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Gender Differences in Coping Behaviour, Motivation and Coping Effectiveness Among Maharashtra Wrestlers

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Abstract

The psychological demands of competitive sports have increased substantially in recent years, making coping behaviour, motivation, and coping effectiveness critical determinants of athletic success. Wrestling is a physically and psychologically demanding sport that requires athletes to manage competitive pressure, emotional stress, performance expectations, and training-related challenges. The present study examines gender differences in coping behaviour, motivation, stress and pressure, and coping effectiveness among Maharashtra wrestlers competing at district, state, and national levels. A sample of 500 wrestlers participated in the study. Descriptive statistics, two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Tukey's post hoc tests were employed to examine differences across gender and playing levels. The findings revealed significant gender differences in overall coping strategies, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, stress and pressure, and coping effectiveness. Male wrestlers demonstrated higher coping strategy scores, greater extrinsic motivation, and superior coping effectiveness compared to female wrestlers. Female wrestlers exhibited higher levels of intrinsic motivation across all dimensions. Playing level emerged as a highly significant factor influencing coping strategies and motivation, with national-level wrestlers demonstrating stronger coping abilities than district- and state-level competitors. The findings highlight the importance of psychological training and gender-sensitive interventions in competitive wrestling. The study contributes to sports psychology literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the relationship between coping behaviour, motivation, and performance among wrestlers.

Keywords: Coping Behaviour, Motivation, Coping Effectiveness, Wrestling, Gender Differences, Sports Psychology, Maharashtra Wrestlers

Introduction

Competitive sport is increasingly recognized as a domain in which psychological factors play a crucial role in determining athletic performance. Success in sport depends not only on physical fitness, technical skills, and tactical knowledge but also on an athlete's ability to manage stress, maintain motivation, and effectively cope with challenging situations. Wrestling, one of the oldest and most physically demanding sports, requires athletes to demonstrate extraordinary levels of mental toughness, emotional stability, and psychological resilience.

Wrestlers regularly encounter numerous stressors, including rigorous training schedules, competitive expectations,

weight management demands, fear of injury, performance pressure, and uncertainty regarding future success. The manner in which athletes cope with these challenges significantly influences their performance outcomes and psychological well-being. Consequently, coping strategies have become a major area of investigation in sports psychology.

Coping behaviour refers to the cognitive and behavioural efforts employed by individuals to manage stressful situations. Athletes who possess effective coping mechanisms are generally better equipped to regulate emotions, maintain concentration, recover from setbacks, and perform consistently under pressure. Motivation

represents another critical psychological factor influencing sports participation and achievement. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation contribute to athletic engagement, persistence, and performance.

Gender has emerged as an important determinant of psychological functioning in sports. Male and female athletes often experience competition differently and may adopt distinct coping mechanisms and motivational orientations. Understanding these differences is essential for developing effective psychological interventions and coaching strategies. The present study therefore examines gender differences in coping behaviour, motivation, stress and pressure, and coping effectiveness among Maharashtra wrestlers.

Objectives of the Study

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine gender differences in coping strategies among Maharashtra wrestlers.
2. To investigate differences in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation between male and female wrestlers.
3. To evaluate stress and pressure levels among wrestlers across gender groups.
4. To assess coping effectiveness among male and female wrestlers.
5. To determine the influence of playing level on coping behaviour and motivation.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research design. A total of 500 wrestlers from Maharashtra participated in the investigation. Participants represented district, state, and national levels of competition and included both male and female wrestlers. Standardized psychological instruments were employed to measure coping strategies, sport motivation, stress and pressure, and coping effectiveness. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were calculated to examine group differences. Inferential statistics included Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's post hoc tests. The independent variables were gender and playing level, while the dependent variables included coping strategies, motivation, stress and pressure, and coping effectiveness. Statistical significance was tested at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

Results and Analysis

The results revealed noticeable gender differences in coping strategies among Maharashtra wrestlers.

Table 1: Gender Differences in Coping Strategies

Coping Strategy	Female	Male
Commitment	4.08	4.36
Control	4.00	4.16
Challenge	3.74	4.13
Total Coping	11.82	12.64

Male wrestlers scored higher than female wrestlers across all coping dimensions. The highest gender difference was observed in the challenge dimension, suggesting that male athletes were more likely to interpret competitive situations as opportunities rather than threats. Female wrestlers also demonstrated strong coping abilities, particularly in

commitment, indicating dedication and perseverance toward training and competition.

The ANOVA results further confirmed significant gender differences in total coping strategies ($F = 8.249$, $p < .01$). Playing level produced an even stronger effect ($F = 101.569$, $p < .001$), indicating that competitive experience substantially enhances coping capabilities.

The analysis demonstrated a progressive increase in coping abilities across playing levels.

Table 2: Playing Level Differences in Coping Strategies

Playing Level	Total Coping Mean
District	10.07
State	11.67
National	14.97

National-level wrestlers displayed the highest coping strategy scores, followed by state-level and district-level competitors. The findings suggest that competitive exposure contributes significantly to the development of coping mechanisms. National-level athletes appear more capable of managing adversity, controlling emotions, and viewing challenges positively.

Tukey's post hoc analysis revealed significant differences between all three playing levels, indicating a clear progression in coping abilities from district to national competition.

Intrinsic motivation was assessed across three dimensions: motivation to know, motivation to accomplish, and motivation to experience stimulation.

Table 3: Gender Differences in Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation	Female	Male
IM to Know	22.63	21.53
IM to Accomplish	22.60	21.54
IM to Experience Stimulation	22.56	21.43

Female wrestlers consistently reported higher intrinsic motivation scores than male wrestlers. These findings indicate that female athletes participate in wrestling primarily because of personal satisfaction, enjoyment, skill development, and self-improvement. Female wrestlers appear more internally driven and psychologically engaged in their sporting activities.

The ANOVA analysis confirmed significant gender differences across all intrinsic motivation dimensions. For example, intrinsic motivation to know produced a significant gender effect ($F = 15.584$, $p < .001$). Similar significant findings were obtained for intrinsic motivation to accomplish and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation. Interestingly, intrinsic motivation demonstrated a declining pattern across playing levels.

Table 4: Playing Level Differences in Intrinsic Motivation

Dimension	District	State	National
IM to Know	23.45	21.97	20.83
IM to Accomplish	23.60	22.00	20.62
IM to Experience Stimulation	23.60	21.87	20.52

District-level wrestlers reported the highest intrinsic motivation, while national-level athletes reported the lowest. This pattern suggests that athletes entering competitive

wrestling may initially be driven by enjoyment and personal interest. As athletes progress to higher levels, external rewards, recognition, and performance expectations may increasingly influence participation.

Extrinsic motivation was measured through identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation.

Table 5: Gender Differences in Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic Motivation	Female	Male
Identified	23.19	24.28
Introjected	23.30	23.99
External Regulation	23.60	24.39

Male wrestlers exhibited higher extrinsic motivation than female wrestlers across all dimensions. This finding suggests that external rewards such as medals, recognition, financial incentives, and competitive success play a stronger motivational role among male athletes.

ANOVA results confirmed significant gender differences in identified motivation ($F = 24.043, p < .001$) and introjected motivation ($F = 11.712, p < .001$). Playing level also exerted a strong influence on extrinsic motivation. National-level wrestlers displayed significantly higher extrinsic motivation than district-level competitors.

The study also examined amotivation or lack of motivation

Table 6: Lack of Motivation

Variable	Female	Male
Lack of Motivation	11.54	13.27

Male wrestlers reported higher levels of amotivation compared to female wrestlers. Although male athletes demonstrated stronger extrinsic motivation, they also appeared more vulnerable to periods of psychological disengagement. This finding suggests that reliance on external rewards may occasionally undermine sustained psychological commitment.

Stress and pressure represent significant challenges in competitive wrestling.

Table 7: Stress and Pressure

Variable	Female	Male
Stress and Pressure	24.18	25.29

Male wrestlers reported higher levels of stress and pressure than female wrestlers. Increased expectations, competitive demands, and performance responsibilities may contribute to these differences.

Table 8: Playing level analysis

Playing Level	Stress Mean
District	23.13
State	24.47
National	26.60

National-level wrestlers experienced the highest levels of stress and pressure, highlighting the psychological demands associated with elite competition.

Coping effectiveness reflects an athlete's ability to manage stress and adapt successfully.

Table 9: Coping Effectiveness

Variable	Female	Male
Coping Effectiveness	16.39	17.11

Male wrestlers demonstrated greater coping effectiveness than female wrestlers. These results suggest that male athletes may be more successful in applying coping strategies to manage competitive stress and performance demands.

Playing level comparisons showed a progressive increase in coping effectiveness:

Table 10: Playing level for coping effectiveness

Playing Level	Mean
District	15.42
State	16.92
National	17.92

National-level wrestlers reported the highest coping effectiveness, indicating that competitive experience enhances psychological adaptation and resilience.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that gender significantly influences coping behaviour, motivation, stress management, and coping effectiveness among Maharashtra wrestlers. Male wrestlers displayed stronger coping strategies, higher extrinsic motivation, greater stress levels, and superior coping effectiveness. Female wrestlers, however, exhibited stronger intrinsic motivation across all dimensions.

The higher coping strategy scores among male wrestlers may reflect greater confidence, perceived control, and willingness to embrace competitive challenges. These findings align with research suggesting that male athletes frequently utilize problem-focused coping strategies and perceive stressful situations as opportunities for achievement.

The elevated intrinsic motivation observed among female wrestlers suggests stronger internal engagement with the sport. Female athletes appear to participate in wrestling because of enjoyment, skill mastery, and personal satisfaction rather than external rewards. Such motivational orientations are generally associated with greater psychological well-being and long-term commitment.

The progression in coping effectiveness across playing levels highlights the importance of competitive experience. National-level wrestlers demonstrated stronger coping skills, greater confidence, and enhanced psychological resilience. Repeated exposure to high-pressure environments likely contributes to the development of effective coping mechanisms.

The increase in stress and pressure among national-level wrestlers reflects the growing demands associated with elite sport participation. While higher stress levels may present challenges, successful athletes appear capable of transforming these pressures into opportunities for growth and performance enhancement.

Conclusion

The present study investigated gender differences in coping

behaviour, motivation, stress and pressure, and coping effectiveness among Maharashtra wrestlers. Significant differences were observed across both gender and playing levels. Male wrestlers demonstrated stronger coping strategies, higher extrinsic motivation, greater stress levels, and superior coping effectiveness. Female wrestlers exhibited stronger intrinsic motivation across all dimensions.

Playing level emerged as the most influential factor affecting psychological functioning. National-level wrestlers consistently demonstrated stronger coping abilities and higher coping effectiveness than district- and state-level competitors. These findings emphasize the importance of psychological skill development, resilience training, and motivation enhancement programs within wrestling.

The study highlights the need for gender-sensitive coaching practices and psychological interventions that address the unique motivational and coping characteristics of athletes. Future research should continue exploring the complex relationships among coping behaviour, motivation, resilience, and performance in competitive sports.

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