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Level of aspiration of cricket players in relation to their sports achievement

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the significant mean difference and correlation between level of aspiration & sports achievement of cricket players which are participating at District, State, Inter-university and National level. The sample of the study comprised 300 cricket players of Haryana state. All the players are male participants and their age ranges from 17 to 23 years. Level of aspiration of cricket players was incorporated: Shah & Bhargava). In order to test the significance of mean difference between the variables descriptive statistics, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied and for comparison between possible pairs of different achievement groups, Scheffe's post hoc test was applied. The correlations among variables were obtained by using Pearson's product moment method of correlation. The result indicates that two of the three measures of level of aspiration showed significant correlation with different achievement levels of cricket players. Goal discrepancy score (GDS) yielded negative correlation, while Number of time Goal reach score (NTRS) showed a positive correlation with achievement in cricket. Correlation between Attainment discrepancy score (ADS) and achievement levels of cricket players is not found to be significant. Different achievement groups differ significantly on GDS and NTRS while no difference was found among cricket players on ADS (a measure of LOA).

Keywords: Level of Aspiration, Sports achievement, Cricket, Players.

1. Introduction

Cricket is a wonderful world that creates learning situations in which the participants learn and modify certain qualities in a unique manner. The excellence of physical development, mental development, superiority of moral development and uniqueness of social adjustment are assured in cricket. There are some factors influencing the performance of a player which need to be mentioned here. The first and the crucial most factors is the psychological built by a player. If a player is psychologically strong built he performs better in crunch situations. As is known, the game is replete with twists and fluctuations; a player is required to be psychologically strong. The performance of a player is directly proportional to his mental strength. The game demands a high strength level so far as the psychological aspect is concerned. History of the game is a testimony to that. The players who are stronger, they perform better than other players who are otherwise better than them. The level of aspiration at hand affects the performance of a player immensely because this factor has a great influence on the psychology of a player.

2. Level of Aspiration

Like other psychological phenomena, motivational factors have their importance in directing individual behavior consciously and make him strive to perform certain types of activity in order to achieve a definite goal. Everyone aims at reaching a definite goal or excellence in performance and in doing so, he sets a desire for distinction which has an inner structure known as 'Level of Aspiration' (LOA). The question arises: what does the term 'aspiration' mean? Generally the meaning of the term level of aspiration bears an intimate relationship to the method used in determining goal setting behavior.

The notion of level of aspiration is invoked in reference to the goal striving behavior of an individual presented with a task, the outcome of which can be measured on an achievement scale. Even before the coining to the term by Dembo (1931) the first experiment in the area was conducted by Hoppe (1930) who defined the 'level of aspiration' (LOA) as 'a person's expectations, goals or claims on his own future achievement in a given task. On the basis of experimental analysis, Hoppe found that a given performance is accompanied by a feeling of

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Failure, if it falls below the LOA, and a given performance is accompanied by a feeling of success if it goes above the LOA. Therefore LOA according to Hoppe, was essentially qualitative in nature. He ascertains LOA through the following lines of evidence: (i) the subjective nature of an individual's goal (ii) the occurrence of success and failure experienced after the goal is achieved, conflicting and decision taking experiences, and (iii) the influence of immediate past experience on the subsequent level of goal setting behavior.

The work on the topic gained more importance after the appearance of Lewin's dynamic theory of personality (1935). Since then, the level of aspiration has been recognized as one of the most important personality variables uncovered so far. Frank (1935) altered Hoppe's concept of level of aspiration (LOA) behavior in the light of his quantitative technique, where the goodness of performance, was measured in terms of the time taken to complete the set task. The subject was acquainted with the task, given a number of trials and after each trial told how long he had taken. He was subsequently asked to state how long he thought he would take to complete the next trial. By this method, the goal was expressed in the same units, in which the goodness of performance was measured, thus enabling direct comparison to be made between the level of aspiration and the level of performance. Frank offered evidence that the LOA is a stable personality characteristic relatively independent of specific task. He then redefined Hoppe's concept of level of aspiration as, "the term level of aspiration... is defined as level of future performance in a familiar task which an individual, knowing his level of past performance in that task, explicitly undertakes to reach". The term level of aspiration is defined by Festinger (1942), Boyd (1952), Backer & Seigal (1957), Joshi (1963), Hurlock (1968), Smith (1968), Orio (1969), Drever (1952) but according to Frank (1941) an individual arranges his aspiration towards his possible attainments in a hierarchy of difficulties that he is likely to face. His level of aspiration is described to be the most attractive orientation on the continuum of difficulty in relation to the goal he aspires to achieve.

Level of aspiration is a psychological construct which reflects a cognitive type of motivation of the individual. James Drever (1952) explains it as a frame of reference involving self-esteem of alternatively as a standard with reference to which an individual experiences i.e. has the feeling of success or failure. Thus, the term level of aspiration involves the estimation of his ability (whether over, under or realistic) for his future performance on the strength of his past experience (goal discrepancy), his ability and capacity, the efforts that can be made towards attaining the goal thus set by him. The difference between the level of the last performance and that of the goal is called 'Goal Discrepancy' whether as the difference between the goal level and that of the new performance is called 'Attainment Discrepancy'. The greater the discrepancy, whether goal or attainment, the lesser the changes of attaining the goal and the wider the frustration that the individual may experience. Thus, neither the over estimation, nor the under estimation, what so ever they may be but it is the realistic estimation in terms of least goal or attainment discrepancy, that brings home the highest level of satisfaction ascertaining his reality oriented personality and consistency between his goal setting behavior and his ability and efforts to attain the same.

The level of aspiration presupposes a goal which as an inner structure, called by the name of 'Ideal Goal'. This goal may be too difficult or too easy for the person at present. Knowing this, the goal seeker may set his goal at a place for the next

action. This is called 'action goal', which is usually taken as a criterion for the level of aspiration for an individual at a given time. This does not mean that the individual has given up his 'ideal goal'. The 'action goal' is within the whole goal structure of the individual. There may be a number of more or less realistic goal levels. The goal may be too high i.e. dream goal or very low, both unrealistic for the person.

On the whole, if the results of any action are seen as an achievement reflecting one's own ability and in addition, different degrees of difficulty can be distinguished, one speaks of a level of aspiration. There are wide individual differences in cricket players, for some have ambitions far below, some normal and some far above, what they might reasonably expect to achieve. Some cricket players quickly change their aspirations to fit their experiences of success and failure; others stick tenaciously to their high goals in the face of repeated failure. It is, therefore, quite obvious that the level of aspiration is of basic importance for the conduct of human beings and influences most of their goal seeking. The study of level of aspiration is still more important in the context of the present research work as the cricketer's aspiration level represents him not only as he is at any particular moment, but also as he would like to be at some point in the future. So, some measures can be adopted to see that not only those cricket players who have a high level of aspiration keep up their tempo, but also those whose levels of aspiration is low could be helped to move up the ladder step by step. After all, life is a journey and the destination can best be achieved when an individual is on the move, does not matter what difficulties are on the way. Certainly by knowing a player's level of aspiration we learn a great deal about him.

3. Sports Achievement

The world is becoming more and more competitive. Sports achievement has become the key factor for personal progress. The importance of sports achievement has raised several questions for sports researches. What factors promote sports achievement in cricketers? Sports achievement is always a many sided phenomenon. In this sense it depends on many factors such as physique, motor fitness, technique, tactics, intelligence, early life experiences, physiological conditioning etc. Various factors and conditions affect the sports achievement of a particular player in a particular field. The achievement of a cricketer depends indeed on his conceptual learning and understanding on ground. It further depends on numerous factors like cricketer's interest and motivation in the game that they play; the devices and methods adopted by coaches on ground, family setup and situational playing habits. It is pertinent to mention that economic, social and cultural factors tend to influence sports achievement of the cricketers. In addition to all these, there are certain factors associated with affected domain of a player. Among these, the factors of primary importance are psychological factors. Among these psychological factors, level of aspiration may have a deep and serious effect on the performance of cricket players. Level of aspiration goes into making the mental make up of a cricket player. One individual differs from another in personality and optimum level of aspiration may influence the performance of a player. In this research, level of aspiration was judged as the variable affecting sports achievement.

4. Methodology

The sample of the study comprised 300 cricket players of Haryana state. All the players are male participants and their age ranges from 17 to 23 years. The data has been divided into

four achievement groups, each having 75 subjects in it. Achievement groups/levels are District, State, Inter-university and National level. The data at hand was collected by the researcher by personal visits to cricket players of various districts of Haryana. The random sampling technique was utilized to collect the required data of the subject during inter-collegiate, inter-university and national camps and competitions and practicing at popular centers of Haryana state.

5. Tool

Level of Aspiration Questionnaire (LOA): Shah and Bhargava (1983)

This measure of level of aspiration by Shah and Bhargava is a nonverbal test based on coding method. The level of aspiration booklet contains general information's of the testee; instructions to the respondent and the scoring table. Last eleven pages contain the performance sheet of this measure which is arranged in order of trial numbers. The performance sheet has 50 circles (each of 1cm in diameter) which are arranged in five rows – ten in each row. Above and below of these rows, there are two boxes on the right side – the upper box is for writing the number of expected score (except in practice trial) whereas lower box is for putting the number of actual score or completed performance. The students have to complete ten trials except practice trial. The respondents have to draw four lines in these circles, so that they may appear like a human face. They must draw the line in this sequence – right eye, left eye, nose and mouth. They have to work from left to right across the rows and then proceed to the next line.

For each trial 30 seconds are allotted for work and at the end of this time, they will be asked to stop the marking and count the number of completed faces and enter it in lower box. This trial will be treated as PRACTICE TRIAL. In the following trials they have to do the same thing along with to put the number of faces in the upper box which they intend to complete within 30 seconds time on the basis of last actual performances. Thus, they have to complete 10 trials for actual work. Eleven trials are necessary because the practice trial is ignored in the scoring and last trial (Tenth) ensures that the subject will state a goal.

The reliability of this measure is calculated by the test-retest method and the split half method (correlating the first half with the second half trials). Here, the question of interjudge reliability does not arise (Humphrey and Argyle, 1962).

Table

| Retest Method | N | GDS | ADS | NTRS |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| With a gap of 1 month | 100 | .88 | .82 | .86 |
| With an interval of 3 months | 60 | .72 | .75 | .74 |
| Split half method | 60 | .77 | .69 | .78 |

It may be stated that no device or measure of level of aspiration has made any mention of validity coefficient. Perhaps the question of validity is not relevant to the study of level of aspiration. In this context, Muthayya (1959) writes, "level of aspiration behavior remains constant regardless of the means used to measure it". His argument is understandable because question of validity arises when a behavior is inferred from another behavior indirectly. In this situation, the respondent is involved in the actual task proposed by him and the situation is by and large realistic for him. Still present investigators tried to found out the validity coefficients with few tasks and available allied tests of aspirations and it is obtained in the table.

Table

| Method | N | GDS | ADS |
|---|----|-----|-----|
| Card Sorting Tray Tasks | 30 | .58 | .52 |
| Level of Aspiration V.P. Bhargava | 50 | .67 | .62 |
| Occupational Aspiration Scale By Grewal | 60 | .76 | .65 |
| Educational Aspiration Scale Form V By Sharma & Gupta | 45 | .48 | .56 |

Findings

Table 1: Description of the Sample Selected

| Name of District | ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL | | | | Total |
|------------------|-------------------|-------|------------------|----------|-------|
| | District | State | Inter-University | National | |
| Jind | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 16 |
| Hissar | 8 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 26 |
| Sirsa | 7 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 22 |
| Rohtak | 8 | 15 | 10 | 18 | 51 |
| Karnal | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 16 |
| Bhiwani | 8 | 13 | 12 | 20 | 53 |
| Panipat | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| Gurgaon | 8 | 12 | 9 | 13 | 42 |
| Sonepat | 7 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 17 |
| Faridabad | 8 | 15 | 9 | 13 | 45 |
| Total | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 300 |

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Combined Sample

| Variables | Means | SDs |
|-----------|-------|------|
| GDS | 1.73 | 1.63 |
| ADS | -0.26 | 1.50 |
| NTRS | 3.03 | 1.65 |

Table 3: Inter-correlation Matrix

| Variables | Achievement |
|-----------|-------------|
| GDS | -.17 |
| ADS | .06 |
| NTRS | .39 |

Note: $r \geq .12$ is significant at .05 probability level.
 $r \geq .15$ is significant at .01 probability level.

Table 4a: Different achievement groups on the measure Goal Discrepancy Score.
Mean and SDs

| Groups | Means | SDs |
|------------------|-------|------|
| District | 2.13 | 1.58 |
| State | 1.86 | 1.62 |
| Inter-University | 1.53 | 1.59 |
| National | 1.42 | 1.67 |

Table 4b: Summary of ANOVA

| Source of Variation | SS | df | MS | F | P |
|---------------------|--------|-----|------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 23.34 | 3 | 7.78 | 2.97 | .032 |
| Within Groups | 774.42 | 296 | 2.61 | | |
| Total | 797.76 | 299 | | | |

Table 4c: Scheffe's post hoc test

| Dependent Variable | Groups | Mean Difference | Sig. |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------|
| Goal Discrepancy Score | District State | .28 | n.s. |
| | Inter-University National | .60 | n.s. |
| | State Inter-University National | .71 | n.s. |
| | State Inter-University National | .33 | n.s. |
| | Inter-University National | .43 | n.s. |
| | Inter-University National | .11 | n.s. |

Table 5a: Different achievement groups on the measure Attainment Discrepancy Score.
Mean and SDs

| Groups | Means | SDs |
|------------------|-------|------|
| District | -.40 | 1.33 |
| State | -.27 | 1.58 |
| Inter-University | -.19 | 1.56 |
| National | -.18 | 1.54 |

Table 5b: Summary of ANOVA

| Source of Variation | SS | df | MS | F | P |
|---------------------|--------|-----|------|-----|------|
| Between Groups | 2.31 | 3 | .77 | .34 | n.s. |
| Within Groups | 670.68 | 296 | 2.27 | | |
| Total | 672.99 | 299 | | | |

Table 5c: Scheffe's post hoc test

| Dependent Variable | Groups | Mean Difference | Sig. |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------|
| Attainment Discrepancy Score | District State | -.13 | n.s. |
| | State Inter-university | -.21 | n.s. |
| | Inter-university National | -.22 | n.s. |
| | State Inter-university | -.08 | n.s. |
| | Inter-university National | -.09 | n.s. |
| | Inter-University National | -.01 | n.s. |

Table 6a: Different achievement groups on the measure Number of Times the Goal Reach Score.
Mean and SDs

| Groups | Means | SDs |
|------------------|-------|------|
| District | 2.11 | 1.48 |
| State | 2.68 | 1.53 |
| Inter-University | 3.61 | 1.56 |
| National | 3.72 | 1.49 |

Table 6b: Summary of ANOVA

| Source of Variation | SS | df | MS | F | P |
|---------------------|--------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 133.26 | 3 | 44.42 | 19.37 | .001 |
| Within Groups | 678.93 | 296 | 2.29 | | |
| Total | 812.19 | 299 | | | |

Table 6c: Scheffe's post hoc test

| Dependent Variable | Groups | Mean Difference | Sig. |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------|
| Number of Times the Goal Reach Score | District State | -.57 | n.s. |
| | State Inter-University | -1.50 | .001 |
| | Inter-University National | -1.61 | .001 |
| | State Inter-University | -.93 | .01 |
| | Inter-University National | -1.04 | .001 |
| | Inter-University National | -.11 | n.s. |

6. Results and Discussion

The obtained data were subjected to a number of statistical analyses pertinent to the research objectives of the study. In order to test the significance of mean difference between the variables descriptive statistics, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied and for comparison between possible pairs of different achievement groups, Scheffe's post hoc test was applied. The correlations among variables were obtained by using Pearson's product moment method of correlation. A perusal of inter correlation matrix (Table 3) indicates that two of the three measures of the level of aspiration shows significant correlation with the achievement levels of cricket

players. The goal discrepancy score (GDS), which shows the extent and direction of the difference between attained score on previous trial and the goal set for the next trial has yielded a correlation coefficient of $-.17$ ($p < .01$) with the achievement levels of cricket players. The another variable that taps the number of times goal reached score (NTRS), which provides an index of subject's actual probability of reaching his stated goal correlates with achievement levels of cricket players to the degree of $.39$. The correlation is significant at $.01$ probability level. The high correlation between the variables clearly indicates that the cricket players performing at higher level are more motivated to avoid failure and approach to maximum limits. The correlation between attainment discrepancy score (ADS) of level of aspiration and the levels of achievement (Ach) by cricket players is very low in magnitude, its equals to $.06$, which is not statistically significant. This value shows that achievement level in cricket does not related to the degree of maladjustment and failure in goal attainment in level of aspiration task.

It is clear from the results of ANOVA presented in Table - 4 to 6 that overall achievements groups of cricket players differ significantly on two of the three measures of level of aspiration. The level of aspiration is measured in terms of three components. Goal discrepancy score (GDS) is a measure of level of aspiration in terms of the gap between aspiration for the next trial (expected score) and the immediate performance on previous trials. The F - ratio for this measure is equal to 2.97 ($df = 3/296$) which is significant at $.05$ probability level (table-4b). It suggests that the difference among four achievement groups on Goal discrepancy score are of considerable degree. It also indicates that all the cricket players in four achievement groups differ in respect to their goal set up for next trail in relation to their actual performance on the previous trial.

An inspection of means indicate that District level cricket players are highest (Mean = 2.13 , SD = 1.58) and National level cricket players are lowest (Mean = 1.42 , SD = 1.67). The mean score of State and Inter-University level cricket players are close to each other, the means are 1.86 (SD = 1.62) and 1.53 (SD = 1.59), respectively. These findings clearly indicate that cricket players participating at higher level perceive their performance and the goal more accurately than those playing at lower level. Therefore, they recorded lower goal discrepancies.

For individual comparison of achievement groups with each other Scheffe's post hoc test was applied (Scheffe, 1953). The results of Scheffe's post hoc test suggest that none of the six pairs of comparison achievement groups differ significantly on goal discrepancy score (GDS), a measure of level of aspiration. However, one of the six pairs of comparison is much close to the critical value at $.05$ level i.e. District V/s National level cricket players achievement group. The mean score of District level cricket players (mean = 2.13) is slightly higher than the mean score of cricket players at National level (mean = 1.42). The other comparison groups show an almost equal level of aspiration to set up their goal for next trial on the basis of their actual performance in previous trial.

The second measure of level of aspiration is attainment discrepancy score (ADS). The ADS is obtained by subtracting the expected performance from the actual performance. Hence, it is the difference between aspiration (expected score) and the achievement (actual score) on the same trial. The F - ratio for this measure is equal to $.34$ which is very low to reach the significant level (table-5b). This value obtained from ANOVA clearly suggests that all the four achievement groups of cricket

players aren't differing with each other on this measure of level of aspiration. A perusal of mean table indicates that four achievement groups i.e., District, State, Inter University and National score almost same on ADS. The means are -.40 (SD = 1.33), -0.27 (SD = 1.58), -0.19 (SD = 1.56) and -.18 (SD = 1.54) respectively. However, the negative values mean that their expected performance is higher than the actual performance. The ANOVA results being none significant, it was decided not to apply Scheffé's test for this variable.

On another measure of the level of aspiration, i.e., Number of Time Goal Reached Score, over all group differences is significant. It is clear from the results in table-6b that the F-ratio for NTRS is equal to 19.37 (df = 3/296), which is very large and significant at .001 probability level. It suggests that overall differences among four achievement groups on NTRS are much marked.

A perusal of means table – 6a indicates that National level cricket players are highest (mean = 3.72, SD = 1.49) and the District level cricket players are lowest (Mean = 2.11, SD = 1.48). The mean score of the State and Inter-University level cricket players are 2.68 (SD = 1.53) and 3.61 (SD = 1.56), respectively. These findings clearly suggest that Inter-University and National level cricket players attain their goals more risk frequently than other groups. Further, it also suggests that they take more trial in chasing the goals. In addition, District and State level achievement groups showed a very high fear of failure.

The results of Scheffé's post hoc test (table-6c) suggest that four of the six pairs of cricket players groups differ significantly on NTRS. These are District V/s Inter-University, District V/s National, State V/s Inter-University, and State V/s National level cricket players group.

It is clear from the means table-6a that National level cricket players are higher on the variable number of times the goal reached score as compared to District and State level cricket players. The mean scores of National and Inter-University level cricket players are almost the same; their means are 3.72 and 3.61 respectively. These findings clearly suggest that four pairs of comparison groups differ significantly with each other in respect of level of aspiration on a variable number of times the goal reach score.

7. Conclusions

The result indicates that two of the three measures of level of aspiration showed significant correlation with different achievement levels of cricket players. Goal discrepancy score (GDS) yielded negative correlation, while Number of time Goal reach score (NTRS) showed a positive correlation with achievement in cricket. Correlation between Attainment discrepancy score (ADS) and achievement levels of cricket players is not found to be significant. Different achievement groups differ significantly on GDS and NTRS while no difference was found among cricket players on ADS (a measure of LOA).

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