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Rather Hilal Ahmad
Assistant Professor (C),
Department of Physical
Education & Sports University
of Kashmir, Hazratbal,
Srinagar, J&K, India-19001

Impact of belligerence and behavior on sports performance

Rather Hilal Ahmad

Abstract

Belligerence is common in sports players especially among in those sports persons who play combative sports and team games, this belligerence prevails in such situations which sometimes forces the athlete to do some unwanted behavior which he himself is not aware of for its occurrence. Belligerence and aggressive behavior are sometimes out of the ethical empire of sports, and sometimes very much part of sport, depending on the type of sport, the demand on the performer, nature, and so on. Belligerence includes different behaviours at different situations that serve a common end – to impose pain or injury on the opponent or to disturb the opponent by misbehaving or utter such word which will force him to commit fowls or mistakes. Several studies have been conducted by researchers worldwide but there still remain grim areas that fail to pinpoint offensive or aggressive behavior in sport. This research paper aims to throw light on the reasons for the existence of this belligerence and resolve of such behavior and possible remedies to deal with the same whenever needed.

Keywords: belligerence, assertiveness, catharsis effect, behavior

Introduction

Belligerence is overt, often harmful, social interaction with the intention of imposing damage or other unpleasantness upon another individual. It may occur either in revenge or without provocation. In humans, frustration due to choked goals can cause belligerence. Belligerence is any interpersonal behavior intended to cause physical harm or mental distress to a person or persons in order to show his supremacy. In the sports context, belligerence can be defined as an unprovoked physical or verbal assault, and aggressiveness as the intent to commit such an assault. Belligerence has also been defined as 'a plain verbal or physical act that can psychologically or physically injure another person or oneself'. Belligerence today is part and parcel of any contemporary sport. Types of Behaviors in Psychology Psychology is actually study with regards to the mind, taking place partly through the study of behavior. In scientific approach, psychology has got the immediate goal of knowing individuals and groups by each researching specific cases and forming general principles and for most it eventually aims to help society.

In this field, an expert researcher or practitioner is known as psychologist and could be classified like a behavioral scientist, cognitive scientist or social scientist. Psychologists try to understand the part of mental functions within social behavior and individual, while additionally exploring the neurobiological and physiological processes which underlie certain cognitive behaviors and functions.

Types of Communication Behaviors

Communication is actually a constant flow of nonverbal and verbal details. Relationships could be built on or broken through the use of negative and positive communication behaviors. Knowing how other people communicate their feelings, assists strengthen interactions. However, communication behaviors which are misunderstood can make misinformation and distance. The right choice of communication behavior can make the difference between negative and a positive situation. Listening can be a communication behavior with a number of different techniques. Comprehension listening, evaluation listening and critical listening tend to be communication behaviors together with positive

Correspondence
Rather Hilal Ahmad
Assistant Professor (C),
Department of Physical
Education & Sports University
of Kashmir, Hazratbal,
Srinagar, J&K, India-19001

effects. Comprehension listening entails knowing the meaning of exactly what is said. Critical listening needs judging what has been said to make an opinion. This kind of behavior entails effort in order to analyze the given information.

Passive Aggressive Behavior

Passive aggressive behavior comes in many forms however can usually manifest as a non-verbal belligerence which evolved in negative behavior. It is where one is angry with somebody but do not let them know. Rather than interacting honestly you feel annoyed, upset, disappointed or irritated, you may as an alternative bottle up the feelings, shut down verbally, make obvious modifications in behavior, give angry looks, sulky, be obstructive, or put up a stone wall. A passive aggressive may well not always show that a person is resentful or angry. He or she can be found in friendly, agreement, polite, down-to-earth, well-meaning and kind. But, underneath there might be manipulations happening - therefore the term is Passive Aggressive Behavior. A type of behavior is way to group behaviors. Any specific behavior might have characteristics fitting in numerous categories. The way in which human beings or animals react to various stimuli or situations can be categorized as types of behavior. Types which are of unique interest and frequently studied, includes emotional behavior, in which an individual or animal responds emotionally to a scenario; bad behavior, in which people break interpersonal rules, for example being rude or otherwise not minding; out of control behavior, where a person cannot control his / her behavior; and also group behavior or how several people act in several situations.

Appropriate Behavior



Fig 1

Description: Accomplishes desired and desired goals without trespassing on the needs and rights of others. This also includes suitable emotional responses.

Inappropriate Behavior

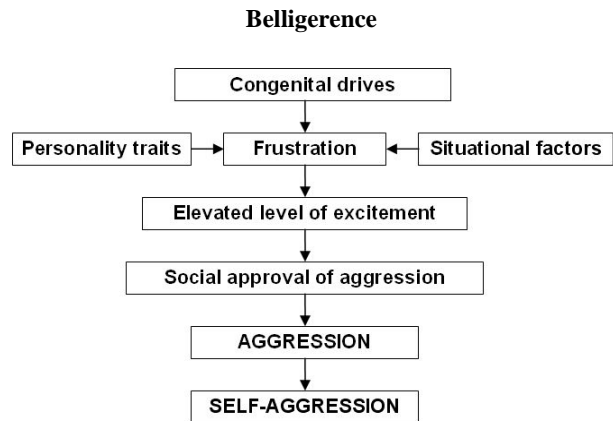
Description: The behavior takes place at a place or time which is inappropriate. If it happened under other situations then the inappropriate behavior would be adequate.

Emotional Behavior

Description: Skilled with performance however has a stronger than distinctive autonomic system response, frequently it is anxieties and fears.

Over the past twenty years, most sports have been undergoing drastic changes, and several problem areas have been located and addressed that form the core of sports research. Some of them are:

- ❖ Drug influence and the problems it poses
- ❖ The increase of professionalism
- ❖ Increased media attention and glorification
- ❖ Commercialization of sports worldwide
- ❖ Introduction of judicial norms and civil/criminal law in professional sports
- ❖ Reduced tolerance levels in modern day athletes



Typical expectations which can also be the cause of belligerence

- Young children preparing to enter playgroup need to develop the socially important skill of being assertive. Examples of assertiveness include asking others for information, initiating conversation, or being able to respond to peer pressure.
- In divergence, some young children use aggressive behavior, such as hitting or biting, as a form of communication.
- Aggressive behavior can impede learning as a skill deficit, while assertive behavior can facilitate learning. However, with young children, aggressive behavior is developmentally appropriate and can lead to opportunities of building conflict resolution and communication skills.
- By school age, children should learn more socially appropriate forms of communicating such as expressing themselves through verbal or written language; if they have not, this behavior may signify a disability or developmental delay

Belligerence triggers the following:

- ❖ Physical fear of others
- ❖ Family difficulties
- ❖ Learning, neurological, or conduct/behavior disorders
- ❖ Psychological trauma

Belligerence in sports

Belligerence in sport as: 'harm-inducing behavior bearing no direct relationship to the competitive goals of sport, and relates, therefore, to incidents of uncontrolled belligerence outside the rules of sport, rather than highly competitive behavior within the rule boundaries.' has been defined by Terry and Jackson (1985). Belligerent and violent actions which might be illegal outside sport or in supposedly non-

contact sports like Basketball, Football, Cricket, Hockey, etc. are legal and allowed in the context of combat sports like Boxing, Tae-Kwon-Do, Wu-Shu, Muay-Thai, Judo, Karate and Wrestling, or team contact sports like Rugby, football, floorball and Ice hockey. All these sports are characterized by high levels of belligerence and often violent physical contact which may be within the rules of the game and not intended to harm. The same sort of behaviour outside the sports context may however be defined as criminal. Participants in these sports have also accepted the irrevocability of rough contact and possible injury in these sports.



Fig 2: Belligerence is sometimes natural and unknown for the game



Fig 3: Belligerence is sometimes unwarranted and sudden

Environmental factors are also believed to have an influence on the state of mood. For example temperature, noise, drugs, alcohol, steroids, presence of weapons, have all shown to increase belligerence. A high degree of belligerence that is not in line with competitive spirit is unlawful and sometimes even illegal. In some sports, however, there appears to be a gray zone where belligerence is accepted by ‘victims’ as a legitimate part of the game. The most likely targets for belligerence are officials, women, young candidates, and athletes who are victims on racial bias. Katherine Simpson (2001) has found evidence about the role of testosterone and its impact on belligerence. Changes in the concentration of hormones can have profound effects on mood and behaviour in humans. Sex differences have also been considered as contributing factors to belligerence. Evolutionary Psychology states that all behavior is designed to prolong the continuance of the gene pool and ensure the survival of the species. This evolutionary imperative contributes to gender differences in behavior. Belligerence has a new marker: the Finger Digit Ratio (F.D.R.), which is thought to be linked with a number of personal characteristics. According to this theory the shorter a man’s index finger is when compared to the ring finger, the more aggressive he will be.

Types of Belligerence and Nature

Belligerence can be of the following types

- ✓ **Direct:** where the athlete can abuse face to face directly or hurt somebody by words or actions. This can be the strategy to harm or force them to do fouls which will be penalized him so that the opponent team may get weaker.
- ✓ **Indirect:** hurting others by gossips, rumours, internal murmurings etc. this is the strategy to hurt them psychologically.
- ✓ **Instrumental:** this is cognitive, where the belligerence is intentional and planned but not to directly hurt someone, rather for gaining something like a reward, fame, scoring a goal, etc.
- ✓ **Emotional:** also called impetuous belligerence refers to belligerence that occurs with only a small amount of forethought or intent. Several theories on belligerence have been proposed but they fall into four main categories:

1. *Instinct theory* suggests that belligerence is the result of an inherent drive like hunger, thirst etc.
2. *Social learning theory* suggests that belligerence is a function of learning, not merely a biological drive.
3. *Moral reasoning theory* where the aggressor justifies his or her action as proper.
4. *Frustration-belligerence hypothesis* states that belligerence is a result of frustration.



Fig 4

The Catharsis Effect

The Catharsis effect is the release of pent-up frustration that makes one feel better. It is a purging of the anger and frustration associated with not being able to accomplish a goal. Venting frustration upon a punching bag or some other inanimate object may serve as a useful catharsis. Venting frustration upon another human being, however, is unacceptable behavior that is likely to lead to more belligerence. In this stage of belligerence the player tries to hit or grab the delicate parts of opponent to weaken him as in frustration he is not able to judge that he is committing a foul.

Supporter’s Violence

Some of the dirtiest instances of sports belligerence and violence happen among the spectators. There are individuals who instigate violence. These individuals are attracted to violence tend to score high on the personality scale for anger and physical belligerence. This belligerence is a result of failure of his best athlete in scoring a goal or abused by someone in the crowd.



Fig 5

Effects of Belligerence on Sports Performance

It is a common knowledge that acts of belligerence on the part of an athlete will constitute a distraction and result in a poor performance. These acts are likely to be distracting to the team also as a whole. Research has shown, for example, that the poorer a team is in the performance, more likelihood it will engage in belligerence. As the game gets bloodier (more intense), hostility levels after the game are significantly higher.

Belligerence due to Situational Factors

- a) Temperature: Higher temperatures can lead aggressive athletes to become more aggressive due to loss of fluids and exertion/fatigue.
- b) Revenge due to perception of victim's intent: Some athletes imagine that an opponent's intent is to inflict harm, so they respond with belligerence against the opponent and tries to harm them.
- c) Rivalry due to familiarity: Familiarity breeds dislike. As players become more familiar with one another due to frequency of play, rivalries also may increase, and belligerence in turn becomes more frequent.
- d) Game situation: Several studies have shown that more aggressiveness occurs as there is a big difference between scores. When the scores are close, belligerence is at a minimum level.
- e) Reduced goal direction: As the ego state of the athlete increases, there is general lack of respect for the game or the official. A high task goal orientation results in a higher level of sportsmanship which results in belligerence.

Controlling belligerence level in Sport

With the cooperation of all concerned parties, belligerence in sport can be minimized. However, some most influential people sometimes actually end up promoting violence in their urge to sell tickets this will create drama in the field which will increase the selling of tickets in general and their profit in particular. Irritated feelings and angry behavior, the originator to belligerence and violence can be modified through proper anger management training and role play.

Controlling Belligerence and Violence by Athletes

- ❖ Aggressive athletes can be provided proper counseling and rehabilitation.
- ❖ There should be meditation and yoga sessions for athletes
- ❖ Athletes who involve in aggressive acts must be severely penalized, at levels much more than any reinforcement that the game offers and some hard and harsh rules should be made to control it.

- ❖ Young athletes must be taught to have non-aggressive but assertive behavior besides that they should be guided from time to time.
- ❖ Athletes should be rewarded for showing restraint and patience in emotionally charged game situations and should be honored publically with good rewards.
- ❖ Tolerance and patience on the part of the coach or leader will reduce violent behavior in athletes.
- ❖ A friendly atmosphere, more in the lines of a family event should be ensured by the organizers besides that the game should be played on amateur basis rather than professional and personal benefits.

Controlling Belligerence and Violence by Fans

- 1 Troublemakers should be closely monitored and should be penalized with huge amounts or threat to sentence.
- 2 A list of Known offenders should be identified and denied admission to enter the premises of the event.
- 3 Distribution of alcoholic beverages/cigarettes at sporting events should be stopped.
- 4 Media can play a big role by not glamorizing the aggressive acts by players or fans.

Conclusion

From above study it is clear that Belligerence and violence can affect the roots of sports spirit and can bring hatred among the people at the same time people will lose their faith that sports helps in socialization and good behavior. It has also been seen that belligerence and violence have become common in modern day sporting events, especially those that have high emotional content. Whatever the degree of belligerence, it can be minimized by adopting a systematic approach at the psychological and sociological levels. Tolerance and empathy on the part of the organizers and the coach, followed by proper training to the athlete may be the solution beside that sport should be played on amateur basis rather than on professional nature.

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