



PE.SP5 Sport Psychology: Aggression in Sport

AQA 8582 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

- 1** Aggression in sport is behaviour intended to harm another person or their property, that is outside the rules of the activity.

- ☐ A) A hard but fair, legal tackle made with no intent to injure
- ☐ B) A late, off-the-ball elbow thrown at an opponent
- ☐ C) A player running at full effort to close down space
- ☐ D) A player diving to save a shot within the rules

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Aggression is often confused with assertive behaviour.

Explain the difference between aggression and assertive behaviour in sport.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

- 3** Aggression is classified as either direct or indirect.

(a) Describe what is meant by 'direct aggression', giving a sporting example. (2)

(b) Describe what is meant by 'indirect aggression', giving a sporting example. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4 Erin, a hockey player, is frustrated after her team concedes a goal. She turns and strikes the ground hard with her stick, away from any other player.

Identify whether Erin's action is an example of direct or indirect aggression, justifying your answer.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

- 5 Which of the following is the best example of direct aggression?

- ☐ A) A footballer kicking a water bottle across the pitch in frustration
- ☐ B) A boxer deliberately punching an opponent after the bell has gone
- ☐ C) A cricketer throwing their bat down after being given out
- ☐ D) A tennis player smashing their racket on the court

(Total for Question 5 is 1 mark)

- 6 State two possible causes of aggression in sport.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

- 7 Explain the link between a performer's level of arousal and their likelihood of behaving aggressively.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

8 Noah is a football defender. An opponent fouls him hard from behind and is not penalised by the referee. Noah reacts by pushing the opponent to the ground.

(a) State whether Noah's push is direct or indirect aggression. **(1)**

(b) Explain one factor from the scenario that may have contributed to Noah's aggressive reaction. **(2)**

(Total for Question 8 is 3 marks)

9 Explain one negative consequence that aggressive behaviour can have for a team, other than a possible injury to the opponent.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

10 Suggest one strategy a coach could use to help a performer control their aggression during a match.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

11 State one way an official (e.g. a referee or umpire) could try to reduce the likelihood of aggression occurring during a match.

(Total for Question 11 is 1 mark)

- 12** Discuss the causes and consequences of aggression in sport, using a named performer and a named sporting situation of your choice, and evaluate strategies that could be used to control it.

(Total for Question 12 is 9 marks)

- 13** State one difference between direct aggression and indirect aggression.

(Total for Question 13 is 1 mark)

- 14** A rugby forward makes a hard, fully committed tackle, exactly within the rules of the game, with no intent to injure the opponent.
Explain why this tackle should be classed as assertive behaviour rather than aggression, even though it is forceful.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

- 15** Explain why a team sport such as rugby or football might be more likely to see instances of aggression than an individual, closed-skill sport such as archery.

(Total for Question 15 is 3 marks)

- 16** State the two features that must both be present for a sporting action to be classified as aggression, rather than assertive behaviour.

(Total for Question 16 is 2 marks)

- 17** Which of the following is the best example of indirect aggression?

- ☐ A) Elbowing an opponent hard in the ribs while going for a rebound
- ☐ B) Shouting insults directly at an opponent
- ☐ C) Slamming a hockey stick against the ground after missing a shot
- ☐ D) Deliberately treading on an opponent's foot off the ball

(Total for Question 17 is 1 mark)

- 18** A basketball player is elbowed hard by an opponent while going for a rebound, and no foul is given by the official. Frustrated, she throws the ball hard against the wall at the next stoppage of play.

- (a)** State whether throwing the ball against the wall is an example of direct or indirect aggression. (1)
- (b)** Explain two factors from the scenario that are likely causes of her reaction. (2)

(Total for Question 18 is 3 marks)

- 19** Explain how a hostile home crowd could increase the likelihood of an away player behaving aggressively.

(Total for Question 19 is 2 marks)

- 20** Explain how the threat of a severe punishment, such as a lengthy ban, might reduce aggressive behaviour in sport.

(Total for Question 20 is 2 marks)

21 State one example of a punishment a governing body might use against a performer found to have acted aggressively.

(Total for Question 21 is 1 mark)

Mark scheme · PE.SP5 Sport Psychology: Aggression in Sport

Question 1

- **B1** B
- **Answer: B**

Question 2

- **B1** aggression involves an intent to harm another person and is outside the rules of the activity, oe
- **B1** assertive behaviour is forceful, high-effort/energetic play that stays within the rules, with no intent to harm, oe
- **B1** a valid comparative sporting example, e.g. a hard, fully committed but legal rugby tackle (assertive) compared with a deliberate late tackle after the whistle (aggressive), oe
- **Answer: Aggression involves an intent to harm another person and breaks the rules of the activity, whereas assertive behaviour is forceful, high-effort, fully committed play that stays within the rules and has no intent to harm, for example a hard but legal rugby tackle (assertive) compared with a deliberate late tackle after the whistle (aggressive).**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** aggression directed straight at another person (an opponent or official), involving physical or verbal contact intended to harm them, oe
- (a) **B1** sporting example, e.g. punching an opponent, or a deliberate high, dangerous tackle, oe
- (a) **Answer: Direct aggression is aggression aimed straight at another person, involving physical or verbal contact intended to harm them, for example punching an opponent.**
- (b) **B1** aggression that is not aimed directly at another person, but is instead taken out on an object or through the environment, oe
- (b) **B1** sporting example, e.g. throwing/smashing a tennis racket, or kicking the ball away hard in frustration, oe
- (b) **Answer: Indirect aggression is aggression that is not aimed directly at another person, but is taken out on an object instead, for example smashing a tennis racket on the ground in frustration.**

Question 4

- **B1** indirect aggression, oe
- **B1** justification: the aggressive action is directed at the ground/an object, not at another person, oe
- **Answer: Indirect aggression, because Erin's aggressive action is directed at the ground, an object, rather than at another player or official.**

Question 5

- **B1** B
- **Answer: B**

Question 6

- **B1** any one valid cause, e.g. frustration (e.g. losing/being outplayed), high arousal/over-arousal, provocation by an opponent, or the importance/pressure of the match, oe
- **B1** a second, distinct valid cause, oe
- **Answer: For example, frustration at losing, and being provoked by an opponent.**

Question 7

- **B1** as arousal rises above a performer's optimal level, they can become over-aroused, oe
- **B1** over-arousal is linked to a loss of self-control/rational decision making, oe
- **B1** this makes an aggressive response more likely, e.g. reacting impulsively to a foul rather than staying composed, oe
- **Answer: As arousal rises above a performer's optimal level, they can become over-aroused, which is linked to a loss of self-control and rational decision making, making an impulsive, aggressive response, such as retaliating to a foul, more likely.**

Question 8

- (a) **B1** direct aggression
- (a) **Answer: Direct aggression.**
- (b) **B1** provocation, e.g. being fouled hard by the opponent, oe
- (b) **B1** linked explanation: the lack of punishment from the referee may have increased Noah's frustration further, making a retaliatory reaction more likely, oe
- (b) **Answer: Provocation, being fouled hard by the opponent, contributed to Noah's reaction, and the referee failing to penalise the foul may have increased his frustration further, making retaliation more likely.**

Question 9

- **B1** a valid consequence, e.g. a penalty/card/sending off for the aggressive player, or a loss of focus on tactics/skill, oe
- **B1** linked explanation, e.g. playing with one fewer player after a sending off puts the team at a numerical/tactical disadvantage, oe
- **Answer: The aggressive player could be sent off, leaving the team a player short and at a tactical disadvantage for the rest of the match.**

Question 10

- **B1** a valid strategy, e.g. arousal-control/relaxation techniques, focusing on a process goal, or being substituted/taking a short break to calm down, oe
- **B1** linked explanation of how it reduces aggression, e.g. lowering arousal reduces the loss of self-control linked to aggressive behaviour, oe
- **Answer: For example, using a controlled-breathing technique to lower arousal, since lowering arousal reduces the loss of self-control that is linked to aggressive behaviour.**

Question 11

- **B1** any valid method, e.g. applying the rules consistently/firmly, punishing fouls promptly, or giving early warnings/cards for provocative behaviour, oe
- **Answer: For example, applying the rules consistently and punishing fouls promptly.**

Question 12

- **Level 3 (7-9):** A detailed and coherent response that accurately distinguishes aggression from assertive behaviour and direct from indirect aggression, applies causes and consequences specifically to the named performer/situation, and evaluates control strategies with a balanced judgement. Sustained, accurate use of sport psychology terminology throughout.
- **Level 2 (4-6):** Some accurate coverage of causes, consequences and/or control strategies, with some application to the named example, though the distinction between aggression/assertion or direct/indirect may be underdeveloped, or evaluation may be one-sided. Generally correct use of terminology.
- **Level 1 (1-3):** Basic or generic statements about aggression with little or no specific application to the named performer/situation and little evaluation of control strategies.
- **Level 0 (0):** No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Definition: aggression is behaviour intended to harm another person, that is outside the rules; it should be distinguished from assertive behaviour, which is forceful, fully committed, legal play with no intent to harm.
 - Direct aggression: physical or verbal contact aimed straight at an opponent or official, e.g. a deliberate late/high tackle.
 - Indirect aggression: aggression released onto an object rather than a person, e.g. throwing equipment.
 - Cause: frustration, e.g. from being outplayed, losing, or a decision going against the performer/team.
 - Cause: provocation from an opponent, e.g. being fouled or verbally taunted.
 - Cause: over-arousal, since high arousal is linked to a loss of self-control and impulsive decision making.
 - Cause: the importance/pressure of the specific match named (e.g. a cup final, a local derby) can raise arousal and frustration together.
 - Consequence: a card/sending off, leaving the team at a numerical or tactical disadvantage.
 - Consequence: risk of injury to an opponent, and possible bans/suspensions affecting future matches.
 - Consequence: reputational damage to the performer or team, and possible loss of focus on tactics/skill execution.
 - Control strategy: arousal-control techniques (e.g. controlled breathing, relaxation) to reduce the loss of self-control linked to aggression.
 - Control strategy: focusing on process goals rather than dwelling on provocation or the scoreline.
 - Control strategy: consistent officiating/firm application of the rules to remove a common trigger.
 - Evaluative point: no single strategy works for every performer or situation, since causes differ (a strategy targeting over-arousal will not help a performer whose aggression is caused mainly by a specific rival's provocation), so a combination of approaches is usually more effective than relying on just one.

Question 13

- **B1** direct aggression is aimed at another person, whereas indirect aggression is aimed at an object, oe
- **Answer: Direct aggression is aimed at another person, whereas indirect aggression is aimed at an object.**

Question 14

- **B1** it is within the rules of the game, oe
- **B1** there is no intent to harm the opponent, oe
- **Answer: The tackle is within the rules of the game and there is no intent to harm the opponent, so it does not meet either of the two defining features of aggression, even though it is forceful.**

Question 15

- **B1** team sports like rugby/football involve direct physical contact and opposition, giving more opportunity for provocation/frustration between opponents, oe
- **B1** these sports also often have higher, more variable arousal levels during play, which is linked to a greater loss of self-control, oe
- **B1** archery has no opponent contact and is performed at a lower, calmer, more stable arousal level, so there is little opportunity or trigger for aggression to occur, oe
- **Answer: Rugby and football involve direct physical contact and opposition, which gives far more opportunity for provocation and frustration, and are often played at higher, more variable arousal levels linked to a loss of self-control, whereas archery has no opponent contact and is performed at a lower, calmer arousal level, giving little opportunity or trigger for aggression.**

Question 16

- **B1** intent to harm another person, oe
- **B1** it must be outside the rules of the activity, oe
- **Answer: There must be an intent to harm another person, and the action must be outside the rules of the activity.**

Question 17

- **B1** C
- **Answer: C**

Question 18

- (a) **B1** indirect aggression
- (a) **Answer: Indirect aggression.**
- (b) **B1** provocation: being elbowed hard by the opponent, oe
- (b) **B1** frustration: the lack of a foul being given added to her frustration at the unpunished contact, oe
- (b) **Answer: Provocation, being elbowed hard by the opponent, and frustration at the official not awarding a foul for it, are both likely causes of her reaction.**

Question 19

- **B1** constant jeering/booing can provoke and frustrate the away player, oe
- **B1** it may also raise their arousal level, which is linked to a loss of self-control, oe
- **Answer: Constant jeering or booing from a hostile crowd can provoke and frustrate the away player, and it may also raise their arousal level, which is linked to a loss of self-control and a greater chance of an aggressive reaction.**

Question 20

- **B1** a performer who knows a severe consequence is likely may think more carefully before acting aggressively, oe
- **B1** this can act as a deterrent, reducing the number of aggressive incidents overall, oe
- **Answer: A performer who knows a severe consequence, such as a lengthy ban, is likely may think more carefully before acting aggressively, so the threat of punishment can act as a deterrent, reducing the number of aggressive incidents overall.**

Question 21

- **B1** any valid example, e.g. a red card/sending off, a match ban/suspension, or a fine, oe
- **Answer: For example, a match ban or suspension.**