

Aggression and sport

Aggression

- Aggression is any behavior intended to harm another individual or object by physical or verbal means
- Aggression is a behavior and should be distinguished from feelings of anger
- Aggression may be ***antisocial***, (e.g., self-defense like vandalism, aggression, and rioting), or ***pro-social*** (e.g., law enforcement)

Physical and non physical aggression

Physical aggression

- aggression that involves harming others physically—for instance hitting, kicking, stabbing, or shooting them.

Non-physical aggression

- aggression that does not involve physical harm. Nonphysical aggression includes verbal aggression (insulting, screaming, swearing, and name calling) and relational or social aggression,

Instrumental aggression

- Aggression that is intentional and planned and that is aimed at hurting someone to gain something.
- Instrumental aggression takes place when the behavior is clearly likely to cause harm, but its intention is to achieve a different aim, such as to score a point or prevent the opposition from scoring a goal

- The intentional use of harmful behavior to achieve some other goal.
- Aggressive acts are carried out with the objective of gaining material, psychological, or social benefits Carried out to avoid punishment
- The aggression the thief used in his robbery attempt is an example of instrumental aggression.

Hostile aggression

- Hostile aggression takes place when the primary intention of the behaviour is to harm the other player
- This type of aggression is accompanied by anger, and the underlying wish is to see the victim suffer.
- The goal of the intentionally harmful behavior is simply to cause injury or death to the victim or player
- Often impulsive and irrational

- Its purpose is to harm for its own sake, for example, hitting an opponent who has just been aggressive against a player
- Hostile aggression is not really motivated by the anticipation of rewards or the avoidance of punishments, even though these may indeed be ultimate consequences of the aggressive act.
- Instead, this type of aggression is often impulsive and irrational. There is a goal, but it is simply the desire to cause harm to the victim

Sanctioned and Unsanctioned aggression:

In 1993, Apter has pointed out that there is often a set of unofficial rules as well as official rules, governing what aggression behaviors are acceptable.

- **Sanctioned Aggression:** The aggressive behaviors which are acceptable are known as sanctioned aggressive behaviors. For example, using the shoulder to force a player off the ball in soccer.
- **Unsanctioned Aggression:** The aggressive behaviors which are not acceptable because of harming other player intentionally are known as unsanctioned aggression. For example: Kicking or punching other player.

Aggression vs Assertion

- Assertive behaviors are forceful behaviors that are not intended to injure the opponent.
- It is within the rules of the game.
- The intention is to establish a dominance rather than to harm.
- Coaches often describe strong physical play as aggressive, when this type of play is actually assertive.

- some sports involves strong physical contact, which has some kind of capacity to harm the opponent. such as karate, boxing, wrestling etc
- it is always difficult to distinguish between aggression and assertion because of the notion of intent.
- A behavior that might appear aggressive, but which does not result in harming others (Husman and Silva, 1984).

SR	Aggression	Assertion
1	Intent to harm	Intent to dominate
2	Illegitimate	Legitimate
3	Forceful contact	Forceful contact
4	Uncontrolled	Controlled
5	Unsanctioned	Sanctioned

- Types of aggression

Assertive behavior	Hostile aggression	Instrumental aggression
No intent to harm	Intent to harm	Intent to harm
Legitimate force	Goal to harm	Goal to win
Unusual effort and energy expenditure	Unusual effort and energy expenditure	No anger

Passive and active aggression

- Harming others by withholding a behavior.
e.g., purposely failing to convey an important message)

Harming others by performing a behavior.
(e.g., spreading vicious rumors)

Gender difference in aggression

- There is a widespread belief about men being more aggressive than women.
- Meta-analytic studies indicate that males and females do differ in one important kind of aggression: physical aggression. There is some evidence that males are more likely than females to engage in aggression that produces pain or physical injury (Eagly & Steffen, 1986)

Indirect aggression,

- a form of social manipulation in which the aggressor attempts to harm another person without a face-to-face encounter.
- Gossiping, spreading bad or false stories about someone, telling others not to associate with a person, and revealing someone's secrets are all examples of indirect aggression.

Displaced aggression

- occurs when negative emotions caused by one person trigger aggression toward a different person.

Biological factors

- Aggression is controlled in large part by the area in the older part of the brain known as the amygdala
- The region in the limbic system that is primarily responsible for regulating our perceptions of, and reactions to, aggression and fear.

- Biological research suggests that individual differences in aggression are partly due to inheritance and hormonal changes.

Behavior genetics

- Identical twins tend to have more similar aggressive tendencies than fraternal twins. The problem with this research, however, is that parents tend to treat identical twins more similarly than fraternal twins, and thus, it is difficult for us to clearly distinguish between biological and environmental determinants of aggression.

Hormonal activity

- Research indicates that chemical messengers in the bloodstream, known as hormones, influence human aggression (Adelson, 2004).
- Hormones are also important in creating aggression. Most important in this regard is the male sex hormone testosterone, which is associated with increased aggression in both animals and in humans.
- Higher than normal levels of the male hormone testosterone is reported in highly aggressive individuals of both sexes (Carlson, 2004).
- These findings suggest that high testosterone levels may either directly cause aggression or indirectly cause it by encouraging social dominance

Drinking Alcohol Increases Aggression

- the consumption of alcohol increases aggression. In fact, excessive alcohol consumption is involved in a majority of violent crimes, including rape and murder
- Alcohol increases aggression for a couple of reasons. For one, alcohol disrupts executive functions, which are the cognitive abilities that help us plan, organize, reason, achieve goals, control emotions, and inhibit behavioral tendencies

- Secondly, when people are intoxicated, they become more self-focused and less aware of the social situation, a state that is known as *alcohol myopia*.
- As a result, they are less likely to notice the social constraints that normally prevent them from engaging aggressively

Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

- First suggested by Dollard et al in 1939 that aggressive behavior is elicited by frustration. When we are frustrated we respond with aggressive behavior.
- Secondly, In 1989 Berkowitz suggested more sophisticated version. According to which frustration leads to anger rather than directly to aggression

- The system is made up of and follows from the amygdala to the hypothalamus and finally to the periaqueductal gray matter
- if a man is disrespected and humiliated at his work, but cannot respond to this for fear of losing his job, he may go home and take his anger and frustration out on his family

2. **Cognitive Neo-association Theory**

- Berkowitz (1993) has proposed that aversive events such as frustrations, provocations, loud noises, and uncomfortable temperatures produce negative affect.
- Negative affect automatically stimulates various thoughts, memories, expressive motor reactions, and physiological responses associated with both fight and flight tendencies
- negative feelings and experiences are the main cause of anger and angry aggression. Sources of anger include: pain, frustration, loud noise, crowding, sadness, and depression.
- the fight associations give rise to initial feelings of anger, whereas the flight associations give rise to initial feelings of fear

Social Learning Theory: Human aggression is largely learned by watching other people behave aggressively, either in person or in films. It is also learned when we are rewarded for aggression.

- According to social learning theories (Bandura 2001), people acquire aggressive responses the same way they acquire other complex forms of social behavior—either by direct experience or by observing others.
- It explains the acquisition of aggressive behaviors, via observational learning processes and provides a useful set of concepts for understanding and describing the beliefs and expectations that guide social behavior.

- Baron & Byrne(2002) suggest the following four aspects of aggression that can be explained by learning
 1. how to be aggressive,
 2. who is an appropriate target of aggression,
 3. what actions requires an aggressive response
 4. what situations aggression is appropriate

Excitation Transfer Theory

- This theory suggests that arousal from one situation can be transferred to another situation.
- If two arousing events are separated by a short amount of time, arousal from the first event may be misattributed to the second event. If the second event is related to anger, then the additional arousal should make the person even angrier.

INSTINCT THEORY

- AGGRESSION IS INSTINCTIVE. (An instinct is an innate tendency to behave in a certain way).
- we are born with two opposing instincts, the life instinct and the death instinct. Our death instinct leads us to be aggressive.
- It is manageable and we can, to some extent, exert conscious control over it.
- sport is a healthy way of expressing our death instinct.
- Proponents of the theory saw sport as serving the social function of channelling human destructive instincts constructively.
- Main contributions to this theory includes Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical Approach and Konrad Lorenz's Ethological Approach

Individual differences in sporting aggression

- 1. Gender:** Gender also defines the role of aggression in an individual. Males are more physically aggressive than females.
- 2. Identification with team:** The athletes who have a particularly strong identification with their team are more willing to behave aggressively toward opposite team members.

3. Motivational Style: The motives of an athlete also play an important role in the aggressiveness. There are two types of motives, an athlete have are as follow;

- Ego-Oriented: Athletes who judge their performance according to their success.
- Task-Oriented: Athletes who judge their success according to their efforts and deal well with adversity.

An ego-oriented is associated with aggression

Reduction Of Aggression;

There are several techniques that can be used to reduce aggression in athletes.

- **Punishment:** The aggressive athlete can learn through punishment that the consequences of aggression are negative. Punishment can also serve as a deterrent. An example of severe punishment is football's red card.
- **Catharsis:** The vigorous exercise can reduce aggression because it reduces both tension and feelings of anger. Although, it has two limitations:
- **Role Modeling:** A child can learn aggressive behaviors from watching aggressive role models. If we expose children to non-aggressive role model, we can prevent them from aggressive behaviors.

Contracting:

- Leith (1991) suggested that a simple contract with the name, date and signatures of both parties should eliminate the unwanted behaviors. There is punishment for breaking the contract and reward for sticking to contract.

Anger-management groups

- A type of group therapy in which anger is explored and mental strategies for coping with anger are taught.

Strategies to control anger:

1. Psychoanalytical tradition.
2. Cognitive-behavioral Strategy