USE OF A LEVEL OF ASPIRATION TECHNIQUE WITH ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL COLLEGE SOPHOMORES

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USE OF A LEVEL OF ASPIRATION TECHNIQUE WITH
ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL
COLLEGE SOPHOMORES

THESIS

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MASTER OF ARTS

By

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CHAPTER I

PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

There are always two selves: a self observed with whatever degree of realism one can bring together, and a self clearly or faintly glimpsed as something to be realized. The interrelations of these two selves have been studied under the term "aspiration level," as contrasted with, and many times compared with, "ego level." Thus it has been shown that some people characteristically play safe by setting an aspiration level only slightly above what they have already achieved, and consequently are usually "successful"; others consistently enhance the self by setting the level so high that they can and do pretend that they are superlative persons, though in fact they never achieve such a goal. In some instances when an individual is extremely cautious in either his personal interaction or the setting of goals, he may consistently set them below his actual capabilities and thereby experience success consistently and at the same time enhance his ego to a point of irreality. In general, caught between the need to maintain a high level of standards and the need to succeed in accordance with that standard, most people probably set an aspiration level near the upper limit of their abilities.
Recent studies relate that relationships between school and personality characteristics have shown a high correlation between motivation and school achievement, and, in some instances, even higher correlations than between school achievement and intelligence (4, p. 208). These facts are frequently seen in other studies and in classrooms, represented by "overachievers" and "underachievers": i.e., performance not commensurate with their intellectual abilities.

Statement of the Problem

Aspiration level is defined as "the goal of achievement or performance which a person states for himself and hopes to realize" (1, p. 202), or stated differently, "the level of future performance in a familiar task which an individual, knowing his past level of performance in that task, explicitly undertakes to reach" (3, p. 119).

From these definitions it would then be expected that students who have established purposeful and satisfactory (to self) goals will also exhibit a measurable difference in aspiration level from students who are not so well motivated. The measurement of these differences and the results they have on the students' performance in academic endeavors is the problem of this study.

Background Knowledge and Theory

There are variations in standards among individuals, and also differences in the ways similar standards may be
perceived. Although the fact is recognized that every individual represents a unique background of his own, some commonality does occur, and the same objective performance on a given task will have a different psychological meaning for each person. If academic performance is considered by an individual as a task toward an ultimate goal, which it is hoped to be the case with all college students, then the degree of effort exerted and accomplishment achieved toward that goal as represented by the student's grade point average will reflect the degree to which he is motivated, or proportionally, his level of aspiration. It would then appear that a group of students with high academic records would, as a group, represent a greater level of aspiration than a group of low achievers who are not so well motivated. Of course it must be borne in mind that the establishment of an aspiration level is purely the product of the personal need of the individual and is thereby controlled or governed by this need in accordance with its severity or urgency. This would apply to all individuals regardless of intelligence level or academic accomplishment.

Need for the Study

Within contemporary psychology and with the increasing demand for counseling and guidance techniques, the door is always open for new methods of measurement and evaluation. Harris (4, p. 165) states that there are in general three necessary factors in the achievement of a student: (1) ability,
(2) effort, and (3) circumstances. He defines effort as drive or degree of motivation. Considering motivation as the counterpart of aspiration places an obligation on educators to consider this aspect of the student when he is, and more frequently when he is not, achieving to the fullest of his abilities.

In recent years an increasing number of investigators have employed the level of aspiration techniques with groups, studying both the group action and the individuals within that group and other groups, but few of them have dealt with students above the elementary level, thereby increasing the need for the study within the higher levels of education.

Hypotheses

The problem concerned with here is the degree of aspiration (level of aspiration) exhibited by students with high or low levels of academic performance. With these levels established by the use of a standardized test designed for this purpose, this study is concerned more specifically with testing two hypotheses: First,

Those students with low academic records, as determined by their grade point average, will also manifest a low level of aspiration.

and second,

Those students with high academic records, likewise determined by their academic grade point average, will manifest a high level of aspiration.

The combination of the two preceding hypotheses would then suggest that not only is the academic achievement and
standing indicative of the level of aspiration at which an individual operates, but that a number of other factors are constantly in operation; i.e., mental ability, aptitude, etc., and this combination would further suggest that students with high academic records would tend to exhibit a higher level of aspiration and are more purposefully motivated than students with low levels of achievement.
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CHAPTER II

RELATED STUDIES

When an individual is presented with a task the outcome of which may be measured on an achievement scale, he may strive for a particular goal or point of achievement on that scale. The term "level of aspiration" refers to this goal. Becker and Siegel (3, p. 81) have suggested that

the level of aspiration be viewed as a decision situation wherein an achievement scale is thought of as a utility scale on which each achievement goal has utility or some subjective value for the individual; thereby the level of aspiration may thus be defined as a point on such a utility scale.

The earlier studies on the level of aspiration were primarily concerned with the techniques as a way of testing some theoretical hypotheses developed by the Lewinian group. Probably the first and most comprehensive theoretical rationale for the instrument as a measure of individual personality characteristics was in the article published by Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, and Sears (13), which was the first attempt to relate level of aspiration to a systematic personality theory. Generally, according to a later investigator, three factors or influences were a result of observed behavior, i.e.,

(1) the seeking of success, (2) the avoiding of failure, and (3) the cognitive factor of probability judgment. In other
words, "The subject making an estimate of his future performance will be influenced by his desire to achieve success at as high a level as possible, will have a desire to avoid failure, and will exhibit an expectancy (or a probability of) making a given score (15, p. 315)." Jones (12, p. 285) also states three needs on which the relative strength is primarily dependent, i.e., (1) the need to make the level of aspiration approximate the level of future performance as closely as possible; (2) the need to keep the level of aspiration high, regardless of the level of performance; and (3) the need to avoid failure.

Earlier Lewin (14, p. 100) pointed out that the level of aspiration may be influenced by the demands or performance of others, and expanded this by stating that "either feelings of superiority or inferiority may be developed from the frequency with which the level of aspiration is achieved." Evidently these early statements of Lewin became incorporated into the basic motivating factors promoting research into the field of aspiration levels. Four years later Gould (8, p. 23) suggested the possibility that positive discrepancies obtained from experiments on the LOA are related to cultural factors which exert an influence on the individual by (1) expecting, and (2) feeling obligated to improve their performance more or less continuously. Gould made special reference to children who are typically placed in a state of learning and of whom improvement is required. The culture itself offers rewards
for individuals who meet and maintain the upward trend in performance, and exerts negative forces against those who do not. Could further suggests:

Momentary goal strivings in relation to a given task were not only dependent on the goals set by the task or the instructor, or the actual level of ability of the individual, but other forces existed relating the striking individual differences in the reactions to success and failure, and the greater or lesser responsiveness of aspiration level to success or failure (8, pp. 8-9).

These other forces he attributed to the individual's deeper strivings which motivated his ambitions and his behavior in everyday life.

It has been suggested that "self-confidence, ambition, subjectivity, wishfulness, might find expression in a high level of aspiration; realism, cautiousness, self-protectiveness, and fear of failure in a low one (1, p. 573)."

The full understanding of the behavior of the level of aspiration requires consideration of all these factors coupled with the influence exerted by the cultural and social background of the individual. For example, it has been found that the average discrepancy score tends to be higher in individuals with an inferior socio-economic background than in those with a better one (9, p. 465). Such factors as:

more college training and income of the subject's father, the extent to which the students are not required to work their way through school, the birth of the parents in this country, and the expectancy of larger salaries in the future are definitely found on the side of those subjects whose test results yield low discrepancy scores (13, p. 343).
Therefore, recounting all of these intervening variables, the same objective performance score will have different psychological meanings for different subjects due to their different standards, backgrounds and experiences.

The expectation or experience of success or failure may not only influence the behavior of the LOA in any one of its meanings, but may cause it to change from one meaning to another (8, p. 110). "Shifts in the LOA are in part a function of changes in the subject's confidence in his ability to attain any particular goals (5, p. 312)." A classic experiment along this line was performed by Chapman and Volkman (4) which related the fact that LOA is subject to regular and consistent influence by the subject's knowledge of his own standing relative to that of his group or the knowledge of the performance of other groups. Their study concerned giving college students scores of (a) literary critics, (b) students, (c) WPA workers for a test of "literary ability," and in this way were able to manipulate the level of aspiration in a clear-cut way and relate that the values defined by their own group may, in effect, be extended upward or downward with knowledge about the other groups.

From the accumulated studies it becomes apparent that the LOA may have many different meanings. For example, "A high LOA may represent a direct expression of a goal, an incentive to perform, a compensation for inferior ability (11, p. 54)," or merely a means of protecting the ego. A
low one may "express an objective judgment, an effective method of avoiding tension, or merely a way of avoiding the appearance of failure (6, p. 225)."

Success generally leads to a rising in the LOA and failure to a lowering. Juncknat found that:

Good students were found to show a high initial LOA, the average student a medium level and the poor student set an initial level which is at either the upper or lower end of the scale. The poor students, expecting to perform poorly, either set a very high or very low level (13, p. 344).

In accordance with the findings of Juncknat, Anderson and Brandt found that children poor in achievement set levels of aspiration with much larger discrepancies than did those children who were above average in achievement (2, p. 232). Sears also found that none of her subjects who had experienced long or continued school failure with its resultant non-reward for achievement were able in the LOA situation to respond consistently with a "normal" response sequence (16, p. 531). Therefore it may be assumed that the degree to which either success or failure is, or has been, present is directly proportional to the greater rise or probability of the lowering of the LOA (13, p. 338).

Several studies have been conducted utilizing groups. From these studies it has been suggested that the aspiration level of the group is more easily influenced than is that of individuals within the group, this being principally due to the varied division of responsibility within the group (7, p. 202).
Returning to the academic uses and implications of the LOA techniques, the essential factors in the achievement demonstrated by the students are "(1) intelligence or scholastic aptitude, (2) motivations or degree of aspiration, and (3) his personal, social, economic and academic milieu within which he operates (10, p. 151)." The highly self-sufficient student in the high dominant, low neurotic, groups will relate a better correlation between intelligence and grades than their contrasting groups (10, p. 130), and, accordingly, Jones maintains that the higher the correlation between college grades and intelligence test scores, the greater must be the motivation toward scholastic achievement (or LOA) of the students (12, p. 150).
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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENT

Methodology

Subjects

A review of the literature reveals three major areas in which steps should be taken to better adapt aspiration techniques to more contemporary use. Original and early investigations used a variety of tasks to study the conditions arising from success and failure and the results were obtained from spontaneous utterances and observations of general behavior; this then is considered the first point of importance. Secondly, in the majority of the research to date, the subjects have been well acquainted with one another and their relative position in the class or group was well known. Thirdly, research to date has been done principally with children in the elementary grades. It is the intention here to introduce a task which is unfamiliar to any of the subjects, using subjects who are essentially unknown to one another and whose average age is twenty years. With these three variables controlled the results should offer new insight into the use of these techniques.
In an effort to minimize the first point mentioned above, the Cassel Group Level of Aspiration Test (1957 revision) by Russell N. Cassel was used. The task involved is one in which the subjects have had no previous experience to which reference can be made. It is essentially a paper and pencil test from which numerical scores are derived with no results depending on verbal utterances or observation of behavior during the proceedings.

The students used as subjects were essentially unknown to one another, so contamination of results from this aspect is essentially negative. The subjects were chosen by two methods. Questionnaires were distributed to all students in six classes in Introductory Psychology requesting name, age, sex and approximate grade point average. These classes represented a considerable cross section of academic fields with no one field predominating. After processing the data thus received, forty students were identified as "unachievers" and twenty-eight as "achievers." The designation was determined by grade point averages of 2.5 or above for the "achiever" group, and a grade point average of 1.5 and below for the "unachiever" group, based on the 3.0 system. Twelve more students were selected for the "achiever" group from the Dean's Honor Roll who were at the same academic level and fulfilled the other matching criteria. An attempt was made to match the two groups as evenly as possible on sex, age, and all were taken from the same (sophomore) level of college.
classification. Academic records were checked for accuracy of grade point averages. Post cards were then mailed to all students in the selected groups requesting that they report to any one of a number of designated times "to participate in a research project." At no time during the entire procedure did the student know for what reason he was being evaluated or what criteria were used in his selection. The great number of sessions scheduled allowed the students to report at their leisure, made no distinction between the two groups, and allowed the groups to remain small, varying from two to twelve. The final experimental group consisted of forty students, twenty in each category.

All subjects were in the first semester of their sophomore year on the premise that while secondary schools may have varying criteria by which their students are graduated, by the completion of their freshman year in college a more stable relationship is established on which to base the assumption that they have all had equal opportunities and have basically reached the same level of academic achievement.

Procedure

As each student, or group of students, reported for the research session, papers were distributed with instructions for correct labeling and the students were requested to follow the directions (on test) as they were read by the examiner. Instructions given followed the manual explicitly and were as follows:
This test is concerned with measuring the "level of aspiration" of an individual and deals largely with that aspect of the personality. It is different from most tests in that it does not ask you to solve problems, or to indicate how you should react to certain situations. The only thing that you are asked to do in this test is to draw a four-cornered figure around each of the small circles like the ones in the example below. You are given enough time between parts of the test to rest your fingers and to get ready for the next part. The test is very accurately timed with a stop watch, and exactly 30 seconds of time are allowed to work on each of the eight parts. You must pay strict attention to the instructions for starting and stopping if your test is to have value.

There are four rules you must follow in taking the test: **Rule One** states that you must always indicate in the space marked "number of squares you expect to do" at the bottom of each part and the number of squares you expect to draw in the 30 seconds allowed. **Rule Two** states that you never get credit for more squares than you indicate that you expect to do; for example, if you say you expect to do 20 squares and actually do 22, you get credit for the 20 you bid, and no more. **Rule Three** states that if you bid too many or too high, you get two points taken off what you actually do for each point you are short; for example, if you bid 20 and get only 18, you are 2 points short of your bid: 2 times the two points short equals 4; subtract 4 from the 18 you completed and your score is 14. If you bid too high, you get penalized, and if you don't bid high enough, you don't get credit. Therefore, you can see that it is to your advantage to bid as nearly to what you really believe you can make as it is possible for you to do. **Rule Four** states that every square drawn must have at least three corners or it will not be counted. Now, finish drawing the squares for the remaining circles in the examples, like those indicated:

```
EXAMPLE 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
(2, pp. 7-9).
```

After the instructions were given and time was allowed for questions pertaining to procedure, the test was begun.

Each successive section was preceded by a rest period and a
repetition of appropriate instructions for recording work done and bids for the next section.

After Part Eight was completed, all test booklets were collected and the group allowed a brief rest period during which Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Tests, Form G, and answer sheets were distributed. This test was administered in conjunction with the aspiration test to yield an easily obtainable intelligence quotient for use in the computation of the Level of Aspiration Quotient.

Description of Instrument

The validity and standardization of the GGAT is concerned with whether the instrument actually assesses the irreality dimension of an individual, irreality here referring to the presence of reality, rather than the absence of it, but implying a degree of the absence of acceptable sensory phenomena for the generation of self-perceptions in relation to previous performance (2, p. 19). This then is the discrepancy between the real (physical) and the perceived (psychological) words of the individual actually completed in what appears to be a quantified objective measure from the real or physical world of the subject which is evident to him. The number of squares that the subject expects to do on succeeding trials would then seem to be a quantified objective measure of his psychological field. The difference between the number of squares completed and the estimate of the subject's expectations for the succeeding performance is then the basis
for six of the seven scores obtainable for the test: i. e.,
Level of Aspiration Quotient (LAQ), Clinical "D" Score, First
Goal Score, Aspiration "D" Score, the Housemann Score, Psych-
ological Response to Failure, and the Physiological Re-
sponse to Failure, and the Physiological Response to Failure.

According to Cassel, the reliability of the various
scores on the CGAT tend to fluctuate with the different popu-
lations taking the test. Of the seven scores obtainable the
Clinical and the Housemann scores are the least variable.
The reliability for the Level of Aspiration Quotient is ap-
proximately the same as for the Housemann Score, which is in
fact, the basis for the LAQ. For a typical population, the
r's on all main scores have been established by Cassel as
above .84 (2, p. 3).

In comparison of the two experimental groups presented
here, only four of the obtainable scores will be utilized,
the Level of Aspiration Quotient, the Aspiration "D" Score,
the First Goal Score and the Housemann Score.

The Level of Aspiration Quotient is the most important
score obtainable from the test and indicates the relationship
between the person's intelligence and his level of aspiration
to intelligence. An LAQ of 100 indicates average aspirations
and irreality for the subject's intelligence, while LAQs
above 100 indicate greater aspirations than intelligence, but
with a low irreality dimension which is very desirable; and
LAQs below 100 indicate low aspirations for the subject's
intelligence, but with high irreality dimension, which is very undesirable. For typical individuals the LAQ, according to Cassel, ranges from 50 to 180, with a mean of 101.3 and with a SD of 22.8 (2, p. 19).

The Aspiration "D" Score is the traditional score reported in association with the level of aspiration studies in most of the literature. It is a measure of the extent to which one's psychological field is in agreement with one's physical field and is considerably more unstructured than either the LAQ or the Hausermann Score, since its mere existence is wholly dependent on the necessary standards or requirements of the test itself: i.e., a figure with minimum of three corners, time limitations, and the insertion of goals prior to the performance on each separate part. High values on the Aspiration "D" Score indicate both a high level of aspiration and a high irreality dimension of personality, while low raw scores indicate the opposite. Cassel finds that typical individuals will score within a range of from 0.0 to 9.0, with a mean of 2.8 and a SD of 1.5 (2, p. 22).

The First Goal Score is indicative of the subject's perceived position of how he will perform without previous knowledge of the task, with the exception of the examples given in the introductory instructions. This score then provides a measure of the psychological field of the individual with a minimum of influence from the physical field. High values on this score would then tend to indicate a high
aspiration, but would have no relation to the concept of irreality, and the low scores would then tend to indicate the opposite. For typical individuals, values would range from 6.0 to 38, with a mean of 27.3 and a SD of 7.8 (2, p. 22).

The Hausmann Score, which is also frequently encountered in related literature, is the most important score on the CGAT next to the LAQ and is in its own right a measure of the level of aspiration of an individual. According to Cassel, four important elements appear to be contained in the evaluative use of this score: (1) the level of goals, (2) the degree to which goals and performance are in agreement, (3) the attitude and ability of the subject to follow directions and the rules established for the test, therefore his vulnerability and acceptance of the culture, and (4) the elimination of wish goals or fantasy concepts. High scores here also indicate high aspirations, but always in terms of, and in accordance with, the actual performance of the subject. A low score appears to indicate low aspirations in relation to the actual performance of the subject. Scores for a typical individual range from 15.00 to 39.00, with a mean of 28.4 and a SD of 5.4. Cassel then states that in terms of irreality, a high score would indicate low irreality while a low score would offer the opposite (2, p. 22).

Once the scores were obtained from all areas of the test presented, the means and standard deviations were calculated from each group for each area of the test. The statistical
procedures used employed the small sample theory considering the significance of a difference in means of independent samples. According to Lindquist (2, p. 139) this procedure is valid only if the true standard deviations of the two groups are approximately the same. In view of the population sampled and the matching procedures involved, it is suggested that this assumption is well satisfied and the t valid as used here.
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CHAPTER IV

EXAMINATION OF FINDINGS

In Chapter I two specific hypotheses were developed. In an effort to test these hypotheses, the small sample theory of significant differences in means was employed. This statistical technique and the implications of the results of its application will be discussed in this chapter.

It appears appropriate at this point to review the implications asserted in the hypotheses: i.e., students with records of high academic achievement will also possess a relatively high level of aspiration as opposed to students with a low record of academic accomplishment whose performance on the instrument employed in this research should relate a low level of aspiration. Stated differently, students in an "achiever" group will show a marked superiority in level of aspiration over a group of "nonachievers."

Statistical Data

As a result of the initial screening and the selection of the subjects, the factor of age differences in the two groups can be ruled out as a possibility of contamination in the experimental procedures, as presented in Table I, but the
intelligence quotients of each group offer some statistical concern.

**TABLE I**

**COMPARISON OF GROUPS A AND B FOR AGE AND I. Q.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>I. Q.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group A</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The approximation of ages was accomplished as nearly as possible in accordance with the techniques of selection employed. The discrepancy that exists between the I. Q.'s of Groups A and B would be extremely difficult to alleviate using a sampling procedure of this type. On the other hand, a discrepancy of this type may naturally be expected to exist, considering the criteria upon which each group is based: i. e., over and underachievers. The fact that intelligence and academic achievement are highly correlated makes the task of matching two such groups as even more difficult one.

With the ample number of subjects from which to establish the experimental groups, placing an equal number of males and females in each group was not difficult, and is considered important in research of this type. The distribution is presented in Table II.
TABLE II
COMPARISON OF GROUPS A AND B
FOR SEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In view of the figures presented in Table II, it becomes obvious that both groups A and B were evenly matched for sex with 10 males and 10 females in each group yielding a Group N of 20 and a total experimental N of 40.

The four scores obtained from the Cassel test were added and computed for each group to yield means and standard deviations for each individual score for each group. Each area of the test, i.e., First Goal Score, Hausemann Score, Aspiration "D" Score, and Level of Aspiration Quotient, were calculated separately for inter-group calculation of the level of significance.

TABLE III
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CASSEL
SUB-TEST SCORES FOR GROUP A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st. Goal</th>
<th>Hausemann</th>
<th>Aspiration &quot;D&quot;</th>
<th>IQAQ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>92.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>2.93</td>
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</table>
TABLE IV
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CASSEL
SUB-TEST SCORES FOR GROUP B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st. Goal</th>
<th>Hausemann</th>
<th>Aspiration &quot;D&quot;</th>
<th>LAQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>99.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>9.18</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Tables III and IV, Group A's scores were on the whole superior to those of Group B.

The comparison of Groups A and B using the Small Sample Theory of the significance of a difference in the means of independent samples, the significance of the First Goal Scores was found to lie at better than the 5 per cent level of significance; i.e., less than 5 per cent of the time this could be attributed to chance. The remaining scores, i.e., Hausemann Scores, Aspiration "D" Scores, and Level of Aspiration Quotients maintained a higher level, or chance value, of 20 per cent as presented in Table V.

TABLE V
LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE OBTAINED BY COMPARISON
OF SCORES OF GROUPS A AND B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>1st Goal</th>
<th>Hausemann</th>
<th>Aspiration &quot;D&quot;</th>
<th>LAQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results then indicate that although the two groups do differ in the degree of the level of aspiration, the chance value involved would tend to equate the two groups rather high. This is amply supported by the research to date which relates the considerable number of factors which influence the demonstration of different levels of aspiration. Although high achievers do exhibit a higher LOA, so do some low achievers with lower irreality dimensions, and conversely some high achievers, although their LAQ is high, maintain a high irreality dimension which is considered as undesirable.

It is therefore seen that the level of aspiration does play a significant part in academic accomplishment, and the testing of this level could prove to be an important diagnostic aspect for over and underachievers, bearing in mind the number of other variables which must always be considered, i.e., training, interest, reality levels, etc.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the research with levels of aspiration to date has been attempted by few researchers in the field of education, with an expressed emphasis upon its implications in the field of guidance and education, the use of aspiration level techniques has proven to be an effective technique for use in determining motivating factors present in both individuals and in groups. The Cassel test is the latest effort to bring this technique into wider use, but maintains the complexity of administration which makes its use still cumbersome for widespread use. As this instrument becomes more sophisticated through use and revision, it will undoubtedly become more widely used.

The fact that an individual's level of aspiration is an integral part of his personality and motivation cannot be denied and must be considered when evaluating the performance and expectations of students whose achievement is not commensurate with their ability. This fact has also long been recognized in clinical circles and is employed frequently in the diagnosis and treatment of some neuroses. The introduction of these and similar techniques into the educational testing
and evaluation programs should add emphasis and value to a well rounded and integrated testing program and supply some of the factors which are lacking in the evaluation techniques as they are employed today.

As stated in Chapter I, the hypotheses concerned with in this paper should be repeated here to facilitate clarity and closure. They are:

1. Those students with low academic records, as determined by their grade point average, will also manifest a low level of aspiration.

2. Those students with high academic records, likewise determined by their academic grade point average, will manifest a high level of aspiration.

The data in Chapter IV appear to support the general hypotheses, but the general statement of fact would be erroneous without comprehensive coverage of the implications involved and the more subtle findings related by the data.

In the comparison of the experimental groups it is apparent that Group A demonstrated a more definite knowledge of how it would perform on a new and unfamiliar task, excepting the influence exerted by the practice session, than did Group B. Group A approached the Cassel mean (27.3) with a mean of 28 as opposed to the mean of 25 obtained by Group B. Group A also exhibited a smaller standard deviation in scores (5.76) as opposed to a S. D. of 9.19 in Group B and in relation to the established normal S. D. of 7.8 by Cassel. This would then tend to support the assumption that the
"achiever" students have a more accurate knowledge of their own abilities than do students in the opposing, or "non-achiever," group.

The Hausemann Scores obtained by the two groups relate, according to Cassel, that low aspirations are present in relation to the actual performance. The group mean of 31 for Group B relates a lower aspiration level than the Group A mean of 34. The standard deviations of both groups are below the normal (5.4), but Group A relates an S. D. nearer the norm with 4.84 than does Group B with an S. D. of 4.24.

A high t-score for the Aspiration "D" Scores indicates the opposite. It is evident in the comparison of these two groups, and in accordance with the resultant scores, that both groups are experiencing high levels of aspiration because of the relatively low group scores shown by each group: Group A with a "D"-Score of 1.75 and Group B with a "D"-Score of 1.65. Standard deviations for both groups is considerably below the norm of 1.5, with Group A maintaining an S. D. of .28 and Group B an S. D. of .29. It must be kept in mind, though, that this score is considerably more unstructured than either the LAQ or the Hausemann Score since the only rules applicable for its generation are those necessary for standard test results.

The performance of both A and B groups relate a low level of aspiration for the intelligence levels of each group. It is significant to note that Group B exhibits a considerably
higher score than does Group A relating a higher level of aspiration than the level of intelligence would warrant. This fact would tend to support the statement of Hoppe that a high level of aspiration may be used as a compensation for inferior ability, or of Juncknat that poor students expecting to perform poorly either set a very high or a very low level. The lack of performance by Group A may be explained by the lack of motivation in the test situation, a disinterest in being a subject, or numerous other variables which would inevitably lower this score. It is felt that the significant difference in the group intelligence quotients of the two groups was the most important contributing factor in the calculation and outcome of the comparison of these two groups for the Level of Aspiration Quotient.

The results obtained from this study relate the difference in level of aspiration for the two groups involved and tend to support the hypotheses that students of high academic performance tend to relate a higher level of aspiration than do students possessing records of low academic performance, but the results here presented are not considered to be completely conclusive of these facts. The level of significance at the 5 per cent level for the First Goal indicates that the students in the "achiever" groups do possess better insight into their own abilities and their ability to set goals. The levels of significance at the 20 per cent level for the three remaining scores attribute results highly to
chance which could undoubtedly be reduced by an increase in the number of subjects and sophistication in the test procedures.

Recent studies concerning achievement and motivation at the higher education levels (1, p. 81; 3, p. 308) relate an interest in these techniques and the probability of their future use. Lewin, et al., (2, pp. 376-377) offer two interesting suggestions for further research into aspiration levels and techniques:

1. One can try to understand more fully the general laws of the level of aspiration. The analysis is far enough along at present to encourage an attempt to determine quantitatively the values on the various scales of reference. Such an attempt would give insight, for instance, into the factors which determine our probability judgment about our future, and would be of considerable value for general theory of cognitive process and perceptions. It would permit a quantitative approach to such divergent questions as theory of choice and compromise; the effect of past experience and group belonging on certain aspects of cultural values, e.g., their distribution, interdependence, and the rigidity; the factors determining the "ability to take it"; and problems of development and regression in regard to complying to rules.

2. It is possible to use level of aspiration techniques as an instrument to compare different cultures and to characterize their systems of values in a quantitative way. Similarly, these techniques may become progressively more useful for measuring individual differences of value systems and of other major characteristics of normal and abnormal personality.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX
THE CASSEL GROUP LEVEL OF ASPIRATION TEST  
(Revised 1957)  
— By —  
RUSSELL N. CASSEL, Ed. D.  
Published by  
WESTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES  
10655 SANTA MONICA BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES 25, CALIF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M-F</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School or Organization</th>
<th>Ed.</th>
<th>Examiner</th>
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**Scores**

- Aspiration "D" Score
- Unstructured First Goal
- Hausmann Score
- Clinical "D" Score
- Psychological Response to Failure
- Physiological Response to Failure
- L. A. Q. Score

**General Directions**

This test is concerned with measuring the "level of aspiration" of an individual and deals largely with that aspect of the personality. It is different from most tests in that it does not ask you to solve problems, or to indicate how you should react to certain situations. The only thing that you are asked to do in this test is to draw a four cornered figure around each of the small circles provided. There are eight different parts to the test, and each one is made-up of three lines of small circles like the ones in the example below. You are given enough time between parts of the test to rest your fingers and to get ready for the next part. The test is very accurately timed with a stop watch, and exactly 30 seconds of time are allowed to work on each of the eight parts. You must pay strict attention to the instructions for starting and stopping if your test is to have value.

There are five rules you must follow in taking the test: RULE ONE states that you must always indicate in the space marked "number of squares you expect to do" at the bottom of each part the number of square you expect to draw in the 30 seconds allowed. RULE TWO states that you never get credit for more squares than you indicate that you expect to do; for example, if you say you expect to do 20 squares and actually do 22, you get credit only for the 20 you bid, and no more. RULE THREE states that if you bid too many or too high, you get two points taken off of what you actually do for each point you are short; for example, if you bid 20 and get only 18, you are 2 points short of your bid; 2 times the 2 points short equals 4; subtract 4 from the 18 you completed and your score is 14. If you bid too high you get penalized, and if you don't bid high enough you don't get credit. Therefore, you can see that it is to your advantage to bid as nearly to what you really believe you can make as it is possible for you to do. RULE FIVE states that every square drawn must have at least three corners or it will not be counted. Now, finish drawing the squares for the remaining circles in the examples, like those indicated:

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  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
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**Example:**

Now turn to PART I and write the number of squares you expect to do for this part in the space provided. READY! BEGIN! (after 30 seconds) STOP! Mark the number of squares you have done in the space provided. (and so on for each part).
PART I

Number of squares you expect to do: _______ Number of squares you have completed for this part: _______ Score: _______

PART II

Number of squares you expect to do: _______ Number of squares you have completed for this part: _______ Score: _______

PART III

Number of squares you expect to do: _______ Number of squares you have completed for this part: _______ Score: _______

"D"—Score: _______ # 1

PART IV

Number of squares you expect to do: _______ Number of squares you have completed for this part: _______ Score: _______

"D"—Score: _______ # 2

Please turn to page 3 and write in the number you expect to do in part 5.
PART V

Number of squares you expect to do
Number of squares you have completed for this part
Score

(Physiological)

(Hausmann # 3)

PART VI

Number of squares you expect to do
Number of squares you have completed for this part
Score

(Physiological)

(Hausmann # 4)

PART VII

Number of squares you expect to do
Number of squares you have completed for this part
Score

(Psychological)

PART VIII

Number of squares you expect to do
Number of squares you have completed for this part
Score

(Psychological)

(Physiological)

PLEASE TURN IN YOUR BOOKLET AS SOON AS REQUESTED. THANK YOU.
# LEVEL OF ASPIRATION PROFILE

## SCORES FROM
The Cassel Group Level of Aspiration Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level of Aspiration Quotient</th>
<th>Clinical &quot;D&quot; Score</th>
<th>Aspiration &quot;D&quot; Score</th>
<th>First Goal Score</th>
<th>Hausmann Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
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Typical Norm  Delinquent Norm  Latin Descent Norm
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