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Effect of socio-economic factors on aggressive behaviour of sportsmen status

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to explore the impact of socio-economic status on the aggressive behavior 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 behavior of sportsperson.

Keywords: Socio-economic factors, sportsperson, aggressive behaviour

Introduction

Aggression has a long history in both mainstream psychology and sport psychology. One view is that aggression results from frustration. In sport, frustration can occur for a variety of reasons: because of losing, not playing well, being hurt, and perceiving unfairness in the competition. Frustration heightens one's predisposition toward aggression. Contextual factors come into play so that the manner in which an individual interprets the situational cues at hand best predicts whether this athlete, or spectator, will exhibit aggression.

Some theorists view aggression as a learned behavior, which is the result of an individual's interactions with personal social environment over time. Aggression occurs in sport where an athlete's expectancies for reinforcement for aggressive behavior are high (receiving praise from parents, coaches, peers), and where the reward value outweighs punishment value (gaining a tactical or psychological advantage with a personal foul). Situation-related expectancies, such as the time of game, score opposition, or the encouragement of the crowd, also influence the athlete in terms of whether this is deemed an appropriate time to exhibit aggression.

A number of individual difference factors have been associated with aggression. Three of them are legitimacy judgments, moral disengagement, and ego orientation. When athletes judge aggressive and rule-violating behaviors as legitimate or acceptable, they are more likely to be aggressive. Moral disengagement refers to a set of psychosocial mechanisms that people use to justify aggression. Through these justifications, athletes manage to engage in aggression without experiencing negative feelings like guilt that normally control this behavior. For example, players may displace responsibility for their actions to their coach, blame their victim for their own behavior, claim that they cheated to help their team, or downplay the consequences of their actions for others. Finally, individuals who are high in ego orientation feel successful when they do better than others; they are preoccupied with winning and showing that they are the best. These players are more likely to be aggressive in sport.

There has always been interest in aggressive behavior and competitive sport. Several writers have mentioned that sport provides a necessary "safety value" or cathartic release for the aggressive drives of the human (Scott, 1970; Lorenz, 1966). Opponents of this position have posited that successful aggressive behavior facilitates further aggressive behavior. 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 behavior.

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!

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When one begins to examine the various writings on aggressive behavior, 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 behavior rather than a unitary concept. Unfortunately, research on aggressive behavior 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.

Aggression in sport

Aggression has a long history in both sport and non-sport contexts. There is some variation in the definitions of aggression employed by different people. However, it is commonly agreed that aggression is a verbal or physical behavior that is directed intentionally toward another individual and has the potential to cause psychological or physical harm. In addition, the target of the behavior should be motivated to avoid such treatment. Typically, definitions of aggression incorporate the notion of intent to cause harm; that is, for behavior to be classified as aggressive, the perpetrator must have the intent to harm the victim. However, strict behavioral definitions of aggression exclude the term intent because it refers to an internal state, which cannot be observed.

Aggression has been distinguished between instrumental and hostile. Instrumental aggression is a behavior directed at the target as a means to an end, for example, injuring a player to gain a competitive advantage, or late tackling to stop an opponent from scoring. Thus, instrumental aggression is motivated by some other goal. In contrast, hostile aggression is a behavior aimed toward another person who has angered or provoked the individual and is an end in itself. Its purpose is to harm for its own sake, for example, hitting an opponent who has just been aggressive against the player. Hostile aggression is typically preceded by anger. Instrumental aggression, in pursuit of a goal, is not normally associated with anger and, in sport, is far more frequent than hostile aggression. In both types of aggression, a target person is harmed, and the harm can be physical or psychological.

In this entry, the construct of aggression is presented. First, the distinction is made between aggression and assertion, and difficulties with the notion of intent in the definition of aggression are discussed. Then measures of aggression are outlined followed by factors associated with aggression in sport.

Aggression, Assertion, and Intent

In sport, the word aggressive is often used when assertive is more appropriate. For example, coaches describe strong physical play as aggressive, when this type of play is actually assertive; it is within the rules of the game and there is no intention to cause harm. The difference between aggression and assertion lies in the intention to harm. If there is no intent to harm the opponent, and the athlete is using legitimate means to achieve goals, the behavior is assertive, not aggressive. When one is being assertive, the intention is to establish dominance rather than to harm the opponent. Behaviors such as tackling in rugby, checking in ice hockey, and breaking up a double play in baseball may be seen as

assertive as long as these are performed as legal components of the contest and without malice. However, these same actions would represent aggression if the athlete's intention was to cause injury.

It is often difficult to distinguish aggression from assertion in sport. Although assertive behaviors are forceful behaviors that are not intended to injure the victim, by their nature, they may result in unintended harm to the athlete's opponent. In addition, some sports involve forceful physical contact, which has the capacity to harm another person, but this contact is within the rules of sport. Assertive behaviors have also been labeled sanctioned aggression. Thus, sanctioned aggression is any behavior that falls within a particular sport's rules or is widely accepted as such: for example, using the shoulder to force a player off the ball in soccer and tackling below the shoulders in rugby. Examples are combat sports, such as judo, karate, and wrestling, and team contact sports, such as rugby, ice hockey, American football, and lacrosse. Perhaps the confusion between assertion and aggression arises because both have the capacity to harm the target, although, as noted earlier, only aggression involves intention to harm.

Incorporating the notion of intent in definitions of aggression has the difficulty of establishing which behavior is aggressive. This is because the only person knowing whether there is intent to cause harm is the person who carries out the action. Two features of definitions of aggression that have not been questioned are the capacity of behavior to cause harm and the intentional (non-accidental) nature of the behavior.

Methodology

In view of above, the paper makes an empirical attempt to understand the socio-psychological correlates with the aggressive behavior 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 Discussions

Table 1: Mean, SD and 't' values of Aggressive Behavior 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 behavior of sportsmen belonging to high and low SES. The mean score of high and low SES sportsmen on aggressive behavior 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 behavior 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 behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the aggressive behavior 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 behavior 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 behavior 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.

Conclusion

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 behavior 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 behavior in sport.

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