

Assessment of Psychological Burnout in Interuniversity Cricket Players

Mordhawj Sonwani
Dr. Vivek Mishra

ABSTRACT

Cricket as a sport is physically, mentally and emotionally demanding because it has three different formats all of which require different skill sets. Since psychological burnout affects performance, the present study is conducted to assess psychological burnout in cricket players. To conduct the study, 50 inter-university cricket players were selected. The average age of the cricket players was 21.11 years and purposive sampling was used for the selection of the sample. The Athletic Burnout Questionnaire prepared by Raedeke and Smith (2001) was used for data collection. The results reveal that 8% of interuniversity male cricket players had very low levels of burnout symptoms; 40% of interuniversity male cricket players had low levels of burnout symptoms; 48% of interuniversity male cricket players had moderate levels of burnout symptoms and 4% of interuniversity male cricket players had severe symptoms of burnout. The Chi-square of 29.68 is statistically significant at 0.01 level. Based on the results, it was concluded that the majority of the interuniversity cricket players have moderate symptoms of psychological burnout but the results call for continuous monitoring and counselling of cricket players so that they can maintain their mental wellbeing and perform to the best of their abilities in competitive cricket.

* Research Scholar, SOS in Physical Education, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur C.G.

* Principal, Netaji Subhas College, Abhanpur Raipur C.G.

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INTRODUCTION

Athletic burnout is a state in which a sportsperson feels constant physical and mental exhaustion which is often accompanied by sports devaluation and reduced sense of achievement. The concept of psychological burnout came into prominence in the 1970s and it became popular and recognized in various fields including as a factor affecting performance. Freudenberger (1974) has the credit of introducing the term burnout. Freudenberger defined it as an outcome of severe stress and nobility in treating people. Based on Freudenberger's work, Maslach et al. (2001) described psychological burnout in the light of three aspects namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced sense of achievement. Since then burnout has emerged as a global phenomena affecting people engaged in different occupations across cultural and socio- demographic boundaries. Cox et al. (2003) documented that 1980s and 1990 as the time frame in which the concept of psychological burnout evolved under sports psychology. Despite various theories, the most accepted model of psychological burnout is proposed by Raedeke (1997). This three-dimensional model consists of components such as physical/emotional exhaustion, devaluation and reduced sense of accomplishment. Emotional and physical exhaustion means persistent thoughts of mental and physical fatigue/tiredness. Sports devaluation means a lack of interest in a sport which a person liked most in the past. The reduced sense of accomplishment means devaluing achievement in the field of sports i.e. not crediting the skill sets and capabilities for achievements in sports.

A three-dimensional model of burnout has also been put forth by Gustafsson et al. (2016) with three dimensions namely emotional exhaustion, devaluation and reduced sense of accomplishment but did not include physical exhaustion in their model. Gustafsson et al. (2016) reported that a combination of these dimensions is one of the factors affecting sports performance. When athletes are engaged in intense training sometimes somatic or emotional pressure may result in the development of burnout. According to Eklund and Cresswell (2007), burnout is the imbalance between need and expectations and the persistent pressures of fulfilling needs through achievement sometimes cause symptoms of burnout.

Cricket in India is considered a cultural phenomenon and can not be considered as just a sport. Cricket in India has grown in stature and popularity since the colonial era and its popularity in recent times has grown exponentially. It enjoys fan-following and media coverage. Events like the Indian Premiere League further expanded its popularity globally.

Because of the popularity of cricket as a sport in India, players are under extreme pressure to excel at the highest level due to stiff competition. The performance of players is often discussed in the media. The competition

requires players to maintain their performance while adding new skill sets to survive in a pool of talented players. This pressure is sometimes hard to handle and may create psychological stress in cricket players.

The symptoms of psychological burnout in cricket players may develop due to constant travel, training schedule, long competitive season and physical/mental demands of the game. The stress factor is high in this support due to team dynamics, coaches' expectations and fitness issues in typically long sessions. Emotional fatigue may be an issue with cricket players due to time spent away from family due to matches and training schedules. Exhaustion may be an issue due to lack of time to recover from injury and inadequate counselling facilities. All these may contribute to the development of psychological burnout in cricket players.

Despite literature regarding the negative effect of burnout symptoms on sports performance, the studies regarding its prevalence, factors affecting it and its effect on sports performance are limited. However, Gould and Dieffenbach (2002) reported that about 1-7% of athletes suffer from severe burnout symptoms while Francisco et al. (2014) found that 12.7% of athletes are at elevated risk of possible psychological burnout. Hence the present study was planned to assess the psychological burnout in interuniversity male cricket players.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gould and Dieffenbach (2002) in their study observed severe symptoms of burnout in 1 to 7% of athletes. They also reported a moderate level of burnout in 15% of athletes.

Cremades et al. (2008) in their study found that reduced sense of accomplishment was higher in female athletes from team games as compared to female athletes from individual games.

Charbonneau et al. (2014) in their study observed a prevalence rate of psychological burnout in 1.4% of student-athletes.

De Francisco et al. (2014) in their study reported that age is not a predictor of psychological burnout in athletes.

Nafian et al. (2014) in their study concluded that depersonalization as a component of burnout was significantly higher in male sportspersons as compared to female sportspersons.

Madigan et al. (2015) in their study reported that burnout in young athletes sets in when they try to master a skill to perfection. This perfectionism leads to the development of symptoms of burnout in young athletes.

Holden et al. (2016) in their study reported a significant association between training load and burnout in sportspersons but no significant association was observed between years of participation and burnout in sportspersons.

Amemiya and Sakairi (2022) in their study reported a significant association between depressive symptoms in Japanese athletes and burnout.

Manasa and Varma (2023) reported a non-significant relationship between coaches' excessive diligence and burnout in athletes.

OBJECTIVE

The present study aims to determine the prevalence of psychological burnout in inter- university male cricket players.

HYPOTHESIS

It was hypothesized that interuniversity male cricket players will exhibit moderate levels of symptoms of burnout.

METHODOLOGY

The following methodological steps were taken to conduct the present study.

Sample

To conduct the study, 50 inter-university cricket players were selected. The average age of the cricket players was 21.11 years and purposive sampling was used for the selection of the sample.

Tools:

To assess psychological burnout in interuniversity male cricket players, Athletic Burnout Questionnaire validated by Raedeke and Smith (2001) was chosen. It is based on three dimensions namely emotional/physical exhaustion, devaluation and reduced sense of accomplishment. The questionnaire contains 15 items with responses collected through 05 point Likert scale. Different categories were formed based on further analysis and named as Very Low: <15, Low : (15-30), Moderate (31-45), and Severe symptoms of psychological burnout >45 The ABQ is a highly reliable and valid measure to assess psychological burnout in athletes.

Procedure:

50 inter-university cricket players were selected. The average age of the cricket players and ABQ administered for data collection. Responses were scored numerically and frequency distribution as per categories of psychological burnout was determined. The results are given in Table 1.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Frequency Distribution for a Group of Interuniversity Male Cricketers Based on Categories of Burnout

Categories of Burnout	Male Cricket Players	
	N	%
Very Low: <15	04	8.0%
Low : (15-30)	20	40.0%
Moderate (31-45)	24	48.0%
Severe >45	02	4.0%
Total	50	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 29.68, p < .01$

The frequency distribution shown in Table 1 gives the following figures -

- 8% of inter university male cricket players had very low levels of burnout symptoms.
- 40% of inter university male cricket players had low levels of burnout symptoms.
- 48% of inter university male cricket players had moderate levels of burnout symptoms.
- 4% of inter university male cricket players had severe symptoms of burnout.

The frequency distribution given in Table 1 reveals that the majority of the interuniversity male cricket players have moderate levels of burnout symptoms. The Chi-square of 29.68 also supports this finding statistically. Since inter-university male cricket players have better access to training facilities, resources and psychological support this gives them better coping mechanisms to deal with stressors. The results of the present study are also consistent with Gustafsson et al. (2007).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it was concluded that the majority of the interuniversity cricket players have moderate symptoms of psychological burnout but the results call for continuous monitoring and counselling of cricket players so that they can maintain their mental wellbeing and perform to the best of their abilities in competitive cricket.

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