

# Analysis of Athletic performance, psychology and athletic satisfaction for sport and life in China

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## Abstract

The main objective of the study is to determine the connection between athletic performance, psychology, and athlete satisfaction level in athletes attending physical education institutions in China. In doing so, the study aims to analyse the differences between their level of self-satisfaction by psychoanalytical compartmentalization of burnout and ego resilience. Data is collected from a targeted population of individual respondents i.e., different athletes attending Chinese physical education high schools. A survey questionnaire technique has been used as the primary instrument of data collection with target respondents selected using a random sampling technique. Moreover, to analyse the data, PLS-SEM technique has been used in the study. The findings of the study illustrate that high levels of stress have a considerably adverse effect on the performance of athletes, leading to lower levels of self-esteem and work satisfaction. Furthermore, the mediating role of burnout of athlete's performances vis-à-vis stress and athlete's ability to handle stress is also explored. Finally, a comparative study of the high ego resilience group with low ego resilience group has been performed concluding in the favour of the former group which reports a higher level of athlete satisfaction in response to performance.

**Keywords:** stress, athletic performance, athlete satisfaction, ego resilience, self-esteem, burnout

## Introduction

According to (Shi & Zainuddin, 2020), the Government of Peoples Republic of China lays a commendable groundwork to promote physical education, as well as health of athletes in general. This determination is perfectly elucidated by the Education Law of China, which defines the basic parameter for education at large as being, "Education should serve the construction of the socialist modernization, should link with productive labour work, and should cultivate builders and successors of the socialist undertakings in an all-rounded development in morality, intellect and body" (Jin, 2013). Physical education, thus, signifies a significant share of the education in China, so much so that governing bodies of educational departments and institutes, at all levels attach highest priority to physical education, taking health of students along-with inspiring them to take interest in sports as a prerequisite for their performance assessment. According to the national bureau of statistics of China, there are 26 physical education universities for higher studies (Zhu, Tang, & Li, 2017). In addition, physical education-related disciplines are being taught in nearly 60 other institutions of higher learning (Wei, 2018). In addition, in 200 secondary teacher training schools, physical education programs are being taught (Y. Wang & Hu, 2017). Besides, physical education curriculum of secondary schools have a "two-fold task".

One is physical training of athletes, and second, training of teachers along the lines of latest technology. According to B. Wang and Wang (2018), so far, nearly 300,000 physical education teachers are working within the premises of China, devoting themselves for the greater service of country in the field of sports and athletics. These unwavering inputs have shown visible results over the years, as China's performance in the fields of sports has become considerably significant, both at intra and inter regional level (Ho et al., 2017).

However, notwithstanding the remarkable results, physical educational institutions have been found to face multiple challenges. The athletes of physical educational institutions reside in boarding houses, where they complete their academic studies while going through high levels of physical training and competitive drills (Shi & Zainuddin, 2020). They dedicate most of their time to enhancing their athletic abilities and performances, instead of acquiring practical education and knowledge and learning about multiple the roles and opportunities to come their late life (B. Wang & Wang, 2018). In addition to that, for them either they achieve good grades in their schools helping them to move to universities or become a full-time athlete representing their country at regional and global stages. Apart from these, Y. Wang and Hu (2017) reports there exist virtually no other opportunities to excel in any other sector. In short, any conceivable profession for

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an unemployed specialist athlete is uncertain, and in most cases, equal to none. In the light of these conditions, the athletes and students become susceptible to several kinds of stressors (Jin, 2013).

Yates (2020), notes that stress may be defined as a continuous effect upon the mental health of an individual because of his interaction with the environment. Moreover, it is characterized by the insufficiency of the individual to cope with environmental changes (Cole et al., 2015). Furthermore, Gardner et al. (2019) asserts that stress is a process where a certain event or incident creates an imbalance between the individual's ability to respond to variable environmental factors.

There are several stressors that affect the mental health of athletes, like injuries, performance targets, exceeding expectations, peer behavior, non-inclusion in the playing team, failure to win confidence of coaches, minimum monetary rewards, tough opponents, bureaucratic policies, non-professional heads of the departments etc. (Heidari, Kölling, Pelka, & Kellmann, 2017; Mann, Bryant, Johnstone, Ivey, & Sayers, 2016). Chyi, Lu, Wang, Hsu, and Chang (2018) made comparative study of the stressors that students of physical educational institutions go through, which includes, financial stress, family stress, competition stress, exercise stress, academic stress, instructor's stress, life problems, peer pressure, conflict with mates etc. Thereafter, Chyi et al. (2018), put-forth several techniques to examine the effect of these stressor on the mental health of the athletes in physical education institutions. A validity test was organized which categorized and measured the said stressors faced by athletes through the following factors: athletic stress, conflict with teammates, coach stress, and life stress. These can have rather inimical ramifications on the psychological conditions and may result in growing consternation, reducing self-esteem, as well as, complementing depression, (De Francisco, Arce, del Pilar Vilchez, & Vales, 2016). Moreover, if it is left unchecked, it may result in athlete burnout. (Rano, Fridén, & Eek, 2018).

Yates (2020), defines burnout as a physio-mental disorder. It is defined as physical, emotional, and social degradation, resulting in the exhaustion of an individual, both physically and mentally. Further, it scales down one's realization to achieve something, resulting in the devaluation of one's athletics abilities. Souza, Osiecki, Silva, Costa, and Stefanello (2018), also found the same symptom in students as well as in the athletes in different institutions, who were aspiring to join the national academy of sports. It may be inferred from these results that athletes who aspire to be educated along with getting physical training often experience these symptoms, both

emotional and physical (Nawaz & Aqdas, 2021). They develop a sense of low-esteem with no desire of accomplishment, and question their ambitions in the life and field they are in (Souza et al., 2018). Moreover, Markati, Psychountaki, Kingston, Karteroliotis, and Apostolidis (2019), asserts that athletes lose their interest in the sports so much so that they start giving little to no value to it in spite of their previous joy derived from it

The burnout, as mentioned above, causes tiredness, sadness and de-motivation (Leiter, Maslach, & Frame, 2014), followed by a subsequent decline in player or athlete performance, and a denial of participation in physical drills. In some cases, an athlete goes beyond repair and thinks of giving up his goals in athletics altogether. i.e., quit athletics (Leiter et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2015; Yates, 2020). Certainly, there are multiple research works or studies (Granz, Schnell, Mayer, & Thiel, 2019; Kent, Kingston, & Paradis, 2018; Leiter et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2015; Yates, 2020) which have asserted that unmitigated stress in athletes, like non-grafting with teammates or problems with the coach and his or her techniques or overstretching, has a considerable connection with burnout, leading to the possibility of permanent good-bye to athletics. About 30% of athletes in China relinquish from taking part in physical exercises per annum (Jin, 2013). This points towards the high ration of the burnout problems that sportsmen face (Panagopoulos, Anastasiou, & Goloni, 2014).

A number of studies show that continuous exposure to stress enhances the probability of burnout in students (Gomes, Faria, & Vilela, 2017; Granz et al., 2019; Moen, Hrozanova, Stiles, & Stenseng, 2019; Souza et al., 2018). Many academics in this regard have used several techniques to understand burnout in athletes built upon a stress-based methodology (De Francisco et al., 2016). Although burnout was initially presented as a phenomenon caused by disproportionate physical training (Leiter et al., 2014), recent developments in psychological studies have pointed out that the chief premise behind this episode is brain or psychological activity (Kent et al., 2018). By virtue of this concept, scholars and academics have demonstrated that burnout has an adverse effect on the individual athlete's welfare, self-esteem and their perspective towards both life and game (Furrer, Moen, & Firing, 2015).

These issues are first addressed by Coakley (1993), in his theoretical representation of the problems associated with burnout. While taking stock of the concept of identity, his research focuses on the effects of burnout and its potential ramifications on the life of an affected person. Athletic identity is deemed as the amount to which any athlete perceives of himself as an athlete (Brewer & Petitpas,

2017). In other words, it is the sense of reliability of one's goals with his area of sport. It is pointed out that students, who pass through a phase of burnout, show a tendency to develop a negative identity (Coakley, 1993). Furthermore, it is also observed that the exceptional environments of the schools and institutions they train in, also casts an identity factor upon students and athletes, who are required to excel in terms of their grades as well as maintain a certain level of rigorous physical training (W. H. Chang, Wu, Kuo, & Chen, 2018).

Moreover, a comprehensive study on the relationship between stress and burnout was conducted (De Francisco et al., 2016). Study reveals that when stress related to physical training or drills goes beyond certain level, majority of the athletes and students tend to lose their interest in the sports, as a deficit between input and output rises, resulting in lowered level of satisfaction. Athletic satisfaction is a multifaceted concept which may be understood as a, "positive affective state resulting from a complex evaluation of the structures, processes, and outcomes associated with athletic experience" (Saraf, Ramanakumar, & Chandrasekar). Since it is obvious that people suffering from burnout usually experience low satisfaction with their work (Lee, Kang, & Kim, 2017), it is safe to infer that burnout has a negatively effect on athletic satisfaction.

With the inception of new millennium, trends of research have changed considerably. Psychology, now, is playing a relatively dominant role in the studies of such disorders. It has a particular focus on the several abnormalities that an individual faces through the course of his daily life. Apart from that, it focuses on how human behavior is affected by the forces of environment and one's surroundings. Studies indicate the presence of an individual's latent capacity to

counter the burnout, often called ego resilience (Cole et al., 2015). Several papers have been published which study the effects of an athlete's resilience over the past decade (Lee et al., 2017). Ego resilience may be characterized by a person's capability to intercede factors that might lead towards risk, by developing or maintaining an ability to adapt to the environment, despite being in difficult conditions (Seaton & Beaumont, 2015). Furthermore, Ferreira, Cardoso, and Braun (2018) assert that this ability of driving a person out from his worst case scenario or situation persists at all times.

Cole et al. (2015) present a work-model with an insistence upon the optimism of the people who have high ego resilience. He concludes that such people are more prone towards positivity in their daily life than people who may low ego resilience. Furthermore, he noted that former are better adaptive to newer situations and have a better self-esteem than later. Same observations are made by Ferreira et al. (2018), who, in addition to the adaptability of the former, report more flexibility in the former as compared to the later.

Given that students attending physical education institutions have to go through a tough process of scrutiny to be selected, this results in the development of a different culture in such institutions. (Jin, 2013). Moreover, another factor i.e. the 'young age' of students also affects their mental health significantly, as they are exposed to youth or adolescence-associated stress. Furthermore, the tougher routine of these institutions, where students are not lent any free time, affects their mental health as well. (Robinson, 1999). Therefore, for students who study in these institutions, burnout is a possibility that cannot be overlooked.

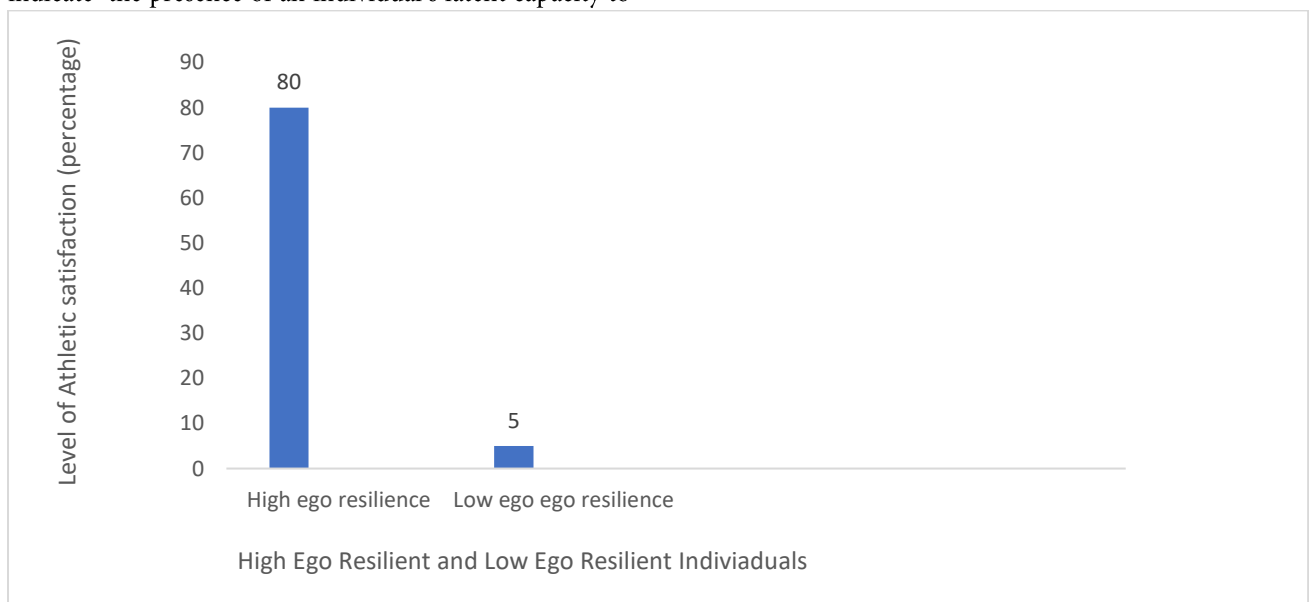


Fig.1.1 Level of athletic satisfaction between high ego resilient and low ego resilient individuals

Burnout, as a research topic, has received significant consideration by several researchers and academics. To back their theories, multiple studies have been conducted (K.-H. Chang et al., 2017; W. H. Chang et al., 2018; Chyi et al., 2018); nevertheless, coming out with strong set of arguments has been difficult as far as burnout, as a subject, is concerned (Souza et al., 2018). Additionally, there has been a debate upon where to put stress as a variable. Most studies have identified stress as a dependent variable and burnout as an independent variable. However, another class of scholars considers burnout to be a mediator with athletic performance and satisfaction as the dependent variables. We choose to side with the later for the purposes of this research paper.

## Literature Review

### Stress and Burnout

As noted earlier, stress and burnout have a direct effect on an individual's performance and identity. Yates (2020) reports that stressors tend to have a compromising effect on a person's capacity to tackle the challenges of personal and professional life. Farber (1991), asserts that as an athlete is exposed to an environment that is unhealthy and detrimental for their mental and physical his well-being, he is likely to submerge under the severe burden of the stressors. Lee et al. (2017), states that such stressors include lack of monetary success, trouble with team-mates, failure to win confidence of coach, etc. These factors cause stress which under certain circumstances cannot be dealt with by a normal person (Gardner et al., 2019). As a result, the person cannot keep up with his day-to-day life tasks. The cumulative result of these stressors is development of burnout (Gardner et al., 2019). Burnout is the result of a process of physical and mental deterioration of a person because of stress that they face. The burnout effect is a direct result of the stressors that a person endures. Hence, the following hypothesis is deduced

H1: Stress has a significant positive relationship with burnout

### Stress and Athletic Performance

Continuously high levels of stress not only result in burnout, but also upon have an adverse impact on the performance of an individual, irrespective of whether in the context of sports or not (Flanick & Mittal, 2020). According to Rano et al. (2018), however, stress for athlete's can be both, a mental and physical hazard. Bagheri et al. (2018), assert that with increased stress, muscle tension of body also increases. This compromises an athlete's performance and puts him at risk of injuries.

Furthermore, Lopes Dos Santos et al. (2020), observe that as an athlete tries to recover from such injuries, his stress may push him back with another injury after a while. Moreover, it is also noted that an excessive amount of stress can cause, and in a lot of cases does cause, performance anxiety (Furrer et al., 2015), which not only damages the health of an athlete physically but it also creates a sense of guilt, leaving him unrelaxed and obsessive to recover. Filho et al. (2015), reports that this obsession sometimes, brings a player back on track without complete recovery, leading to another potential injury. Another study found that with an increase in stress, energy levels of athletes deteriorate (Heidari et al., 2017). Moreover, it bears to note that sleeping routine is also disturbed. These athletes are found to be more prone towards injury in the outfield. It bears to further note that the greater amount of stress an athlete was suffering from, the more likely he is to get ill. Lastly, it is observed that with an abrupt load of training pattern, many athletes became injured.

According to LeBlanc (2009), high levels of stress can hamper the performance of any athlete, not only while he is on the field, but also in terms of off-the-field activities. It creates an imbalance in their daily routine where one needs to pay attention to multiple things. Furthermore, it affects a person's ability to judge or evaluate a given situation (Akenhead & Nassis, 2016). Aughey, Elias, Esmaeili, Lazarus, and Stewart (2016), states, as a person suffering from stress considers his situation as unmanageable, that is when the person starts to perform poorly in every field of life. Gradually, he loses his sense of creativity and work productivity, becoming a permanent prey to stress.

Cosh and Tully (2015) state that, under these circumstances, if an athlete or individual fails to respond or manage the stress level, it would drastically affect his personal and professional life, leading to mental deterioration. Furthermore, stress compromises the ability to remember the action one regularly performs in his daily life. It also impedes one from learning any new skill, both mentally or physically (Drew & Finch, 2016). LeBlanc (2009), reports that mentally exhausted people are effortlessly sidetracked and are more likely to make irrational and fatalistic decisions in their professional life. He further asserts, "If you're not feeling well, you're not going to do your best work." This means that adequate and quality sleep is a vital element in defense against mental stress and anxiety, as the individual's first line of defense. According to Cosh and Tully (2015), as have been discussed above, athletes suffering from injury have been

reported to have highly extreme levels of stress due to the constant pressure (internal and external) of getting back to pitch and performing at par with the expectations from them. Furthermore, this constant worry, brewing up in their minds, tends to create a fear of injury on their return which may compromise their performance (Drew & Finch, 2016). In addition, Akenhead and Nassis (2016), cites that these negative thoughts above recovery and performance, in most cases result in the complete departure from the sport they participate in.

H2: Stress has a significant negative relationship with Athletic Performance

#### **Stress and Athletic Satisfaction**

Crutcher, Moran, and Covassin (2018), report that with an increase in the levels of stress and its enhanced effect on the performance, athletes tend to lose their satisfaction with the game they participate in. As we have observed above that stress causes performance anxiety which results in an injury to the athletes. Lee et al. (2017), determines that successive injuries create a sense of fear in the mental outskirts of individual sportsmen. They become restrained as they play, resulting in the lack of quality performances, which further leads to lack of satisfaction, which they enjoyed before. Furthermore, a sense of guilt of not contributing enough, further deteriorates the mental as well as physical health of the athletes and students.

H3: Stress has a significant negative relationship with Athletic Satisfaction

#### **Burnout and Athletic Performance**

Burnout is the physical and mental exhaustion of an individual given their exposure to stress. Leiter et al. (2014) defines burnout as a phenomenon that has a remarkable amount of negative impact on a person which not only affects them individually but also leads to detrimental effects on their performance as part of a team. Moen et al. (2019), asserts that a physically and mentally exhausted person loses his will and vision to participate in any field of life, however, it is more particularly visible in the context of sports where a team depends upon a person and his mental health leads to the entire team being let down (Souza et al., 2018). Apart from on a collective level, it also affects the sportsman at the individual or personal level. In most cases, it leads to injuries and other ailments.

H4: Burnout has a significant negative relationship with Athletic Performance

#### **Burnout and Athletic Satisfaction**

Athletic satisfaction is inversely related to burnout. It is observed that high levels of burnout which are the results

of stress and anxiety, generally lead to decline in performance and hence towards lowered levels of athlete satisfaction (Kent et al., 2018). Keeping in mind the evidence in literature, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H5: Burnout has a significant negative relationship with Athletic Satisfaction

#### **Burnout, Stress and Athletic Performance**

Lee et al. (2017), reports that burnout is not a dependent variant, as most studies assert, rather, it plays the role of mediator between stress which is the independent variable and athletic performance which is the dependent variable. Increasing stress levels complement burnout factor to act as a mediator to affect athletic performance (Moen et al., 2019). Stress destroys both mental and physical attributes of an individual, making them vulnerable and susceptible to changes in environmental conditions. Furthermore, apart from mental injury it impedes the physical activity of the athletes, making them more prone to physical injuries, i.e. major muscle contraction. Furrer et al. (2015) reports, the results of negative performance of the athlete in both at the outfield and in the personal sphere of life.

H6: Burnout significantly mediates between stress and Athletic Performance

#### **Burnout, Stress and Athletic Satisfaction**

Burnout plays the same role of mediation in relation to stress and athletic satisfaction (Lee et al., 2017). It absolves the athlete from his sense of self-esteem and makes him less satisfied with his input in the game as well as his overall interest in the game, which is also affected by that. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Burnout significantly mediates between stress and Athletic Satisfaction

## **Research Method**

This study was carried out in People's Republic of China, to determine the relationship between stress, athletic performance, and athletic satisfaction, with the mediating role of burnout in the athletes and students of physical education institutions in China. The participants of the study were the common citizens who frequently visit the major local consumer markets. China's open-door policy not only opened itself to the world but also encouraged participation in regional and international competitions, like South Asian games and Olympics. To meet its requirement for athletics at the international level, China has invested sizeable in its sports sector. Being the second-best performing nation at Olympics, it is potentially insightful to study their physical education institutions, as well as learn about their athletes. A survey questionnaire

technique was used for data collection using a five-point Likert scale. The responses to the questions ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree i.e., starting from 1 to 5. Lastly, the PLS-SEM technique was used to analyze the data.

### Measures

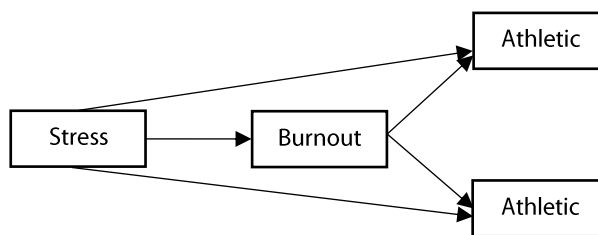
The instruments selected for the research were adapted from the previous literature, as they pertained to chosen variables, which makes them authentic and relevant. The items were designed taking into account 6 items for socio-demographic variables and 18 items comprising statements pertaining to the selected variables of this study with five-point Likert scale as introduced by (Albaum, 1997); Gwinner (2006); (Partecke, Schwabl, & Gwinner, 2006; Vagias, 2006). Furthermore, the scales used in the study were also taken from reliable resources. Lastly, the distinguished items were used to measure each variable separately.

### Data collection procedure

The first section of the questionnaire includes the socio-demographic information of the respondents while the second section included the relevant question apropos the study. Before distributing the questionnaires to the athletes, it was clearly mentioned that it is up to their discretion whether to participate in the research or not, and that the responses will be kept confidential. A total of 800 athletes were chosen for the study. A total of 763

questionnaires were returned out of which 9 were discarded because of missing values. Finally, 754 questionnaires were considered for analysis.

### Research Framework



### Results

A convergent validity test is conducted to examine the relation between the items selected for the purpose of research for this paper. The result of the test shows that the correlation between the items prescribed for the virtue of this test is found to be overwhelmingly positive. The variables are based upon a comprehensive analysis of the alpha and composite reliability. The values of both alpha and composite reliability of variables are found to be higher than 0.7, as it is found in our research. This shows that a high interrelation is found between the variables. In the same way, the importance between the connection among the variables was supplemented by the AVE value which is found to be greater than 0.5. The table given below illustrates the results of the convergent validity test:

**Table 1**

#### Convergent Validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Athletic Performance	AP1	0.887	0.914	0.936	0.746
	AP2	0.906			
	AP3	0.830			
	AP4	0.881			
	AP5	0.810			
Athletic Satisfaction	AS1	0.913	0.903	0.930	0.730
	AS2	0.627			
	AS3	0.909			
	AS4	0.889			
	AS5	0.897			
Burnout	BO1	0.777	0.912	0.929	0.620
	BO10	0.865			
	BO11	0.778			
	BO12	0.811			
	BO4	0.844			
	BO5	0.720			
	BO7	0.688			
	BO9	0.802			
	ST1	0.817			
Stress	ST10	0.774	0.930	0.940	0.612
	ST11	0.825			
	ST14	0.815			
	ST16	0.719			
	ST2	0.810			
	ST20	0.779			
	ST3	0.717			
	ST5	0.772			

To examine discriminant validity, HTMT i.e., Heterotrait-Monotrait, is opted. It is one of the most contemporary and relevant techniques to analyse the discriminant validity for variables. The value of Heterotrait-Monotrait should not exceed 0.90, for making sure that discriminant validity exists. The value, in case of this study, matches the scale value i.e. 0.9, asserting the existence of discriminant value. The results are shown as follows in Table 2:

**Table 2**

HTMT

	AP	AS	BO	ST
AP				
AS	0.448			
BO	0.608	0.269		
ST	0.561	0.224	0.505	

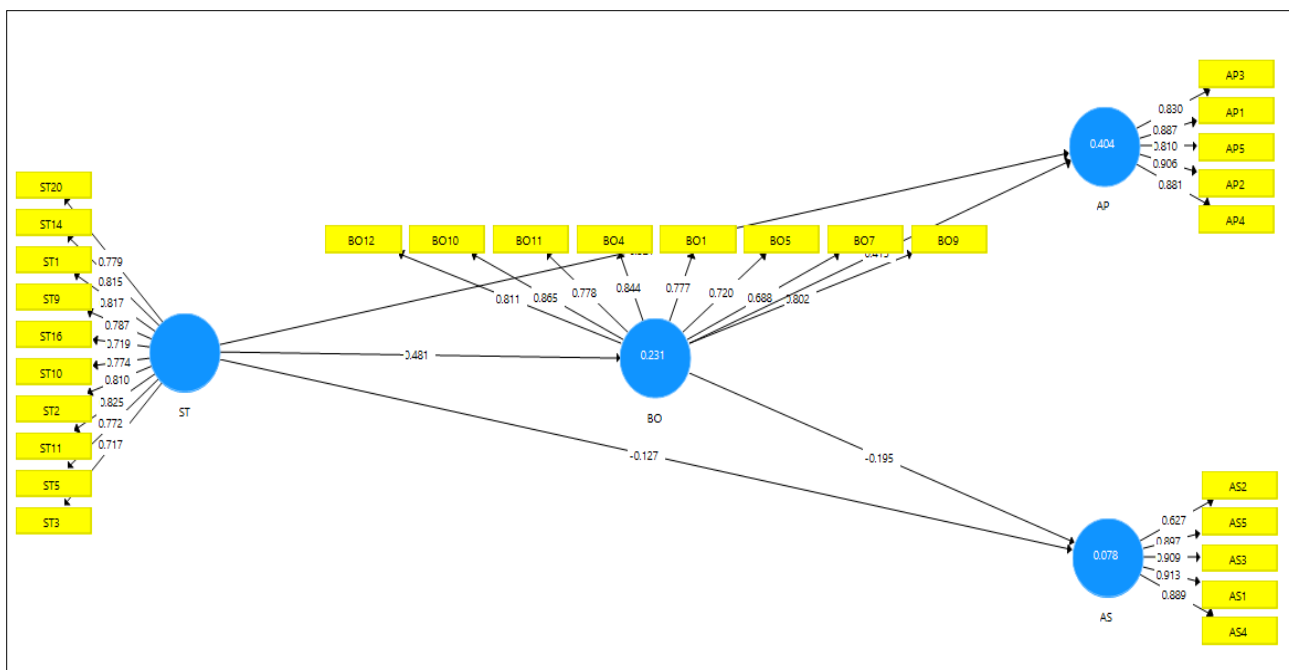


Figure 2: Measurement Model Assessment

The following table shows the data collected for regression analysis. The data collected as such creates a strong link between stress and burnout, resulting in physical and mental weathering of an athlete. Likewise, stress and performance of athlete also have a substantial association. While on the other hand, according to the data given below, stress does not indicate any considerable connection with athletic satisfaction. In addition to that, burnout because of stress and athletic performance exhibits a positive relationship as well. Furthermore, burnout is found to have a negative

relation with athletic satisfaction. The data given below reinforces four hypotheses i.e., H1, H2, H4 and H5 where the value of “p” of the hypotheses mentioned before are found to be less than 0.05, whereas the values of “t” is found to be higher than 1.64 without any zero in between them. On the other hand, value of “p” in H3 is found to be 0.053, which shows no striking relation between stress and athletic satisfaction among athletes in physical education institutions in China. Table 3 is extracted from the SEM analysis of the given data.

SEM

**Table 3**

Main Effects

	Std. Beta	Sample Mean	Std. Error	T Value	P Values	Decision
H1 ST -> BO	0.481	0.484	0.055	8.769	0.000	Supported
H2 ST -> AP	0.321	0.322	0.061	5.247	0.000	Supported
H3 ST -> AS	-0.127	-0.126	0.078	1.614	0.053	Not Supported
H4 BO -> AP	0.415	0.413	0.057	7.237	0.000	Supported
H5 BO -> AS	-0.195	-0.199	0.072	2.706	0.003	Supported



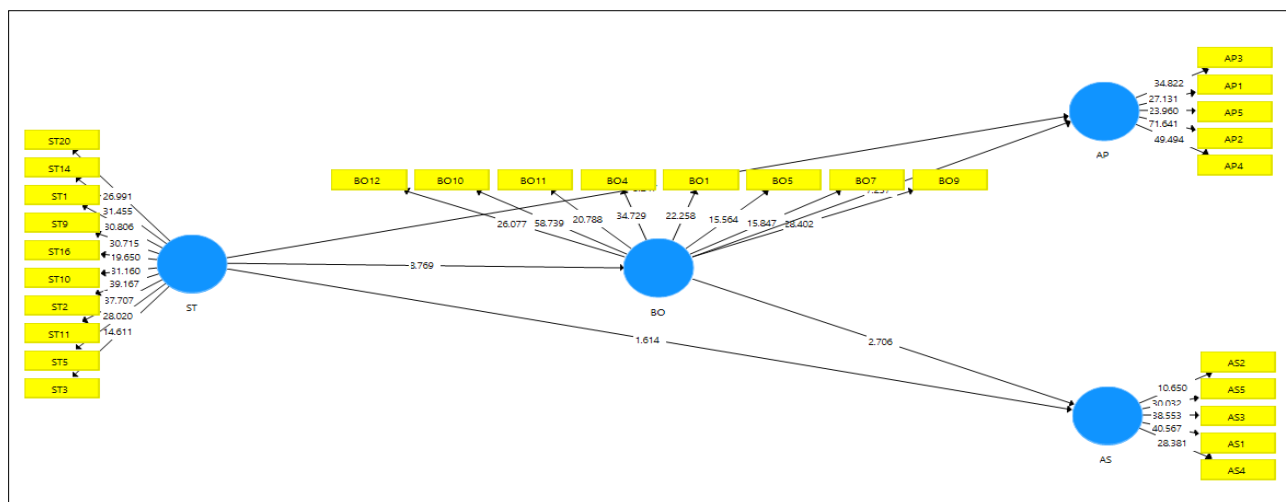


Figure 3: Structural Model Assessment

In this research, burnout is taken as a mediator. In order to understand its role as mediator and relationship between the variable's, bootstrapping analysis is carried out. The results of this analysis are shown in the table given below. According to the analysis, a significant connection between stress and athletic performance is pointedly being mediated by burnout. In the same manner, burnout, as a mediator played a role in the relationship between stress and athletic satisfaction. Therefore,

both H6 and H7 are accepted, with the addition of burnout showing significant outcome. The effect of burnout affecting both athlete's performance and satisfaction is indirectly substantiated by the value of beta in both hypotheses, i.e.  $\beta = 0.199$  and  $\beta = -0.094$ , respectively, while those of values for t were found to be 5.988 and 2.523, respectively. Additionally, no zero exists between the upper and lower limits which also corroborates the indirect path of the variables.

Table 4

Indirect Effects

		Std. Beta	Sample Mean	Std. Error	T Value	P Values	Decision
H6	ST -> BO -> AP	0.199	0.200	0.033	5.988	0.000	Supported
H7	ST -> BO -> AS	-0.094	-0.096	0.037	2.523	0.006	Supported

### Discussion and Conclusion

The most important period for any profession is the formative years or a young age. This is even more important for a sportsman or athlete (Saraf et al.). However, since most athletes who are trained at professional institutions and schools are required to focus on their academics as well as their physical training programs, consequently, there is a strong probability of them suffer from burnout, lack of athletic satisfaction and decline in performance (Lee et al., 2017). Gomes et al. (2017) states that athletes at their young age face a lot of stressors in the form of financial crises, negative competition, and failure to achieve their goals. Furthermore, being driven to achieving something is the pinnacle of any sport, and athletes after having devoted their time and energy, fail to achieve the desired result fall, are likely to fall prey to stress, which leads to burnout. As a result of multiple failures, athletes suffering from emotional and physical exhaustion quit the life of athlete

(Granz et al., 2019).

It has been stated before that student enrolled at the physical education institutions in China must live in a boarding school. They must focus on their physical training as well as on their academics. As a result of this two-fold pressure, many students and athletes suffer from different levels of stress and burnout (Lee et al., 2017). In addition to that, these physical education institutions are more concerned about achievement of their short-term targets, i.e. to improve the student's performance in the field by rigorous training. They do not associate themselves the general character development and student enhancement programs which may help students and athletes fight against such stresses and failures in the long run. As a result, it is predicted that, given the current situation, students in physical educational institutions in China are likely to suffer through high levels of stress, which would adversely affect their performance and satisfaction.

As illustrated in Figure1, an athlete's stress leads to



burnout which serves dual consequences. Heidari et al. (2017) presents those consequences, first, athlete's performance is affected adversely, leading him towards injury or permanently unfit for play. Secondly, it deepens or intensifies the athlete's lack of satisfaction with his contributions and input towards team, at large. It is also observed that burnout acts as a mediator between stress and athletic performance along with athletic satisfaction. W. H. Chang et al. (2018), demonstrates that the experience of an athlete on the field is credited with the level of development of athletic identity and his quality of performance in sports. As a result, given the evidence, it is quite safe to conclude that stress and burnout have a negative impact upon the athlete's performance. If these hypotheses are considered to be valid and in line with the psychological understanding of the subject, then it may be inferred that with increasing levels of stress, the confidence of an athlete deteriorates, leading to a decline in his performance (Lee et al., 2017).

This paper, as opposed to the previous studies conducted on burnout and stress, embarks upon the road to a new discovery. That is, by the virtue of this study, it is found that increasing amount of stress does not increase burnout, rather it is burnout, which being a mediator, when stress levels increase, affects the psychological build-up of an individual. In short, stress does not directly affect the athlete's performance or satisfaction, instead it is pre-existing burnout which does when faced with increasing amount of stress. Moreover, as put-forth above, continuous amount of stress compliments the existing burnout in the athlete, and when coupled-with varying environmental conditions and physical exercise, (Souza et al., 2018) it can be inferred that this may result in the decline in the athlete's performance and satisfaction levels. So far, the studies have rested upon the conclusion that low levels of stress, good mental or psychological health have high degree of achievement (Ferreira et al., 2018). In addition, Cole et al. (2015) observe that athletes with practical techniques of dealing with stress are more adept at controlling negative thoughts. Further, Ferreira et al. (2018) asserts that such athletes are more self-reliant, with

a higher level of self-esteem. They are also reported to have a more optimistic picture of the world.

In psychological literature, burnout in an athlete is a result of his non-compliance with the changing conditions, resulting in non-participation on and off the field. Therefore, it is deemed imperative either to avert or curtail its manifestation (Markati et al., 2019). It is no secret, that athletes and students experience a multiple form of changes in the first half of their youth years. These changes include their physical and mental development, academic changes, and social changes (Granz et al., 2019). Therefore, it is safe to assume, given their weaker capacity to handle high levels of stress, they are easy to fall for its prey than adult athletes. It is in this regard, that a dynamic strategy is required on the part of coaches and team leaders to place safeguards against the ills of stress and burnout. Furthermore, they should work on the psychological development of the athletes, for ensuring the factors of ego resilience in them.

To achieving the goals mentioned above, there is a need to conduct further investigation into the process of burnout, its cognitive symptoms, ways to handle it and how to curtail it for good. As this study introduces a new approach of viewing burnout as a mediator, rather than variable, it should be replicated by working it in the line of other variables. Moreover, comprehensive research on mental development programs with a focus on ego resilience should be conducted. As per the studies, it is singular most important factor which may lead to the curtailment of burnout and stress among individual players and athletes. A course module on mental development and ego resilience should be taught as a compulsory subject in physical education institutions with a view to help them cope with these problems in the future.

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