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## Assessment study on anxiety of sprinters, middle and long distance runners for effective performance

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### Abstract

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components. It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern. The root meaning of the word anxiety is in either presence or absence of psychological stress, anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness, and dread. It is also associated with feelings of restlessness, fatigue, concentration problems, and muscle tension. The sample for the study consists of 150 Sprinters, 150 Middle distance runners and 150 Long distance runners who have participated in the Inter District Tournaments of Maharashtra State. The Standardized Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test is used for the study. It was found the Long distance runners are having high Anxiety than Sprinters, and Middle distance runners because the Long distance runners has to run a very long distance and the duration of the event is very long. They have to compete under the Psychological stress, anxiety, feelings of fear, and physical as well as psychological fatigue. Whereas in sprints the event duration is very short and muscle power and technique is needed.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, athletes, sprints, middle distance, long distance etc.

### Introduction

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern. The root meaning of the word anxiety is 'to vex or trouble'; in either presence or absence of psychological stress, anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness, and dread. Anxiety is considered to be a normal reaction to a stressor. It may help an individual to deal with a demanding situation by prompting them to cope with it. When anxiety becomes excessive, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder.

### Definitions

1. Anxiety define as an emotional reaction evoked by stimulus that is perceived as threatening (Spilberg, 1972).
2. A negative emotional state with feelings of nervousness, worry and apprehension associated with activation or arousal of the body. (Weinberg & Gould)
3. According to one dictionary definition, anxiety can be defined as a strong and unpleasant feeling of nervousness or distress in response to a feared situation, often accompanied by physiological effects such as nausea, trembling, breathlessness, sweating, and rapid heartbeat.

### Effect of Anxiety

The physical effects of anxiety may include heart palpitations, muscle weakness and tension, fatigue, nausea, chest pain, shortness of breath, stomach aches, or headaches. As the body prepares to deal with a threat, blood pressure, heart rate, perspiration, blood flow to the major muscle groups are increased, while immune and digestive functions are inhibited (the fight or flight response). External signs of anxiety may include, sweating, trembling, and pupillary dilation. Someone who has anxiety might also experience it subjectively as a sense of dread or panic.

The emotional effects of anxiety may include "feelings of apprehension or dread, trouble concentrating, feeling tense or jumpy, anticipating the worst, irritability, restlessness, watching

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(and waiting) for signs (and occurrences) of danger, and, feeling like mind's gone blank" as well as "nightmares/bad dreams, obsessions about sensations

The cognitive effects of anxiety may include thoughts about suspected dangers, such as fear of dying. "One may fear that the chest pains are a deadly heart attack. The behavioral effects of anxiety may include withdrawal from situations which have provoked anxiety in the past. Anxiety can also be experienced in ways which include changes in sleeping patterns, nervous habits, and increased motor tension like foot tapping.

Anxiety can be defined as an unpleasant state of mental uneasiness or concern that causes physical and psychological discomfort. Extreme anxiety disrupts and unsettles behaviour by lowering the individual's concentration and affecting their muscular control. Any sporting game or contest can give rise to anxiety when one's perceived ability does not measure up to the demands of the task.

**Trait Anxiety**

Trait anxiety refers to a general level of stress that is characteristic of an individual, that is, a trait related to personality. Trait anxiety varies according to how individuals have conditioned themselves to respond to and manage the stress. What may cause anxiety and stress in one person may not generate any emotion in another. People with high levels of trait anxiety are often quite easily stressed and anxious.

**State Anxiety**

State anxiety is characterised by a state of heightened emotions that develop in response to a fear or danger of a particular situation. State anxiety can contribute to a degree of physical and mental paralysis, preventing performance of a task or where performance is severely affected, such as forgetting movements during a dance or gymnastic routine, to breaking in sprint or swim starts or missing relatively easy

Sprints	100 m. 200 m., 400 m., 110 m., Hur., 400 m. Hur	Muscle endurance events
Middle Distance	800 m., 1500 m.	Muscle Heart Endurance events
Long Distance	3000 m. Steeple Chase, 5000 m., 10000 m. Marathon (42.195 k.m.) 20 km. Walk, 50 km. Walk	Heart Endurance events

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to find out the Anxiety among Sprinters and Middle and Long distance runners.

**Methodology**

The sample for the study consists of 150 Sprinters, 150 Middle distance runners and 150 Long distance runners those who have participated in the Inter District Tournaments of Maharashtra State of Nagpur District. The Standardized Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test was used for the study. The Questionnaire was administered in small groups of runners.

**Results**

It was found the Sprinters are having normal Anxiety, Middle distance runners are having High anxiety, and Long distance runners are extremely high Anxiety.

**Discussion**

The decision must be made by Long distance runners is final for their performance. Whereas in sprints where muscle power and technique is needed. Anxiety level differs from event and individual.

shots at goal i.e., pressure situations.

For some athletes sports anxiety can be a valuable motivator, e.g., contact sports such as rugby, whereas other sports require a very low level of anxiety for successful performances, e.g. archery, pistol shooting.

Athletes can learn to manage anxiety using techniques such as relaxation, hypnotherapy, cognitive behaviour therapy and positive thinking. For state anxiety, therapies focus on the specific situations causing stress to the athlete whereas Trait anxiety requires a broader approach.

Sports and performance anxiety often go hand-in-hand. Have you ever "choked" during an important sporting event or felt your nerves get in the way of your athletic performance? While many athletes become "pumped up" during competition, when the rush of adrenaline is interpreted as anxiety, and negative thoughts begin to swirl, it can have devastating effects on your ability to perform. Before you learn how to manage the symptoms of anxiety during competitions, it is important to understand the relationship between anxiety and athletic performance.

Sport Psychology is the scientific study of people and their behaviours in sport. The role of a sport psychologist is to recognize how participation in sport exercise and physical activity enhances a person's development. Every person has some sort of Anxiety in their daily activities. Athlete has to participate in competitions against their opponents to win the race. He is the winners who overcome psychological stress, anxiety, fear, feelings of restlessness, fatigue, concentration problems, and muscle tension. Track and Field dominated the ancient Greek athletic festivals, and was also popular in Rome, but declined in the middle Ages. In England track was revived sporadically between the 12th and 19th century the first college meet occurred in 1864 between Oxford and Cambridge universities Sample which Study among below sprinters, Middle and long distance runners

**Table 1:** Sprinters, Middle Distance Runners and Long Distance Runners Shows the Mean, S.D, S.E. and F Value of Anxiety

Dimension	Group	A	B	C	Total
	Mean	24.58	28.23	32.86	28.55
	S. D.	2.28	1.99	2.50	4.07
Anxiety	S. E	0.19	0.16	0.20	0.19
	N	150	150	150	450

A = Sprinter B = Middle Distance Runners C = Long Distance Runners

From the Table 1 it is seen that Mean value of anxiety score of the Sprinters is 24.58, which is falling in Normal anxiety level. Sprinters have control over their feelings & emotions. They represent essentially normal individuals. Middle distance runners mean is 28.23, which is falling in High Anxiety level. They are little excited before and during competition. And Long distance runners mean is 32.86, which is falling in Extremely High Anxiety level. They are feeling restless. They are regarded as hyper- anxiety individuals. They are excited about their performance, they have fear of defeat. Their personality is little complicated, and they may be in need of counselling and psychotherapy. Long distance

runners have more anxiety than Sprinters and Middle distance runners.

### **Conclusion**

Middle distance runners have significantly high anxiety than the sprinters. Long distance runners have significantly high anxiety than the sprinters. Long distance runners have significantly high anxiety than the middle distance runners. Sprinters have control over their feelings & emotions. They represent essentially normal individuals. Middle distance runners are having High Anxiety level. They are little excited before and during competition. Long distance runners have Extremely High Anxiety level. They are feeling restless. They are regarded as hyper-anxiety individuals. They are excited about their performance, they have fear of defeat. It is concluded that Middle distance runners are having comparatively high Anxiety than Sprinters, because they set goals and aims to give level best performance to win the Competition, whereas the Sprinters concentrate on technique at the start & finish and muscle power to give the high level of performance. It is recommended that for all sports persons must be trained to overcome Anxiety to achieve high excellence in sports. The Coaches must prepare the athletes to minimise the Anxiety before and during competition.

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