Original Article

Gender and Competitive Level Differences in Goal Setting strategies among Kho – Kho Players

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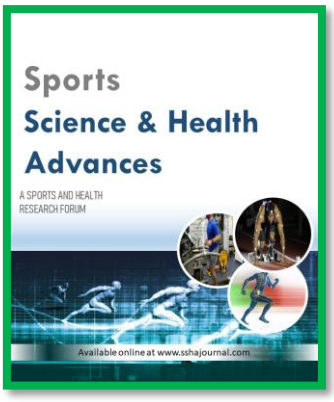

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Abstract

Background: Goal setting is a crucial psychological strategy that enhances performance, concentration, and motivation; it involves defining clear and measurable goals for both individual and team achievements. **Purpose:** This study aims to investigate differences in goal setting strategies based on gender (Male & Female) and level of Participation (State, Inter-University, National Level & international level). **Methodology**: A G*Power software was used to determine sample size (N = 93). A total of 103 subjects (61.17% male and 38.83% female) were selected for the present study, exceeding the required sample size. The age of the participants ranged from 12 to 28 years (M = 17.59). The Goal-Setting Questionnaire developed by Meenakshi and Lalit Sharma (2014), was used to assess the players goal setting strategies, using a 7-point Likert scale to assess the goal-setting strategies of the players. Descriptive statistics and two-way ANOVA were used for statistical analysis to examine differences in goal-setting strategies between male and female athletes across different levels of participation. The level of significance was set at p=.05. **Result:** The result of two-way ANOVA revealed that men and women did not differ significantly in the following Sub-Variables of goal setting: goal-setting action (p>0.05), types of goals (p>0.05), team goal setting (p>0.05), goal-setting interaction with the coach (p>0.05). Similarly, no significant differences were found across all of the variables of goal setting across the level of participation. **Conclusion**: According to the findings of the study we concluded that most kho kho players demonstrate average goal setting behaviors, rarely set different types of goals, and have limited awareness of team goal setting. Additionally, coach rarely encourage players to set the types of Goals mentioned in the study.

Keywords: Goal setting, Kho-Kho, Gender, competitive level, psychological strategies

Introduction

In the field of sports psychology, goal setting is widely recognized as a fundamental approach for improving physical performance, maintaining motivation, and sharpening mental concentration. This technique is based on the formulation of SMART goals, which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Bird et

al., 2024; Burton et al., 1998; Crotts, 2025; Giannini et al., 1988; Hall & Byrne, 1988; Jeong et al., 2023; Kyllo & Landers, 1995; Locke, 1991; Locke & Latham, 1985; Miller & McAuley, 1987). According to Locke and Latham's (1990) Goal-Setting Theory, explicit and hard goals result in higher levels of performance than ambiguous or easily reachable ones because they help focus attention, increase effort, strengthen perseverance, and encourage the adoption of new methods. While this concept has mostly been applied to elite and Olympic sports, it is also important in traditional Indian games like Kho Kho, which demand mental agility, quick decision-making, and synchronized teamwork (M. Das et al., 2024; S. Das & Sekh, 2025; Gandhi et al., 2019; Kant, 2017; Manoj Kumar et al., 2024; Suresh Kumar, 2018). As Kho-Kho grows from a traditional regional game into a recognized competitive sport, understanding the mental aspects of goal setting is key to improving performance for both players and teams (Barman et al., 2023; Kalpana, Cherian, et al., 2023; Kalpana, Khanna, et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2011; Mahapatra & Abhinandan, 2023; Saha, 2022)

Building on the theoretical foundation of goal setting, it is critical to investigate how goal-setting strategies are implemented in real sports contexts (Locke & Latham, 2002; Weinberg & Gould, 2019). These techniques are systematic approaches that athletes and coaches employ to maintain attention, increase motivation, and assure constant skill improvement (Burton & Raedeke, 2008; Weinberg & Gould, 2019). For example, in a fast-paced and highly participatory sport like Kho Kho, where players alternate between offensive and defensive roles on a regular basis, structured goal setting benefits in managing the physical intensity and cognitive demands of games. Athletes who set goals are better able to maintain discipline throughout practice, recover mentally from mistakes, and remain focused during high-pressure games (Weinberg, Butt, & Culp, 2011). Furthermore, goal setting promotes self-regulation by allowing athletes to evaluate their performance, adjust expectations, and accept responsibility for their progress (Kingston & Hardy, 1997; Locke & Latham, 2006; R. Weinberg et al., 2011). Moving from theory to strategy, goal setting transforms from a motivational tool to a critical component of psychological resilience and athletic success (Locke & Latham, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 2019).

The approach to goal setting has matured, giving rise to four key types of goals: outcome goals, which target results like winning (Elliot & McGregor, 2001); performance goals, which focus on improving personal benchmarks; process goals, which guide attention to the techniques or strategies needed to succeed (Gollwitzer, 1999); and learning goals, which involve acquiring new knowledge or skills (Locke & Latham, 2002). When athletes set a blend of these goal particularly emphasizing performance and process, they are more likely to stay motivated and resilient, even under pressure. The psychological effect of realistic and personally meaningful goals cannot be overstated (Boyce & Wayda, 1994).

The impact of team goal setting is even more profound. When teammates set and commit to shared objectives, it enhances cooperation, builds trust, and fosters a unified sense of purpose (Kleinert et al., 2012). Teams aligned under a common vision are more efficient and emotionally cohesive (Katzenbach & Smith, 1992). Within this structure, the coach's role becomes pivotal. Coaches do more than instruct; they act as motivators, facilitators, and psychological anchors. By helping athletes articulate specific goals, offering regular feedback, and adjusting targets based on progress, coaches ensure that the goal-setting process is both dynamic and supportive (Miller & McAuley, 1987). This interaction is essential not only for goal achievement but also for sustaining motivation and preventing burnout (Evans & Hardy, 2002). Now, if we speak specifically about Kho-Kho, it is a traditional Indian sport that demands speed, strategy, and split-second decision-making. Played between two teams of nine players on a narrow field, the game requires fast running, sudden directional changes, and precise communication (Das & Sekh, 2025; Gandhi et al., 2019; Manohar, 2015; Suresh Kumar, 2018).

In such a context, goal setting is not merely a psychological technique it becomes a powerful tool to enhance an athlete’s competitive abilities. When Kho Kho players set specific goals, such as reducing chasing time, increasing the number of successful touches,

or improving chain formations they are not only training their physical bodies but also sharpening their mental capabilities. However, psychological variables in Kho-Kho especially the use and application of goal-setting strategies still receive limited attention. There remains a gap in understanding how to implement these strategies effectively and how to integrate them into performance training. Addressing these gaps is crucial for maximizing athlete development and game performance and specifically examining the effects of gender and level of participation (state, inter-university, national, and international), and how these goal setting strategies relate to their performance. In this high-speed sport, structured goal setting acts as a bridge between physical fitness and mental readiness. Players who understand and adopt these strategies tend to be more agile, focused, and better synchronized with the flow of their team. Therefore, the purpose of the study is exploring of goal setting strategies in gender and level of participation among Kho Kho players.

Material and Method

Participants

An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power analysis to estimate the required sample size for detecting effects in goal setting strategies. The expected large effect size ($f2=0.40$, α err probability= 0.05, 1 - β error probability 0.90) yielded a required sample size of N = 93 and an actual sample size of 103 participants. The obtained statistical power was 0.90 for goal setting strategies, indicating that the investigation was appropriately powered to detect significant effects. These findings support the statistical soundness and trustworthiness of the analysis. The current study included 103 Kho-Kho players and it exceeded the required sample size, who have represented state, inter-university, national, and international level were selected for the present study. The subjects selected for the study were divided on the basis of gender and level of participation. The sample consisted of 63 (61.17%) male and 40 (38.83%) female, among which 37 (35.92%) players had competed at state level, 8 (7.77%) players had competed at inter-university level, 42 (40.78%) players have competed at national level, and 16 (15.53%) players have competed at international level. Their Age range from 12 years to 28 years (M = 17.59).

Criterion Measure

"Goal setting in sports" questionnaire, which involves 26 questions in goal setting in sports questionnaire, which contain 12 questions for assessment of goal setting action and 5 questions for assessment of types of goals and 4 questions for assessment of team goal setting and 5 questions for assessment of goal setting interaction with the coach. The goal setting in sports questionnaire developed by Meenakshi and Lalit Sharma (2014). The Scoring procedure was as follows: All the section of goal setting scale were rated at 7-point Likert scale from very true of me (7) to very untrue of me (1). The total attitude on goal setting scale was obtained by taking in each subscale and was finally interpreted with the help of norms.

Procedure

The data was collected by the researcher and the co-author for the purpose of the study using "goal setting in Sports Questionnaire. The data was collected from participants of the Delhi Olympic Games (Kho-Kho) 2024 and from players who were unable to attend the event, via an online Google form. The researcher collected the data by visiting the JLN stadium during the Delhi Olympic Games 2024 (Kho-Kho). The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, they were requested to provide accurate and authentic information. In case of any ambiguity, the researcher provided immediate assistance for clarification. The subjects were assured that their information would be kept confidential. Offline questionnaires were filled by Kho-Kho players at the JLN Stadium while online data were collected through Google Forms.

Statistical Analysis:

The researcher used Descriptive statistics to calculate the mean and standard deviation. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare goal setting strategies between gender across the level of participation. All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22. The level of significance use set at 0.05.

Result

The raw data obtained from the subjects were analyzed with the help of SPSS to obtain descriptive statistics, two-way ANOVA and correlation statistics. The results obtained from the analysis are given below in form of tables and graphs.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for The Goal setting action Between Genders among Different Level of Participation Group in Kho-Kho

Gender	Level of Participation	N	% Within Gender	Mean ± Std. Deviation
Male	State level	26	41.27%	63.04 ± 10.35
	Interuniversity level	2	3.17%	61.00 ± 5.66
	National level	23	36.51%	68.08 ± 7.27
	International level	12	19.05%	69.50 ± 8.93
	Total (Male)	63	100.00%	66.05 ± 8.93
Female	State level	11	27.50%	67.64 ± 4.43
	Interuniversity level	6	15.00%	70.33 ± 6.83
	National level	19	47.50%	69.58 ± 13.20
	International level	4	10.00%	73.75 ± 9.84
	Total (Female)	40	100.00%	69.58 ± 10.10
Total	State level	37	35.92%	64.41 ± 9.19
	Interuniversity level	8	7.77%	68.00 ± 7.52
	National level	42	40.78%	68.76 ± 10.27
	International level	16	15.53%	70.56 ± 7.72
	Grand Total	103	100.00%	67.42 ± 9.51

The tables no 1 revealed the descriptive analysis of Goal setting action among kho-Kho players. It was found that the mean value and standard deviation of Goal setting action for male and female Kho-Kho players were 66.05±8.93, and 69.58±10.10 respectively. However, the mean and standard deviation value of kho-kho players' task orientation at the state level, inter-university, national level, and international level were 64.41±9.19, 68.00±7.52, 68.76± 10.27, and 70.56±7.72 respectively. The mean value of the male level of participation was found to be 63.04 ±10.35, 61.00±5.66, 68.08±7.27, and 69.50±8.93 respectively for male state level, inter-university, national level, and international level. The mean value and standard deviation of female level of participation were found 67.64±4.43, 70.33±6.83, 69.58±13.20 and 73.75±9.84 respectively for female state level, inter-university, national level, and international level respectively. To find out the influence of gender and task orientation of kho kho players and level of participation, a two-way ANOVA was employed. The above Table shows that most male and female participants fall into the "average" category and international fall into "good" category indicating a tendency to set moderate goals.

Table 2 Summary of Two-Way ANOVA of goal setting action Between Genders Among Different Level Of Participation Group Of Kho-Kho

Goal Setting Action	Df	SS	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Gender	1	315.824	315.824	3.624	.060
Highest achievement	3	434.784	144.928	1.663	.180
Gender * highest achievement	3	103.912	34.637	.397	.755
Error	95	8279.048	87.148		
Corrected Total	102	9223.049			

The above table no 2 reveal that the two-way ANOVA analysis showed no significant effect of gender on goal setting action F (1,95) = 3.62, p < 0.05, indicating that the mean scores of goal setting action for males and females did not differ significantly. Therefore, gender does not influence the goal setting action of kho kho players. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence on goal setting action is fail to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA revealed no significant effect of level of participation on goal setting action F (3,95) = 1.66, p<0.05, indicating that the mean scores of goal setting action among players at different level of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international not differ significantly. Therefore, the level of participation does not influence the goal setting action of kho kho players. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of level of participation on goal setting action is fail to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA revealed the interaction effect between gender and level of participation was not significant, as F (3,95) =0.397 p>0.05. This means that the mean scores of goal setting action among males and females across different levels of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international level, does not differ significantly. Therefore, the interaction between gender and level of participation does not influence the goal setting action of kho kho players. Thus, null hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender and level of participation on goal setting action is fails to be rejected.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for The Types of goals Between Genders among Different Level of Participation Group in Kho-Kho

Gender	Level of Participation	N	% Within Gender	Mean ± Std. Deviation
Male	State level	26	41.27%	24.54 ± 5.69
	Interuniversity level	2	3.17%	30.00 ± 1.42
	National level	23	36.51%	26.96 ± 4.52
	International level	12	19.05%	27.92 ± 4.54
	Total (Male)	63	100.00%	26.24 ± 5.14
Female	State level	11	27.50%	28.18 ± 2.89
	Interuniversity level	6	15.00%	26.17 ± 3.13
	National level	19	47.50%	26.58 ± 5.58
	International level	4	10.00%	29.00 ± 5.48
	Total (Female)	40	100.00%	27.20 ± 4.59
Total	State level	37	35.92%	25.62 ± 5.26
	Interuniversity level	8	7.77%	27.13 ± 3.23
	National level	42	40.78%	26.79 ± 4.97
	International level	16	15.53%	28.19 ± 4.62
	Grand Total	103	100.00%	26.61 ± 4.93

The tables no 3 reveal the descriptive analysis of types of goals among kho kho players. It was found that the mean value and standard deviation of the types of goals for male and female players were 26.23±5.13, and 27.20±4.58 respectively. However, the mean and standard deviation value of kho kho players Types of goals at the state level, inter-university, national level, and international level were 25.62±5.26, 27.13±3.23, 26.79±4.97 and 28.19±4.62 respectively. The mean value of the male and level of participation was found to be 24.54±5.59, 30.00±1.42, 26.96±4.52, and 27.92±4.54 respectively for male state level, inter-university, national level, and international level. The mean value and standard deviation of female level of participation were found 28.18±2.89, 26.17±3.13, 26.58±5.58 and 29.00±5.48 respectively for female state level, inter-university, national level, and international level respectively. To find out the influence of gender and Types of goals of kho kho players and level of participation, a two-way ANOVA was employed. The table shows that most males and female participants fall into the “average” category, showing tendency to use different types of goal “sometimes”.

The majority of participant at the state, national, interuniversity, and international level participants at this level fall into the "sometime" category and all level of participant use sometime types of goals.

Table 4 Summary of Two-Way ANOVA of types of goals Between Genders Among Different Level of Participation Group of Kho-Kho

Types Of Goals	Df	SS	MSS	F-value	P-value
Gender	1	.217	.217	.009	.924
Highest achievement	3	47.138	15.713	.658	.580
Gender * highest achievement	3	108.782	36.261	1.518	.215
Error	95	2269.436	23.889		
Corrected Total	102	2478.466			

The above table no 4 shows that the two-way ANOVA revealed no significant effect of gender on types of goals F (1,95) = 0.009, $p<0.05$, indicating that the mean scores types of goals between males and females did not differ significantly. Therefore, gender does not influence the types of goals of kho kho players. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of gender on types of goals is fails to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA also revealed no significant effect of level of participation on types of goals F (3,95) = 0.66, $p<0.05$, indicating that the mean scores for types of goals among players at different level of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international not differ significantly. Therefore, the level of participation does not influence the types of goals of kho kho players. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of level of participation on types of goals is fails to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA revealed interaction effect between gender and level of participation was not significant, as F (3,95) =1.52 $p>0.05$. This means that the mean score for types of goals among males and females across different levels of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international level, does not differ significantly. Therefore, the interaction between gender and level of participation does not influence the types of goals of kho kho players. Thus, null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of gender and level of participation on types of goals is fails to be rejected.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics for Team Goal Setting Between Genders among Different Level of Participation Group in Kho-Kho

Gender	Level of Participation	N	% Within Gender	Mean ± Std. Deviation
Male	State level	26	41.27%	19.81 ± 5.00
	Interuniversity level	2	3.17%	23.50 ± 3.54
	National level	23	36.51%	22.09 ± 3.58
	International level	12	19.05%	24.17 ± 2.29
	Total (Male)	63	100.00%	21.59 ± 4.32
Female	State level	11	27.50%	21.73 ± 1.27
	Interuniversity level	6	15.00%	24.17 ± 2.93
	National level	19	47.50%	21.26 ± 6.17
	International level	4	10.00%	23.25 ± 4.35
	Total (Female)	40	100.00%	22.03 ± 4.66
Total	State level	37	35.92%	20.38 ± 4.32
	Interuniversity level	8	7.77%	24.00 ± 2.83
	National level	42	40.78%	21.71 ± 4.88
	International level	16	15.53%	23.94 ± 2.79
	Grand Total	103	100.00%	21.76 ± 4.43

The tables no 5 revealed the descriptive analysis of team goal Setting among kho kho players. It was found that the mean value and standard deviation of team Goal Setting for male and female were 21.59±4.32, and 22.03±4.66 respectively. However, the mean and standard deviation value of kho kho players team goal setting at the state level, inter-university, national level, and international level were 20.38±4.32, 24.00±2.83, 21.71±4.88

and 23.94±2.79 respectively. The mean value of level of participation of male players was found to be 19.81 ±5.00, 23.50±3.54, 22.09±3.58, and 24.17±2.29 respectively for male state level, inter-university, national level, and international level. The mean value and standard deviation of female level of participation were found 21.73±1.27, 24.17±2.93, 21.26±6.17 and 23.25±4.35 respectively for female state level, inter-university, national level, and international level respectively. To find out the influence of gender and Team Goal Setting of kho kho players and level of participation, a two-way ANOVA was employed. Above Table shows that most male and female participants rated their team goals setting as "average". The majority of the participants at the state, national, interuniversity, international level participants at this level team goal setting experience as "average" category small percentage of "excellent".

Table 6 Summary of Two-Way ANOVA of Team goal setting Between Genders among Different Level of Participation Group of Kho-Kho

Team goal setting	Df	SS	MSS	F-value	P-value
Gender	1	.584	.584	.04	.87
Highest achievement	3	102.074	34.025	1.82	.15
Gender * highest achievement	3	37.830	12.610	.68	.58
Error	95	1779.481	18.731		
Corrected Total	102	2004.932			

The above table no 6 shows that the two-way ANOVA revealed no significant effect of gender on Team goal setting $F(1,95) = 3.63$, $p<0.05$, indicating that the mean scores of team goal setting for males and females did not differ significantly. Therefore, gender does not influence team goal setting among kho kho players. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of gender on Team goal setting is fails to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA also revealed no significant effect of the level of participation on Team goal setting $F(3,95) = 1.67$, $p<0.05$, indicating that the mean score team goal setting among players at different level of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international did not differ significantly. Therefore, the level of participation does not influence the team goal setting among kho kho players. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of level of participation on team goal setting is fails to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA revealed interaction effect between gender and level of participation was not significant, as $F(3,95) =0.39$ $p>0.05$. This means the mean scores of team goal setting among males and females across different levels of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international level, did not differ significantly. Therefore, the interaction between gender and level of participation does not influence Team goal setting among kho kho players. Thus, null hypothesis that there is no significant influence interaction effect of gender and level of participation on Team goal setting is fails to be rejected.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics for The Goal setting interaction with coach Between Genders among Different Level of Participation Group in Kho-Kho

Gender	Level of Participation	N	% Within Gender	Mean ± Std. Deviation
Male	State level	26	41.27%	25.46 ± 5.87
	Interuniversity level	2	3.17%	30.50 ± 3.54
	National level	23	36.51%	31.17 ± 3.05
	International level	12	19.05%	28.67 ± 7.15
	Total (Male)	63	100.00%	28.32 ± 5.76

Table 7 Continue…

Female	State level	11	27.50%	29.55 ± 3.56
	Interuniversity level	6	15.00%	30.00 ± 3.95
	National level	19	47.50%	30.47 ± 6.34
	International level	4	10.00%	32.25 ± 2.22
	Total (Female)	40	100.00%	30.33 ± 4.97
Total	State level	37	35.92%	26.68 ± 5.57
	Interuniversity level	8	7.77%	30.13 ± 3.60
	National level	42	40.78%	30.86 ± 4.77
	International level	16	15.53%	29.56 ± 6.41
	Grand Total	103	100.00%	29.10 ± 5.53

The tables no 7 revealed the descriptive analysis of goal setting interaction with coach among kho kho players. it was found that the mean value and standard deviation of the Goal setting interaction with coach for male and female players were 28.32±5.76, and 30.33±4.97 respectively. However, the mean and standard deviation value of kho kho players Goal setting interaction with coach at the state level, inter-university, national level, and international level were 26.68±5.57, 30.13±3.60, 30.86±4.77 and 29.56±6.41 respectively. The mean value of the male level of participation was found to be 25.46 ±5.87, 30.50±3.54, 31.17±3.05, and 28.67±7.15 respectively for male state level, inter-university, national level, and international level. The mean value and standard deviation of female level of participation were found 29.54±3.56, 30.00±3.95, 30.47±6.34 and 32.25±2.22 respectively for female state level, inter-university, national level, and international level respectively. To find out the influence of gender and Goal setting interaction with coach of kho kho players and level of participation, a two-way ANOVA was employed. Above Table shows that most female participants had higher interaction with coach compared to males. The majority of national, international level participants at this level interaction with coach "good" and state, interuniversity level interaction with coach "average.

Table 8 Summary of Two-Way ANOVA of goal setting interaction with coach Between Genders Among Different Level of Participation Group of Kho-Kho

goal setting interaction with coach	Df	SS	MSS	F-value	P-value
Gender	1	34.127	34.127	1.254	.266
Highest achievement	3	209.606	69.869	2.568	.059
Gender * highest achievement	3	120.994	40.331	1.482	.224
Error	95	2585.147	27.212		
Corrected Total	102	3117.029			

The above table no 8 shows that the two-way ANOVA revealed no significant effect of gender on goal setting interaction with the coach $F(1,95) = 1.25$, $p<0.05$ indicating that the mean scores of goal setting interaction with coach of males and females do not differ significantly. Therefore, gender does not influence the goal setting interaction with coach among kho kho players Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence on goal setting interaction with coach is fails to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA also revealed no significant effect of level of participation on goal setting interaction with coach $F(3,95) = 2.56$, $p<0.05$ indicating that the mean scores of goal setting interaction with coach among players at different level of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international does not differ significantly. Therefore, the level of participation does not influence the goal setting interaction with coach among kho kho players. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of level of participation on goal setting interaction with coach is fails to be rejected.

The two-way ANOVA revealed interaction effect between gender and level of participation was not significant, as F (3,95) =1.48 p>0.05. This means that the mean scores of goal setting interaction with the coach among males and females across different levels of participation such as state level, inter-university level, national level, and international level, do not differ significantly. Therefore, the interaction between gender and level of participation does not influence the goal setting interaction with coach among kho kho players. Thus, null hypothesis that there is no significant interaction effect of gender and level of participation on goal setting interaction with coach is fails to be rejected.

Discussion

The overall purpose of the present research study was to replicate and extend the findings and Explore goal setting between gender and level of participation among Kho – Kho players (Locke & Latham, 2002). It was found that there is no difference in goal setting action between gender and level of participation with most player falling into average category. This suggests that Kho-Kho players do not set effective goals, possibly due to reason such as environmental Factors such as low motivation influenced by team culture, insufficient resources, or few career opportunities (Bortoli et al., 2009; Burton, 1989; Locke & Latham, 1985, 2002; Maitland & Gervis, 2010a; R. S. Weinberg, 2013a). Therefore, failed to rejected the null hypothesis. Regarding Types of Goals, result revealed no differences between gender and level of participation, with mostly players falling into "sometime" category. This indicate that kho kho players are not using different types of goals (outcome, performance, and process goals), which could be due to lack of awareness or training in goal setting or focus only on outcome goals, as supported by Weinberg, (2010). Thus, null hypothesis is fails to be rejected. In terms of team goal setting, no significance differences were found between gender and level of participation due to limited understanding of goals, lack of participation in team goal setting, nature of team membership and Inadequate leadership and guidance (Arraya et al., 2015; Maitland & Gervis, 2010b; R. S. Weinberg, 2013b; *Weinberg2001 Goal Perception*, n.d.; Widmeyer & Ducharme, 1997). Consequently, null hypothesis is fails to be rejected. Similarly, in the goal setting interaction with coach there are no differences in gender and level of participation similar result were obtained by Maitland & Gervis, (2010) ; Denison (1995) & Weinberg, Butt, Knight, & Perritt, (2001).This is mainly because formal techniques of goal setting are not used enough by the coach as well players, and players manage their goals based on intuition, and cultural barriers which prevent open communication. Thus, the null hypothesis is fails to be rejected.

Conclusion

The goal-setting actions of males and females did not differ significantly; both genders showed similar patterns in goal setting. Likewise, there was no significant difference in goal-setting actions based on the level of participation. The types of goals set by males and females were also found to be similar, with no significant differences observed between the two groups. Similarly, the types of goals did not vary significantly across different levels of participation. In terms of team goal setting, no significant differences were found between males and females, indicating that both groups had similar approaches. Additionally, team goal-setting patterns did not differ based on the level of participation. The interaction with coaches regarding goal setting also showed no significant difference between males and females, suggesting similar engagement levels. Lastly, no significant difference was observed in goal-setting interaction with coaches across different levels of participation.

Future implication

The findings of this study suggest that gender and level of participation do not significantly influence goal-setting behaviours among Kho Kho players. This highlights the potential for standardized goal-setting strategies to be applied across diverse athlete groups, regardless of gender or competitive level. Coaches, sports psychologists, and trainers may focus on developing unified goal-setting programs that emphasize clarity, motivation, and coach-athlete communication, without the need for major adjustments

based on demographic factors. Future research may explore other psychological variables such as motivation, self-efficacy, and performance anxiety to build a more comprehensive understanding of athlete development in Kho Kho. Longitudinal studies may also help determine how goal-setting behaviours evolve over time with experience and training. Moreover, expanding the research to include athletes from other regions or sports could provide comparative insights and strengthen the generalization of these findings. Similar study may also be conducted on large sample size.

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest

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