

# Gender Difference in Perceived Level of Social Support among Corporate Cricket Players of Pakistan.

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## Abstract:

Social support is the key contributor in high performance of athletes for both males and females. Social support has wide array of sources such as perceived and actual support. The study aims to investigate the gender differences in perceived level of social support.

## Objective:

To determine the gender differences in perceived level of social support among corporate cricket players of Pakistan.

## Methods:

Stratified sampling method was used to conduct the survey. 176 corporate players were selected including male (n<sub>1</sub>=123) and female (n<sub>2</sub>=53). Enriched social support instrument (ESSI) (Vagallo, 2005) was used to collect the data from the respondents. SPSS version 20.0 was used to conduct the independent sample t test for gender analysis.

## Results:

Results revealed statistical significant difference in structural support of males (n=123, m=6.82, Sd=1.228) and females (n=53, m=6.11, Sd=1.25), p=0.001. On the other hand no statistical significant difference found in instrumental support of males (n=123, m=6.58, Sd=1.358) and females (n=53, m=6.26, Sd=1.546), p=0.186 and emotional support of males (n=123, m=6.63, Sd=1.351) and females (n=53, m=6.23, Sd=1.368), p=0.069

## Conclusions:

Study concluded that male and female corporate players have similarities in instrumental and emotional support but in structural support they have differences

## Keywords:

Structural support, Instrumental support, Emotional support, Corporate Cricket Players

## Introduction

“Social support is a help which individuals seek from others in time of need and endorsed the vitality of this psychosocial factor as one of the strong shield against

the detrimental effect of life stresses”.<sup>1</sup> Literature from the past endorsed the overwhelming role of social support in reducing stress. Rees and Hardy found that higher the level of social support protect the players from the detrimental effect of stress on performance as compare to those who experiences less stress.<sup>2</sup> These findings clearly indicates the importance of social support in professional sports in which athletes have to cope the demand of high performance and experience intense pressure”. Norris and Kaniasty, postulated wide array of social supports which individuals seek in time of need from the different available sources such as family, friends, teammates, coaches and trainers. Literature highlighted the two border domains of social support such as perceived social support and actual social support. “Actual support is the support an individual receives in terms of what is said, what is given and what is done for the individual. Actual support is an individual perception of availability of support. Perceived social support refers to an individual's belief that social support is available, is generally considered positive or negative and provides what is considered needed by the individual”.<sup>3</sup>

Pines et al. (1981) identified different domains of social support which individuals seek in time of need. Four of them are related to provide by concerned individuals such as friends, parents, family members and colleagues and two of them are related to technical experts such as coaches and teammates in which sports athlete participates. Coaches provide technical feedback support time to time in order to motivate, challenge and encourage the athletes to attain the right attitude and frame of mind and on the other hand team mates and friends provides shared social reality support that refers to support provided by the individuals from the same perspective, values, beliefs. Friends and teammates are major contributor in providing technical aid as well as mentoring and emotional aid when required by the athlete especially in adverse situations. Parental support is ranked secondary as compare to coaches and friends and team

mate's especially in providing technical feedback, listening and emotional support.<sup>4</sup> Blum et al. (2013) further pursued social support phenomenon and identified structural support and functional support<sup>5</sup> where "Structural support refers to network of people surrounding an individual and their size, type, density, and frequency of contact. Some examples are the frequency of interactions, the number of close contacts versus peripheral acquaintances, marital status, group or church memberships, and geographic location". Functional support is a support provided by the surrounding people. Functional support is multidimensional including Informational, Instrumental, Appraisal, Emotional and Financial support. Instrumental support refers to receiving help to complete tangible tasks. Financial support refers to receiving financial support. Informational support is provided in the form of necessary information. Appraisal support refers to help for evaluating a situation or information for self-evaluation.<sup>6</sup> Carhart & Ades. (1998) emphasized on the need of information support while facing adversity, especially when suffering from health problem or illness. Emotional support also provides the feeling of being loved and cared in the time of health problems and adversity.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this study was to explore the gender difference in perceived level of social support among corporate cricket players of Pakistan to find out the distinctive types of social supports where the male and female cricket players differs and have similarities.

## Methods:

Survey was conducted and stratified random sampling method was used and 176 corporate cricket players were selected males n1 (123) and females n2 (53) (Age 14-43, M= 26.65, SD=5.031). Data was collected from training grounds where the players were preparing themselves for the upcoming domestic championship season 2015-16. Sample consist of 38.63 % of batsmen, 25% fast bowlers, 2.84% spin bowlers, 27.84% all-rounder and 5.68% Wicket keeper /batsmen corporate players for the study. Enriched Social Support Instrument (ESSI) (Vaglio et al. 2004) was adopted to collect the data. SPSS 20.0 was used and independent sample t test was employed to find out the gender difference in perceived level of social support.

## Results:

Independent sample t test was conducted to determine the difference between the mean of structural, instrumental and emotional support of male and

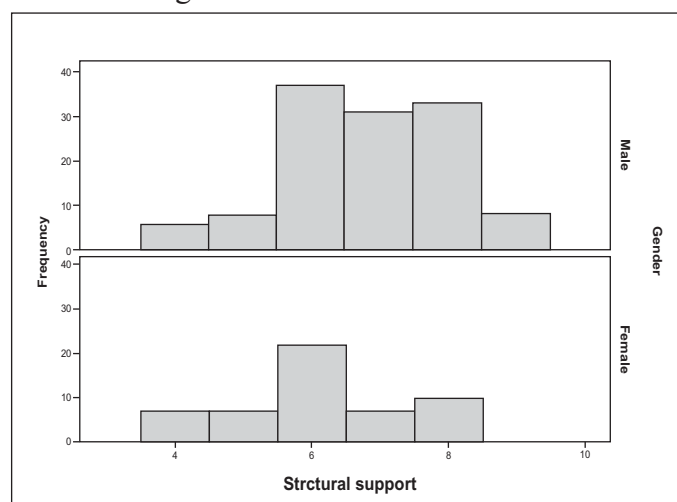
female corporate cricket players. The homogeneity of variance of structural support was satisfied via Levene's test  $F(174) = .248, p=.619$ . There was statistical significant difference between the mean scores of structural support test scores of males ( $n=123, m=6.82, Sd=1.228$ ) and females ( $n=53, m=6.11, Sd=1.25$ ),  $p=0.001$ . The homogeneity of variance of instrumental support was satisfied via Levene's test  $F(174) = 1.006, p=.303$ . There was no statistical significant difference found between the mean scores of instrumental support of males ( $n=123, m=6.58, Sd=1.358$ ) and females ( $n=53, m=6.26, Sd=1.546$ ),  $p=0.186$ . Similarly homogeneity of variance of emotional support was satisfied via Levene's test  $F(174) = 171, p=.680$  but there was no statistical significant difference between the mean scores of emotional support of males ( $n=123, m=6.63, Sd=1.351$ ) and females ( $n=53, m=6.23, Sd=1.368$ ),  $p=0.069$ .

		N	M	SD	t	df	P value
SS	Male	123	6.82	1.228	3.489	174	0.619
	Female	53	6.11	1.25	3.389	174	0.001
IS	Male	123	6.58	1.358	1.328	174	0.303
	Female	53	6.26	1.546	1.328	174	0.186
ES	Male	123	6.63	1.351	1.830	174	0.680
	Female	53	6.23	1.368	1.830	174	0.069

N= population, M =mean SD= standard deviation, t= test value, df= degree of freedom

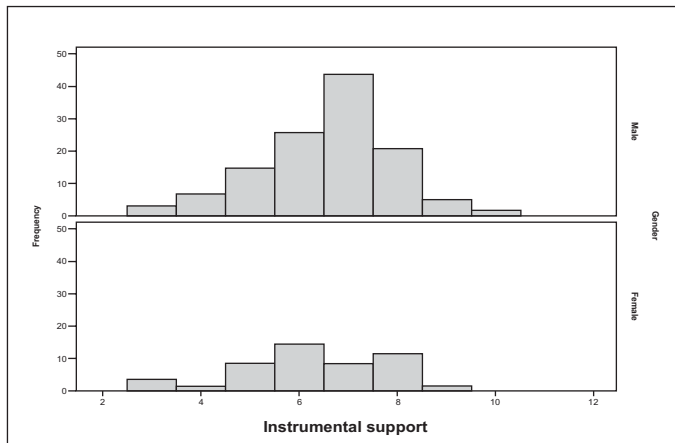
P=Value of significance, SS= Structural support, IS Instrumental support, ES=Emotional support

Descriptive analysis of the data showed higher perception of structural support among male corporate cricket players as compared to female, as show in the figure 1.



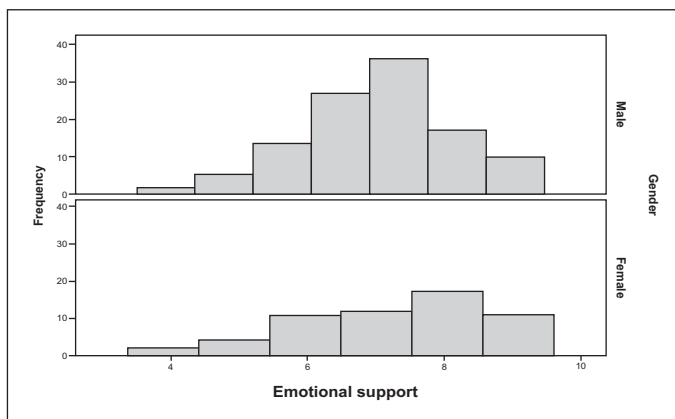
**Figure 1:** Structural support differences between male and female corporate cricket players

Descriptive analysis of the data showed that instrumental support had stronger perception among male corporate cricket player than female players, figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Instrumental support differences between male and female corporate cricket players

Similar to structural and instrumental support, the emotional support was also found to be more prevalent among male corporate cricket player as compared to their female counter parts, as shown in figure 3.



**Figure 3:** Emotional support differences between Male and Female Corporate Cricket Players

## Discussion:

Cricket is the most popular and financially lucrative sport of Pakistan. The study was conducted to see the difference in player's perceived social supports and how culture contributes in these psychosocial supports on gender basis. Stead (2004) defined Culture "a social phenomenon, individuals developed during social action with one another through means of shared symbols, meanings and perspectives"<sup>8</sup>. Hofstede et al. (2010) also argued "Culture" a software of mind which differentiate the social groups from one another<sup>9</sup>. The target population of the study was corporate players who were getting financial

assistance from commercial entities and getting maximum amount of backing and acknowledgement from their social networks. The findings revealed that the male corporate players were found higher in structural support as compared to the female cricket players despite the fact that they are getting equal amount of instrumental and emotional support. The findings of the study are in line with Aghakhanbabaei et al, (2015) increase social support increases participation in physical activity<sup>10</sup>. These findings are in line with Treiber et al. (1991), Sallis & Owen (1999), Springer et al. (2006), Dowda et al. (2007) postulated family, friends, martial support, helps to attract people to participate more in physical activity and sports<sup>11, 12, 13</sup> and Vermeulen, & Mustard (2000) concluded low social support was associated with higher distress across all categories of job strain<sup>14</sup>.

There could be number of factors that could be held responsible for these difference and one of them is our cultural values. Our culture and religion does not allow the female's involvement without any intensive reason. The sport activities are not included in those intensive reasons. Pakistan is male dominant society. Cultural values supports males to be more assertive, toughest and decision makers as compare to females. Sporting culture is not developed in the country especially for females. Females are not encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities due to cultural and social constraints. Females lack basic level of social support which in required from the surrounding environment. Environmental effect involves a complex combination of multiple processes. In sport, this means that the existence of a caring and supportive network, including family, friends, team-mates, coaches, managers, fitness trainers, and psychologists have strong influence on the talent development and high performance.

Males have high level of structural support in terms of wide range of social networks and frequency of contacts than females. Geographic location is another factor because woman are not considered to be made of sporting activities especially in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Baluchistan, interior Sind and South Punjab. The scope of professional sports for woman athletes is very limited. The majority of the female cricket players are from central Punjab (Lahore) and Karachi which is narrowing the base of opportunities for the other woman population. hus, according to the findings of the research and in light of meaningful relationship between the variables.

## Conclusions:

The study was conducted to explore the similarities and differences of perceived level of social support among male and female corporate cricket players. The results revealed that there is significant differences in means scores of structural support and no significant differences found in mean scores of instrumental and emotional support between male and female cricket players which means that male and female corporate players have similarities in instrumental and emotional support but in structural support they have differences.

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