

Level of Aspiration of Senior School Students in Relation to Their Family Type

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present investigation was to study the impact of family type on the level of aspiration of students. The research was conducted on senior secondary school students of Himachal Pradesh (India). The data was collected from the male and female school students belonging to nuclear and joint families by using random sampling technique. It was hypothesized that the students from different family backgrounds do not differ significantly in their level of aspiration. The results of the study indicated that the students belonging to different family backgrounds do not differ significantly in their level of aspiration with respect to GDS, ADS and NTRS, however the students coming from nuclear families have slightly higher means as compared to the students coming from joint families, but the difference was not significant statistically. It was also appeared that female students were over-aspirant as compared to the male students irrespective of the family type to which they were belonging. But their level of aspiration is not rational because the means of number of times the goal reach scores of female students was lower than the male students. The results implied that students were overambitious and reach the goal very lesser number of times. Therefore, the teachers and parents should provide guidance to the students to fix their goals rationally otherwise repeated failures would lead to frustration.

Keywords: Level of Aspiration, Nuclear Family, Joint Family, GDS, ADS, NTRS, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The Concept of level of aspiration was introduced by Dembo (1935) with reference to the degree of difficulty of goal towards which a person is striving for. "Level of aspiration is a function of time and life space in the individual's range of aspirations" Lewin (1935). Level of occupational aspiration is a concept used in Vocational Psychology, which is derived from the concept of level of aspiration. They differ from each other only in that the former refers to the level of vocational hierarchy (Haller and Miller, 1971), whereas the later refers to the level of aspiration in general.

The concept of level of aspiration is relevant only if there is a perceived range of difficulty in the attainment of possible goals and if there is variation in valence among the goals along the range of difficulty. In discussing the level of aspiration, it may be helpful to consider a sequence of events typical of many of the experimental studies in this area:

- i. A subject plays a game or performs a task, in which he can obtain a score.
- ii. After playing the game and obtaining a given score he is asked to tell, what score he will undertake to make the next time he plays.
- iii. He then plays the game again and achieves another score.
- iv. He reacts to his second performance with feeling of success or failure, with continuing or new level of aspiration, etc.

In the foregoing sequence of events, point (ii) 'Setting of the level of aspiration' and point (iv) 'Reaction to achievement', are particularly significant for the dynamics of the level of aspiration.

Lewin et al. (1944), stated that the resultant valence of any level of difficulty is equal to the valence of achieving success times the subjective probability of success minus the valence of failure times the subjective probability of failure. The level of aspiration, that is, the goal an individual will undertake to achieve, is the level of difficulty that has the highest positive resultant valence. The subjective experience of success or failure is determined by the relation of the individual's performance to his level of aspiration and not simply by his absolute accomplishments.

Family is the basic unit of almost all societies. It is especially true in India where the very identity of a person is dependent on the status and position of his or her family and its social status. Family is one of the most important social institutions of the society. It caters to the needs and performs functions, which are essential for the communities, integration and change in the social system, such as reproduction, production and socialization. The family type certainly affects the personality and attitude of the members. The number of persons in the family, its structure and type influences the behaviour patterns and aspirations of its members.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of families i.e. nuclear and joint family. *Nuclear family* consists of husband, wife, and unmarried children. It is usually assumed that nuclear family system is originated by weakening of family ties and break up of joint family system. *Joint Family* is also known as extended family, which is comprised of a few more kins than the nuclear family. Important dimensions of 'jointness' of a family are co-residentiality, commensality, coparcenary, three-generation depth, and fulfillment of obligation towards kin and sentimental aspect. Co-residentiality means that members of a family live under the same roof. Commensality implies that they eat together i.e. have a common kitchen. Coparcenary means that they have joint ownership of property. Further, generation depth encompasses three generations or more i.e. grandfather, father, and the children or more. Members of the family also have obligations towards their kin. Moreover, they have a sentimental attachment to the ideals of joint family.

As one endeavours to handle the challenges of life, aspiration can prove to be a major benefactor for good living. As a common motivational phenomenon, 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. Bouffard, Bastin and Lapierre, (1996) found that Canadian women undergo numerous changes in their goal setting behaviour during adulthood. Women aged 20 to 60 years revealed different goal profiles according to their age and social roles (homemakers, students and career women).

Experimental work on the level of aspiration has brought out the variety of influences, which affect the positive and negative valence of different levels of difficulty. It has indicated that cultural and group factors establish scales of reference, which help to determine the relative attractiveness of different points along a difficulty continuum. Some of these influences are rather stable and permanent in their effects. It has been found that most of the people of western culture, under the pervasive pressures towards "self-improvement", when first exposed to a level of aspiration situation, give an initial level of aspiration which is above the previous level of aspiration score, and that under most conditions they tend to keep their level of aspiration higher than their previous performance. In addition to broad cultural factors, the individual's level of aspiration in a task is likely to be very much influenced by the standard of the group to which he belongs (Anderson and Brandt, 1939).

Reference scales do not come only from membership in a definitely structured social group, for they also may reflect the influence of one's self-image, other individuals, or groups that either establish certain standards for performance or that serves as models for evaluating self-performance. Thus, the level of aspiration of college students with respect to an intellectual task varies, depending on whether he is told that a given score was obtained by the average high school student, the average college student, or the average graduate student (Festinger, 1942).

The discrepancy between the subject's last performance and his aspiration level becomes twice as great when he was asked to state what he "hoped" to do on the next trial, as it was, when he was asked what he "expected" to score on the next trial. It is clear that many subjects hope to do better, when they expect, realistically, to do. The variability of actual performance on the task is important, too (Sutcliffe, 1952). When there is little variability, the subject's goal can be realistically governed by knowledge of his probable performance; this is not the case when his performance varies widely from trial to trial. A quite widely accepted generalization from experiments on level of aspiration is that, successful performance leads to an increased level of aspiration and unsuccessful performance (failure) leads to a reduced level of aspiration. Singh (2017) observed in a study that female students were over-aspirant showing higher goal discrepancy and attainment discrepancy scores as compared to the male students irrespective of the area from where they were coming. But their level of aspiration was not rational because the means of number of times the goal reach scores of female students was found to be lower than the male counterparts.

Thus, it can be concluded that level of aspiration of an individual is his/her minimized or maximized expectation from himself/herself. To what extent, one can be successful in accomplishing a particular task, whether easy or difficult, outcome of the same shows one's level of aspiration.

Keeping in mind the above discussion, the researcher felt a great need for this area to be explored to a great extent and conducted a study on the following objectives:

1. To study the difference in the level of aspiration of students belonging to nuclear and joint families with respect to:
 - i. Goal Discrepancy Scores (GDS).
 - ii. Attainment Discrepancy Scores (ADS).
 - iii. Number of Times the Goal Reach Scores (NTRS).
2. To study the difference in the level of aspiration of male and female students with respect to:
 - i. Goal Discrepancy Scores (GDS).
 - ii. Attainment Discrepancy Scores (ADS).
 - iii. Number of Times the Goal Reach Scores (NTRS).
3. To study the interactional effect of family type and sex on the level of aspiration of students with respect to:
 - i. Goal Discrepancy Scores (GDS).
 - ii. Attainment Discrepancy Scores (ADS).
 - iii. Number of Times the Goal Reach Scores (NTRS).

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the level of aspiration of students belonging to nuclear and joint families with respect to:
 - i. Goal Discrepancy Scores.
 - ii. Attainment Discrepancy Scores.
 - iii. Number of Times the Goal Reach Scores.
2. Male and female students do not differ significantly in their level of aspiration with respect to:
 - i. Goal Discrepancy scores.
 - ii. Attainment Discrepancy Scores.
 - iii. Number of Times the Goal Reach Scores.
3. Family type and sex do not interact significantly in terms of level of aspiration of students with respect to:
 - i. Goal Discrepancy Scores.
 - ii. Attainment Discrepancy Scores.
 - iii. Number of Times the Goal Reach Scores.

METHOD

Sample: The sample for the present study consisted of male and female senior secondary school students belonging to the nuclear and joint families of Himachal Pradesh, India. The random sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Tool: A Test of Level of Aspiration by Shah and Bhargava (1970) was used to find out the goal discrepancy, attainment discrepancy and number of times the goal reach scores of the students. The test sheet had 50 circles (each of 1cm in diameter) arranged in five rows, 10 in each row. On the above and below of these rows of 50 circles, there are two boxes on the right side. The upper box was to write the number of expected scores or aspired performance, whereas, the lower box was for putting the completed performance or actual score. The test can be administered individually as well as in the group. The test-retest reliability of the scale with a time gap of one month was found to be +0.84.

Procedure: The respondents were required to draw four lines in each circle so that they appear like a human face. For each test sheet 30 seconds were allotted for work and after 30 seconds respondents were asked to count the completed faces and enter it in the lower box. In the next trials, first of all, the respondents were asked to put the number of faces they intend to complete in 30 seconds period, in the upper box, on the basis of last performance. This number represented the immediate goal for that trial. It expressed only the intention, not a goal. These test sheets were given to the selected sample of students ten times, to get the average scores. Data were tabulated as per requirement in 2x2 factorial design involving 2 levels of family type i.e. students belonging to nuclear and joint families and 2 levels of sex i.e. male and female keeping in view the objectives of the study.

In order to study the main effects of family type and sex along with their interactional effect on the goal discrepancy scores (GDS), attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) and number of times the goal reach scores of students (NTRS), statistical technique of analysis of variance (2x2 factorial design involving 2 levels of family type i.e. students belonging to nuclear and joint families and 2 levels of sex i.e. male and female) was applied on the means of goal discrepancy, attainment discrepancy and number of times the goal reach scores respectively.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

[A1] Main Effects (Family Type)

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of family type on the goal discrepancy scores (GDS) of students, irrespective of their sex, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 0.36, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that "The students coming from nuclear families and joint families do not differ significantly in their goal discrepancy scores" was accepted. However, from the means table-1, it is evident that students coming from nuclear families have higher mean of goal discrepancy scores (1.995) as compared to the students coming from joint families (1.74), but this difference is not significant statistically.

Similarly, - The calculated value of 'F' for the main effect of family type on the attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) of students, irrespective of their sex, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 0.02, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that "The students coming from nuclear and joint families do not differ significantly in their attainment discrepancy scores" was accepted. However, from the means table-1, it is evident that the students coming from nuclear families have slightly higher mean of attainment discrepancy scores (0.76) as compared to the students coming from joint families (0.70), but this difference is not significant statistically.

In the same manner, the calculated value of 'F' for the main effect of family type on the number of times the goal reach scores (NTRS) of students, irrespective of their sex, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 2.25, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that "the students coming from nuclear and joint families do not differ significantly in their number of times the goal reach scores" was accepted. However, from the means table-1, it is evident that the students coming from nuclear families have slightly higher mean of number of times the goal reach scores (0.515) as compared to the students coming from joint families (0.455), but this difference is not significant statistically.

Table-1: Mean Scores of Male and Female Students Coming From Nuclear and Joint Families

		Means of Goal Discrepancy Scores (GDS)			Means of Attainment Discrepancy Scores (ADS)			Means of Number of Times Goal Reach Scores (NTRS)		
		Nuclear	Joint	Total	Nuclear	Joint	Total	Nuclear	Joint	Total
1	Male	1.27	1.03	1.150	-0.003	0.13	0.06	0.52	0.50	0.51
2	Female	2.72	2.45	2.585	1.53	1.27	1.40	0.51	0.41	0.46
3	Total	1.995	1.740	1.867	0.76	0.70	0.73	0.515	0.455	0.485

Table-2: Summary Table of Analysis of Variance

S. No.	Source of variation	Df	Goal Discrepancy Scores (GDS)			Attainment Discrepancy Scores (ADS)			Number of Times Goal Reach Scores (NTRS)		
			SS	MS (V)	F-Ratio	SS	MS (V)	F-Ratio	SS	MS (V)	F-Ratio
1	Family Type	1	3.22	3.22	0.36	0.23	0.23	0.02	0.18	0.18	2.25
2	Sex	1	102.80	102.80	11.57*	90.34	90.34	9.64*	0.14	0.14	1.75
3	Interaction (Family Type X Sex)	1	0.03	0.03	0.003	1.97	1.97	0.21	0.08	0.08	1.00
4	Error Variance	196	1741.53	8.88		1836.30	9.37		16.15	0.08	
5	Total	199	1847.58			1928.84			16.55		

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance
* Significant at 0.05 level of significance

[A2] Main Effects (Sex)

The calculated value of 'F' for the main effect of sex on the goal discrepancy scores (GDS) of students, irrespective of the family type, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 11.57, which is much higher than the table value (6.76) even at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that, "The male and female students do not differ significantly in their goal discrepancy scores" was rejected. It may be interpreted that female students have significantly higher mean of goal discrepancy scores (2.585) than their male counterparts (1.15).

Similarly, The observed value of 'F' for the main effect of sex on the attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) of students, irrespective of the family type, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 9.64, which is higher than the table value (6.76) even at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that, "the male and female students do not differ significantly in their attainment discrepancy scores" was rejected. It may be interpreted that female students have significantly higher mean of attainment discrepancy scores (1.40) than their male counterparts (0.06).

In the same manner, The observed value of 'F' for the main effect of sex on the number of times the goal reach scores (NTRS) of students, irrespective of the family type, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 1.75, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that, "the male and female students do not differ significantly in their number of times the goal reach scores" was accepted. However, from the means table-1, it is evident that male students have higher means of number of times the goal reach scores (0.51) than their female counterparts (0.46), but this difference is not significant statistically.

[B] Interactional Effect (Family Type X Sex)

The computed value of 'F' for the interactional effect of family type and sex on the goal discrepancy scores (GDS) of students, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 0.003, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that, "Family type and sex do not interact significantly with regard to the goal discrepancy scores of students" was accepted. It may be said that there is approximately the same difference in the means of goal discrepancy scores of students coming from nuclear and joint families regardless of their sex i.e. male and female.

Similarly, the obtained value of 'F' for the interactional effect of family type and sex on the attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) of students, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 0.21, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that, "family type and sex do not interact significantly with regard to the attainment discrepancy scores of students" was accepted. It may be said that there is approximately the same difference in the means of attainment discrepancy scores of students coming from nuclear and joint families regardless of their sex i.e. male and female.

In the same manner, the obtained value of 'F' for the interactional effect of family type and sex on the number of times the goal reach scores (NTRS) of students, for df 1 and 196, came out to be 1.00, which is much below the table value (3.89) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis that, "family type and sex do not interact significantly with regard to the number of times the goal reach scores of students" was accepted. It may be interpreted that there is approximately the same difference in the means of number of times goal reach scores of students coming from nuclear and joint families regardless of their sex i.e. male and female.

CONCLUSIONS

Students coming from nuclear and joint families do not differ significantly in their level of aspiration with regard to goal discrepancy scores (GDS), attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) and number of times the goal reach scores (NTRS). However, the students coming from nuclear families have higher mean of goal discrepancy scores (GDS), attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) and the number of times goal reach scores (NTRS) than the students coming from joint families. This shows that although there is discrepancy in the goal setting and making adjustments in their goals but still students coming from nuclear families are making good efforts to reach the goals. This result is not in agreement with Poonia et. al. (1997) who found that family type had a great impact on the level of aspiration of students.

Male and female students differ significantly in their level of aspiration with regard to goal discrepancy scores (GDS) and attainment discrepancy scores (ADS). Female students have significantly higher means of goal discrepancy scores (GDS) and attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) than male students. Whereas male and female students do not differ significantly in their number of times the goal reach scores (NTRS). From the foregoing discussion it appears that female students are over-aspirant as compared to the male students irrespective of the family type to which they are belonging. But their level of aspiration is not rational because the means of number of times the goal reach scores of female students is lower than the male students. This result is in agreement with that of Sharma (1979), Annamma (1982), Parmar (1986) and Malhotra (1992) who also found significant differences in the level of aspiration of male and female students. However, the result is not in agreement with Aggarwal (1991), Sati (1991) and Singh (1998), who observed no significant differences in the level of aspiration of male and female students.

Family Type and sex do not interact significantly as regard the goal discrepancy scores (GDS) and attainment discrepancy scores (ADS) and number of times the goal reach scores (NTRS) of students.

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