et al., 2021).

High self-esteem typically possesses a more positive self-image, fostering high confidence in their abilities and a more optimistic perspective on their performances. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem may harbor doubts about their capabilities, leading towards anxiety or stress during performances, thereby negatively impacting their performances (Gabrys & Wontorczyk, 2023). It is important to recognize that the complex interplay among self-esteem, personality traits, and competitive anxiety is influenced by a range of factors. These include individual differences, life experiences, and contextual circumstances. Furthermore, external factors, such as teammates' and coaches' comments as well as performance results may alter one's sense of self, which, in turn, affects competitive anxiety. Undertaking investigations and utilizing certified psychological assessments tailored to these elements would be crucial in thoroughly investigating the ways in which these variables interact and impact cricket players' well-being and capabilities.

The current study examined the relationship between cricket players' competitive anxiety, self-esteem, and perfectionistic traits. Furthermore, gender differences in competitive anxiety, self-esteem, and perfectionistic traits among cricket players were also examined. With these considerations, following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: There is likely to be a significant relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players.

H2: Perfectionistic traits and competitive anxiety are likely to predict self-esteem in cricket players.

H3: There is likely to be gender differences on the level of perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players.

Method

Research Design

Correlational research design was used to investigate the relationship between three variables, namely perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem.

Sample

The sample of current study consisted of (*N*=100), cricketers, both males (*n*=50) and females (*n*=50). The sample size was determined using G-Power. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select sample of 100 cricketers. The data was collected from Lahore Lions Cricket Club, Lahore City Cricket Club, National Cricket Academy**,** and Lahore Cricket Academy. Participants were selected on the basis of following criteria:

Participants playing cricket under the age of 18-20 years were included in the current study because it is the significant developmental period in young adulthood. In this age they undergo many emotional and psychological changes as well as begin to experience more competition, and pressure to perform well which makes it a crucial period for investigating present study variables. Participants with at least one year of experience in a sports setting were included. The study exclusively focused on domestic cricket players residing in Lahore. Players who were not actively engaged and regularly practice in training sessions and competitive matches within the past 3 months were excluded. Players who have any history of psychological or health issues were also excluded. International players and who were ever played in international leagues were not included.

Table 1

Demographics Showing Sample Characteristics (N=100)

Demographics	*M(SD)*	*f (%)*
Age	18.94(0.76)	
Education		
Intermediate		49(49%)
Graduation		51(51%)
Gender		
Male		50(50%)
Female		50(50%)
Training years	2.08(1.12)	
Family support		
Yes		61(61%)
No		49(49%)
Level		
National		94(94%)
International		6(6%)

Assessment Measures

The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism

Perfectionism was assessed using the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale developed by Flett and Hewitt (2002). This scale comprises two dimensions: PS and PC. Originally, these dimensions were measured with four sub-scales of perfectionism: 1; Excessive concern with parents' expectations and evaluation, 2; Concern over mistakes and doubts about actions (perfection concerns), 3; Concern with precision, order, and organization 4; high personal standards, (perfection striving). The Cronbach's α coefficient showed a good internal consistency (α = 0.83) (Flett & Hewitt, 2002).

Competitive Sport Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2)

Competitive anxiety was evaluated using the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (Martens et al., 1990). This inventory subdivides anxiety into three components: somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and a related component-self-confidence. Self-confidence, which tends to counterbalance cognitive anxiety, plays a crucial role in stress management. The Competitive Sport Anxiety Inventory -2 was reported to have

acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficients between .74 and .92) (Martens et al., 1990).

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by Rosenberg in 1965. The scale is unidimensional. All items are rated using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale has good predictive validity, internal consistency, and test–retest reliability is in-between 0.82 to 0.88 and Cronbach's alpha is in-between 0.77 to 0.88 (Rosenberg, 1965).

Procedure

Following the finalization of the topic, institutional consent was obtained to conduct the study, verifying both the researcher's identity and research topic. Prior to utilizing assessment measures, permissions were obtained from the respective authors. This authorization was then presented to various heads of cricket academies for data collection purposes. Exclusion criteria for the study were identified and players were assured of confidentiality. Both verbal and written consent were obtained from each participant, with the research objectives thoroughly explained. Questionnaires were administered following brief instructions. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 20, involving both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were adhered to by clearly communicating the nature of the study to relevant authorities before seeking permission to use the scales. Permission from the scale authors was acquired via email before their utilization. Each participant received a consent form from the researcher, allowing them to grant permission. Data collection commenced officially after obtaining permission from all legitimate sources, with questionnaires distributed only to those meeting the specified criteria. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research if they felt uncomfortable during the research.

Results

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players. In this chapter, series of statistical analysis were conducted to test

hypotheses (i) Reliability analysis was carried out for each subscale and the values of their Cronbach's alpha were also reported (ii) Pearson product moment correlation was used to find the relationship among perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players (iii) Independent t-test was used to measure mean differences in males and females (iv) Regression analysis was used to predict the relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players.

Reliability Analysis

The reliably analysis for each assessment measure was carried out using Cronbach's alpha. Psychometric properties of perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem were examined.

Table 2

Psychometric Properties of Perfectionistic Traits, Competitive Anxiety, and Self-esteem (N=100)

Scale	*M*	*SD*	Range	*α*
Perfectionist's Traits				
Concern over mistakes and doubts	36.96	8.54	2.28-3.14	.52
Excessive concern with parents	28.06	7.13	2.76-3.4	.51
High personal standards	23.11	4.77	2.89-3.56	.53
Concern with precision	20.93	5.63	3.18-3.74	.59
Competitive Anxiety				
Worry score	22.67	5.77	2.23-2.88	.52
Concentration with disruption	22.63	5.66	2.14-2.97	.59
Somatic trait anxiety	23.52	4.74	2.29-3.04	.55
Self-Esteem	17.68	2.65	1.47-2.07	.63

Table 2 shows psychometric properties and reliability coefficients of all subscales of perfectionistic traits have acceptable reliability of (α=.52, α= .51, α=.53, and α=.59), respectively. Likewise, subscales of competitive anxiety (worry score, concentration with disruption, somatic trait anxiety) and self-esteem also showed acceptable reliability of (α=.52, α=.59, α=.55, and α=.63). These all scales have been originally developed for broader populations, applying them to a specific group of athletes with small age range could result in lower internal consistency as well as scales were not translated in Urdu to make it culturally adapted.

Table 3

Relationship between Perfectionistic Traits, Competitive Anxiety, and Self-Esteem among Cricket Players (N=100)

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Perfectionistic Traits								
1.Concerns over mistakes and doubts	-.52**	-.67***	-.79***	-.30**	-.50**	-.22*	-.40**	-
2.Excessive concern with parents	.41**	.61***	.27*	.23*	.39**	-.52**	-	
3.High personal standards	.25*	.32**	.15	.10	-.32**	-		
4.Concern with precision	.13	.31**	.14	.21*	-			
Competitive Anxiety								
5.Worry score	.23*	.20**	.43**	-				
6.Concentration with disruption	.33**	-.38**	-					
7.Somatic trait anxiety	-.30**	-						
8.Self-esteem	-							

Note. *p< .05. **p< .01. ***p< .001.

Pearson Product Analysis

The first hypothesis stated that there is likely to be a significant relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players. The results of Pearson product analysis are shown in Table 3.

The results of Pearson correlation showed that perfectionistic traits on the level of two subscales (high personal standards r = .43, p <.01, concerns with parents r = .21, p <.01) are significantly positively correlated with self-esteem. While, self-esteem was significantly negatively correlated with the other two subscales (concerns over mistakes and doubts r = -.30, p <.01, excessive concerns with parents r = -.38, p <.01).

Competitive anxiety (worry, concentration with disruption, and somatic trait anxiety) has a significant negative relationship with self-esteem, that is, (r = -.32, p<.01, r = -.52, p<.05, and r = -.40 p<.01), respectively.

Regression Analysis

It was hypothesized that the perfectionistic traits and competitive anxiety are likely to predict self-esteem among cricket players. Hierarchal regression was applied as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the Self-Esteem Predicted by Perfectionistic Traits and Competitive Anxiety (N=100)

Predictors	*B*	95% CI		*SE*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
Model 1							
Constant	14.48	12.42	16.54	1.0	-	.24	.24
Concern over mistakes and doubts	.01	-.03	.07	.02	.08		
Excessive concern with parents	.05	-.02	.14	.04	.18		
High personal standards	.20	-.07	.33	.06	.44		
Concern with precision	-.095	-.20	.012	.05	-.23		
Model 2							
Constant	15.49	12.75	18	1.37	-	.32	.08
Concern over mistake and doubt	.00	-.04	.05	.02	.03		
Excessive concern with parents	.06	-.01	.14	.04	.20		
High personal standards	.22	.10	.35	.06***	.50		
Concern with precision	-.08	-.19	.01	.52	-.21		
Worry score	-.23	-.37	-.09	.07	-.36**		
Concentration disruption score	.18	-.00	.38	.09	.20		
Somatic trait anxiety	.00	-.05	.07	.03	.02		

Note. *$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$.

In model 1, when perfectionistic traits and its subscales (concerns over mistakes and doubts, excessive concerns with parents, high Personal Standards, concerns with parents) were added, the overall model was significant F (4, 95) = 7.53, p=0.00. High personal standards came out as significant positive predictors of self-esteem and explained variance, that is, 20%.

In model 2, when competitive anxiety and its subscales were added (Worry score, concentration with disruption, somatic trait anxiety) as well

as self-esteem, the overall model was significant $F(3, 92) = 3.95$, $p=0.01$). High personal standards positively predict self-esteem, while worry concerns negatively predict self-esteem.

T-Test Analysis

It was hypothesized that there is likely to be a gender difference among perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players.

Table 5

Independent Sample t-test for Mean Differences in Perfectionistic Traits and Competitive Anxiety on the basis of Gender (N=100)

Scales	Males		Females		*t*	*p*	95% CI	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			LL	UL
Perfectionistic Traits								
Concern over mistake and doubt	32.10	9.78	35.46	8.87	-1.89	310	-7.24	.16
Excessive concern with parents	26.08	8.05	29.14	5.99	-2.15	.00	-5.87	-24
High personal standards	22.82	5.77	23.72	3.87	-.91	.00	-2.85	1.05
Concern with precision	19.50	5.70	22.62	4.98	-2.91	.10	-5.24	-.99
Competitive Anxiety								
Worry score	17.10	3.10	18.80	3.54	-2.55	.69	-3.02	-.37
Concentration disruption score	12.52	2.10	13.20	2.57	-1.44	.31	-1.61	.25
Somatic trait anxiety	22.72	6.94	24.90	6.76	-1.58	.87	-4.90	.54
Self-esteem	19.00	2.60	19.84	1.70	-1.90	-.06	-1.71	.03

Table 5 depicts that t-test independent sample revealed significant gender differences on the level of excessive concerns with parents, (t=-2.15, p=.00), females (M=29.14, SD=5.99), and males (M=26.08, SD=8.05). Results also revealed significant gender differences on the level of high personal standards (t=-.91, p=.00), females (M=23.72, SD=3.87), and males (M=22.82, SD=5.77). Females were found to have more concerns for parents and high personal standards than males.

Discussion

The current study aimed to find out the relationship between perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players. The first

hypothesis suggests that there are different relationships between perfectionism and self-esteem depending on which aspects of perfectionism and self-esteem are examined. Decreased self-confidence and increased cognitive anxiety are correlated with negative perfectionism habits. Thus, anxiety related to sports is positively associated with certain types of perfectionistic traits, which are more common in people who use specific self-esteem techniques (Sanader et al., 2021).

According to Stoeber and Otto's (2006) review, perfectionism may be categorized into two main aspects: perfectionist concerns and perfectionist striving. These two aspects have different and distinct correlations with athletes' motivation, emotions, and performances. The review provides evidence to support this research by indicating that the only concerns that show distinct positive relationships with competitive anxiety, fear of failure, and avoidance goal orientations are perfectionistic concerns.

Striving for perfection shows distinct benefits in terms of self-assurance, optimism about future, goal orientation, and performance in training and competition. These results imply that although striving for perfection is maladaptive, it may also be a positive aspect of a healthy pursuit of excellence. Unanswered questions for further research were examined along with the consequences for applied sport psychology (Roy et al., 2023; Stoeber et al., 2007). Perfectionism and self-esteem were examined in a different study conducted by Flett and Hewitt (2014) in a sample of collegiate athletes. The results showed a positive correlation between both of them. Their research unveiled that athlete with higher levels of perfectionistic traits tended to exhibit elevated self-esteem.

Additionally, it was hypothesized that the perfectionist traits and competitive anxiety would likely predict self-esteem among cricket players. The outcomes support this hypothesis. Ghahramani et al. (2011) scrutinized the correlation between perfectionism and self-esteem in student athletes and findings showed that the level of self-esteem increased by positive perfectionism and decreased by negative perfectionism. Sanader et al. (2021) explored the link between competitive anxiety and self-esteem in youth athletes, revealing that individuals experiencing higher levels of competitive anxiety tended to have lower self-esteem. A study on athletes' self-confidence and competitive anxiety was conducted by Marín-Gonzalez et al. (2022). Their levels of physical and cognitive anxiety were higher, according to the research. Higher levels of self-confidence and lower levels

of somatic and cognitive anxiety were observed in the elite athletes. Lastly, a negative correlation was found between the symptoms associated with anxiety and self-confidence, and a positive correlation with competitive anxiety.

Moreover, it was hypothesized that gender differences might exist concerning perfectionistic traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players. Stoeber et al. (2007) conducted a study involving college athletes from various sports, encompassing both team and individual disciplines, where gender differences were observed in perfectionism and competitive anxiety. The results showed that female athletes displayed higher levels of socially prescribed perfectionism, reflecting perceived external expectations and demands. While male athletes showed higher degrees of self-oriented perfectionism in relation to their own goals and quest for greatness. As compared to their male counterparts, female athletes reported higher degrees of competitive anxiety.

These findings contributed to the comprehension of the interplay between perfectionist traits, competitive anxiety, and self-esteem among cricket players. The results suggested that competitive anxiety detrimentally affects self-esteem and positively predicts perfectionistic traits. Additionally, the research underscored gender differences in perfectionistic traits and competitive anxiety, emphasizing the need for tailored support for male and female players. A significant gender gap was evident in practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this present study enhance our understanding of the relationship and prediction between study variables; perfectionist's traits, competitive anxiety and self-esteem in cricket players. The results indicate that competitive anxiety negatively influence self-esteem and positively predicts perfectionist's traits. The study also highlights the gender differences in perfectionist's traits and competitive anxiety emphasizing the tailored support for male and female players. There was a significant gender difference in practice. These research findings have important practical implications for practitioners, sports coaches and psychologists in developing technique, interventions and support programs to enhance cricketers' well-being and performance.

Suggestions and Limitations

The cricket players were exclusively selected from Lahore, suggesting that future data collection should encompass various cities to ensure a more diverse approach and broader generalization of results. The study employed a correlational research design, thereby limiting its ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships. It was recommended that future investigators should use experimental designs to quantify the causal relationships between the research variables. Furthermore, qualitative study is needed to improve the comprehension of competitive anxiety, self-esteem, and perfectionist attitudes. For research in this field to advance, it is essential that measures of these variables be developed nationally and with reliability.

Contributions and Future Implications

Cricket players may anticipate improved performance on the field by resolving perfectionistic traits, controlling anxiety related to competition, and building self-esteem. Players' mental health can be improved by concentrating on these aspects since they assist with reducing anxiety, promote self-compassion, and foster optimism. Creating an environment where effort, support, and development are valued promotes improved cooperation and teamwork among players. Cricket players may benefit long-term by developing healthy perfectionism, self-esteem, and managing anxiety.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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