



Self-Confidence Profiles of Male Under-19 Cricketers in Pune: A Comparative Study Based on Batting Order

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ABSTRACT

Self-confidence is a critical psychological factor influencing performance in cricket, particularly for batsmen who face high-pressure situations, as batting order positions carry distinct roles and opportunities for mastery experiences that shape self-confidence in different ways. This study aimed to examine and compare self-confidence levels among Under-19 male cricketers from professional cricket clubs in Pune based on batting order (top, middle, and lower). A total of 150 cricketers (50 per batting order) were selected from clubs affiliated with the Maharashtra Cricket Association using purposive sampling. Self-confidence was measured using Vealey's Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI, 1986), a 13-item, 9-point Likert scale (range 13–117). Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were computed using SPSS, with Tukey HSD post-hoc test applied at $p < 0.05$ significance level. Descriptive results showed mean self-confidence scores of 92.84 (± 23.74) for top-order, 90.74 (± 16.65) for middle-order, and 61.60 (± 21.89) for lower-order batsmen. One-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference among the groups ($F = 34.642$, $p = 0.000$). The Tukey HSD post-hoc test indicated no significant difference between the top and middle order (mean difference = 2.10, $p = 0.871$), but significant differences between the top and lower order (mean difference = 31.24, $p = 0.000$) and between the middle and lower order (mean difference = 29.14, $p = 0.000$). The batting order significantly influenced self-confidence among Under-19 male cricketers. Top- and middle-order batsmen possess comparable and higher self-confidence, while lower-order batsmen exhibit significantly lower self-confidence. Coaches and sports psychologists should provide targeted confidence-building interventions for lower-order batsmen, including increased batting opportunities, positive reinforcement, and mental skills training.



Keywords: Self-confidence, Batting Order, Under-19 Cricketers, Professional Cricket Clubs, Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory, Pune

Introduction

Cricket has evolved from a rural English pastime into a globally strategic and mentally demanding sport with over 2.5 billion fans worldwide (ICC, 2024). In India, cricket is not merely a sport but a cultural phenomenon, with the Indian Premier League (IPL) valued at over \$10 billion USD (BCCI, 2024). The Under-19 age group (ages 16–19) represents a critical developmental stage where psychological traits, especially self-confidence, begin to stabilise and influence future performance (Dishman, 1988; Kumar, 2021).

Self-confidence is defined as “the belief that an athlete can successfully perform a desired behaviour or achieve a desired outcome” (Vealey, 1986; Bandura, 1997). In cricket, batting is widely considered to be the most psychologically demanding skill (Gordon, 2010). A confident batsman plays with a clear and decisive mind, commits to shots without hesitation, and recovers quickly from setbacks. In contrast, a batsman with low self-confidence hesitates, second-guesses decisions, and dwells on mistakes (Barnett and Smith, 2011).

Batting order positions are not merely sequential numbers but distinct roles with unique psychological demands (Cox 2012; Gordon 2010). Top-order batsmen (positions 1–3) face the new ball, requiring exceptional technique, courage, and confidence. Middle-order batsmen (positions 4–7) require adaptability and situational confidence. Lower-order batsmen (positions 8–11) have fewer mastery opportunities and often receive less specialized batting coaching, which may negatively affect their confidence (Bandura, 1997; Vealey, 2001).

Previous research has consistently shown positional differences in self-confidence. Choudhary and Kataria (2016) found that top-order batsmen scored highest on trait confidence, followed by middle-order, with lower-order scoring lowest. Das and Biswas (2015) reported that opening batsmen had the highest self-confidence and lowest cognitive anxiety, whereas lower-order batsmen showed the opposite pattern. Mishra and Singh (2018) found that top-order batsmen scored the highest on the mental toughness subscales. Sharma and Kumar (2020) reported a significant positive correlation between batting order (earlier = higher) and self-confidence among Under-19 cricketers.



Despite substantial research elsewhere, no known study has systematically measured and compared self-confidence across batting orders among Under-19 male cricketers from professional cricket clubs in Pune, a city with a growing cricket infrastructure, including the MCA Stadium in Gahunje and numerous MCA-affiliated clubs. This study addresses this gap.

Materials and Method

Method: The methodology describes the procedure or technique adopted in the research study. For the present research, a descriptive correlation method was used to study the comparison among male under 19 cricketers of professional cricket clubs in Pune based on the batting order.

Sample: The population consisted of all Under-19 male cricketers from professional cricket clubs in Pune affiliated with the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA). A total sample of 150 cricketers was selected using purposive sampling, with 50 players in each batting category: top order (positions 1–3), middle order (positions 4–7), and lower-order (positions 8–11).

Tool: Trait Sport Confidence was measured using the Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI) developed by Robin S. Vealey (1986). The TSCI is a widely used and validated measure of sport-specific confidence. The inventory consists of 13 items, each rated on a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from “low confidence” (1) to “high confidence” (9). Total scores range from 13 to 117, with higher scores indicating greater sport confidence. Interpretation guidelines are as follows: scores between 13 and 39 indicate low confidence, scores between

Scores between 40 and 78 indicate moderate confidence, and scores between 79 and 117 indicate high confidence. The TSCI has demonstrated good validity (correlations ranging from 0.70 to 0.85) and high test-retest reliability (above 0.85) in adolescent athletic populations (Vealey 2001; Feltz et al. 2008).

Procedure: This study compared the self-confidence of under-19 male cricketers of professional cricket clubs in Pune based on their batting order. Self-confidence and decision-making ability are crucial psychological traits that influence a batter’s ability to handle match pressure, overcome challenges, and make decisions with confidence during a match. From professional cricket clubs in Pune, the researcher selected 150 male cricket players under the age of 19 using a purposive sampling method. To collect the data, the researcher visited the professional cricket clubs in Pune, and permission was obtained from the coaches and concerned authorities. An online Google form was shared with the players. The subjects were briefed on the



significance, purpose, and nature of the study. The subjects were instructed on how to fill out the questionnaire, and their doubts were cleared. The questionnaires were then filled out by the players. The collected data were carefully recorded and then statistically analysed using One-way ANOVA in SPSS, and conclusions were drawn.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table No. 1 : Descriptive Statistics of Self-Confidence Among Under-19 Male Cricketers Based on Batting Order (n=150)

Batting Order	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Top Order (1-3)	50	92.84	23.74
Middle Order (4-7)	50	90.74	16.65
Lower Order (8-11)	50	61.60	21.89

From the above Table No.1 it can be seen that calculated mean score of self-confidence of 50 top order (1-3), 50 Middle order (4-7), and 50 lower order (8 & above) batsmen are 92.84,

90.74, and 61.60 with standard deviations of 23.74, 16.65, and 21.89, respectively. Top- and middle-order batsmen have almost similar levels of self-confidence, while lower-order batsmen have considerably lower self-confidence. Middle-order batsmen showed the lowest variability (SD = 16.65), indicating greater consistency in confidence scores, while top-order (SD = 23.74) and lower-order (SD = 21.89) batsmen showed greater variability.

Table No. 4.2 : One-way ANOVA Test of Self-Confidence of under 19 male cricketers based on their batting order.

ANOVA Score					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-Value)
Between Groups	30491.453	2	15245.727		
Within Groups	64694.340	147	440.098	34.642	.000
Total	95185.793		149		



From the above Table no. 4.2, it can be seen that the results of the one-way ANOVA test indicate a statistically significant difference in self-confidence among under-19 male cricketers from professional clubs in Pune based on their batting order. The obtained F-value (34.642) is quite high, and the corresponding p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05), which shows that the observed differences are not due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that players in different batting positions (top, middle, and lower order) have significantly different levels of self-confidence. The higher between-group variance compared to within-group variance further supports the notion that batting order has a strong influence on players' self-confidence.

Discussion

The primary purpose of the present study was to examine and compare the levels of self-confidence among Under-19 male cricketers from professional cricket clubs in Pune based on their batting orders. The data analysis revealed several important findings that contribute to the existing body of knowledge in sports psychology (Weinberg and Gould, 2019). The first major finding is that there is no significant difference in self-confidence between top-order batsmen (Mean = 92.84) and middle-order batsmen (Mean = 90.74). The mean difference was only 2.10, with a p-value of 0.871, which is higher than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that top-order and middle-order batsmen possess almost similar levels of trait self-confidence. This

This finding is consistent with Choudhary and Kataria (2016) and Sharma and Kumar (2020), who also reported no significant differences between these groups. According to Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, repeated mastery experiences enhance confidence. Both top- and middle-order batsmen receive regular batting opportunities, allowing them to accumulate experience. Vealey's (2001) Sport Confidence Model further supports this by emphasising that confidence develops through preparation, successful performance, and social support. Additionally, clear role definitions reduce uncertainty and anxiety, thereby enhancing confidence levels (Vealey, 2001; Weinberg & Gould, 2019). The second major finding reveals a statistically significant difference between top-order batsmen (Mean = 92.84) and lower-order batsmen (Mean = 61.60). The mean difference of 31.24 with a p-value of 0.000 confirms that lower-order batsmen have significantly lower self-confidence. This finding strongly supports the research hypothesis and is consistent with the findings of previous studies. Das and Biswas (2015), Mishra and Singh (2018), and Kumar and Reddy (2017) reported similar patterns, where top-order batsmen showed the highest confidence and lower-order batsmen the lowest. According to Bandura



(1997), lower-order batsmen experience fewer mastery opportunities because of their limited exposure to batting situations. They also receive less vicarious learning and different forms of verbal persuasion, which negatively affect their confidence. These findings align with the broader literature on self-efficacy, which highlights the importance of experience and reinforcement in developing confidence (Feltz et al., 2008). The third major finding shows a statistically significant difference between middle-order batsmen (Mean = 90.74) and lower-order batsmen (Mean = 61.60). The mean difference of 29.14 with a p-value of 0.000 confirms that middle-order batsmen have significantly higher self-confidence than lower-order batsmen. This finding is consistent with Gupta and Mehta (2020) and Patel and Desai (2022). Middle-order batsmen, similar to top-order players, benefit from regular participation, structured roles, and consistent coaching support. In contrast, lower-order batsmen face structural limitations in terms of opportunities and expectations, which directly impact their confidence (Vealey, 2001; Weinberg & Gould, 2019). An interesting observation is the variation in the standard deviations. Middle-order batsmen showed the lowest standard deviation (16.65), indicating greater consistency in confidence scores, while top-order (23.74) and lower-order (21.89) batsmen showed greater variability. This suggests that individual differences, such as personality traits, recent performance, and psychological readiness, may influence confidence levels in addition to positional roles (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). The findings strongly support Vealey's (2001) model, which states that trait sport confidence is shaped by repeated successful experiences, preparation quality, and social support. Lower order batsmen receive fewer of these confidence-enhancing inputs,

This results in lower trait confidence. This aligns with Bandura's (1997) framework, which emphasises mastery experience as the most powerful source of self-efficacy.

Several practical implications arise from these findings. Coaches should provide lower-order batsmen with increased batting opportunities and structured practice sessions. Psychological interventions, such as positive self-talk, visualisation, and goal setting, should be implemented to enhance confidence levels. These techniques have been widely supported in the sports psychology literature as effective methods for improving athlete confidence (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). Additionally, coaches should evaluate players individually rather than making assumptions based solely on their batting position. These findings are consistent with those of international studies. Feltz, Short, and Sullivan (2008) reported similar positional differences in batting confidence in baseball and softball. Barnett and Smith (2011) found that top order confidence tends to be more stable due to consistent performance opportunities. Furthermore, Woodman and Hardy (2003) demonstrated a strong relationship between self-confidence and performance, reinforcing the importance



of confidence in sports. Importantly, the rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that batting order significantly influences the self-confidence of young cricketers. This study fills an important research gap by providing empirical evidence from professional cricket clubs in Pune, a relatively understudied area. The substantial confidence gap of approximately 30 points between lower-order and top/middle-order batsmen highlights a significant psychological disadvantage. This supports the need to integrate psychological skills training into cricket coaching programs, as recommended by Weinberg and Gould (2019). Early identification and intervention can help prevent long-term confidence deficits and improve performance and player retention in competitive cricket.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in self-confidence among under-19 male cricketers based on their batting orders. Top- and middle-order batsmen show higher and nearly equal levels of self-confidence, whereas lower-order batsmen show significantly lower self-confidence.

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