



SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR AT VARIOUS LEVEL OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT :

The purpose of the study was to assess superstitious attitude prevailing among sports persons (N= 650) of various universities of Punjab namely Panjab University, Chandigarh; Punjabi University, Patiala; Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Lovely Professional University, Phagwara as per their level of sports participation namely District, State, National, and Inter-National. The mean age of the purposive sample was twenty two years. The data was collected by standardised questionnaire of L. N. Dubey (1988). After the application of percentage method and ANOVA test on the collected data the results showed that there were no statistical differences were found among the sports persons of various universities of Punjab state at 0.05 level of confidence.



KEYWORDS : Superstitions, sportspersons, level of participation.

INTRODUCTION

Sports are full of superstitions, from athletes who perform a specific routine before every game to ones who consider certain items to be lucky or unlucky (Joe DeLessio(2015). The number 13, black cats, breaking mirrors, or walking under ladders, even if non-superstitious person, probably say “bless you” when someone sneezes, just in case the devil should decide to steal their soul – as our ancestors thought possible during a sneeze.

In the 30 strangest superstitions in sports history, Corey Nachman (2011) mentioned number of interesting superstitious stories of various sports persons. According to him, “Sports figures have fallen into routines, habits, and superstitions that they believe will put them in a better position to win every time. Even casual baseball fans knew that Nomar Garciaparra was a big fan of rituals. Before every pitch of an at-bat, the former All-Star shortstop would adjust the velcro on both batting gloves several times in a rhythmic fashion. As soon as he was finished with that, Nomar moved his bat in windmill like fashion towards while alternately tapping his toes

Hockey, especially, is rife with these sorts of baubles and rituals, especially in the playoffs, when players grow beards until their team is eliminated and often refuse to touch the trophies awarded to the conference champions. In addition to these broad, widely agreed-upon rituals, individual players have their own idiosyncratic practices, Corey Perry, the star winger of the Anaheim Ducks, has an eight-step ritual he goes through before every game that includes twirling his stick a certain way and tapping the ice before going into the locker room to put his pads on (Joe DeLessio(2015). During the later part of his career, Hall of Fame goalie Glenn Hall made himself throw up before every game (Hall of Fame basketball centre Bill

Russell did the same thing), and fellow Hall of Fame net-minder Patrick Roy used to talk to the goalposts behind him.

Sidney Crosby, the Pittsburgh Penguins' two-time MVP, has a number of superstitions as well, from wearing one sweat-stained hat per season after games and practices to putting his equipment on in the same order (always right-to-left).

Barry Fry used to be the manager of the English Football Club Birmingham City from 1993-1996. In that time, he started doing something quite strange. Believing there were evil spirits living in their home grounds of St. Andrews, Fry went to all four corners of the field and peed on them. This act was done to ward off the spirits. It's unclear as to how often he did this, but it probably happened more than once. Fry's efforts did little to help Birmingham City or himself. His team eventually started losing games, and Fry was relieved of his duties.

Tennis is a game that relies heavily on the feet, but Serena asks more out of them than most. Wearing a pair of socks more than once feels incredibly gross and it isn't good for the health of your feet even if one does that only when going down the corner store to get an Arnold Palmer. Williams does not mind that feeling. In fact, she really likes it. She will only wear a single pair during any given tournament.

When Cager Michael Jordan first joined the league in 1984, he wore shorts that were longer than most of his contemporaries. The reason for this was that Jordan liked to wear his powder blue North Carolina shorts under his Bull skivvies. Even though Jordan had reason for longer shorts, fellow NBA players soon followed suit.

Baseball players may be the most superstitious. Pitcher Turk Wendell brushes his teeth and chews licorice between every inning. Wade Boggs would eat only chicken the day of a game, and used to draw a symbol that means "To Life" in the dirt before every at-bat.

Former pitcher Mark "The Bird" Fidrych used to play with the dirt on the mound and talk to himself and the ball before he pitched.

Red Sox shortstop Nomar Garciaparra gets dressed the same way every day, makes sure to step on each dugout step with both feet, and tugs at his batting gloves and taps his toes during each at-bat.

They were at the mercy of the elements of nature and did not understand the causes of physical changes taking place around them. They respected and worshipped the forces of nature like the Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind, Water, Storms and number of other things. They believed that diseases were caused by the wrath of God as well as evil spirits. They tried to satisfy the evil spirits or the curse of the God by offering sacrifices, prayers, fasting etc. Out of fear, to atone for one's sins, they used to offer sacrifices of birds and animals to please the Gods and Goddesses that gave rise to superstitions.

It has some sort of universal appeal and differ from country to country, region to region, and from individual to individual. Sometimes old superstitions die out and new ones are born. Likewise, a man in car accident tries to find an excuse for his accident and remembers that a black cat had crossed his car and blame falls on black cat.

People in the West still regard number 13 as an unlucky number because after the last supper Lord Jesus dined with his twelve disciples' he was later crucified. On top of this, some airlines such as Air France and Lufthansa, do not have a 13th row. Lufthansa also has no 17th row – because in some countries, such as Italy and Brazil. They believe typical unlucky number is 17 and not 13.

Salt spilled on the table on which they dined and, therefore, even now spilling of salt is considered unlucky and Friday as an inauspicious day to start a new work. They also believe that going under a ladder brings ill luck (Maahir Virani).

Though man has conquered Nature, made wonderful explorations, and solved many mysteries of life, reached on the moon, exploring Saturn, Mars and doing accurate scientific predictions yet he is the most defenceless creature ever born on the Earth. Achievements of courage and adventures of man are numerous and praiseworthy, yet he has never been able to shake off his sense of insecurity. Gifted with abundant scientific knowledge and endowed with massive destructive weapons, man finds himself helpless and totally

incapacitated in face of deep- rooted and time-honoured irrational fear and impending dangers of the unknown.

A 2010 article published in *Psychological Science* found that this perception of increased self-efficacy, as researchers call it, can apparently lead to real-world increased performance. Researchers used a series of experiments to show that activating good-luck superstitions improved performance in tasks like putting a golf ball, and that those performance benefits were, in fact, the result of increased confidence (Joe DeLessio2015). It may be due to role superstitions play, have found that they derive from the assumption that a connection exists between co-occurring, non-related events. For instance, the notion that charms promote good luck, or protect you from bad luck.

The sense of insecurity and fear of ill-luck have such a strong grip over the minds and ideas of men that they have failed to emerge victorious over them. These unfounded, irrational, imaginary fears, based on lack of reasoning and beliefs are called superstitions and they have continued to influence men’s activities ever since the dawn of civilization. With the spread of knowledge and science superstitions are losing their hold upon the mind of man, yet man has not been able to free himself from them. They still have a deep influence on our thinking and behaviour. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the whole life of many of us is governed by them.

The present status was explored scientifically if superstitions attitude prevails among the sports persons of the randomly selected universities of Punjab.

Procedure

The purpose of the study was to asses superstitious attitude prevailing among sports persons according to there level of participation namely District, State, National, and Inter-National, (N= 650) of various universities of Punjab namely Panjab University, Chandigarh; Punjabi University, Patiala; Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Lovely Professional University, Phagwara. The age of randomly selected sample was seventeen to twenty five years. The data was collected by questionnaire of L. N. Dubey (1988) which was already established for superstitions and is a standardized tool for the data collection.

After the application of percentage method and ANOVA test on the collected data the results showed that there were no statistical differences found among the sports persons of various universities of Punjab state at 0.05 level of confidence. The results further declared that the today’s maximum sportspersons of the selected universities of Punjab according to there level of participation were fall in highly non superstitious category. Analysis and results of the study are as below

TABLE 1.1
MEAN SCORES ON SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR AMOMG SPORTSPERSONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Level of participations	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
District	286	56.27	11.72	.69	54.90	57.63	40.00	91.00
State	115	56.64	12.34	1.15	54.36	58.92	40.00	99.00
National	240	58.18	12.26	0.79	56.62	59.73	40.00	104.00
Inter National	9	52.89	4.68	1.56	49.29	56.48	45.00	58.00
Total	650	56.99	11.99	0.47	56.07	57.92	40.00	104.00

As Table 1.1 shows that in the case, the Mean scores and SD for district was 56.26±11.72, state 56.64±12.33, national 58.17±12.26, and international 52.89±4.66. The lower and upper bound for District

was 54.90±57.63, State 54.36±58.92, National 56.61±59.73, and International 49.29±56.48. The minimum and maximum range for District was 40±91, State 40±99, National 40±104, and International years 45±58.

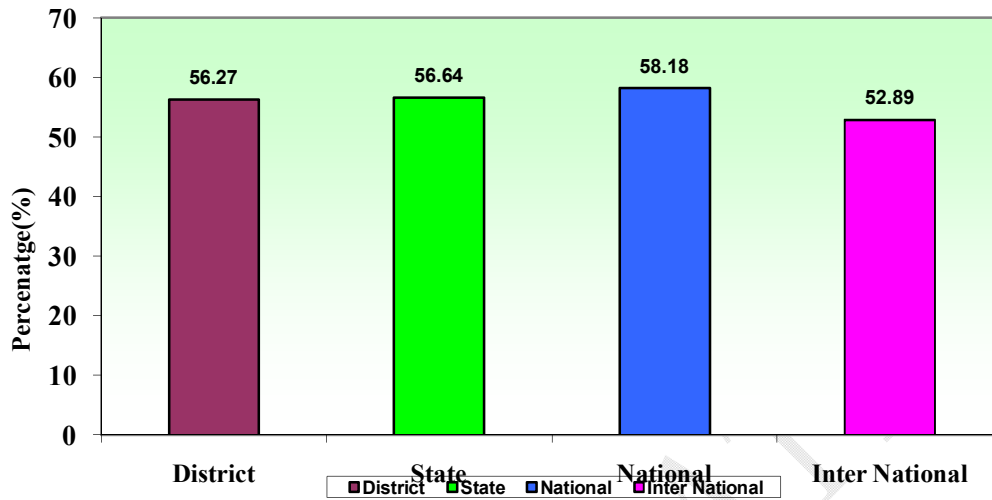


Figure 1.1 MEAN SCORES ON SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR AMONG SPORTSPERSONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION.

The analysis of variance (F ratios) computed to compare the mean of superstitious behaviour among sportspersons of various levels of sports participation has been presented in table 1.2.

**TABLE 1.2
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA) ON SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR AMONG SPORTSPERSONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	650.77	3	216.92	1.51	.210
Within Groups	92652.2	646	143.42		
Total	93302.96	649			

$$F_{0.05 (649)} = 2.37$$

From the result presented in Table 1.2, it has been observed that there was a non significant differences found in superstitious behaviour among the sportspersons belonging to various levels of sports participation as the 'f' ratio of 1.51 was less than the table value 2.37. Therefore, it can be strongly concluded that there was no statistically significant differences in superstitious behaviour at all levels of sports participation.

To see the number of superstitious among sportspersons according to their various level of sports participation; percentage technique was applied and the results has been presented in table 1.3 and depicted in figure 1.3

TABLE 1.3
DISTRIBUTION OF PERCENTAGE BETWEEN CATEGORIES OF SUPERSTITION OF SPORTSPERSONS OF
VARIOUS LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Participation Level	Highly superstitious	superstitious	Moderate	Non-superstitious	Highly non superstitious	Total
District	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	4.9%	38.3%	44.0%
State	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	2.2%	15.2%	17.7%
National	0.3%	0.2%	0.9%	4.6%	30.9%	36.9%
Inter National	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	1.4%
Total	0.3%	0.5%	1.7%	11.7%	85.8%	100.0%

Table 1.3 shows that at District level 38.3% Sport persons were highly non superstitious, 4.9% sportspersons were non superstitious, 0.8% sportspersons were moderate and no sportspersons were superstitious and highly superstitious. At State level 15.2% sportspersons were highly non superstitious, 2.2% sportspersons were non superstitious, no sportspersons were moderate, only 0.3% sports were superstitious and no sportspersons were highly superstitious. At National level 30.9% sportspersons were highly non superstitious, 4.6% sportspersons were non superstitious, 0.9% sportspersons were moderate, 0.2 % sportspersons were superstitious, 0.3% sportspersons were highly superstitious. At international level 1.4% sportspersons were highly non Superstitious and no sportspersons were non sports superstitious, moderate, superstitious and highly superstitious. Thus, it can be concluded that 85.8 % sportspersons found to be highly non superstitious.

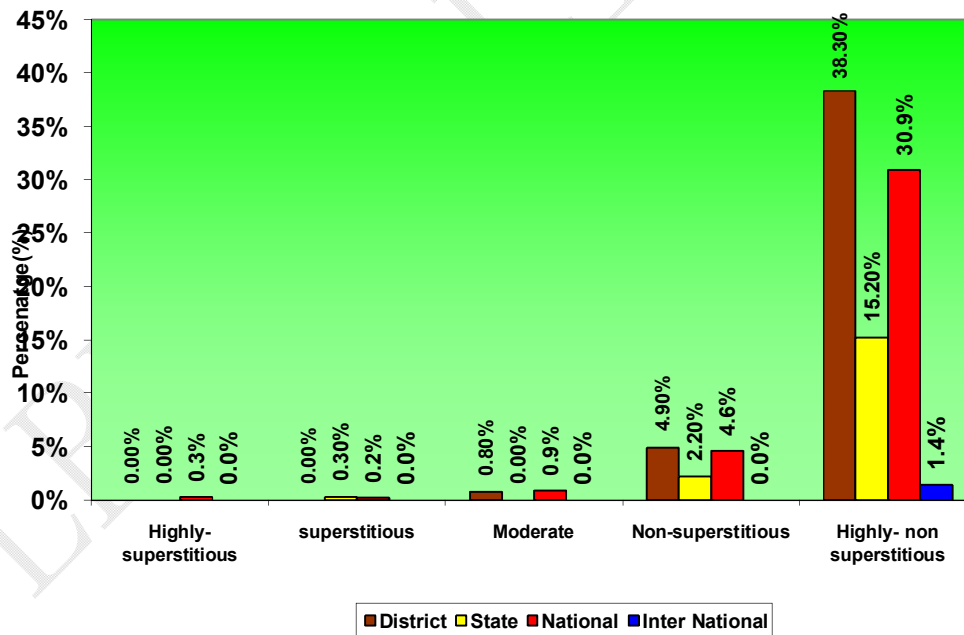


Figure 1.3 DISTRIBUTION OF PERCENTAGE BETWEEN CATEGORIES OF SUPERSTITION OF SPORTSMEN AND
SPORTSWOMEN OF VARIOUS LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

DISCUSSION

From the analysis of results, it has been observed that non-significant differences were recorded among the sportspersons according to their level of participation as the computed the 'f' ratio of 1.51 was less than the table value 2.37. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no statistically significant difference in superstitions at all levels of sports participation. The percentage method showed that maximum sportspersons of the selected universities of Punjab according to their level of participation were fall in highly non-superstitious category.

CONCLUSIONS

There were non-significant differences among the sportspersons according to their level of participation. Maximum sportspersons of the selected universities of Punjab according to their level of participation fell in highly non-superstitious category.

But, yes, any behavior could be a superstition if a person associates that behavior incorrectly with a positive or negative event that follows. A person can associate the behavior and the following event, and come to believe that the behavior caused the event to happen for example an athlete who often wears the same clothes, sometimes without washing them, or to preserve a winning streak. Another example is the athlete who grows "playoff beards" and refuses to shave until the season is over. It was firmly concluded that there was statistically nothing to do with superstitions in sports participation but yes, they are behaviors that people perform in an attempt to affect or control their future, their fate by performing certain tasks in a certain way to either help to alleviate anxiety or to simply better their chances in a certain situation.

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