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EXPLORING GENDER-NEUTRAL SELF-CONFIDENCE LEVELS IN ADVENTURE SPORTS PARTICIPANTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess and compare the levels of self-confidence among male and female athletes participating in Cross-Country Mountaineering (CCM) and Skiing (SK) activities. A total of 40 subjects were selected from Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS) Himachal Pradesh, with equal representation from each gender within both CCM and SK categories. Self-confidence levels were measured using the SCI-RG questionnaire, and statistical analysis was conducted using one-way ANOVA. The results revealed a significant gender-based difference in self-confidence levels, with males exhibiting higher self-confidence than females. These findings support existing research on gender disparities in sports-related self-confidence and suggest that various sociocultural, psychological, and sport-specific factors may contribute to these differences. Future investigations should further explore these factors to enhance support for athletes in both CCM and SK, irrespective of their gender, in their pursuit of optimal performance and personal growth.

Keywords: Self-Confidence; Athletes; Mental Health; Adventure sports; Cross Country Mountaineering; Skiing.

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Introduction

Coaches universally regard self-confidence as a paramount attribute significantly influencing the quality of athletic performance. Psychologists conceptualize self-confidence as a facet of self-awareness that is epitomized by an individual's unwavering belief in possessing the qualities necessary to exert precise control over the outcomes of their endeavours, moulding them to align with their preferences and desirables (Havelka, 1992; as cited in Bačanac, 2014, p. 58). Within the context of sports, self-confidence manifests itself during athletic situations and signifies the extent to which an athlete believes in their capacity to achieve success in their sporting pursuits. Various theoretical frameworks have been employed to define and assess self-confidence in sports, with many sport psychologists, particularly those engaged in applied consultancy, considering it a pivotal component in mental training programs tailored for athletes. Athletes themselves underscore the pivotal role of self-confidence as a mental trait crucial for success in their respective sporting disciplines, particularly when it is characterized by high levels of stability and resilience against fluctuations (Bačanac, 2017). Consequently, aspiring young athletes, driven by talent and ambition, aspire to fortify their inherently delicate and fluctuating self-confidence (Vealey, R. 2009).), thereby rendering it more robust, steadfast, and resilient.Within the realm of self-confidence research in sports, two predominant theoretical models have gained prominence: Bandura's self-efficacy model and Vealey's multi-dimensional sport self-confidence model, which evolved following the revision of her earlier framework delineating features and states of sport self-confidence (Račdc, 2013). The exploration of self-confidence in sports commenced during the 1970s, initially focusing on individuals not engaged in professional sports. These early investigations cantered on the impact of self-confidence on motor skills, consistently revealing that self-confidence significantly bolstered performance in motor tasks. Subsequently, during the 1980s, a substantial body of research delved into the interplay between self-confidence and athletic performance within the competitive arena (Vealey, 2009, p. 46). Notably, in Serbia, research on self-confidence has been undertaken by the Republic Sport Agency, with key contributions from psychologist-researchers such as

Ljubiša Lazarević and Ljubica Bačanac, who concurrently serve as researchers and educators in this domain.However, recent scholarship has witnessed an exploration of the nexus between self-confidence and sports performance, as undertaken by various researchers who have consequently advocated for further investigations in this domain (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019). Despite this burgeoning interest, a comprehensive analysis of self-confidence in adventure sports remains notably scarce within the existing literature.Thus, the primary objective of this study is to assess the levels of self-confidence among athletes engaged in Cross Country Mountaineering (CCM) and Skiing (SK), with a particular emphasis on the gender-neutral aspect of this analysis. By comparing and contrasting the self-confidence levels within these two distinct sports, we aim to contribute valuable insights to the burgeoning field of adventure sports psychology (Sharma, A., &Purashwani, P. 2021). This study endeavours to bridge the gap in the current research landscape and expand our understanding of self-confidence in the context of adventure sports.

Methodology

Selection of the subject

In order to fulfil the objectives of the study, a total of 40 participants N-20male and N-20female (CCM- 10 Male, 10 female and SK-10male, 10 female) were carefully selected from Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS) Himachal Pradesh. The selection of these individuals was done with great attention to ensure a diverse and representative sample. The age range of the participants was set between 17 and 25 years, ensuring a relatively homogeneous group in terms of age.

Procedure

The SCI-RG questionnaire was used tomeasure theself-confidence level. The subjects had given their response to 56 statements of the questionnaire related to self-confidence. There was no time limit provided for the response and instructions were clearly given before filling the questionnaire.

Statistical Technique

First, normality assumption of data was checked by kolmogorov Smirnov (Das &Jhajharia, 2022) and Shapiro-Wilk test (Das et al., 2023). The assumptions of normality were not violated, thus parametric test was implemented (Das &Jhajharia, 2022a), to compare between games and gender one way ANOVA and LDS test was applied with the help of SPSS Version 26.

Results

Table 1.Descriptive statistics of self-confidence

Variable	Game & Gender	N	Mean ± S. D	S. E	Min	Max
Self Confidence	CCMMale	10	24.48 ± 1.66	.30	19.00	26.00
	CCMFemale	10	22.32 ± 2.10	.36	19.50	27.40
	SK Male	10	24.45 ± 1.96	.38	19.30	25.09
	SK Female	10	22.98 ± 1.36	.26	19.34	26.08
	Total	40	23.31 ± 2.65	.20	19.54	27.10

Table 1. demonstrate the descriptive statistics of self-confidence among the male and female in their respective sports. CCM male athletes having mean ±S. D: 24.48 ± 1.66, S. E:.30 and maximum and minimum score respectively 19.00 to 26.00. CCM female athletes having mean ±S. D:24.32 ± 2.10, S. E:.36,maximum and minimum score respectively19.50 to27.40. whereas SK male having mean ±S. D: 24.45 ± 1.96S. E .38,maximum and minimum score respectively19.30 to25.09. SK female having mean ± S. D: 22.98 ± 1.36; S.E:.26;maximum and minimum score respectively:19.34 to 26.08.

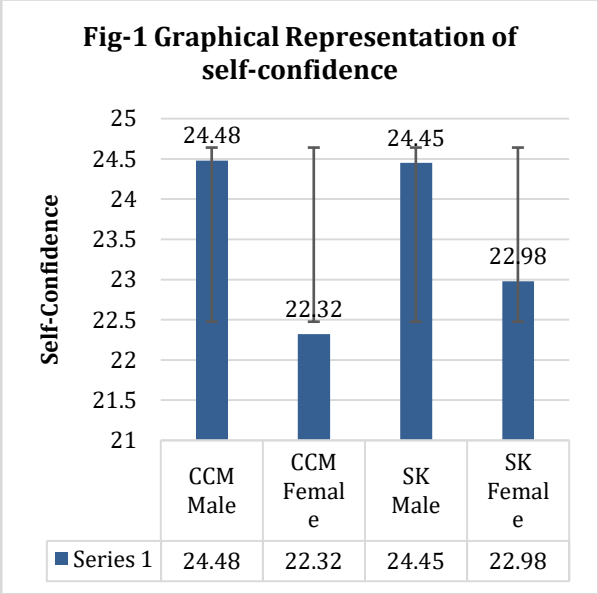

Figure-1 displays a graph depicting the average self-confidence scores of male and female players in the sports of CCM and SK. The graph reveals that male CCM players exhibited notably higher levels of self-confidence compared to players in the other categories.

Table 2.ANOVA mean comparison of self-confidence

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-Confidence	Between Groups	79.310	3	26.437	7.41	.08
	Within Groups	342.080	36	3.563		
	Total	421.390	39			

Table 2. provided compares the mean differences of self-confidence between male and female players in the sports of CCM and SK. From the p-value it was observed that self-confidence p-value 0.08, which higher than 0.05 that

indicate there was no significant difference among the groups.

Table 3.Post Hoc comparison of Self-Confidence group means using LSD test

Dependent Variable	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Self-Confidence	CCM Male	CCMFemale	-1.44*	.53392	.008*	-2.4998	-.3802
		SK Male	0.32	.53392	.550	-.7398	1.3798
		SK Female	1.00	.53392	.064	-.0598	2.0598
	CCMFemale	SK Male	1.76*	.53392	.001*	.7002	2.8198
		SK Female	2.44	.53392	.069	1.3802	3.4998
	SK Male	SK Female	1.35*	.53392	.040*	-.8798	1.7398

Table 3 demonstrate the CCM male and CCM female (p-Value .008), CCM female and SK male (p-value .001), and SK male and SK female (.004) had significant difference in self-confidence, as the p-values were less than 0.05.Where between male from both the sports and between female from both the sports did not show any significant difference, as the p-value is greater than 0.05.

Discussion

The examination of self-confidence in the context of Cross-Country Mountaineering (CCM) and Skiing (SK) athletes has yielded valuable insights, and the results indicate notable gender differences in self-confidence levels among these respective sports (Vealey, R. 2001). This finding aligns with prior research that has explored the relationship between gender and self-confidence in sports. Previous studies have consistently indicated that gender can be a significant factor influencing self-confidence in athletic contexts. For instance, research by Jones and Lavallee (2009) found that male athletes tend to exhibit higher levels of self-confidence compared to their female counterparts in various sports, including those involving endurance activities like skiing. This difference in self-confidence can often be attributed to a complex interplay of sociocultural, psychological, and environmental factors. Furthermore, the nature of the sports themselves may contribute to the observed gender differences in self-confidence (Sharma, A., & Prasad, B. K. 2023). In CCM and SK, athletes often face distinct challenges and requirements. Skiing, for instance, may demand a high degree of physical strength and technical skill, which could potentially boost the self-confidence of male athletes who have historically dominated this sport. On the other hand, Cross Country Mountaineering may emphasize endurance and mental resilience, which could influence self-confidence differently for female athletes who excel in this discipline. The gender disparities in self-confidence within these sports may also be influenced by societal perceptions and expectations. Research by Smith and Martin (2016) highlighted the role of societal gender norms and stereotypes in shaping athletes' self-perceptions and confidence levels. Such perceptions can affect the opportunities and support available to athletes, which in turn can influence their self-confidence. It's essential to recognize that self-confidence is a multifaceted construct influenced by a multitude of factors beyond gender, including coaching support, competitive experience, and individual personality traits. Thus, further research should delve deeper into these variables to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms driving the observed gender differences in self-confidence among CCM and SK athletes.

In conclusion, the significant gender differences in self-confidence among Cross Country Mountaineering and Skiing athletes align with prior research on gender and self-confidence in sports. These disparities may be influenced by a combination of sociocultural, psychological, and sport-specific factors. Future studies should continue to investigate these factors to better support athletes in both CCM and SK, regardless of their gender, in their pursuit of peak performance and personal development.

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