

The Reality Of Sport Bullying Behavior Among Young Handball Players During Coronavirus Pandemic

Saleemah Abdullah Alwan

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: January 04, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: April 03, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords : Coronavirus Pandemic, Handball Players, Sport Bullying</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4661599</p>	<p><i>This study aims to identify the reality of sport bullying behavior among young handball players during coronavirus pandemic. A descriptive survey design was used to guide this study. The study included a purposive sample of 78 young handball players out of 88 players in young clubs who continue their training for participation in the 2020-2021 sport season. The Sport Bullying Behavior Scale was used to measure the sport bullying behavior. Data were analyzed using the statistical package for social science. The researcher concluded that young handball players have sport bullying that negatively influence their peers and that the existence of sport bullying among young handball players pushes them to practice undesirable behaviors in their training environment. Attention must be paid to preparing psychological counseling programs by specialists in sports psychology by considering analyzing the reality of sports bullying of each player during Coronavirus pandemic and considering individuality in instruction and guidance to reduce this phenomenon. It is necessary to provide awareness programs for young handball players in accordance with the Olympic Charter to enhance familiarity and tolerance among players, support self-confidence, and direct the media to back this support, especially during the Coronavirus pandemic.</i></p>

Introduction

Coronavirus conditions imposed the social distancing among players in their training environment as a kind of adherence to the constraints of the World Health Organization (WHO) or as a result of the fears they experience owing to the chaos of information and popular rumors in the various sports media about this pandemic. As a result, they develop behaviors such as a kind of self-affirmation after the forced withdrawal from training, since the handball game is one of the collective ball games that require training sessions in which the players meet.

Self-affirmation tends to maintain a professional level among them which clearly demonstrates the sport bullying behavior. The bullying is considered as a form of violence and it is a negative, intentional act toward others to harm or offend them where there is no balance between them. The researcher in psychological sciences should distinguish between violence and bullying, which is a form of aggression (Kristensen & Smith, 2003).

One of the most common definitions of bullying is that it is an aggressive behavior that includes physical, verbal, or humiliation in general, and results from the unequal power between two individuals; the first is called bully and the other is the victim (Juvonen et al., 2003). This is an evidence of the association between bullying and anger because it not only removes restrictions but is a way to attract attention as is the case with some types of bullying behavior and the bully's desire to prove himself/herself when he/she fails to do so by legitimate, acceptable methods (Jalal, 2007).

Bullying differs from aggressive behavior in three manifestations including the strength of the bully, the weakness of his/her victim, and repetition. It is difficult for the victim to defend himself/herself due to physical or psychological weakness or superiority of the bully (Rigby & Cunningham, 2002). As the problem of bullying among players has multiple aspects due to the presence of variables that affect its occurrence. Some of these aspects are related to the family, as if the player comes to the training environment burdened with family problems, he/she only find an outlet for him in the center, and then the bullying moves from the family to the training environment. Bullying falls into the forms of sarcasm, beating, contempt, the use of profanity, threats, and troubles. Social relationships in the center can be a source of threat. A teenager may feel accepted or rejected by his/her peers. It is probable that he/she is also be subjected to abuse by his/her peers, or he/she assault his/her peers and bullies some of them. This matter has a great impact on the formation of identity (Roberts, 2006). The danger of this behavior also lies in that the victims conceal the incidents of bullying for a variety of reasons, including their fear of future abuse they may expose to by bullies, and their dissatisfaction with the courage of measures taken to reduce this phenomenon which makes them hostage to anxiety and fear to the extent some of them believing that these bully persons are the most capable of providing them with the need for security if they wanted. Herein, the risk may lie in that this behavior may develop to an extent where the

personality of the victim has melted, and its absolute dependence on the bully (Adair & Moore, 2002). On the other hand, the environment that does not provide emotional security to the players leads to feelings of anxiety, anger, frustration, and tension. This feeling may develop into a loss of self-confidence in social relationships with peers. As such, these emotional charges may be discharged in the form of aggressive behavior against others. Much of the psychological pressure that individuals suffer is caused by threats, punishment, ridicule, neglect, and aggressive behavior that they are exposed to in their training environments (Hyman & Zelikoff, 2009).

The bullying has a hidden nature, as the cases of bullying that occur in most stadiums are difficult to perceive and discover due to the secrecy surrounding them, as most victims of bullying do not tell anyone about what is happening to them. Among the reasons that lead victims to conceal incidents of bullying and not to announce them is their fear of future punishments and abuses by the bullies. The victims' belief that they would be more isolated if they disclose their exposure to bullying and their belief in that the bully would love and appreciate them if they kept the matter secret, and their belief that coaches will not do what makes the bully stop his/her behavior (Adair & Moore, 2002), the use of the method of reprimanding the student in front of his/her peers makes him/her feel inferior, which allows him/her abnormal ways of expression, the most prominent and common of which is aggression (Al-Sebian, 2011). Through the researcher's work as an academican specialized in sports psychology and her follow-up for young handball players' discontinuation and resuming during Coronavirus pandemic, she noticed that the quarantine conditions that the players went through have led to many behavioral problems that need to be diagnosed by direct psychological measurement in order to address how to remedy their aggravation that harms the players' future and their contracts at the local and international level. As skill and performance are not sufficient to judge a player's reputation unless he/she enjoys the culture of the Olympic Thought Charter. Thus, the study problem lies in addressing the actual reality analysis of sport bullying behavior. This study aims to identify the reality of sport bullying behavior among young handball players during coronavirus pandemic.

Methods

A descriptive survey design was used to guide this study.

Sample and sampling: The study included a purposive sample of 78 young handball players out of 88 players (88.636% of the total population) in young clubs who continue their training for participation in the 2020-2021 sport season. Ten players were selected for the pilot study who were later excluded from the final sample size. The Sport Bullying Behavior Scale (Rafeaa & Ahmed, 2013) prepared by (Tarrad, 2014) was used to measure the sport bullying behavior. These items were rated as 3 for Always, 2 for Sometimes, and 1 for Never for the positive items and as 1 for Always, 2 for Sometimes, and 3 for Never for the inverse items which are # 9, 14, 30. These items are distributed onto four dimensions namely Social Behavior, Physical Dimension, Verbal Dimension, and Property Damaging. The total score ranges between 39-117 and a cut-off-point of 78. The higher the score, the greater the sport bullying phenomenon. It is one of the paper-and-pen scales.

Data were analyzed using the statistical package for social science. The researcher concluded that young handball players have sport bullying that negatively influence their peers and that the existence of sport bullying among young handball players pushes them to practice undesirable behaviors in their training environment. The external validity of the study was examined by the agreement of more than 80% of the panel of experts (N = 21). The reliability of the study instrument was pilot-tested on 10 players using the split-half method at a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 8, which was 0.883 with Horst correlation coefficient due to inequality of the two halves. As for objectivity, its answer does not require an essay and is determined by choosing a weighted alternative according to Likert's method. Then, the researcher applied it to the final sample of (78) players for the period from September 21st, 2020 to November, 17th, 2020 due to the conditions of social distancing and the application of protective measures in the indoor halls assigned for training handball players after they are allowed to return to training. Data were analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 26 for Windows. The statistical measures of percent, mean, standard deviation (Std. Dev.), Horst reliability coefficient, one-sample t-test, weighted mean, and relative significance were used.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Level of sport bullying compared the hypothesized mean

Underlined phenomenon	Total grade	Hypothesized mean	Mean	Std. Dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Assessment
Sport bullying	117	78	80.04	6.151	2.927	.004	Significant

Measurement unit = degree, N = 78, df = 77, Significance level = 0.05, Significant a p < 0.05

Table 2. Results of reality of sport bullying among young handball players

List	Always		Sometimes		Never		Weighted mean	Relat. Sig.
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
1	44	56.41	16	20.513	18	23.077	2.333	77.778
2	35	44.872	24	30.769	19	24.359	2.205	73.504
3	25	32.051	22	28.205	31	39.744	1.923	64.103
4	56	71.795	1	1.282	21	26.923	2.449	81.624
5	15	19.231	55	70.513	8	10.256	2.09	69.658
6	21	26.923	19	24.359	38	48.718	1.782	59.402
7	15	19.231	19	24.359	44	56.410	1.628	54.274
8	52	66.667	3	3.846	23	29.487	2.372	79.06
9	41	52.564	23	29.487	14	17.949	2.346	78.205
10	70	89.744	4	5.128	4	5.128	2.846	94.872
11	43	55.128	17	21.795	18	23.077	2.321	77.35
12	29	37.179	27	34.615	22	28.205	2.090	69.658
13	31	39.744	30	38.462	17	21.795	2.179	72.65
14	25	32.051	40	51.282	13	16.667	2.154	71.795
15	20	25.641	28	35.897	30	38.462	1.872	62.393
16	42	53.846	21	26.923	15	19.231	2.346	78.205
17	18	23.077	22	28.205	38	48.718	1.744	58.12
18	12	15.385	23	29.487	43	55.128	1.603	53.419
19	19	24.359	42	53.846	17	21.795	2.026	67.521
20	40	51.282	20	25.641	18	23.077	2.282	76.068
21	43	55.128	13	16.667	22	28.205	2.269	75.641
22	12	15.385	45	57.692	21	26.923	1.885	62.821
23	16	20.513	49	62.821	13	16.667	2.038	67.949
24	36	46.154	30	38.462	12	15.385	2.308	76.923
25	18	23.077	21	26.923	39	50	1.731	57.692
26	15	19.231	32	41.026	31	39.744	1.795	59.829
27	14	17.949	32	41.026	32	41.026	1.769	58.974
28	52	66.667	12	15.385	14	17.949	2.487	82.906
29	28	35.897	10	12.821	40	51.282	1.846	61.538
30	29	37.179	11	14.103	38	48.718	1.885	62.821
31	46	58.974	23	29.487	9	11.538	2.474	82.479
32	23	29.487	22	28.205	33	42.308	1.872	62.393
33	54	69.231	4	5.128	20	25.641	2.436	81.197
34	21	26.923	29	37.179	28	35.897	1.91	63.675
35	33	42.308	32	41.026	13	16.667	2.256	75.214
36	10	12.821	40	51.282	28	35.897	1.769	58.974
37	28	35.897	32	41.026	18	23.077	2.128	70.94
38	31	39.744	39	50	8	10.256	2.295	76.496
39	24	30.769	26	33.333	28	35.897	1.949	64.957

Table (1) demonstrates that the underlined phenomenon is existed among players in an amount that slightly differs from the hypothetical level of the scale which is statistically significant which means that young handball players suffer from the emergence of this phenomenon in them as a form of aggression. The results of the reality of this phenomenon were displayed by analyzing the subjects' responses in detail in Table (2) that they were attracted with high relative importance toward the behaviors of violently throwing the ball against the opposing player during the match. This indicates the harm to the victim which means that the phenomenon of sport bullying had a clear effect on them, which necessitates addressing and dealing with it by specialists for its damage to the concept of the group and its breach of the sport ethics that is supposed to adhere to in training environments. The researcher attributes this result to the role of home quarantine and the lack of physical activity that provides a relaxation factor and eases the burden of psychological stress that generate unwanted behaviors or may be beyond the control of individuals. In addition to the causes of problems within the players' families that push them toward the hostility that is reflected on members of society outside the family system, weakness and confusion in conveying information about the prevention of the pandemic and how to evade it. This formed fears that appeared in a form of reactions of clear sport bullying.

The family and the problems it suffers from have a great role in developing and inculcating many undesirable behavioral patterns, as the lack of behavioral controls and the lack of monitoring behaviors have a role in the emergence of bullying behavior (Smith & Hoover 2015). Letting the various types of media to formulate the individual without setting the necessary controls to reduce their influence that may lead to develop behavioral problems such as bullying behavior (Price & Telljohann, 2003). The literature relevant to bullying indicated that this behavior decreases with age, but that it peaks in adolescence. When an interviewing the students' parents, they displayed that this behavior increases as the child gets older, but the number of those who are in a position of power increases in adolescence. This behavior changes during the stages of childhood, adolescence, and youth (Root, 2006). The behavior of bullying, just like other human behaviors, is multidimensional, with varying causes that cannot be attributed to a single explanation.

With the multiplicity of forms of bullying and its motives, there are many theories that explained the behavior of bullying. Some of them pose that it is an innate behavior that is born with a person and he/she is equipped with it, then develops by virtue of his/her biological development. While, others find it as a learned behavior that the individual learns from the environment in which he/she lives as a result of the frustrations that the individual faces in his/her daily life. Thus, these opinions differed in interpreting this behavior and differed in its causes and sources, but all of them agreed on its results and considered it as harmful consequences for the individual (Smith et al., 2015).

Conclusions and Implications

1. Young handball players have a level of athletic bullying that is detrimental to their peers.
2. The emergence of sports bullying among young handball players pushes them to practice undesirable behaviors in their training environment.
3. Attention must be paid to preparing psychological counseling programs by specialists in sports psychology, by considering the analysis of the reality of sports bullying of each player during the Coronavirus pandemic and considering the individuality in guidance and instruction to reduce this phenomenon.
4. It is necessary to provide awareness programs for young handball players in accordance with the Olympic Charter to promote familiarity and tolerance among players, support self-confidence, and direct the media to back this support, especially during the Coronavirus pandemic.

References

- Adair, V. A., Dixon, R. S., Moore, D. W., & Sutherland, C. M. (2000). Ask your mother not to make yummy sandwiches: Bullying in New Zealand secondary schools. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 35(2), 207–221.
- Dake, J. A., Price, J. H., & Telljohann, S. K. (2003). The nature and extent of bullying at school. *Journal of School Health*, 73(5), 173. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.okcu.edu/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2003.tb03599.x>
- Rafeea, I. & Hazim, A. (2013). Developing the sport bullying scale for players of colleges of University of Mosul in sport games. *Journal of Research of College of Basic Education*, 1(2).
- Jalal, H. J. (2007). *Domestic violence*. Cairo: Dar Al-Akhaa.
- Al-Sebian, T. A. (2011). Domestic and school violence experiences among a sample middle and high public school students in holy capital: Um Al-Qura University. *Qualitative Education Research Journal*, 21.
- Tarrad, H. A. (2014). Patterns of parental treatment and their relationship with psychological rebellion and sport bullying among young volleyball players tournament. *Journal of Sciences of Physical Education*, 7(1), 30-52.
- Hyman, I. & Zelikoff, W. (2009). Psychological abuse in the school: An overview, (ERIC).
- Juvonen, J., Graham, S., & Schuster, M. A. (2003). Bullying among young adolescents: The strong, the weak, and the troubled. *Pediatrics*, 112(6), 1231–1237. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.okcu.edu/10.1542/peds.112.6.1231>
- Kristensen, S. M., & Smith, P. K. (2003). The use of coping strategies by Danish children classed as bullies, victims, bully/victims, and not involved, in response to different (hypothetical) types of bullying. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 44(5), 479–488. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.okcu.edu/10.1046/j.1467-9450.2003.00369.x>
- Rigby, K., Slee, P., & Cunningham, R. (1999). Effects of parenting on the peer relations of Australian adolescents. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 139(3), 387–388. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.okcu.edu/10.1080/00224549909598395>
- Roberts, W. (2006); *Bullying from both sides: Strategic intervention for working with Bullies and victims, USA: Corwin press.*
- Root, T. (2006). Student/teacher partnerships can be the key to combat bullying. (cover story). *Education Journal*, 92, 7.

Smith, J., Twemlow, S. W., & Hoover, D. W. (1999). Bullies, Victims and Bystanders: A Method of In-School Intervention and Possible Parental Contributions. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 30(1), 29–37. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.okcu.edu/10.1023/A:1018681819748>

Author Information

Dr. Saleemah Abdullah Alwan

Assistant Professor, University of Baghdad, College
of Arts, Iraq
