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# Survey on the anxiety level of football players of Pune

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**Abstract**
The present study aims to assess the anxiety levels of football players in Pune using the Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT). A total of 100 players were selected as the sample for this survey-based research. The study employs the survey method to analyze competitive anxiety levels among athletes, focusing on the positive aspects of anxiety in sports performance.

The findings indicate that while anxiety is often perceived as a hindrance, a moderate level of competitive anxiety can positively influence performance by enhancing focus, motivation, and preparedness. Many players exhibited an optimal level of anxiety, which contributed to their alertness and competitive drive. The study highlights the importance of managing anxiety effectively to transform it into a performance-enhancing factor rather than a debilitating one. These insights can help coaches and sports psychologists design training programs that harness positive anxiety to improve overall player performance.

This research enhances the understanding of anxiety in sports and highlights the importance of psychological readiness in competitive football. Future studies can further investigate intervention strategies to sustain beneficial levels of anxiety while reducing its adverse effects.

**Keywords:** Anxiety levels, Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT), Competitive anxiety, Optimal anxiety, psychological readiness, Performance enhancement

## Introduction
Anxiety is a psychological condition characterized by unease, which affects football players' performance significantly. In Pune, a rising hub for football in India, players experience heightened anxiety due to competition, selection pressure, and fear of injury. This study focuses on assessing the anxiety levels of male football players aged 18-25 in Pune. It examines triggers like performance stress, coaching styles, social evaluation, and socio-cultural expectations. Key sources of anxiety include performance pressure, injury fears, and peer comparison, while gender and socio-economic status also influence anxiety differently. Players often deal with cognitive and somatic anxiety before, during, and after matches. High anxiety leads to poor decision-making, reduced coordination, and inconsistent performance. Factors like fatigue, lack of confidence, and negative coaching also worsen anxiety. Socio-cultural aspects, including family pressure and financial instability, contribute further. The study utilizes tools such as the SCAT and CSAI-2 questionnaires for data collection. Effective anxiety management includes CBT, mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and lifestyle adjustments. Coaches and team dynamics play a pivotal role in either reducing or escalating anxiety. Addressing mental health is vital to support players' performance and career longevity. The study stresses the need for psychological interventions in Pune's football training programs. Insights from the research can inform sports bodies on how to promote resilience and emotional well-being among players.

## Methodology
The methodology chapter of this study outlines the research design aimed at investigating the anxiety levels of male football players in Pune. A quantitative approach was adopted to allow for numerical data collection and analysis. The study selected 100 male football players aged

between 18 and 25 years, strictly from Pune, as its sample population. Participants outside this age range, women players, or those from other regions were excluded. The psychological component under examination in the study is anxiety, assessed using the standardized Sports Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) developed by Martens. The data collection process involved obtaining formal permissions from football clubs, briefing the participants, and administering the questionnaire directly. The collected data was then statistically analyzed using tools like percentage, mean, and standard deviation to conclude. The study includes a clear schedule, allocating a total of 120 days to complete various stages such as literature review, tool preparation, data collection, writing, plagiarism check, re-checking, and submission. The methodology ensures systematic data collection and analysis to provide a reliable understanding of the anxiety levels among football players in Pune.

**Table 1:** The response of Football players of Pune to the SCAT questionnaire

| Sr. No | Range of Raw Score | Grade | Level of Self-Efficacy | No. of players |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 24 and more | A | High | 7 |
| 2 | 17 to 24 | B | Average | 64 |
| 3 | 17 and less | C | Low | 29 |
| | | | Total | 100 |

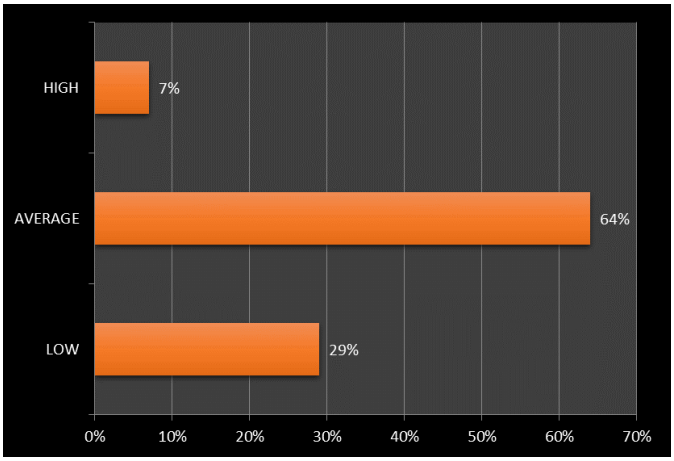


**Fig 1:** Graphical representation of the response of the Football players of Pune

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that the majority of football players in Pune experience an average level of anxiety. Specifically, 64% of the players were found to have an average anxiety level, indicating that anxiety is present but not extreme in most cases. Additionally, 29% of the players demonstrated a low level of anxiety, suggesting that nearly a quarter of the participants are relatively unaffected by competitive pressure. On the other hand, a smaller proportion, 7%, exhibited a high level of anxiety, highlighting that only a few players face significant psychological pressure during competitions. These results provide valuable insight into the overall mental preparedness of football players in Pune.

The findings of the study reveal several important aspects of the psychological experiences of football players in Pune. Most players report finding social enjoyment in competition, with a considerable number expressing moderate enjoyment. However, a significant portion also experiences uneasiness before matches, indicating common pre-game nervousness. Pre-competition performance anxiety is evident in many players, often affecting their mental state and confidence. Although good sportsmanship is observed at times, it is not consistently demonstrated across all players. A notable concern is the fear of making mistakes, which appears to negatively influence players' confidence. The calmness before competitions is rare, with anxiety being the more dominant emotional state. On a positive note, players recognize the value of goal-setting as a strategy to enhance performance. Physical symptoms of anxiety, such as stomach queasiness and increased heart rate, are frequently reported due to competitive pressure. Despite these challenges, most players enjoy physically demanding games, and some even show a strong preference for them. Importantly, around 80% of players experience some level of pre-competition tension, underscoring the widespread presence of anxiety in competitive football settings.

## Conclusion

Football players in Pune derive significant enjoyment from both the social and physical aspects of the game, finding a balance between team camaraderie and physical exertion. However, pre-competition anxiety is common among players, with many experiencing nervousness, fear of failure, and various physiological symptoms such as an increased heart rate and stomach discomfort. Despite some players using goal-setting techniques to enhance their performance, anxiety remains a prevalent issue, suggesting that goal-setting alone may not be fully effective without additional support. This highlights the pressing need for psychological interventions, such as mental conditioning, relaxation techniques, and counseling, to help players manage anxiety and perform at their best.

While players understand the importance of sportsmanship, it is not consistently practiced, indicating a need for value-based education in sports to instill these principles more deeply. Players also express a strong preference for team-based sports and activities that are physically intense, further emphasizing the role of group dynamics in shaping their overall sporting experience. The intensity of the sport, combined with the strong sense of team spirit, significantly impacts the way players experience their involvement in football. Therefore, integrating mental health strategies into training programs is crucial to enhancing athletes' mental well-being and improving performance consistency. These findings suggest that a holistic approach, incorporating both physical and psychological elements, is essential for the development of well-rounded football players.

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