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A study on coping skills among male cricketers of different age category

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the coping skills of male cricketers among different age category. The total number of subjects participated in the study was 102, (34 U-19 cricketers, 34 U-25 cricketers and 34 senior cricketers aged above 25). The subjects were from different clubs and play in different divisions in TNCA (Tamil Nadu Cricket Association) league. Coping skills ability was assessed by Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (Smith *et al*, 1995). Athletic Coping Skills inventory consist of 7 dimensions - Coping with Adversity, Coachability, Concentration, Confidence and Achievement Motivation, Goal setting and mental preparation, Peaking under Pressure and Freedom from Worry. One-way Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) was used to examine the difference in coping skills among cricketers and there was no significant difference in coping skills among U-19 Cricketers, U-25 Cricketers and Senior cricketers. Although there was no significant difference in Coping Skills among cricketers, Senior Cricketers (mean=58.35) had better Coping Skills compared to U-25 Cricketers (mean=57.02) and U-19 Cricketers (mean=55.14). All the group had got less scores in Freedom from worry and peaking under pressure and all the groups got good scores in Coachability and Confidence and Achievement Motivation. This study revealed that there was no significant difference in the coping skills among different age category cricketers.

Keywords: Cricket, athletic coping skills, coping strategies

Introduction

Cricket is one the most popular sport and most viewed sport in the world. Love for cricket in India is always special, the only thing that unites the heart and soul of every Indian is Cricket. Cricket has got a huge fan base with many vigorous devotees, cricket is one of the supreme cultures in India. Sport requires a lot of mental skills to perform and to cope with the match situations, to attain peak performance all athletes require certain psychological skills and coping strategies. Effective coping skills and strategies play a crucial role in enhancing athletic performance. Coping refers to adaptive behaviours that shield individuals from psychological distress caused by challenging social encounters, serving as a vital buffer between societal influences and their well-being (Pearlin, & Schooler, 1978) ^[11]. Coping strategies encompass a range of activities aimed at helping athletes adjust to challenging circumstances, preserving their psychological equilibrium, and ultimately fostering greater mental resilience among athletes. Coping skills are essential when planning personal development programs for athletes, with the aim of increasing motivation, confidence, involvement, resilience to failures, implicitly, sports performance and balance between personal and professional lives (Cosma *et al.*, 2020) ^[2]. Some of the main aspects of coping skills are concentration, confidence, motivation, coping with pressure and stress, goal setting, mental preparation and much more. Sports are typically characterized by intense competition, aggression, and an abundance of stress-inducing situations, leading to heightened pressure for athletes so, one of the important factors contributing to successful performance in competition is the ability to remain calm in stressful situations (Smith *et al.*, 1995) ^[12] and one of the important factors leading to poor performance and failure in sports is the inability to manage stress (Lazarus, 2000) ^[8]. Coping strategies help athletes to manage the stress, negativity and improve their performance. Sometimes athletes worry about what others think about them when they don't perform well (Smith *et al.*, 1995) ^[12]. If an athlete starts to worry about what others think about him and his performance, he/she tend to lose his/her concentration, may have self-doubt and many not be in the present which will lead to poor performance.

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Athletes experience anxiety, lack of confidence, feel depressed and have a very negative mood when they lose a game/set during any competition. They will have an immense pressure leading up to the next games because they don't want to lose it. The inability to deal with these pressures will result in poor performance and failure (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2022) ^[7]. Concentration, a fundamental psychological skill which plays an important role in sports. Lack of concentration is one of the most frequent problems that athletes face during the competition (Smith *et al.*, 1995) ^[12], coping strategies play a vital role in helping athletes to concentrate better and perform better. Goal setting and mental preparation are among the attributes that enable individuals to enhance their athletic abilities and effectively handle challenging training and competitive situations (Smith *et al.*, 1995) ^[12], if used properly goal setting is considered to be one of the effective techniques to enhance performance. Confidence is an essential attribute for every athlete, particularly during challenging times when the going gets tough, and it helps them achieve greater results (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2022) ^[7] Self-confidence helps athletes to arouse positive emotions, facilitate concentration, set goals, increase effort, focus on game strategies and maintain momentum (Weinberg, & Gould, 2011, p. 321). Coping strategies help athletes to deal with tough sporting situations and help them to overcome the odds and exhibit enhanced performance. The coping skills of athletes have been studied in numerous studies (Yadav, & Agashe, 2019) ^[14] (Jooste, *et al.*, 2014) ^[5] (Cosma *et al.*, 2020) ^[2] (Moutaraji, *et al.*, 2021) ^[10] (Bebetsos, 2015) ^[11] (Hazara, & Biswas, 2018) ^[3] and many researches have been done in coping skills and strategies to develop coping skills. Therefore, the sports psychology literatures strongly agree that athletes should possess and use adaptive coping strategies to effectively deal with the challenges they encounter (Lazarus, 2000) ^[8], the coping strategies ultimately help athletes to improve performance and achieve success in sport.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to determine the coping skills of cricketers among different age category.

Methodology

Selection of samples

The Non-probability sampling, Quota sampling method was

used to collect samples. The samples had been collected from different club Cricketers who play in TNCA (Tamil Nadu Cricket Association) league, which is the top tier premier league in Tamil Nadu. 34 samples of U-19 Cricketers, 34 samples of U-23 Cricketers and 34 samples of senior cricketers (aged above 25) are collected.

Selection of test items

The test items selected to assess the coping skills of cricketers was Athletic coping skills inventory (ACSI) developed by Smith, Schutz, Smoll and Ptacek in 1995 (Smith, *et al.* 1995) ^[12]. The ACSI contains 28 items describing seven specific dimensions, each dimension consists of four items. Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ACSI) measures various aspects of coping skills namely coping with adversity, Coachability, Concentration, Confidence and Achievement Motivation, Goal setting and mental preparation, Peaking under Pressure and Freedom from Worry. The scores on each subscale can vary between 0 and 12, with higher values indicating stronger attributes in that specific subscale. The total score can vary between 0 to 84 and higher scores indicate a higher level of strength or capability (Smith *et al.*, 1995) ^[12].

Administration of the test

The researcher got appointment from several clubs that play in the TNCA (Tamil Nadu Cricket Association) league and met the players of different age category (U-19, U-25 and senior cricketers). The researcher explained the importance of the study, purpose, necessary guidelines and made the athletes to fill the Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ACSI). The subjects have been informed that their data will be kept confidentially.

Statistical methodology

Data was collected and interpreted using SPSS statistics program version 23 and the data is analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) and the level of significance was set at 0.05 level.

Analysis and Discussion

After statistical analysis and interpretation of the data collected from various cricketers of different age category, the mean scores were found and shown in the below table (Table -1).

Table 1: Mean scores of athletic coping skills ability among cricketers of different age category

Average Scores of Athletic Coping Skills Among Cricketers								
Category	Coping with Adversity	Coachability	Concentration	Confidence and achievement motivation	Goal Setting and Mental Preparation	Peaking under pressure	Freedom from Worry	Total
U-19 male cricketers	7.18	9.59	7.46	8.76	8.90	7.20	5.97	55.14
U-25 male cricketers	7.94	8.79	7.73	9.35	8.5	7.29	7.41	57.02
Senior male cricketers	8.20	9.61	8.05	8.85	8.26	7.67	7.67	58.35

The above table shows that the total mean scores of Athletic Coping Skills of cricketers of different age category and the mean scores of 7 dimensions namely Coping with Adversity, Coachability, Confidence and Achievement Motivation, Goal Setting and Mental Preparation, Peaking Under Pressure and

freedom from Worry. Further, from the above table it is clearly described that senior cricketers (aged above 25) have better coping skills compared to other age category with the mean score of 58.35 whereas U-19 and U-25 cricketers has the score of 55.14 and 57.02 respectively.

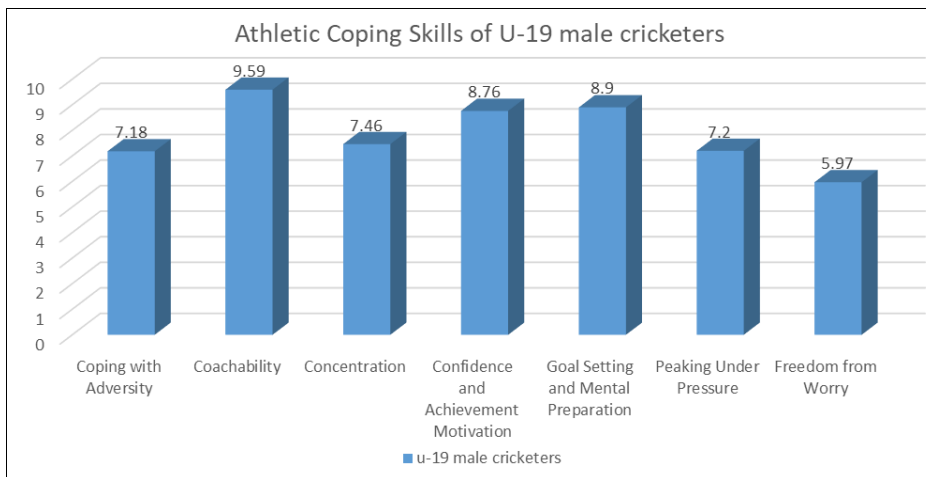


Fig 1: Graphical Representation of Athletic Coping Skills of U-19 Male Cricketers

The above Graph chart (Fig -1) shows the data split-up and the scores of U-19 Cricketers in Athletic Coping Skills. By analyzing the coping skills of U-19 Cricketers it was found that the U-19 cricketers scored less scores in Freedom from

Worry (5.97), whereas they scored good scores in Coachability (9.59) which states that they are easily coachable and they are willing to gain knowledge from coaches.

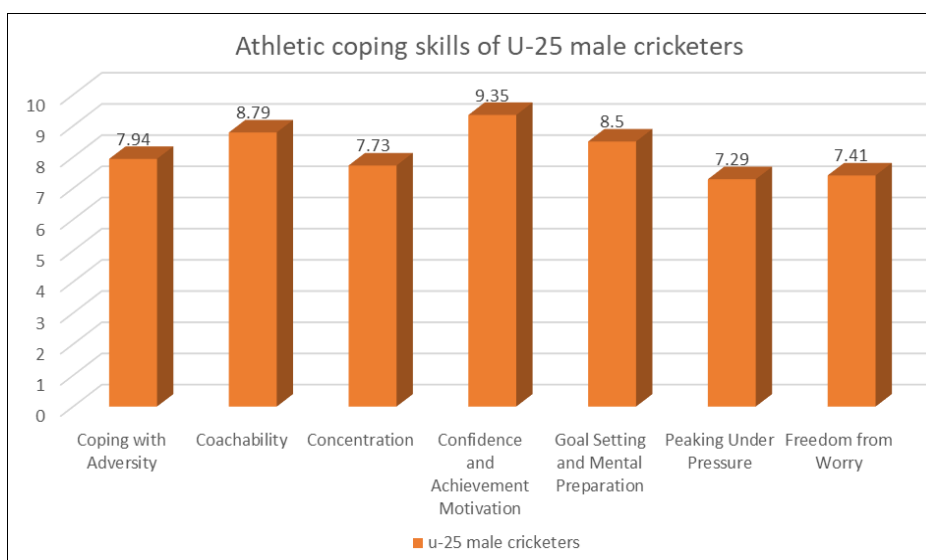


Fig 2: Graphical Representation of Athletic Coping Skills of U-25 Male Cricketers

The above Graph chart (Fig -2) shows the split-up data and scores of U-25 Cricketers in Athletic Coping Skills. By analyzing the Coping Skills of U-25 Cricketers it was found that the U-25 Cricketers scores less scores in Peaking under

pressure (7.29), whereas they scored good scores in Confidence and Achievement Motivation (9.35) which states that they are highly confident and motivated to achieve in their sport and life.

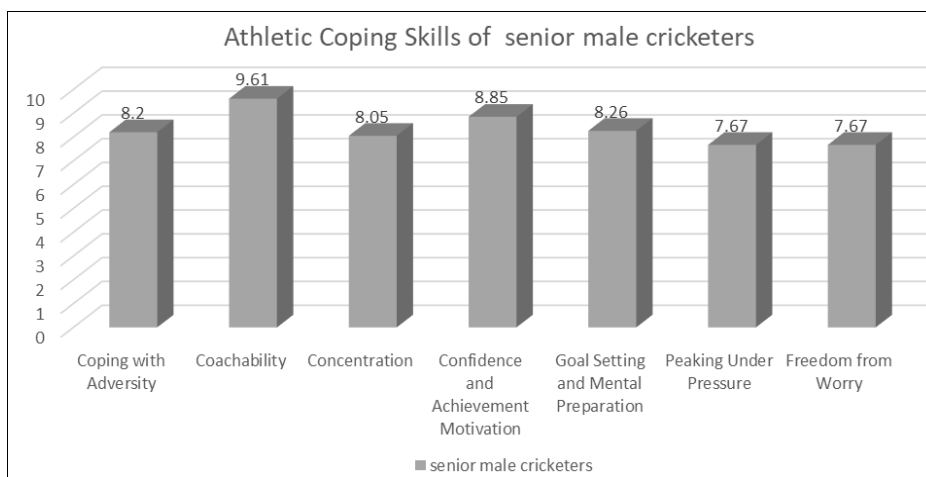


Fig 3: Graphical Representation of Athletic Coping Skills of Senior Cricketers

The above Graph chart shows the split-up data and scores of senior cricketers (aged above 25) in Athletic Coping Skills. By analyzing the Coping Skills of senior cricketers (aged above 25), it was found that the senior cricketers scored less

scores in both Freedom from Worry (7.67) and Peaking under Pressure (7.67), whereas they scored good scores in Coachability (9.61).

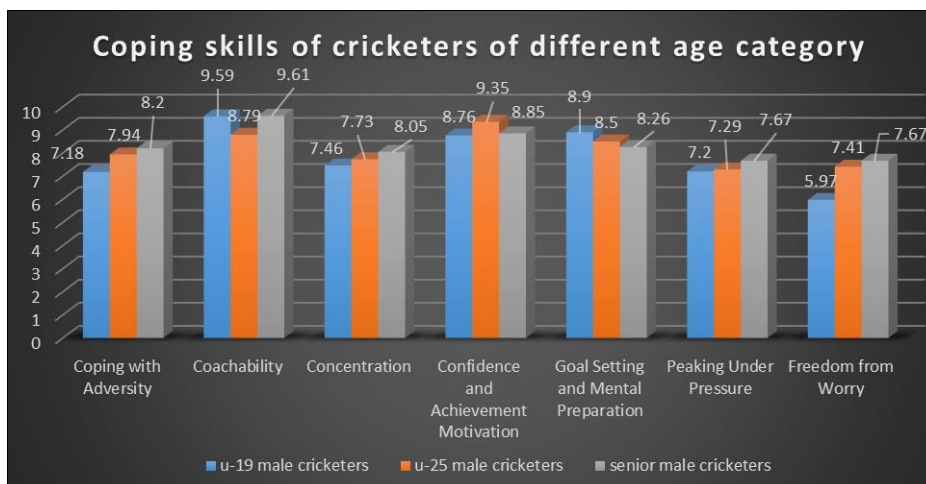


Fig 4: Graphical Representation of Coping Skills among Different Age Category

The Graph chart above shows the scores of Coping Skills of Cricketers from different age category, it is found that all age category cricketers scored less scores in Freedom from Worry and Peaking under Pressure, whereas they scored good scores in Coachability compared to other dimensions, it clearly indicates that Cricketers struggle to cope with pressure and Freedom from Worry. On the other side all the age group cricketers have got good scores in Coachability which states that they are easily coachable and are willing to gain knowledge from coaches which can help them to improve their game. The senior cricketers tend to cope with adversity better than U-19 and U-25 cricketers, whereas U-19 cricketers struggle to cope with adversity. The coachability scores of all the age category are pretty same U-19 and Senior Cricketers have good Coachability whereas the U-25 have a lower coachability skill. The concentration of Senior cricketers is slightly higher than the other groups, U-19 cricketers have less concentration compared to other groups. U-25 cricketers have better confidence and achievement motivation, U-19 and Senior cricketers have lower confidence and achievement motivation compared to U-25 cricketers. U-19 cricketers have better goal setting skills compared to the other groups. Senior cricketers have slightly lower level of goal setting and mental preparation than other groups. U-19 cricketers and U-25 cricketers struggle to perform under pressure, whereas the senior cricketers are slightly better in performing under pressure. U-19 cricketers scored very less in Freedom from

worry, which means they have a lot of fear and worry about their game and performance. Both U-25 and Senior Cricketers have a decent score in freedom from worry.

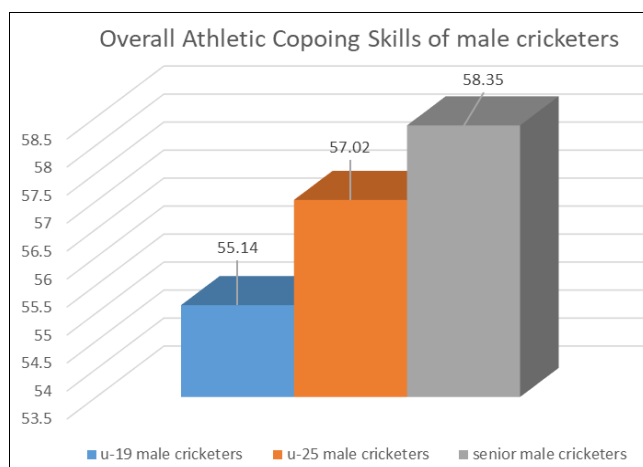


Fig 5: Graphical Representation of Overall Coping Skills Scores of Crickets

The above graph shows the total mean scores of different age category cricketers in Athletic Coping Skills and it is found that the Senior cricketers (aged above 25) have good coping skills compared to U-19 cricketers and U-25 cricketers.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance of Athletic Coping Skills among U-19, U-25 cricketers and senior cricketers

Variable	Cricketers			Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	'F' ratio	sig
	U-19	U-25	Senior						
Athletic Coping Skills	55.14	57.02	58.35	Between	176.49	2	88.245	0.97	0.383
				Within	9005	99	90.959		
				Total	9181.49	101			

*Level of Significant tested at 0.05.

Table-2 shows that the means scores of U-19, U-25 and Senior Cricketers are 55.14, 57.02 and 58.35 respectively. Further, the analysis of variance of athletic coping skills of U-19, U-25 and senior cricketers has an obtained F ratio of 0.97 for the df (2, 99) whereas, the P-value (significance) here is

0.383 hence $P > 0.05$ which means that there was no significant difference among the groups. Thus, the NULL HYPOTHESIS was accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Although, the result of this study stated that there was no significant difference among the coping skills of cricketers of

different age category and based on the mean scores the senior cricketers tend to have better coping skills than u-19 and u-25 cricketers.

2019;6:101-103.

Conclusion

The result of the study stated that there was no significant difference in the Coping Skills among Cricketers. Hence in the view of observed tendencies, it may be presumed that senior cricketers (aged above 25) tend to have better coping skills compared to other category cricketers. Therefore, this study provides useful insights about the coping skills of cricketers from different age category.

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