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Assessment of influence of socio-economics factors on aggressive behaviour of sportsmen status

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Abstract

The present study is an empirical attempt to explore the influence of socio-economic status on the aggressive behaviour of the sportsperson. A sample of 400 sportsperson in the age group of 19 to 25 years studied by using semi-structured interview schedule. It is explored that the socio-economic status of the sports person has something to do with the aggressive behaviour of sportsperson.

Keywords: socio-economic, aggressive behaviour, interview, sportsperson, etc.

Introduction

There has always been interest in aggressive behaviour and competitive sport. Several writers have mentioned that sport provides a necessary "safety value" or cathartic release for the aggressive drives of the human. Opponents of this position have posited that successful aggressive behaviour facilitates further aggressive behaviour. Controlled research findings support this view and many writers have stated that sport should not be compromised as an excuse for punitive and criminal – like behaviour (Mc Murty, 1974; Underwood, 1978; Vaz, 1976).

The arguments for and against aggression and violence in sport are often emotional debates. A major obstacle encountered in this discussion is that the discussants are frequently not talking about the same concept even though they are using the same term! When one begins to examine the various writings on aggressive behaviour, it is clear that the term aggression has the misfortune of being defined in a multitude of ways. The use and misuse of the term is often confusing to players, coaches and researchers. What does one mean by aggression or aggressiveness? Since these terms have taken popular connotations, they are often used to describe different classes of behaviour rather than a unitary concept.

Unfortunately, research on aggressive behaviour in sport has also been plagued by inconsistencies and vague definitions of "aggression" both as an independent and dependent variable. It appears that a clarification of the term aggression will benefit all who are interested in furthering the understanding of aggression and athletic performance.

Sherif and Sherif (1969) concluded that aggression is not an invariable response to frustration, for in both animal and human studies have produced highly different responses. Bateson's study (1941) of the Balinese people indicated that both children and adults of this culture are willing to suffer frustration infinitely without becoming aggressive. Following his investigation of the Semai of Malaya, Alland (1972) concluded that aggression is not instinctive. The aggressive tendencies must be cultivated, for these exists no one instinct of aggression in humans or animals.

Aggression

The use of the word "aggression" is somewhat confusing. The term aggression is employed to describe angry violent behaviour with intent to hurt a person or cause damage to property. "Aggressive" behaviour is also used to depict a strong and somewhat adventurous effort. Thus an aggressive sales person or athlete, for example, may be perceived as obnoxious or violent by some and motivated and hardworking by others.

Definitions

Baron (1977) offers the following definition for aggression:

- Aggression is any form of behaviour directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment." Thus:

1. Aggression is an act not a cognitive state
2. Aggression is not accidental, it is an intentional act to harm
3. Aggressive acts involve both bodily and psychological harm
4. Aggressive acts involve only living beings; harm to objects does not count as aggression
5. The receiver of aggression does not want to get hurt.

Bredemeier (1983) defined aggressive behaviour in sport as

- The intentional initiation of violent and or injurious behaviour. 'Violent' means any physical, verbal or nonverbal offense, while 'injurious behaviours' stand for any harmful intentions or actions." Thus:
 1. An accidental foul or injury inflicted on another athlete resulting from inferior skills, will not be considered as aggression.
 2. An intentional foul, although not resulting in any harm or injury, is considered as sport aggression.

Aggression is a set of behaviours that are likely to, or have the potential to, cause harm to others, are intended to cause harm, and are goal-directed.

Aggression and the Individual

Individuals who participate in sports seem to exhibit higher levels of aggression than those who do not. However, this may be because sports attract people who are naturally more aggressive than non athletes. Some sports are more likely to be associated with violence and inappropriate aggression. When provoked, for example, participants in contact sports reveal much higher levels of aggression than those in noncontact sports. Research also shows that aggression may give players an edge when used early in a contest, or they may show aggression if they fail in the sport. Other factors also influence aggression during sports events. For example, the presence of officials in organized sports increases the number of fouls since the athletes assume it is the referees' job to control inappropriate aggression.

Types Aggression in Sport

Coaches often want players to display more 'aggression' in their play - what they actually mean, in psychological terms, is they want to see more assertive behaviours.

- Assertive behaviours reflect behaviours that are physically vociferous, but do not contravene rules nor do they have the intent to harm, rather they are aimed at imposing influence and dominance, other behaviours that are violent but are neither assertive (aim to influence/dominate) nor aggressive (intent to harm) are not tolerated e.g., bad language, equipment abuse.
- Hostile aggression: Has the primary goal of injuring another person or player e.g., response to provocation, high emotional arousal, usually spontaneous
- Instrumental aggression: Has intent to harm another but with the superordinate goal to achieve an outcome that is beneficial to the player or the team e.g., planned or calculated aggressive acts theory of aggression psychology and sport

1. Frustration-aggression hypothesis

Aggression the product of an 'anger response' to the frustration of goals and desires Aggression directed to perceived source of frustration e.g. hockey player's aim of

scoring goals is frustrated due to lack of service from her wing-players but also marked out of the game by opponents - may lead her to assault the marking defender out of frustration. However, competitive environs lead to lots of frustration but seldom is that expressed in terms of aggression.

2. Social Learning Theory

Connelly (1988) suggests that modeling aggressive behaviours may help non-assertive players. But these need to be checked with distinctions between legitimate, goal-directed and assertive behaviours and aggressive behaviours. Modeling may therefore help coaches enhance the assertiveness of players, but should be used in conjunction with education and information on the distinction between aggressive and assertive behaviours.

3. Personality and Individual Differences

Little evidence that one single personality trait that characterises an 'aggressive personality' Agreeableness consistently and negatively linked with aggression Agreeableness: personality dimension linked to maintaining positive and harmonious social relationships.

- Type 'A' personalities: Highly competitive, driven, extrovert individuals
- Type 'A' personalities tend to be attracted to sport.
- Some evidence type 'A' is related to displays of aggression and hostility in competitive situations.
- Situational factors (e.g., competitive or frustrating environment) may interact with personality factors like type 'A' to foster aggressive behaviour
- But in many sports (e.g., dancing) no extrovert or aggressive behaviours are observed as emotionality and aggressive displays are perceived as signs of weakness (group norm).
- Personality effects criticized as they tend to downplay the situation
- Social cognitive variables such as group norms, group cohesion and self-efficacy can mitigate personality effects.

Factors Influencing Aggression

Gender

- Men are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour
- Men are also more likely to display aggressive attitudes and beliefs
- This may be due to:
 - Elevated levels of androgens (e.g., testosterone)
 - Evolutionary benefit to aggression in terms of status and dominance
 - Socialisation of aggressive tendencies during development
- Majority of aggressive acts in sport are committed by men and it is more endorsed by men
- Young girls tend to express higher levels of moral behaviour in sport and rate such behaviours as more virtuous
- Females do endorse aggressive behaviours if the group norm endorses it
- Females are much less likely to engage in verbal and physical aggressive behaviour than men
- BUT are equally likely to engage in verbal assault as men

Morality Issues

- Social identity theory states that people in groups tend to forgo their personal attitudes and beliefs and assume those of the group - they adhere to the group norm and become 'deindividuated'
- Bredemeier and Shields (1986) suggest that sports players in teams can adopt a 'bracketed morality' in which the "usual moral obligation to equally consider the need and desires of all persons is suspended"
- In the group aggressive acts can therefore be tolerated or condoned if the norm permits it
- Bredemeier and Shields (1986) found basketball players gave fewer prosocial and more egocentric reasons to moral dilemmas in sport

Arousal

- Arousal is heightened with physical exertion and remains elevated for a while thereafter
- Evidence suggests that such arousal may be misinterpreted as anger or frustration c.f. Zillman *et al.*'s (1974) cycling experiment
- Feelings of anger may be elevated in intense sports and, if the group norm legitimises it, may be expressed as aggression

Hormones and Steroid Abuse

- One side effect of misuse of steroids for performance enhancement is aggressive behaviour
- There is a clear link between aggressive behaviour and steroid abuse
- This is particularly the case if the steroid mimics the androgen testosterone, which itself is linked with aggression
- Likely to be a small contributing factor but may interact with situational factors result in aggressive behaviour in sport

Methodology

In view of above, the present study makes an empirical attempt to understand the socio-psychological correlates with the aggressive behaviour of the sportsmen. A sample of 200 sports in the range of 19 to 25 years having equal representation of High SES (100) and Low SES (100) and also sports men from high socio-economic background and low socio economic background are studied. A semi-structured interview schedule is being administered to attain objectives of the study.

Results and Discussion

Mean, SD and 't' Values of Aggressive Behaviour of High and Low SES Sportsmen

Variables	High SES		Low SES
Mean	9.83		12.83
SD	3.97		2.90
t-value		6.13**	

** Significant at 0.01. Level.

It reveals the mean, SD and 't' values of aggressive behaviour of sportsmen belonging to high and low SES. The mean score of high and low SES sportsmen on aggressive behaviour is 9.83 and 12.83 respectively. This difference in their mean score suggests that the sportsmen belonging to high SES are moderate in their

aggressive behaviour when compared to the sportsmen of low SES, who are more aggressive.

The obtained 't' value 6.13 which is highly significant at 0.01 level suggest the fact that, there is a significant difference between the sportsmen of low and high SES sportsman in aggressive behaviour. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the aggressive behaviour of sportsmen belonging to high and low SES is confirmed.

The sportsmen of high SES are more successful in keeping their aggression at moderate level than the low SES sportsmen. It is due to their quality education, exposure to the different sport competitions, proper training and ideal mental makeup. This is not so, in case of sportsmen of low SES, who are high aggressive in their behaviour as they are deprived of quality education, proper training and exposure to the different sport competitions.

It is hypothesized that there is a significant difference in aggressive behaviour between male and female sportsmen is postulated on the rationale that the women were having weak genetically make up, and are having lack of social support, socio-cultural obstacles, orthodox perception and negative attitude towards females, male dominated society and created culture might put her into the secondary and subsidiary role. Under these deprived conditions, she does not show aggression in sport competitions and in her performance.

Conclusions

Sports have been on the world map from time immemorial. The importance and recognition, which sports have received from government, press and public indicates that sports are no more taken up for mere recreation or prestige purpose but also for mental and physical health of an individual. The participation in sports rather influence all aspects of athlete's personality and help in gaining poise, and balance, refreshing the spirits, renewing the inner springs of faith and courage, mastering the skills and meeting the strains of modern life with ease and calmness. At the same time the participation in modern sports is influenced by various physical, physiological, sociological, and psychological factors. Until recently, the coaches have been paying inadequate attention to the social and psychological factors which although have been proved to contribute to performance in events in the higher competitive sports. So now the sports trainers and coaches have started giving more importance to the impact of sociological factors on the psychological conditioning or building the mental makeup of the players and its resultant influences on their performance in the national and international competitions. Aggressive behaviour of the sportsmen is very important factor that is related to varieties of social, economic and psychological background of them. If they have good social and economic status and provided healthy psychological environment in the family as well as in society, they are likely to grow emotionally intelligent individuals. Aggression within the limit of emotional intelligence can yield better results. If it cross the limits it can results a lot of destruction. This has a bearing on better performance. Hence, government and responsible authorities should think positively to influence their socio-psychological background in order to have positive aggressive behaviour in sport.

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