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Cognitive Behaviour Assessment of Movement Competence Ambition among Human Kinetics Students in South-West Universities, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper reports the quantitative phase of an ongoing explanatory sequential mixed methods research design on Movement Competence Ambition (MCA) among human kinetics students in state public universities within the South-Western geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study holds and treated ambition as a psycho-philosophical concept. The psychological perspective of ambition implying achievement motivation was mixed with its philosophical view of honour seeking behaviour. Both perspectives relate to Einstein's inertial-tendency postulate regarding reference frames. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 418 respondents (199, 47.6% males; 219, 52.4% females); $\bar{x}$ *age = 20years and 1month). A self-developed 15-item validated questionnaire r =.81 built on the four "P's" plus one added of ambition drivers, i.e. Predisposing, Precipitating, Perpetuating, Protective and Prospective (added) factors was the main instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, was employed to depict respondents' bio-data while collected data was analyzed with mean and rank ordered. Results indicate that 377 (90.2%) of the students were fairly ambitious while 41 (9.8%) were highly ambitious. 90.9% males and 89.5% females were fairly ambitious while more females (10.5%) were highly ambitious as compared to males (9.1%). Though there was no marked difference between the ambition statuses by gender, however, females showed a better level of ambition compared to males. The predisposing factors with a mean of 4.1 have the highest*

impact on movement competence ambition followed by precipitating factors with the second highest mean value of 3.5. Other factors have no effect on the population ambition status as the factors have mean values below the criterion average of 3.5. Therefore, the predisposing and precipitating factors are areas of concentration to enhance the students' achievement goal orientation in movement competence.

Keywords: Ambition, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Movement Competence Assessment, Human Kinetics Students, Nigeria.

Introduction

Observing achievement goal orientation, that is, ambition of the present crop of human kinetics/sports students to scholarship is quite troubling considering the immediate future when the bulk of leadership in the discipline would rest on their shoulders. A significant fraction of these students substantially absent themselves from classes, attend mindlessly to assignments and are aloof in terms of critical thinking. The exempted few from these ills conduct themselves as if their studentship is an extension of the crèche days. Their work ambition is without doubt cloudy.

Ambition is a pervasive concept, yet, greatly diffused. It has been viewed fragmentarily by psychology, philosophy, theology, sociology, and other social science disciplines. It has been held, as a trait, a product, and, or obligation. The disaggregation of the concept is felt more in philosophy than other disciplines where there are two mutually exclusive schools of thought. Here, one sees ambition as virtuous (Santayana, Kaufmann), whereas the others perceive it as vicious (Aquinas, Locke, Rousseau).

Allport (1955) viewed ambition from his lens of "propriate strivings" as one's overarching desire to aspire toward success and improvement over one's current condition. Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012) view ambition "as the persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment, and accomplishment". This study aligns with the virtuous perspective of the concept and adopts an integrated view of ambition as achievement motive directed striving obligating diligence.

Supportive of the above perspective is "the fact that all known ambition definitions involve strivings in the context of worldly success suggests that ambition may well be a middle-level or Level II personality variable" (McAdams, 1995; McAdams & Pals, 2006). Cantor (1990) described middle-level units of personality as "units that take an individual's standing on abstract dispositions . . . and give concrete form to their diverse expressions"

The middle-level side of personality is concerned with the things that individuals do with personality in a context. Consistent with a social cognitivist position (Bandura, 1999; Mischel & Shoda, 1995), Cantor saw middle-level traits as having more direct affects on behaviour than more abstract personality traits. In this sense, ambition is a life task (Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, & Brower, 1987), characteristic adaptation (McCrae & Costa, 1999), or personal concern (McAdams, 1995) that arises as a result of underlying personality dispositions and perceptions of the world (Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012) emphasized that middle-level traits are indeed traits, meaning that they are stable and consistent over time and across situations within a given domain, but they are more contextualized. Major life goals such as ambition are based on long timelines, over years and decades (Roberts & Robins, 2000). In the case of ambition, the context is often the world of education (attainment), job prestige (rank), and income (wealth). One would expect that as mediating constructs between abstract personality dispositions and attainment, major life goals like ambition should be consistent over time.

The expectation has been attested by evidence from longitudinal studies depicting high rank-order stability in life goals over extended time periods (Roberts, O'Donnell, & Robins, 2004).

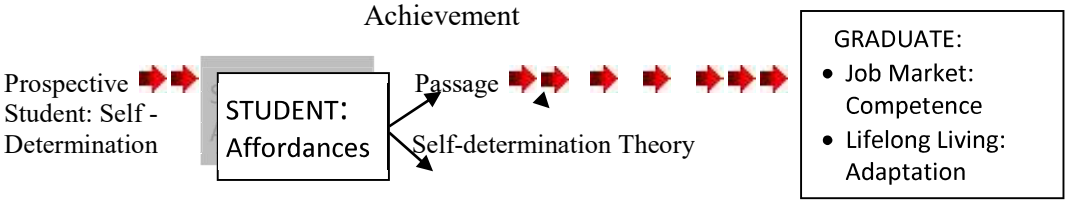
In the context of this study, ambition is viewed as achievement motivation and honour seeking. Psychologically, achievement motivation, also referred to as the need for achievement, is an important determinant of aspiration, effort, and persistence in strive towards excellence. Philosophically, it is the seeking and attaining of deserved honour.

The observed poor ambition in today's physical education students is not restricted to the Nigerian school environment. Thus, Ni Chroinin, Fletcher and O'Sullivan (2017) expressed the concerns that current forms of Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) are not adequately providing teachers with the tools necessary for working with the realities and challenges of teaching physical education in contemporary schools. This has led some scholars to advocate for an approach that prioritises meaningfulness in physical education. Evidence abound that scholars have begun working to reverse this trend. In light of this, van der Mans and Harvey (2010) aver that "educators are promoting a shift from an "assessment of learning", to "an assessment for learning".

In the same vein, the European Commission (2012) posit that an important similarity of most definitions of key competencies is a shared focus on "learning for life", "lifelong learning" or "learning to learn". While they emphasise different elements, these terms are clear in suggesting that what is learned must have relevance beyond school (Lucas and Claxton, 2009).

This responds to the concern that school settings sometimes tend to promote a narrow set of cognitive skills and attitudes which have limited relevance outside the classroom. While these may be essential "school skills", they are insufficient to equip students for active participation in society and the world of work in the future (Lucas and Claxton, 2009). For this professional opinion of Lucas and Claxton (2009) this study is set on three motivational goal theories based on the tri-variant framework of affordances, achievement motivation and self-determination theory. Figure 1 below depicts the links among the theories.

Figure 1: The relationships among the theory of affordances, achievement motivation and self-determination theory.



The above figure on the mix of the three motivational theories implicates the society as represented by the educational institution as an influential factor in the moulding and final products exemplified by the graduates of the school system. As seen in figure 1, the prospective student who is aspiring to get admitted into the tertiary institution is driven by his/her autonomous and intrapsychic forces, otherwise referred as self determination to achieve a status envisaged from earlier multiple factors of models and experiences in recognition of known self – capability.

On admission, the institution presents a myriad of information to the student which ultimately shapes its path in conflict or in conformity to his/her lateral personal disposition to strive for a particular goal otherwise referred as achievement motivation. Gibson (1950) analyzes the manner in which "the 'values' or 'meanings' of things in the environment could be directly perceived". He draws from nature and the environment to postulate his theory of

affordances, which is defined as "a specific combination of the properties of its substance and its surfaces taken with reference to an animal". Under this definition, affordances are perceived through an invariant combination of properties, which are "meaningful" to a person—the properties in isolation are not. He stated that "the medium, substances, surfaces, objects, places, and other animals have affordances for a given animal. They offer benefits or injury, life or death. This is why they need to be perceived. The possibilities of the environment and the way of life of the animal go together inseparably. The environment constrains what the animal can do, and the concept of a niche in ecology reflects this fact. Within limits, the human animal can alter the affordances of the environment but is still the creature of his or her situation".

He goes on to demonstrate the affordance of substances by claiming that the air affords breathing, while, after the application of his theory to surfaces and layouts, he claims that the ground affords standing on it. Further, he explains the affordance of detached objects by providing the example of manipulating a rope, among others, which allows knitting, binding, knotting. The most elaborate and rich affordances, according to Gibson, are provided by other people or animals. In this respect, he claims that behaviour affords behaviour, generating interactivity, such as touching, speaking, striking.

Gibson is influenced by the theory of valences developed by the Gestalt psychologists, for whom the relationship between the above listed things from the environment is subject to the needs of the observer. For Gibson, however, affordance does not have this "demand character" – the relationship between the objects, the substances, the surfaces, the animals and the people in the environment does not depend on the observer's recognition of its affordance. For instance, a post office box affords letter-mailing to humans, whether the person perceives it or not – or as Gibson puts it: "The object offers what it does because it is what it is".

Although the definitions of key competencies vary considerably across countries, they reflect a similar ambition: overcoming traditional educational approaches focussing primarily on knowledge transmission and acquisition of basic skills. The aim of many recent curriculum reforms is to promote a broader model of learning which comprises a complex integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes and action in order to carry out a task successfully in real-life contexts. Such key competencies, or "21st century skills", typically include dimensions such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, communication, ICT literacy, as well as collaborative, social and citizen skills" (OECD, 2013).

Whereas a number of studies have been done on motor competence, the term has become quite diffused as it has been used from these articles as a concept that represents different things in different manners (Logan et al., 2018). Motor competence refers to a person's ability to execute different motor acts, including coordination of motor skills that are necessary to manage everyday tasks (Henderson & Sugden, 1992). Movement competence can generally be described as the ability to use voluntary movements in order to achieve a specific purpose or goal (Magill, 2011).These motor acts include coordination of both fine (e.g., manual dexterity) and gross (e.g., static and dynamic balance) motor skills (Henderson & Sugden, 1992). According to Invernizzi, Signorini, Colella, Raiola, Bosio, & Scurati et al., (2020), "competence is a pivotal concept of the teaching process at any school level. It can be defined as the individual capacity/ability to deal with job, study, professional, or personal requirements by applying all knowledge and skills previously acquired in formal, non-formal, and informal learning contests. Knowledge has to be turned into practice, which moves the focus of the teachers' training from individual knowledge to operative skills".

Statement of Problem

The problem of this study is the investigation of the locus of causality of movement competence ambition among human kinetics/sports science students of public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Methods and Procedure

This study is phase one of a regime of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which involves assessment. The investigation was with the aid of a 15-item self-developed questionnaire (r=.81) designed on a weighted 7point Likert scale range: Strongly Disagree =1point, Disagree =2points, Somewhat Disagree =3points, Neither Agree nor Disagree =4points, Somewhat Agree =5points, Agree =6points and Strongly Agree =7points. The question-items concerned the four "P's" plus one added ambition drivers, i.e. Predisposing, Precipitating, Perpetuating, Protective and Prospective (added) factors. The questionnaire was emailed to 675 purposively selected penultimate and final year students of human kinetics and sports science of public universities in South-West, Nigeria. 418 respondents (199, 47.6% males, 219, 52.3% females; $\overline{x}$ age = 20years and 1month) returned valid filled out questionnaire. Collected data was analysed with the aid of descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean and rank order.

Result

The result of the study is as presented below in tables 1-4.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	219	52.4
Male	199	47.6
Total	418	100.0

The result contained in table 1 show that 52.4% of those that returned valid filled out questionnaire were females while 47.6% were males.

Table 2: Population Ambition Status

Ambition Status	Frequency	Percentage
Fairly Ambitious	377	90.2
Highly Ambitious	41	9.8
Total	418	100

The Population ambition status as shown in table 2 implies that the immense majority (90.2%) of the respondents were fairly ambitious on movement competence. As such, the respondents have less interest in the learning of and future use of physical movements in a competent and graceful standard. The fairly ambitious status of the population also points to the composite influence that the predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating, protective and prospective factors wield in stimulating the students' disposition to movement competence acquisition. This result is depicted in figure 1 below.

Figure1: Bar chart of population ambition status

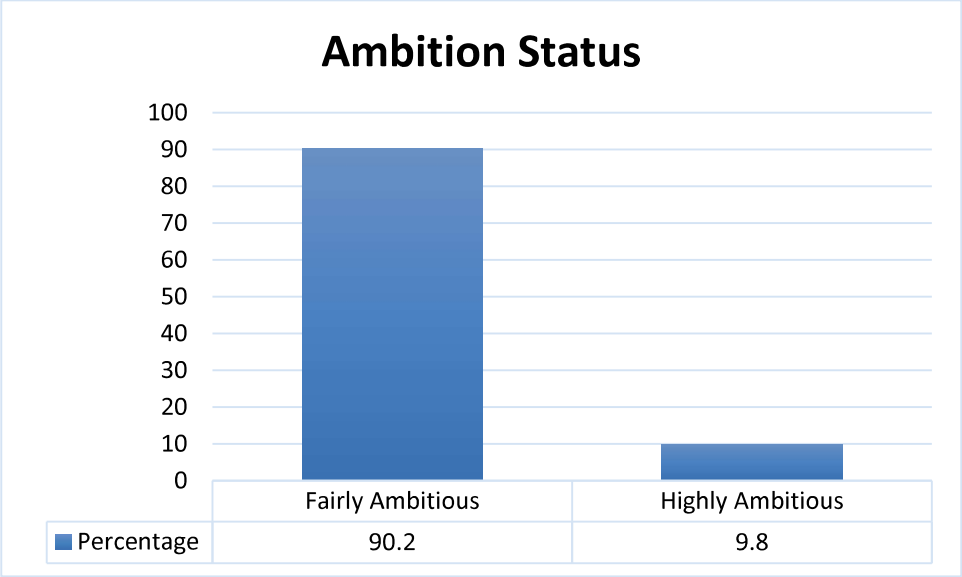


Table 3: Gender Ambition Status

Ambition Status	**Female**		**Male**	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Fairly Ambitious	196	89.5	181	90.9
Highly Ambitious	23	10.5	18	9.1
Total	219	100.0	199	100.0

The findings in table 3 shows that 90.9% of male and 89.5% of females were fairly ambitious while more of females (10.5%) were highly ambitious as compared to males (9.1%). The result implies that although there was no marked difference between the ambition status of males and females, however, females showed a better level of ambition on movement competence ambition when compared to males. This result is graphically presented in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Bar chart of Ambition status by gender

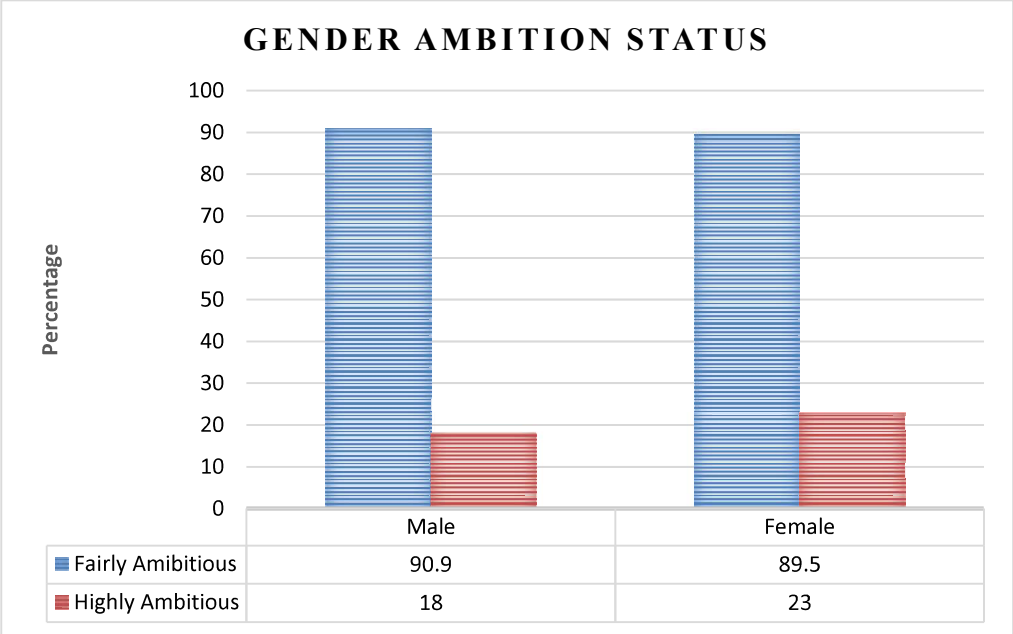
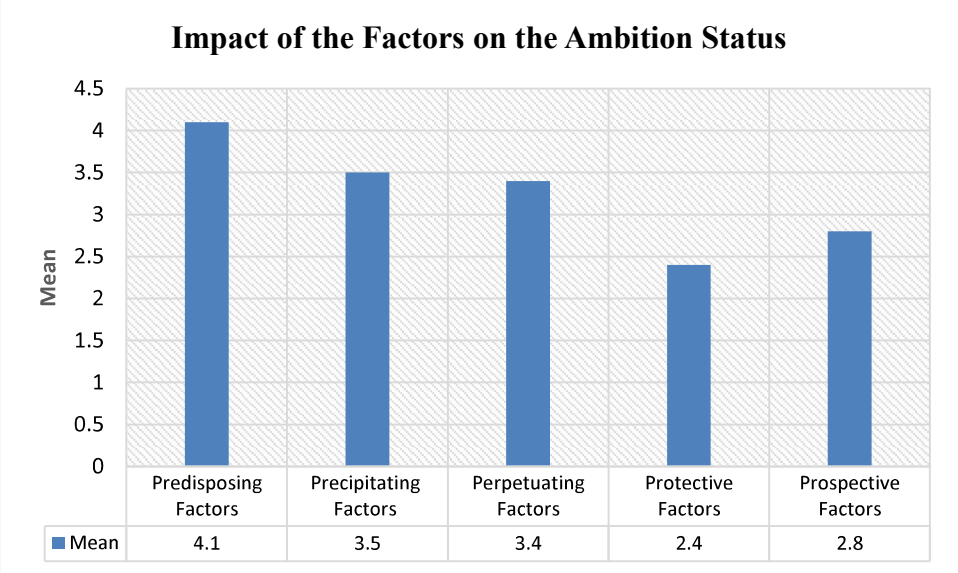


Table 4: Impact of the Factors on the Population Ambition Status.

Factors	**Mean**	**Rank**
Predisposing Factors	4.1	1
Precipitating Factors	3.5	2
Perpetuating Factors	3.4	3
Protective Factors	2.4	5
Prospective Factors	2.8	4

The impact of the various factors on the students' movement competence ambition as presented in table 4 indicates predisposing factors with a mean of 4.1 has the highest impact followed by precipitating factors with a mean of 3.5 on movement competence ambition. The other factors: perpetuating 3.4, protective 2.4 and prospective 2.8 have little or no significant impact on the population ambition status as these factors mean values are below the criterion average of 3.5 consequent of the COUNTIF Function. Therefore, the predisposing factors and precipitating factors are areas of concentration to motivate the students' interest in movement competence acquisition. This result is graphically represented in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Bar chart of Impact of the Factors on the Population Ambition Status.



Discussion

The findings of the study are that (90.2%) of the students were barely ambitious. An insignificant difference was found in terms of the students' disposition to excellence by the factor of gender on movement competence which confirms Ni Chroinin, Fletcher, and O'Sullivan (2017) conclusion that current forms of physical education teacher education (PETE) are not adequately providing teachers with the tools necessary for working with the realities and challenges of teaching physical education in contemporary schools. The findings imply that the students popularly have less interest in the learning of and future use of physical movements competently and in graceful manner or standard. These developments signal a period of serious trouble for the job market whenever this set of students becomes graduates and are gainfully employed. This averment rests on the evidence that ambition arises as a result of underlying personality dispositions and perceptions of the world (Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012) also emphasized that ambition as middle-level traits are stable and consistent over time and across situations within a given domain. Life goals such as ambition have long timeline, over years and decades (Roberts & Robins, 2000).

The fairly ambitious status of the population stands in opposition to the general belief that "the desire to be employable by studying a specific course and obtaining a degree increases personal investment in higher education" (Johnes, 2006). The findings of the study command examination of the constituents of both influential factors of predisposing and precipitating factors of weak honour drive in the students and corrective measures mounted as soon as possible. One of the doctoral students of the lead author who served as a research assistant in the course of the study has signalled interest to explore varied autonomous-supportive teaching styles and focus group discussion as approaches to modifying the human kinetics/sports students' ambition status.

Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings, we suggest that Universities in the South-Western region of Nigeria should stop the practice of allocating students who do not apply to study human kinetics/sports science into the subject area. A comprehensive orientation programme should be organized in the very first week of every academic year to take the

new students who in this case are mostly adolescents through their likely paths while on the academic programme up to the immediate destinations at the point of graduation. Quality assurance systems of the institutions should be strengthened to monitor the teaching-learning process in a holistic manner. Refresher training courses should be mounted for the teaching staff to expose them to supportive teaching models in this contemporary age of "teaching for learning". Peer or team teaching is one assured way of spicing the teaching-learning environment. Course and level advisers should be made to discharge their duties in the best possible ways to nip the problem of dissatisfaction in the students early.

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