

**Emotionality Research on Young Athletes: The Impact of Rigorous Training and  
Mental Health**

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**Abstract:**

This study investigates the emotionality of young athletes, specifically focusing on the impact of rigorous training regimens on their mental health, with an emphasis on anxiety. Conducted with 43 young athletes from the Delhi Sports Institute, the research utilized the Eysenck Personality Profiler Version 6 (EPP6) to assess anxiety levels. Results revealed that these athletes exhibited relatively high levels of anxiety, which correlated moderately with feelings of unhappiness. The findings suggest that intense training and high-pressure environments contribute significantly to increased anxiety and emotional distress among young athletes. The study underscores the need for interventions such as mindfulness practices, yoga, and psychological support to mitigate anxiety and enhance the overall well-being of young athletes.

*Keywords: Young athletes, anxiety, rigorous training, Eysenck Personality Profiler, sports psychology, mindfulness, yoga.*

The field of sports psychology has increasingly emphasized the importance of understanding the emotional and psychological aspects of athletes' lives, particularly among young athletes. Emotionality, encompassing various facets such as anxiety, stress, and mood regulation, is critical in athletic performance and overall well-being. In competitive sports, young athletes often undergo rigorous training regimens that can significantly impact their mental health (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007). This research article explores the emotionality of young athletes, focusing on how rigorous training patterns influence their mental health, with a particular emphasis on anxiety.

Training regimens for young athletes are designed to enhance physical performance, skills, and endurance. These programs often involve intense physical activities, repetitive drills, and strict schedules. While such training is essential for developing athletic proficiency, it can also lead to physical exhaustion and psychological strain (Meeusen et al., 2013). Studies have shown that excessive training without adequate recovery can result in overtraining syndrome, characterized by prolonged fatigue, performance decrements, and increased susceptibility to injuries (Meeusen et al., 2013). For example, a study by Matos et al. (2011) found that young swimmers who trained more than 15 hours per week exhibited higher levels of psychological distress compared to those with lighter training loads.

The mental health of athletes, particularly young athletes, is a growing concern in sports psychology. Young athletes face unique challenges, including the pressure to perform, competition-related stress, and the need to balance academics with sports. These factors can contribute to various mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout (Rice et al., 2016). For instance, a study conducted by Sarkar and Fletcher (2014) found that elite athletes in India often experience significant stress due to the high expectations from coaches and parents, leading to increased anxiety and depressive symptoms. Understanding the mental health status of young athletes is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems to enhance their well-being and performance.

Anxiety is a common emotional response among athletes, often triggered by the pressure to perform and the fear of failure. While moderate levels of anxiety can enhance performance by increasing alertness and focus, excessive anxiety can be detrimental. High anxiety levels can

impair concentration, disrupt motor skills, and negatively affect decision-making processes (Craft et al., 2003). The relationship between anxiety and performance follows the inverted-U hypothesis, which posits that performance improves with increased arousal up to an optimal point, beyond which further increases in anxiety lead to performance declines (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). This hypothesis is supported by a study conducted by Raglin and Hanin (2000), which found that athletes with moderate levels of pre-competition anxiety performed better than those with very low or very high anxiety levels.

Athletes, particularly young athletes, are especially vulnerable to anxiety due to their developmental stage and the high expectations placed on them. Anxiety in young athletes can manifest in various forms, including pre-competition anxiety, performance anxiety, and generalized anxiety. Factors such as parental pressure, coaching styles, and peer competition can exacerbate anxiety levels in young athletes (Wiggins et al., 2020). For example, a study by Gupta and Sudhesh (2017) in India found that young cricket players experienced significant anxiety due to the pressure from parents and coaches to excel in matches. Assessing and addressing anxiety in this population is essential for fostering a positive sports experience and promoting long-term athletic development.

Globally, the prevalence of anxiety among athletes has been well-documented. In the United States, research by Reardon et al. (2019) indicates that approximately 33% of elite athletes experience anxiety disorders, compared to 20% of the general population. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, a study by Smith (2016) found that 40% of adolescent athletes reported experiencing anxiety symptoms. In India, the situation mirrors these trends. Sarkar and Fletcher (2014) observed that Indian athletes often face significant stress and anxiety due to cultural expectations and the pressure to perform well in sports.

Rigorous training regimens can significantly impact the mental health of young athletes. A study by Matos et al. (2011) indicated that excessive training hours are associated with higher levels of anxiety and burnout among young athletes. Similarly, a study by Nattiv et al. (2007) found that athletes who engaged in high-intensity training without adequate recovery were more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.

The mental health status of young athletes is a growing concern. In a study by Rice et al. (2016), it was found that young athletes are at a higher risk of developing mental health issues compared to their non-athlete peers. The pressures of competition, the need to balance academics and sports, and the high expectations from coaches and parents contribute to increased levels of anxiety and depression among young athletes. In India, a study by Gupta and Sudhesh (2017) found that young athletes often experience significant anxiety and stress due to the pressure to perform well in sports and academics.

This study utilizes the Eysenck Personality Profiler Version 6 (EPP6) to assess the emotionality of 43 young athletes from the Delhi Sports Institute, with a focus on the anxiety subscale. By analyzing the anxiety levels of these athletes, this research aims to identify patterns and provide insights into the relationship between rigorous training and mental health.

### **Objective**

- This study aims to evaluate the anxiety patterns of young athletes from the Delhi Sports Institute. Specifically, the study aims to:
- Identify general patterns of high or low anxiety scores among the athletes.
- Explore the relationship between rigorous training and anxiety in young athletes.
- Investigate the correlation between anxiety and unhappiness among the athletes.

### **Measures**

#### *Eysenck Personality Profiler Version 6 (EPP6)*

The Eysenck Personality Profiler Version 6 (EPP6) is a psychometric tool used to assess various dimensions of personality, including extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. The EPP6 provides a comprehensive measure of emotionality, which includes anxiety, depression, and other emotional states. The test consists of a series of questions that respondents answer on a Likert scale, allowing researchers to quantify their emotional responses. In this study, the focus is on the anxiety subscale of the EPP6 to evaluate the anxiety levels of young athletes.

#### *Data Collection*

Data were collected from 43 young athletes at the Delhi Sports Institute. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a representative sample of athletes engaged in various sports disciplines. The athletes were aged between 14 and 18 years, with an equal representation of male and female participants.

### *Sampling*

The sample consisted of young athletes actively participating in sports training programs at the Delhi Sports Institute. The athletes were involved in sports such as cricket, football, athletics, and swimming. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before taking part in the research.

### *Administration*

The EPP6 test was administered in a controlled environment to ensure accurate and reliable data collection. Participants completed the questionnaire individually, under the supervision of trained researchers. The responses were collected and securely stored for analysis.

### **Results**

The results from the EPP6 test revealed the average anxiety scores among the sample of 43 young athletes from the Delhi Sports Institute:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Anxiety and Unhappiness Scores

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Anxiety (Athletes)	43	63.86	19.40
Unhappiness (Non-Athletes)	43	61.58	23.23

Table 2

Correlation Between Anxiety and Unhappiness

<b>Variables</b>		
Anxiety	1.000	0.585

Unhappiness	0.585	1.000
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$p < 0.001$

$N = 43$

Additionally, a sub-investigation into the correlation between anxiety and unhappiness revealed a moderately positive correlation ( $r = 0.585$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that higher anxiety levels are associated with greater feelings of unhappiness among the athletes (see Table 2).

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that young athletes from the Delhi Sports Institute exhibit relatively high levels of anxiety, which is consistent with previous research in the area, of the impact of rigorous training on mental health (Matos et al., 2011; Nattiv et al., 2007). The positive correlation between anxiety and unhappiness further supports the notion that high-pressure environments can have detrimental effects on the mental health of young athletes.

Intense pressure and high expectations can be harmful to young athletes, leading to increased levels of anxiety, stress, and unhappiness. Studies have shown that excessive anxiety can impair concentration, disrupt motor skills, and negatively affect decision-making processes (Craft et al., 2003). Moreover, chronic anxiety and stress can result in long-term psychological issues such as depression and burnout (Rice et al., 2016). Research in the Indian context supports these findings, indicating significant mental health challenges among young athletes. For instance, a study by Kumar and Singh (2018) revealed that high levels of competitive stress are prevalent among Indian adolescent athletes, contributing to anxiety and reduced performance. Similarly, Sharma and Wadhwa (2019) found that the pressure to excel in sports and academics simultaneously exacerbates stress and anxiety among young Indian athletes, leading to emotional and psychological strain. Additionally, Gupta and Sudhesh (2017) highlighted the role of parental pressure in increasing anxiety levels among young cricket players in India, emphasising the need for balanced support systems. These studies collectively underscore the critical impact of rigorous training and high expectations on the mental health of young athletes, necessitating comprehensive strategies to mitigate these effects.

## **Conclusion**

This study highlights the significant impact of rigorous training patterns on the anxiety levels and overall mental health of young athletes. The findings suggest that high-pressure environments and intense training regimens can lead to increased anxiety and feelings of unhappiness among young athletes. To mitigate these effects, it is essential to implement strategies for managing anxiety and promoting mental well-being among young athletes.

## **Recommendations**

Research in the area of anxiety relief and remedy has found mindfulness and meditation to be effective techniques for helping athletes focus on the present moment and reduce anxiety levels (Gross et al., 2016). Mindfulness practices enable athletes to enhance their awareness and emotional regulation, contributing to improved mental well-being. Additionally, incorporating yoga into training routines can enhance physical flexibility and promote mental relaxation, effectively reducing stress and anxiety (Sengupta, 2012). Yoga's emphasis on breathing and controlled movement fosters a sense of calm and balance, which can be particularly beneficial for young athletes facing high-pressure environments. Counseling and psychological support are also crucial; providing access to sports psychologists and counselors can help athletes develop effective coping strategies for managing anxiety and stress (Reardon et al., 2019). These professionals can offer tailored interventions and support systems that address the specific emotional needs of athletes. Furthermore, balanced training programs that ensure adequate rest and recovery periods are essential to prevent overtraining and its associated mental health issues. By integrating these strategies, the overall mental health and performance of young athletes can be significantly improved, fostering a healthier and more supportive sports environment.



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