

MASS MEDIA AS DETERMINANT OF PROACTIVE SPORT BEHAVIOUR OF NUGA ATHLETES IN SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Nigeria University Games Association (NUGA), has been grappling with the problem of proactive sport behavior of athletes. The study investigated the effect of mass media on proactive sport behavior of NUGA athlete in South Eastern Nigeria. One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level. Ex-post-facto research method was adopted for the study. The research data were collected using PSB measuring instrument from 521 NUGA athletes during the 22nd NUGA game. A reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained using test-retest method. Five sports were selected from the 15 NUGA sports based on laid down criteria. Inferential statistics of step-wise multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis. The result shows that mass media determined proactive sport behaviour of NUGA athletes ($B=0.30, t=14.38, df=(1,519), P<0.05$) significantly. Conclusively, mass media is a predictor of proactive sport behavior of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria. It was recommended that mass media among others should be educated properly on the concept of proactive sports behaviour to enable them report properly.

Proactive Sport behavior is a goal oriented behaviour involving psychological or physical injuries inflicted on a person or group of persons by one or more persons. The issue of proactive sport behavior has been a re-occurring decimal in the Nigerian University Games, since its inception in 1965. The NUGA council have been suspending and banning one University or the other as punishment for one form of proactive sport behavior or the other.

A number of factors have been speculated as possible causes of uncontrolled proactive sports behaviour of athletes during NUGA games. One of such factors is the activities of the mass media.

Mass Media and Proactive Sport Behaviour

Consumption of the professional sports through newspapers and television in particular, is voracious. For example 53% of minor and junior professional performers in Toronto, and 39% of their non-playing peer, read about sports in the newspapers daily. Almost 70% of these players and 60% of the non-players watch televised professional sports at least once a week (Smith 2000). A study prepared for the Royal Commission on Aggression in the Communications Industry, reported that 152 children and youths, watched more aggressive sports on television than did youngstars (McCabe and Moriarty 2005). Two other Royal Commission studies found that, newspaper, television, and radio sports news in Ontario, did not report undue amounts of aggression (Gordon & Ibson, 2004).

The proportion of media-mediated aggression, that could be said to have a pro-aggression slant, is not known but unquestionably, the media, more frequently convey the idea that fighting and the like is acceptable and even desirable behaviour. Indicators of media acceptance include, attention-

grabbing newspaper pictures of fights, radio and television reminiscences about famous brawls of the past and newspaper and magazine articles, overtly or covertly glorifying tough players. The net result of this sort of coverage is, at least, to condone aggression, at most, to glorify it.

Do young players actually learn from professionals, how to commit act of assault? Research suggests that conditions for learning aggression through the television, for example, are almost ideal (Goranson, 2001). In a study of 83 high school players, those who perceived their favourite performers as rough and tough, received more assaultive penalties in a season's play, than those who chose less violent models (Russel, 2006). More specifically, in a sample survey of 604 Toronto minor and junior professional players, the interviewees were asked, if they had ever learned how to hit another player illegally in any way, from watching? Fifty-six percent responded "yes" then gave detailed descriptions of what they had learned.

When asked, how many times during the season they had actually used one or more of these tactics, 60% said "at least once or twice". Official game records verified players' responses, those who claimed they performed these acts received significantly more major and minor penalties than those who said they did not.

Hypothesis: Mass media is not a significant determinant of proactive sport behaviour of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria.

Research Design: In this study, the ex-post-facto research design was employed. This design was considered appropriate because the investigator had no control over the independent variables and did not manipulate any of them rather; the investigator simply determined the extent to which the independent variables predicted the dependent variable, based on available data. Nworgu (1991) opined that ex-post-facto method concerns the collection of information after the event under investigation has taken place. In this study, athletes who have taken part in NUGA organized competitions were the participants. A validated questionnaire with a reliability of 0.92 was used to collect data. Inferential statistic of step wise multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant

Population of the Study

The target population for this study consisted of all male and female athletes who have taken part in any NUGA organized competition in South Eastern Nigeria.

Significance of the study

The result of this study if published would:

1. educate the mass media on a better reporting system in sports, and,
2. appreciate the motivating role of proactive sports behaviour.

Sample and Sampling Technique

There are eight zones by NUGA classification. Each zone consists of five Universities except zone D which has six Universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 546 participants from the three zones in the five sports as follows:

Sampling of Participants from the Five Sports.

Table 1

Sport	Male	Female	Total
Soccer	66	-	66
Judo	24	24	48
Hockey	54	54	108
Track and Field	126	114	240
Handball	42	42	84
Grand Total	312	234	546

Source: from NUGA regulation (2004)

Summary of Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents according to Sport

Table 2

Sport	Frequencies	Percentages
Soccer	64	12.3
Athletics	220	42.2
Handball	88	16.9
Hockey	102	19.6
Judo	47	9.00
TOTAL	521	100

Source: from author's survey

Table 3: Relative Effects of Mass Media on Proactive Sport Behaviour of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria.

Independent Variables	Mass Media	Constant
B	30	4.41
SEE	.07	1.17
BETA	.11	-
t	4.38	3.77
Sig.t	.0000	.0000

df=(1,519) P<0.05

Source: from author's survey

Data in the Table shows the relative effect of mass media on proactive sport behavior of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria. The Table shows the regression weight (B), the standard error of estimate (SEE) (B) and the t. ratio associated with mass media effect. As shown in the Table, the weight and t. ratio indicate that, mass media effect is significant in determine proactive sport behavior of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria (B=0.30, t=14.38, P<0.05). The null hypothesis was therefore not accepted.

Discussion

Mass media significantly determined proactive sport behavior of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria. ($B=0.30$, $t=14.38$, $df=(1,519)$, $p<0.05$). Silva (1990) asserted that the publicity given to aggressive behavior of athletes by the media has proactive motivational effects.

Smith (2000) opined that the mass media determines pro-active sport behaviour by focusing on incidence of aggression and by communicating them to the players. They frequently portray the idea that fighting is acceptable, even desirable behavior during sporting competition (Gordon & Ibson, 2004). This observation is confirmed by Russel (2006). He observed that players popularity was strongly related to the interaction between aggression and media exposure. The results of this study support the findings of these scholars. NUGA athletes learn proactive behavior like hard and illegal tackle from the photographs and write ups in newspapers and magazines. In the attempt to put into practice what they saw on television, athletes slide and try to pull down their opponents in celebration to get publicity. In the same vein when they direct proactive behavior that will attract retaliation from the opponent, they quickly embrace them to avoid bad publicity that may affect their status and teams. The activities of the media are significant in determining proactive sport behaviour of NUGA athletes in South Eastern Nigeria.

Conclusion

The influence of mass media on the exhibition of proactive sport behaviour of NUGA athletes cannot be underrated. The media through which they disseminate information are also increasing with new technology in place. It is also very clear that the media over emphasize injuries sustained in the course of competition to make them look like criminal or intentional act. This is far from the facts.

Recommendations

The investigator wish to make the following recommendations as the way forward in controlling proactive sport behaviour in NUGA games:

1. The media should be educated not to highlight injuries during competition as wicked acts but to explain them as unavoidable circumstances.
2. Stakeholders should provide motivating information to the media for publication
3. Media men/women who are knowledgeable in sport matters should be employed to cover sporting event.

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