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A Comparative Study of Self-Confidence and Competitive Anxiety between Rural and Urban Cricket Players

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Abstract

In this study, urban and rural cricket players' levels of self-confidence and competitive anxiety are compared. Psychological qualities often determine performance under duress, and cricket is a sport that demands a high level of mental preparedness. The mental talents and limitations of players may vary among areas due to differences in coaching, exposure, and facilities. Measurements of these characteristics, effects of demographic and socioeconomic variables, and the link between anxiety and self-confidence were the goals of the research. The study included 420 players, evenly distributed between rural and urban locations. Data were collected using standardised methods, including the Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test (SCAT) and the Self-Confidence Inventory (SCI). The analysis included descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, correlation, and regression. The findings indicated that players from rural areas exhibited greater self-confidence, whereas those from urban settings demonstrated a marginally better ability to manage anxiety. A significant positive relationship was observed, indicating that greater self-confidence may occasionally elevate performance pressure. Training exposure and facility availability substantially impacted confidence, while geography, income, and experience had lesser still significant impacts. The results underscore the need of integrating these features in the development of training and mental preparation programs.

Keywords; self-confidence, competitive anxiety, rural and urban, cricket, sports psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Both physical and mental preparation are crucial in high-stakes sports like cricket. When it comes to performance, two crucial psychological attributes are self-confidence and competitive anxiety. Self-confidence indicates a player's conviction in their own abilities, while competitive anxiety is the tension or anxiousness experienced before or during a competition. These characteristics are connected, and the balance between them may have a significant impact on performance under duress. (D. M. Singh, 2024)

In India, cricket players emerge from diverse rural and urban settings, with their upbringing often shaped by contrasting circumstances. Players in urban areas typically enjoy enhanced access to coaching, superior facilities, and greater competitive opportunities. Informal training and community support can help rural players develop resilience, despite the fact that they may encounter limited resources. Their psychological development can be significantly influenced by these distinctions. (M. Singh & Sreenivasan, 2025)

Sports psychologists and coaches may benefit from a greater understanding of rural and urban players' differences in self-confidence and competitive anxiety in order to develop more effective mental preparation and training programs. Another advantage is that it encourages fair player development by recognising that individuals from various backgrounds may encounter distinct challenges and opportunities. This study holds significant importance and relevance due to the existing gap in research that examines these characteristics among cricket players from rural and urban regions in India.

Self-confidence in sports

Confidence is undoubtedly one of the most notable characteristics of those who succeed in any field. This also applies to the realm of sports, and it is no accident that those who excel in them have a strong sense of self-worth. Confidence has a pivotal role in many contexts as a psychological determinant of success or failure.

The following are the five essential elements that Dr. Taylor lists as being necessary to reach Prime Confidence (Chauhan et al., 2023):

i. **Preparation breeds confidence:** The basis of confidence is preparation. This training entails investing the required time and energy into all facets of your sport, including the technical, tactical, mental, equipment-related, and physical components.
ii. **Mental Skills reinforce confidence:** Inspirational images and thoughts will help you stay motivated, positive body language and self-talk will help you feel more confident, intensity control will help you fight anxiety that undermines your confidence, keywords will help you stay focused and stay away from distractions, and emotional control techniques will help you relax under pressure.
iii. **Adversity ingrains confidence:** Athletes must be ready to face obstacles since they can't always practice or compete in perfect circumstances. The difficulty is in keeping your composure in the face of the most adverse circumstances, adversary, or circumstance.
iv. **Support bolsters confidence:** It's hard to succeed by yourself. Every sport's top athletes have a large following of supporters. During periods of adversity, it is beneficial to have the support and encouragement of others.
v. **Success validates confidence:** Unless you subsequently execute well and accomplish your objectives, all of the preceding steps in fostering confidence will be rendered meaningless. A successful outcome confirms your self-confidence and shows that your conviction in your own abilities is sound.

Table 1 Importance of Self-Confidence in Cricket Performance

S. No.	Aspect	Description
1	Supports better decision-making	Confident players make quick, accurate decisions by trusting their instincts, even in high-pressure match situations.
2	Helps manage pressure	Self-confidence enables players to remain calm and perform effectively during tense or crucial stages of the game.
3	Builds a positive mindset	Confidence promotes optimism, helping players stay motivated, focused, and determined despite challenges.
4	Strengthens resilience	Players with strong self-belief recover faster from setbacks or defeats and continue striving toward their goals.
5	Boosts overall performance	Believing in one's abilities directly contributes to improved performance and achieving desired outcomes on the field.

Competitive Anxiety in Athletes

In recent decades, the correlation between athletic performance and psychological stability has garnered significant attention from a variety of sources, including coaches, institutional stakeholders, and sports psychologists. While physical conditioning continues to be emphasized in mainstream training routines, the role of mental preparedness, especially in managing competitive anxiety, has gained critical importance.

Athletes often walk a fine line between motivation and mental pressure. In cricket, a sport deeply embedded in both national pride and community culture, this pressure manifests intensely. The unpredictability of outcomes, the demand for individual consistency, and the pervasive public attention—especially in urban tournaments—are known to impact mental health and concentration levels. (Sharma & Hartley, 2023)

Cricketers from rural backgrounds often display different psychological patterns compared to their urban counterparts, largely influenced by the nature of exposure, the availability of coping mechanisms, and the social expectations tied to success (D. S. Singh et al., 2024). To understand this, one must consider how competitive anxiety is shaped and how it manifests:

i. **Pre-performance anxiety:** Worry or unease before entering the field, often due to a lack of exposure or fear of failure.
ii. **In-game anxiety:** Rapid changes in performance under pressure, such as difficulty focusing,

overthinking decisions, or physical symptoms like elevated heart rate.

iii. **Post-performance rumination:** Excessive self-criticism or worry about external judgment after the match concludes.

Table 2 Competitive Anxiety in Cricket

S. No.	Type / Factor	Description
A. Types of Competitive Anxiety		
1	Cognitive Anxiety	Involves negative thoughts, worries about performance, and fears of possible negative outcomes, such as disappointing the team or making mistakes.
2	Somatic Anxiety	Refers to physical symptoms like sweating, muscle tension, “butterflies” in the stomach, and increased heart rate caused by perceived competition pressure.
B. Factors Causing Competitive Anxiety		
3	Pressure to Perform	High expectations from teammates, coaches, or spectators can intensify anxiety levels.
4	Fear of Failure	Worrying about losing or making errors can significantly increase anxiety.
5	Uncertainty of Outcome	Cricket’s unpredictable nature and sudden momentum shifts can heighten feelings of anxiety.
6	Negative Self-Talk	Habitual negative thinking can worsen anxiety before and during matches.
7	Social Evaluation	Concern over how others perceive one’s performance can contribute to higher anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(M et al., 2019) The study aimed to assess the psychological disparities among university-level cricket participants. There is a little statistical difference and a significant difference in the mental skill studies of university-level cricket players in Kerala, according to the study's results. Ultimately, it was determined that there are notable differences in mental skill scores between Keralan university-level cricket players, between Kannur and M.G. Universities, and between Kannur and Kerala universities in terms of imagery ability. However, there are no notable differences between universities in terms of mental preparation, self-confidence, anxiety, concentration, relaxation, and motivation among university players.

(Samanta & Rout, 2018) The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between kho-kho, football, and other players' levels of anxiety and self-confidence. The ANOVA test was employed as a statistical measure to investigate the differences in self-confidence and anxiety levels among kho-kho players, football players, and athletes. Football players and athletes had substantially different mean levels of self-confidence (MD = 3.20 and MD = 3.12, respectively), as did athletes and Kho-Kho players. This is due to the fact that the differential mean values exceed the critical variance value of 1.82 at a significance level of 0.05. "The mean difference value (MD = 0.08)" between football players and Kho-Kho is smaller than the major disparity value of 1.8. Following the study's findings, it is evident that athletes exhibit elevated levels of apprehension, with football and kho-kho participants following closely behind. Compared to football and kho-kho players, athletes have a greater level of self-confidence.

(Ashraf, 2016) Boys who play intercollegiate cricket in rural and urban locations were to have their psychological parameters—sport competitive anxiety and accomplishment motivation anxiety—compared. According to the findings of this empirical research, boys who played intercollegiate sports in rural and urban areas did not substantially vary in their levels of accomplishment. This is because sports achievement motivation is not influenced by a person's sex. However, one can also infer that there was no discernible difference in competitive anxiety between intercollegiate boys' cricket players in rural and urban areas.

(Vishva & Jethwa, 2023) In order to examine the psychological characteristics of successful and unsuccessful teams, the study uses emotional intelligence (EI) ratings and mental health measures such as depression, stress, and anxiety. The research measured psychological distress and emotional intelligence using “the Anxiety Depression Stress Scale (ADSS) by Bhatnagar (2011) and the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) by Singh & Narain (2014)”. The research emphasises the critical role that emotional intelligence plays in competitive sports and makes the case that athletes who possess greater emotional intelligence may be more resilient and psychologically healthy. To enhance mental fortitude and overall athletic performance, it is imperative to incorporate EI training into sports coaching, as these results emphasise the necessity of this approach. Aiming to improve emotional intelligence and alleviate performance-related tension in elite athletes, future research should investigate the effects of psychological interventions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of self-confidence among rural cricket players.
2. To assess the level of self-confidence among urban cricket players.

3. To evaluate the degree of competitive anxiety experienced by rural cricket players.
4. To evaluate the degree of competitive anxiety experienced by urban cricket players.
5. To compare the levels of self-confidence between rural and urban cricket players.
6. To compare the levels of competitive anxiety between rural and urban cricket players.
7. To examine the relationship between self-confidence and competitive anxiety across demographic variables such as age, experience, and training exposure.
8. To analyze the influence of socioeconomic factors on psychological development in cricket players.
9. To explore environmental and infrastructural contributions to psychological variables among rural and urban players.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a quantitative, descriptive survey methodology to investigate self-confidence and competitive anxiety in male cricket players from rural and urban regions. A total of 300 participants—150 from rural areas and 150 from urban areas—were recruited using purposive sampling, ensuring each had a minimum of one year of competitive cricket experience. Standardised psychological instruments were used, including Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test (SCAT), the Nairashya Meapa Frustration Test, and the Self-Confidence Inventory (SCI). The tools, evaluated within the Indian context, were modified into a structured questionnaire for enhanced clarity and relevance. Data collection occurred in group environments under regulated circumstances, with voluntary participation and guarantees of anonymity. The research additionally gathered demographic information to examine differences related to factors like age, training experience, and socioeconomic status. The statistical analyses comprised descriptive statistics, t-tests, correlation analysis, ANOVA, and regression, facilitating comparisons between rural and urban groups while exploring the relationships among the measured variables.

Table 3 Research Methodology

Component	Details
Type of Research	Quantitative
Research Design	Descriptive Survey
Nature of Study	Non-experimental, cross-sectional
Sampling Technique	Purposive Sampling
Sample Size	300 male cricket players (150 rural, 150 urban)
Selection Criteria	Minimum 1-year competitive cricket experience, active participation
Tools Used	SCAT (Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test), Nairashya Meapa Frustration Test, Self-Confidence Inventory
Data Collection Method	Structured questionnaire (group administration)
Ethical Considerations	Voluntary participation, confidentiality maintained
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics, t-test, correlation, ANOVA, regression
Geographical Scope	Selected rural and urban cricket training centers and institutions

DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION

The main objective of this section is to understand how self-confidence and competitive anxiety differ between players from different backgrounds, and what factors influence these psychological traits. The data has been carefully examined using various statistical tools to test the research hypotheses and to draw meaningful insights.

Table 4 Age

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 18 years	73	24.3	24.3	24.3
	18–21 years	102	34.0	34.0	58.3
	22–25 years	68	22.7	22.7	81.0
	Above 25 years	57	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The age-wise distribution of respondents reveals that the majority belonged to the 18–21 years age group, with 102 individuals accounting for 34.0% of the sample. This is followed by 73 respondents (24.3%) who were below 18 years. The 22–25 years age group comprised 68 individuals, making up 22.7% of the total, while the smallest group was those above 25 years, with 57 respondents, constituting 19.0% of the sample. This indicates that younger participants, particularly those between 18 and 21 years, formed the largest segment of the surveyed population.

Table 5 Region

Region					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	150	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Urban	150	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The data reveals an equal regional distribution of respondents, with 150 participants each from rural and urban

areas, comprising 50.0% of the total sample respectively. This balanced representation ensures a fair and unbiased comparison of self-confidence and competitive anxiety between rural and urban cricket players, aligning well with the objective of the study.

Table 6 Years of Experience in Cricket

Years of Experience in Cricket					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 2 years	46	15.3	15.3	15.3
	2–4 years	102	34.0	34.0	49.3
	More than 4 years	152	50.7	50.7	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents based on their years of cricket experience shows that the majority, 152 individuals (50.7%), have more than 4 years of experience. This is followed by 102 respondents (34.0%) with 2–4 years of experience, while only 46 participants (15.3%) have less than 2 years of experience. This indicates that over half of the cricket players surveyed are relatively experienced, which may have implications for their levels of self-confidence and competitive anxiety in the context of this study.

Table 7 Type of Coaching Received

Type of Coaching Received					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Formal Coaching	218	72.7	72.7	72.7
	Informal Coaching	82	27.3	27.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The data on the type of coaching received indicates that a significant majority of respondents, 218 players (72.7%), have undergone formal coaching, while 82 players (27.3%) have received informal coaching. This suggests that most participants in the study have been trained through structured and professional methods, which may influence their levels of self-confidence and ability to manage competitive anxiety in cricket.

Table 8 Monthly Family Income

Monthly Family Income					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below Rs 20,000	50	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Rs 20,001– Rs 35,000	72	24.0	24.0	40.7
	Rs 35,001–Rs 50,000	105	35.0	35.0	75.7
	Above Rs 50,000	73	24.3	24.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The monthly family income data shows that the largest proportion of respondents, 105 individuals (35.0%), belong to families earning between Rs 35,001 and Rs 50,000. This is followed by 73 respondents (24.3%) from families with income above Rs 50,000, and 72 respondents (24.0%) in the Rs 20,001–Rs 35,000 bracket. Only 50 players (16.7%) reported a family income below Rs 20,000. This distribution indicates a predominance of participants from middle- to upper-middle-income backgrounds, which could potentially influence their access to resources, including coaching, and affect their self-confidence and competitive anxiety levels.

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics of the responses

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I believe in my ability to perform well under pressure	300	1	5	3.18	1.456
I feel confident when competing against strong opponents	300	1	5	2.07	1.211
I recover quickly after making mistakes in a match	300	1	5	1.89	1.156
I trust my cricketing skills in critical moments	300	1	5	1.91	1.253
I am comfortable making quick decisions on the field	300	1	5	2.50	1.533
I remain focused even in noisy or distracting environments	300	1	5	2.94	1.371
I feel in control of the game most of the time	300	1	5	2.17	1.242
I rarely doubt my ability before a match	300	1	5	1.92	1.123
I can motivate myself without external encouragement	300	1	5	2.24	1.327
I believe I have leadership potential in a team setting	300	1	5	2.52	1.496
I feel tense before an important match	300	1	5	2.97	1.368
My hands sweat or tremble before competition	300	1	5	2.19	1.257
I feel restless when the match is about to start	300	1	5	1.91	1.125
I worry excessively about my performance	300	1	5	2.25	1.329
I get nervous thinking others may outperform me	300	1	5	2.50	1.471
I feel shortness of breath under match pressure	300	1	5	2.91	1.642
My mind often goes blank during competitive moments	300	1	5	2.24	1.480

I feel fear of failure even after preparation	300	1	5	2.04	1.277
I worry about disappointing my coach or teammates	300	1	5	2.24	1.268
My heartbeat increases as match time approaches	300	1	5	2.33	1.419
I have access to regular coaching sessions	300	1	5	1.86	1.081
The training equipment provided to me is up to standard	300	1	5	2.02	1.132
I receive feedback from my coach after practice	300	1	5	1.88	1.062
My training facilities are available throughout the year	300	1	5	1.89	1.128
I participate in fitness programs related to cricket	300	1	5	2.59	1.552
I receive support for diet and physical conditioning	300	1	5	2.72	1.470
I train under professional or certified coaches	300	1	5	2.06	1.217
I have access to psychological or mental training support	300	1	5	2.17	1.427
My training schedule is consistent and structured	300	1	5	2.23	1.358
I have access to video analysis or review sessions	300	1	5	2.30	1.379
I feel more confident than most players from my region	300	1	5	2.47	1.408
I often take initiative in team discussions	300	1	5	2.03	1.136
My presence boosts the confidence of others	300	1	5	2.39	1.355
I handle criticism without losing confidence	300	1	5	2.36	1.337
I believe I can be selected for higher-level teams	300	1	5	2.35	1.398
I often lead by example during matches	300	1	5	2.73	1.471
My teammates look up to me for support	300	1	5	2.07	1.229
I can recover from defeat without losing self-belief	300	1	5	2.11	1.395
I rarely feel intimidated by external expectations	300	1	5	2.20	1.343
I strive for personal excellence rather than comparison	300	1	5	2.30	1.385
I feel mentally stronger after every competitive match	300	1	5	2.47	1.410
My confidence improves with each experience	300	1	5	2.05	1.151
I have learned to control anxiety through practice	300	1	5	2.35	1.327
Failure has helped me grow psychologically	300	1	5	2.31	1.327
I understand the mental aspect of competition better now	300	1	5	2.35	1.407
My reactions during games are more balanced than before	300	1	5	2.51	1.516
I can identify when anxiety is affecting my performance	300	1	5	2.24	1.315
I use relaxation or visualization techniques before matches	300	1	5	2.07	1.092
I am open to seeking mental health or counselling support	300	1	5	2.04	1.207
I believe psychological strength is as important as physical training	300	1	5	2.72	1.539

The descriptive statistics show a mixed pattern in the players' self-confidence, anxiety, training support, leadership perception, and psychological growth. Since the scale is 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree, means closer to 2 reflect general agreement and those near or above 3 reflect neutrality or mild disagreement. Strengths appear in areas like recovering after mistakes (mean = 1.89), trusting skills in critical moments (1.91), rarely doubting ability before a match (1.92), receiving coach feedback (1.88), and having regular coaching access (1.86), indicating these are relatively consistent positives. However, belief in performing well under pressure has a higher mean (3.18), suggesting weaker confidence in high-pressure execution. Decision-making comfort (2.50) and perceived leadership potential (2.52) are moderate. Anxiety-related items such as feeling tense before important matches (2.97) and shortness of breath under pressure (2.91) hover around neutral-to-agree, pointing to noticeable competitive anxiety. Training support beyond basic coaching—like psychological/mental training (2.17) and video review (2.30)—shows moderate availability. Leadership influence and resilience items (means mostly between 2.0 and 2.7) suggest a generally moderate self-perception in team roles. Standard deviations are moderate to high in several items (e.g., shortness of breath SD = 1.642), indicating variability in individual experiences, especially for physical anxiety symptoms and confidence under pressure.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1

H01: "There is no significant difference in the level of self-confidence between rural and urban cricket players".

Ha1: "There is no significant difference in the level of self-confidence between rural and urban cricket players".

Table 10 Hypothesis 1

Group Statistics					
	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Level of Self-Confidence	Rural	150	23.92	4.894	.400
	Urban	150	22.76	5.161	.421

Table 11 Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Level of Self-Confidence	Equal variances assumed	.646	.042	2.197	298	.047	1.160	.581	.017	2.303
	Equal variances not assumed			2.197	297.162	.047	1.160	.581	.017	2.303

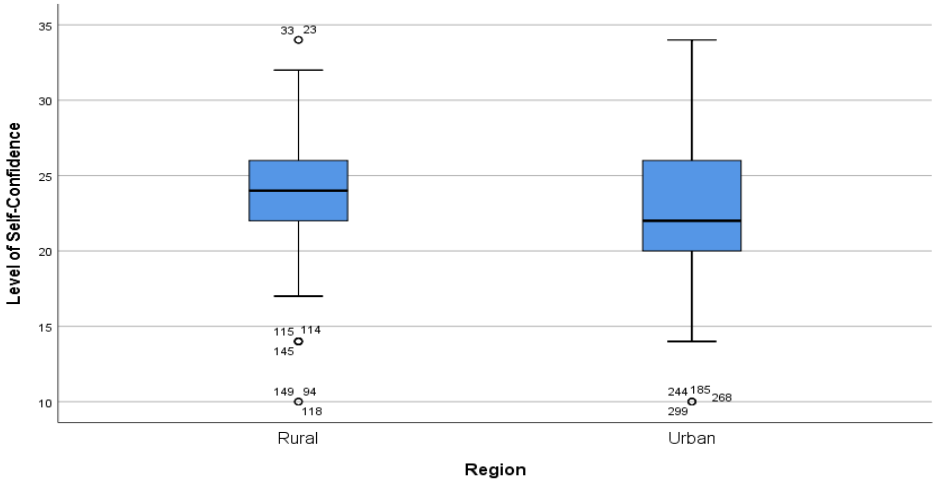

Figure 1 level of Self-Confidence

The hypothesis aimed to examine whether a significant difference exists in self-confidence levels between rural and urban cricket players. The group statistics show that rural players (M = 23.92, SD = 4.89) scored higher on self-confidence than their urban counterparts (M = 22.76, SD = 5.16). To test the statistical significance of this difference, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The Levene's Test indicated equal variances (F = 0.646, p = .042), allowing interpretation under the assumption of equal variance. The t-test yielded a statistically significant result (t(298) = 2.197, p = .047), with a mean difference of 1.160 and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.017 to 2.303. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting a significant difference in self-confidence between the two groups. The boxplot further supports this, showing that rural players generally have a higher median self-confidence and a more concentrated distribution of scores compared to urban players, whose data are more dispersed with several outliers and a lower median. This visual evidence, combined with the statistical test, confirms that rural cricket players exhibit significantly higher self-confidence levels than urban players.

Hypothesis 2

H02: "There is no significant difference in the level of competitive anxiety between rural and urban cricket players".

Ha2: "There is no significant difference in the level of competitive anxiety between rural and urban cricket players".

Table 12 Hypothesis 2

Group Statistics					
	Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Level of Competitive Anxiety	Rural	150	24.18	4.813	.395
	Urban	150	22.98	4.931	.403

Table 13 Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Level of Competitive Anxiety	Equal variances assumed	.035	.032	2.111	298	.026	1.200	.568	.082	2.318
	Equal variances not assumed			2.111	297.996	.026	1.200	.568	.082	2.318

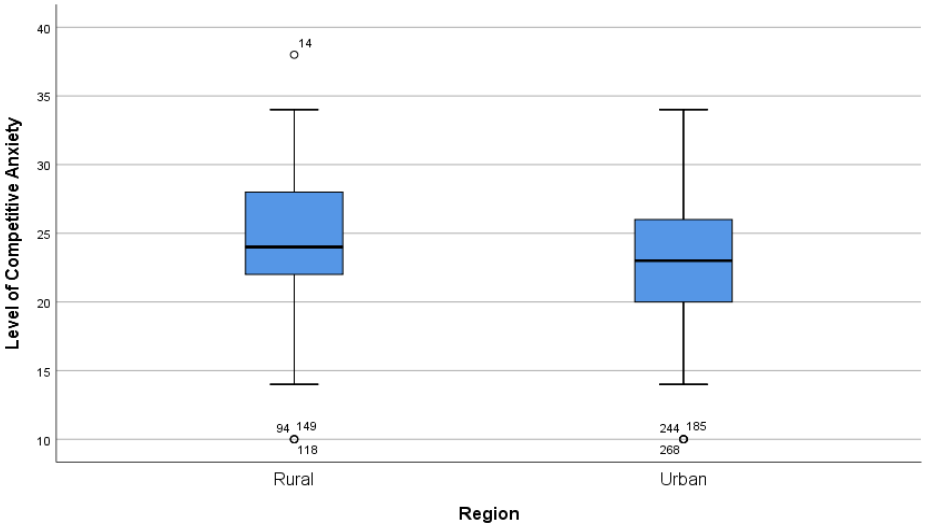

Figure 2 Level of Competitive anxiety

The second hypothesis tested whether a significant difference exists in competitive anxiety levels between rural and urban cricket players. Group statistics show that rural players (M = 24.18, SD = 4.81) reported slightly higher competitive anxiety compared to urban players (M = 22.98, SD = 4.93). An independent samples t-test was performed to assess this difference. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was significant (F = 0.035, p = .032), suggesting variance homogeneity. The t-test revealed a statistically significant difference (t(298) = 2.111, p = .026), with a mean difference of 1.200 and a 95% confidence interval of 0.082 to 2.318. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference in competitive anxiety between the two groups. The boxplot visually supports this, showing a slightly higher median and a more spread-out distribution of anxiety scores among rural players, including a high outlier, whereas urban players show a more compact distribution with some low outliers. Overall, the results suggest that rural cricket players experience significantly higher levels of competitive anxiety than urban players.

Hypothesis 3

H03: "There is no significant relationship between self-confidence and competitive anxiety among cricket players".

Ha3: "There is no significant relationship between self-confidence and competitive anxiety among cricket players".

Table 14 Hypothesis 3

Correlations			
		Level of Competitive Anxiety	Self-Confidence Among Cricket Players
Level of Competitive Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Self-Confidence Among Cricket Players	Pearson Correlation	.836**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

To test Hypothesis 3, a Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between self-confidence and competitive anxiety among cricket players. The results revealed a strong positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .836$, $p < .01$), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that as self-confidence increases, competitive anxiety also tends to increase among the participants, which is somewhat unexpected, as these two constructs are often considered inversely related. The high correlation coefficient suggests a very close association between the two variables. With a sample size of 300, the analysis provides robust evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H03). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant and strong relationship between self-confidence and competitive anxiety among cricket players in the study.

Hypothesis 4

H04: "There is no significant impact of training exposure and facilities on self-confidence among cricket players from different regions".

Ha4: "There is no significant impact of training exposure and facilities on self-confidence among cricket players from different regions".

Table 15 Hypothesis 4

ANOVA					
Self-Confidence Among Cricket Players					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5597.673	16	349.855	102.673	.000
Within Groups	964.313	283	3.407		
Total	6561.987	299			

To test Hypothesis 4, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether training exposure and facilities significantly impact self-confidence among cricket players across different regions. The results indicate a statistically significant difference in self-confidence levels between groups (i.e., different combinations of training exposure and facilities), with an F-value of 102.673 and a p-value of .000 ($p < .05$). The between-group sum of squares (5597.673) compared to the within-group sum of squares (964.313) shows that a substantial proportion of variance in self-confidence can be attributed to differences in training-related factors. As the p-value is well below the threshold of significance, we reject the null hypothesis (H04) and conclude that training exposure and facilities have a significant impact on the self-confidence of cricket players from various regions.

Hypothesis 5

H05: "There is no significant influence of socioeconomic background on the psychological development of cricket players in terms of self-confidence and competitive anxiety".

Ha5: "There is no significant influence of socioeconomic background on the psychological development of cricket players in terms of self-confidence and competitive anxiety".

Table 16 Hypothesis 5

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.182[a]	.033	.017	4.659
a. Predictors: (Constant), Monthly Family Income, Years of Experience in Cricket, Region, Type of Coaching Received, Age				

Table 17 ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	218.371	5	43.674	2.30	.045[b]
	Residual	6380.999	294	21.704		
	Total	6599.370	299			
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Development (Self-Confidence & Anxiety)						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Monthly Family Income, Years of Experience in Cricket, Region, Type of Coaching Received, Age						

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	25.496	1.681		15.171	.000
	Age	.359	.264	.080	1.360	.175
	Region	-.981	.538	-.105	-1.822	.049
	Years of Experience in Cricket	.073	.379	.011	.192	.048
	Type of Coaching Received	-.318	.616	-.030	-.517	.605
	Monthly Family Income	-.573	.268	-.125	-2.138	.033
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Development (Self-Confidence & Anxiety)						

The multiple linear regression analysis conducted to examine Hypothesis 5 reveals a statistically significant influence of socioeconomic background on the psychological development of cricket players, as indicated by the overall model significance ($F = 2.30$, $p = .045$). The model explains approximately 3.3% of the variance in psychological development ($R^2 = .033$), with a standard error of 4.659, suggesting a modest explanatory power. Among the predictor variables—age, region, years of experience in cricket, type of coaching received, and monthly family income—monthly family income ($\beta = -0.573$, $p = .033$), region ($\beta = -0.981$, $p = .049$), and years of experience in cricket ($\beta = 0.073$, $p = .048$) emerged as significant contributors. The negative coefficient for family income suggests that players from higher-income backgrounds may exhibit slightly lower psychological development, possibly due to performance pressure or lack of resilience. Similarly, players from urban regions may face different psychological challenges compared to their rural counterparts. On the other hand, greater experience in cricket appears to positively influence psychological development. Since the overall model is statistically significant, the null hypothesis (H05) is rejected, confirming that socioeconomic background does influence the psychological development of cricket players in terms of self-confidence and competitive anxiety.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine the impact of demographic, social, and environmental variables on the psychological qualities of self-confidence and competitive anxiety among cricket players in India, specifically comparing those from rural and urban areas. The 300 male players who participated in the study came from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds; they were mostly young adults with varying degrees of experience and education.

According to the results, rural players reported greater levels of self-confidence than urban players, which was statistically significant. This might be attributed to the resilience established in resource-constrained environments, but urban players confront more scrutiny and expectations, which can erode confidence. Surprisingly, players from rural areas also showed a little more competitive anxiety. This suggests that not having as much experience with high-stakes events may make emotional responses stronger, even in people who have a lot of faith in themselves. Although they were less sure of themselves, urban players seemed less affected by pressure because they were constantly playing against other teams. A strong positive relationship between self-confidence and competitive anxiety has called into question established beliefs, suggesting that a heightened faith in one's capabilities can lead to increased internal pressure and, consequently, anxiety. Training exposure proved to be a crucial element, as improved facilities and coaching were associated with increased confidence. The impact of socioeconomic background was more nuanced, revealing that experience played a more significant role in psychological development than factors like income or geographic location. Overall, the results reveal that mental readiness in cricket is shaped by a complex interplay of confidence, anxiety, environment, and exposure.

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