



Poor Officiating, Lack of Sportsmanship Spirit and Poor Facilities as Triggers of Violence Among Sports Audience in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined if poor officiating, lack of sportsmanship spirit and poor facilities are triggers of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria. This study was conducted among the inhabitants of Port Harcourt metropolis in River state. The descriptive survey research design and a sample size of 1,000 participants were used. The multi-stage sampling technique, a structured, validated and modified Likert type questionnaire were employed. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the Cronbach Alpha, which gave a value of $r = 0.89$. The data collected was analyzed using the Chi-square statistics. The study revealed that poor officiating, lack of Spirit of Sportsmanship and poor facility were triggers of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria. It was consequently recommended that only competent and knowledgeable officials should be used for matches. Both players and supporters should be educated on the rules of games and trained to accept the decision of referees' umpires etc. and should not see competition as a do-or-die affair/event.

Introduction

The concept of violence has often been used interchangeably with vandalism in sports administration to express unruly behaviour by irate athletes, supporters and sometimes by officials (Chado & Kabido 2009). According to Omolabi (1998) violent behaviour in sports is generally conceived as the violent and irresponsible behaviour exhibited by spectators (fans) and competitors (Athletes) during sports competitions. Onifade (2005) opined that there is always an act of violence in each and every sport since violence exists in every sphere of human endeavour, whether it is sport, business, politics, religion, love, or perhaps desire. Owolabi (2001) defined violence as a behaviour that is intended to injure another person physically, verbally or destroy property. He went further to say that violence may also be seen as the use of physical force to achieve or attempt to achieve an objective which persuasion fails to achieve, or where appeal to the conscience would have been ideal.

Violence is also defined as an exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse, profanation, vehement feeling or expression or disorder to the point of losing control. (Amuchie, 2004), it is also conceived as over manifestation of action (passion or fairness) by competitors, officials and spectators which cause or threaten to cause physical harm on others (Omolabi, 1998). Urdang (2008) opined that violence as a form of behaviour is characterized by rough and injurious physical force action, or treatment. Violence at school is costly not only in financial terms, but also in terms of long term damage it inflicts on the individuals' learning of pro-social behaviours and above all, its impact on the vital task of developing human resources for national development.

Violence is disruptive and it is an anti-social behaviour to be simply defined. It is a sudden, explosive and an irrational type of behaviour which when it does manifest itself, looks as if some sorts of aggressive energy had built up until it had to find an outlet, it is difficult to control its outburst of anger once it starts. Basically even though secondary school students have a tendency to cause violence during sports participation, most of the causes arise from officiating, lack of sportsmanship etc (Onifade, 2004).

Oyewusi (2005) described violence in sport as a rough character which can at any time drag a crowd into the act of vandalism. Omolabi (1998) opined that violence in sports is generally conceived as the irresponsible behaviour exhibited by spectators (fans) competitors (athletes) and sometimes officials during sports competitions.

Violence may also be looked at as an exertion of physical force as to injure or abuse, have vehement feeling, or expression, or be disorderly to the point of losing control. It is also conceived as over manifestation of action (passion or fierceness) by competitors, officials or spectators, which cause or threaten to cause physical harm on others (Amuchie, 2004)

Violence occurs in sports depending on the organizational structure of each sport for instance, if the jeering and booing, by the spectator, verbal harassment and throwing of missiles at athletes and sports officials are not effectively controlled, it could degenerate into violence and vandalism. The incidence of violence in sport that has been in the increase of varying consequences have attracted the attention of authors like Nwangwu (2012), Awosika (2004), Amuchie (2004) and Sohi (1998) who wrote on violence in competitive sports in its various forms, and reported that it has attracted the attention of scholars administrators and law enforcement agencies over the years.

Bucher (2004) pointed out that sports create avenue for the acceptance of all persons, regardless, of their race or origin. He stated that competitive sports may teach the appreciation and acceptance of all persons in terms of their ability, performance, and worth, regardless of the individual economic background, social class, or team affiliation. Excellent sports performance gives every athlete the opportunity to achieve and be organized. According to Bucher (2004) there are various activities in sports which could inculcate the spirit of justice, fair play and self-discipline. Sports teach the qualities of good leadership and followership, it teaches obedience and loyalty, these and many other experiences in the field of play are fundamental to mental and character development of secondary school students, in the bid to make them good citizens of the country. Through sports, students learn about the importance of individual merit, gain, knowledge of fair play and accepted social behaviour, sports also help to develop those traits that portray good citizenship, such as; initiative, dependability, consciousness; trust-worthiness, loyalty, and respect for individuals which are essential to democratic living. The objective towards which organized sport is striving among students is the training of the emotion. This aids the development of the spirit of sportsmanship which allows students to win or lose honorably.

Sohi (1998), in his own contribution concluded that a crowd as audience at sports competitions, is a collection of spectators who are interested in seeking information about their sport of interest also want to recreate themselves. The audience according to him consists of individuals who have different background and personality traits. There are those who are law abiding, those who can easily be provoked, those who are ruffians and so on. In terms of behaviour towards the participants, the audience can be favourable or unfavourable when the feeling leads to a hostile behaviour on the part of the audience. The audience through this process also turns out to be a mob indulging in violence. Ikulayo (2012) stated that crowd behaviour have a remarkably diverse effects on competition depending on the individuals. All categories of

attitudes and types of audience generate tension and anxiety which will positively or, detrimentally affect performance depending on the level of proficiency reached on the skills and the stress coping mechanism of individual competitors.

According to Moore (2004), not only do people display intricacies and complexities in behaviour, but their capacities for good and for evil are sometimes unfathomable. He went further to state that in the world of sports, it is easy to observe and study all the emotions and motivation which are generally enacted in relative privacy because of the communal nature of sporting events. Extreme in emotional behaviour becomes part of the public domain. It therefore seems certain that the interest of the lay person, the sportsman and the sport women may continue to converge upon the arena of sport. According to Gaskell and Pearton (2009), violence may be an aggressive behaviour engaged in by adolescents who are not really interested in the game and concentrated in a small hard core of trouble makers in the world. They also argued that if these renegade individuals could be excluded from the playing ground and perhaps reform in some penal ways then sport would be safe for a vast majority of spectators who come only to watch and enjoy sporting activities. Walshe-brennen (1995), believed that violence is part of the more general delinquent and vandalistic tendencies of youth and thus not more than a fashionable example of the general social malice. The current concern on violent behaviour is from the belief that sports should be free of such negative aspects.

Facilities are vital elements necessary to achieve success in sports competitions. They are essential aids to effective participation. There had been persistent claim that sport facilities provided in certain institution and tertiary sectors in this country are far below standard (Awosika, 2012). Sportsmanship is perhaps the code of ethics or morals values in sport. Marion and Betty (2004) defined sportsmanship as “the application of the golden rule to the ethics of sports. Participation in sports is supposed to be a unifying factor, a normal diversion from work, and enjoyable contest and lose or win, there is always a grateful tribute. When any sport loses any one of the above objectives, it has lost everything. Over proportional zeal to win-at-all-cost is a negation of spirit of sportsmanship. A good spirit of sportsmanship is demonstrated when a loser does not show resentment to the winner and when a winner does not boast or provoke the loser.

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Ikulayo (2012) stated that crowd behaviour have a remarkably diverse effects on competition depending on the individuals. All categories of attitudes and types of audience generate tension and anxiety which will positively or, detrimentally affect performance depending on the level of proficiency reached on the skills and the stress coping mechanism of individual competitors.

Facilities are vital elements necessary to achieve success in sports competitions. They are essential aids to effective participation. The importance of facilities as an incentive to sport participation is clear. Umedum (2006), argued that the provision of adequate facilities and equipment is as important as providing other forms of incentives for sports participation. For effective sports competition, sufficient facilities should be provided and facilities just like other elements are the factors that determine the viability of any sport competitions. If students are

to be gainfully involved in sports at all, there must be enabling environment. Sports facilities, equipment and sports personnel are required for a planned sports program in school. Sports facilities in Nigerian secondary schools are in pitiable situation and in most cases they are not in existence. It is rare to find sports club being organized in Nigeria secondary schools. Sports club if formed will bring students together to play under one healthy environment. Team spirit and understanding for each other's difference will be built. Most facilities today, particularly in Rivers State Nigeria, according to Akpata (2004] are bad and risk prone and as well as in various state of disrepair. There had been persistent claim that sport facilities provided in certain institution and tertiary sectors in this country are far below standard (Awosika, 2002).

Sport audiences are often made up of aggregate groups which comprise of spectators, fanatics, mob and supporters. It could also be made up of "active and passive" audience. The active audience, are those who are physically present and are actually involved in the pattern of play. Each move by every player is simultaneously accompanied by gestures like cheering, clapping, booing etc, by the audience; such behaviour according is capable of gearing player up and could enhance or deter performance. The passive audiences are 'those members of the crowd that are rather quiet and make no move to interact or respond to the playing ability of the competitors. Audience can be classified into supportive and non-supportive. They are supportive when they tend to cheer the move of players in a particular team against the other, whereas, they are non-supportive when their concern is the display of skills by any of the teams playing. The non-supportive audiences are more of spectators while the supportive audiences are fans who are keen on cheering their team to victory. In a related development, audience to occurrences in the field of play is usually characterized with positively, negatively and neutrality. The positive characteristics are common among the positive audience who behaves in a friendly fashion by cheering all the movements of the competitors through drumming, clapping and dancing. Its motive is to encourage their team to perform to excellence and the atmosphere is generally relaxed. The negative audience behaves in extreme way to the positive audience. They are generally hostile to the performers and they blow, hiss as well as shout abuses at the players. Sometimes, they keep mute in the performance that actually deserves cheering and ovation under normal circumstances. Their motive is to distract and discourage the performers as well as create a stressful situation in order to destabilize the performance pattern. As for the neutral audience, they watch for fun, enjoyment and recreational purpose. They do not take side and their assessment of the competition is usually objective, fair and unbiased. Audience have remarkable diverse effect on competition, depending on the athletes age, exposure, past experience, level of skill acquisition etc. all categories of audience attitude as well as the types of audience, generate effects on sport performance (Ezomoh & Porbeni, 2018).

The increasing awareness on the issue of violence in secondary schools sports in Port Harcourt Metropolis and which has been resulting in loss of human lives and properties indicate that violent behaviour in sports competition is a phenomenon that calls for public concerns and urgent intervention of educationists, sociologists, criminologists, psychologists, politicians, sport administrators, law enforcement agencies and journalists. The incident of sport violence has challenged the proposition that sport is a source for peace, unity, goodwill, and international understanding. Also taking a critical look at the major incidents of violence that have occurred, records have shown that sport violence is in the increase and extends beyond any geographical horizon.

Sport, which is regarded as an activity involving vigorous physical skill by the individuals who are motivated by the intrinsic and external reward gained through participation is one act of endeavor that cuts across various barriers such as age, sex, race, creed, economic status etc. but

one salient point is that those who participate in sports do so because of the expected positive gain or reward whether intrinsic or extrinsic. Thus means that the rewards expected by people could be good health, enjoyment fun, (intrinsic) or money, scholarship promotion etc. (extrinsic). Sport, being a social event performed not in isolation but rather in front of spectators both primary and secondary is supposed to be a civilizing and specializing process or source for promoting peace, friendship, good will, and international understanding and to give recreation and entertainment. However contrary to all these advantages, in recent times violence in sports has become a common occurrence among secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It is against this backdrop that this researcher attempted to find out if poor officiating, lack of sportsmanship spirit and poor facilities are triggers of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria.

This study may be of great benefits to high school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis in particular and Rivers State in general on the correlates of violence among high school students and which may help to minimize violence and thus make the sports competitions violence free, enjoyable and gain more sport audience in our high schools.

Methods

This study was conducted among the high school students of Port Harcourt metropolis in River state. Port Harcourt metropolis is the largest metropolis in the present Rivers State. It is located in the upland area of the state and houses three local government areas namely; Obio Akpor, Emoha and Port Harcourt city. Rivers State was created on May 27, 1969 and constitutes one of the earliest states which came into being upon the dissolution of the old regional structure. Rivers State is one of the 36 states in Nigeria; its capital is Port Harcourt. It is bounded on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the North by the Anambra, Imo and Abia States, to the East by Akwa-Ibom State and to the West, by the Bayelsa and Delta States (Crowder, 2016).

Rivers State is the nerve centre of the famous Nigerian oil industries and over ninety industrial concerns, including the Shell Petroleum Development Company of (Nigeria) Limited, Agip, Texaco, Elf, NPRC, West African Glass industry, Alcan Aluminum, Metaloplastic, NAFCON, to mention a few (Crowder, 2016).

Due to its beautiful layout, and peculiar topography, Port Harcourt, christened “Garden City” is accessible by road, rail, air and sea. Apart from being a railway terminus and having one of the busiest Airports in Nigeria, Port Harcourt has the unique natural advantage of being the nation’s second largest sea Port with another sea Port, “the Ocean Terminal” at Onne, a stone throw from it. By the 2006 census Rivers State is inhabited by 5, 198, 718 people (Nigerian Population Commission, 2006).

Presently, there are 23 Local Government Areas; 12 are urban while 11 are sub-urban. Rivers State is in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria, which is among the oil rich states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It is highly industrialized. It is grouped into upland and River-rine areas. The indigenous occupation of the upland areas such as; Ikwerre, Etche, Omuma, Ogoni, Ahoada, Omoku etc. is farming. The farmers produce the staple foods, such as; garri, yam, plantain, vegetables and fruits, while the indigenous occupation of the river-rine areas which include; Buguma, Bonny, Opobo, Degema, Andoni, Abonema etc., is fishing. All manner of sea foods and fishes are gotten from the water. Port Harcourt, which is the state capital, is thickly populated because of the presence of the oil companies located within it.

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The sample size was 1,000 participants. The multi-stage sampling technique of Area sampling techniques was used to divide Port Harcourt metropolis into zones A, B, C and D., while the purposive sampling

technique was used to divide each of the zones into five clusters, while the simple random sampling technique was used to select 50 participants each from the following twenty schools in the following order:

Zone A	Zone B
Rumueme	Rumuogba
Rumuokwuta	Rumuobiakani
Rumuolumeni	Ogniba
Eliparanwo	Woji
Rumuepirikom	Rumuomasi
Zone C	Zone D
Orowhorhukwo	Elekahia
Ogbunabali	Nkpolu orowhorhukwo
Rumuokwurushi	Ibaa
Rumuibekwe	Ndele
Rumuorolu	Rumuche

A structured, validated and modified Likert type questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the Cronbach Alpha, which gave a value of $r = 0.89$. The data collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of simple percentages and Chi-square.

Results and Discussion

The data analysis and discussion of findings are presented as follows;

Hypothesis 1: Poor officiating will not be a significant trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria.

Table 1. Chi-square Analysis of Poor Officiating and Sport Violence

Variable	Cal X ²	t- value	Df	P-value	Decision
Poor officiating	306.96	3.841	1	.05	Rejected

Table one above indicated a calculated x^2 value of 306.96, while the table value is 3.84, at the degree of freedom (df) 1, and the decision rule says that if the calculated X^2 value is greater than that of the table value, the hypothesis should be rejected. Therefore the hypothesis that says that poor officiating will not be a significant trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

This finding is in line with that of Fadoju (1998), who stated that it is common to find some officials who have made up their minds on who should win a match before getting to the field of play. It is also possible that such officials have been bribed or bought more often than not, by a particular team. These officials who mortgage their conscience seem to close their eyes to flagrant offences committed by the some teams. However, in the case of other teams, they are ruled for offences not committed at all, or the least offence committed would be taken seriously. Partiality may also be due to ignorance of the officials in the current rules guiding the sport.

Hypothesis 2: Lack of Spirit of Sportsmanship will not be a significant trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria.

Table 2. Lack of Sportsmanship Spirit and Sport Violence

Variable	Cal X ²	t- value	Df	P-value	Decision
Lack of Sportsmanship Spirit	178.3	3.841	1	.05	Rejected

Also, the table above shows a calculated X^2 value of 178.3 at df 1, while the table value is 3.841. Therefore, since the calculated X^2 value is higher than that of the table value, the hypothesis that says that lack of sportsmanship spirit will not be a significant trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

This finding supports that of Ezomoh and Porbeni (2018), which stated that when players and negative audience have an erroneous idea that they have an exclusive right to win and when they lose even to a better team, rather than accepting defeat and go to prepare well against subsequent encounters, they resort to violent actions. They do forget that in real life, you do not win all the time. Also in some cases, where a team anticipates victory because of its previous brilliant performances, but quite expectedly, the table is turned against the team and its supporters, violence is likely to ensue. Rough play can also be attributed to lack of sportsmanship spirit. All the above can trigger sports violence. Owolabi (2001), postulated that students and coaches who conceive competition as a do or die affair which is a demonstration of lack of sportsmanship spirit, over emphasize on winning which usually attracts huge reward in cash and kind, and the use of hard drugs, disrespect to rules and regulations governing smooth competition may precipitate a breakdown of law and order and consequently lead to violence and vandalism in sports competitions. He then suggested that sponsors, individual, cooperate bodies and government should as a matter of fact and in the spirit of sportsmanship, cut down on these investment geared towards winning by all means as antidotes to violence. Instead of conceiving competition as a do or die affair. The idea of sports and the joy of competition, and working hard and doing ones best should be vigorously pursued as antidote to violence in sports.

Hypothesis 3: Poor facility will not be a significant trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria.

Table 3. Poor Facility and Sport Violence

Variable	Cal X^2	t- value	Df	P-value	Decision
Poor Facility	306.36	3.841	1	.05	Rejected

The above table 3 indicates a calculated X^2 value of 306.36 at df 1, with a Crit. t-Value of 3.841. This result indicates that the calculated X^2 value is higher than that of the table value. Consequently, the hypothesis that says poor facility will not be a significant trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

This finding is in line with that of Ezomoh and Porbeni (2018), which stated that poor arrangements in a facility leads to violence when spectators of opposing teams are forced or compelled to sit close to one another, etc. Adesanya (2002), on sports facilities in Nigerian secondary schools wrote that the existing facilities in Nigerian secondary schools for sports and recreational purposes are exceedingly low and substandard. He concluded that lack of facilities and equipment has not only militated, against the performance of students but had caused violence in some sports competition particularly football competition. Facilities are not only needed for running successful competitions but also justify the higher institutions role and expectations as a breeding ground for varsity and national athletes. Adesanya (2002), therefore advised that modern up-to-date facilities and equipment should be available if good quality work is to be done in sport as the use of defective facilities and equipment could lead to physical injury and consequently, violence.

This view is supported by Wolfendom (1990), adding that the first and most obvious necessity if sports are to be practiced is the existence of suitable facilities. Inadequacy of facilities and

equipment is a prevailing factor affecting the success of any sports competition. Bucher (2003) opined that, facilities and programme are related. If the facilities are available, adequate and well-maintained, there is every possibility of having a good programme. For facilities to be constructed according to recommended standard in respect of size, surfacing, lighting and safety features, conclusively, the available facilities and equipment must be functional and should be designed to provide settings for optimum and safe participation and should allow for the implementation of a wide variety of activities. Therefore, the success of any effective programme is highly dependent upon appropriate administration of existing facilities and equipment.

Summary

This study was conducted among the sports audience of Port Harcourt metropolis in River state. Port Harcourt metropolis is the largest metropolis in the present Rivers State. The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The sample size for this study was 1,000 participants. The multi-stage sampling technique was used. A structured, validated and modified Likert type questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the Crombach Alpha, which gave a value of $r = 0.89$. The data collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of simple percentages and Chi-square.

Conclusion

Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn; (1) Poor officiating is a trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria; (2) Lack of Spirit of Sportsmanship is a trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria; (3) Poor facility is a trigger of violence among sports audience in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following measures if taken can reduce incidents of violence in sport if not totally eradicate it; (1) Only competent and knowledgeable officials should be used for matches. Officials with bad records should not be used. Officials who are known to be partial should be punished; this punishment could be in the form of suspension from officiating or downgrading; (2) Both players and supporters should be educated on the rules of games so that they become knowledgeable and, therefore, become intelligent players and spectators, they should be trained to accept the decision of referees, umpires etc. and people should not see competition as a do-or-die affair/event. They should accept the results of matches as they come; (3) There should be erection of physical barriers-barbed wired fences, nets etc. to prevent spectators from rushing into the field of play or crossing to attack opposing team or supporters. There should be many exits into the stadium for easy evacuation of spectators at the end of a match, while better facilities should be provided to ensure crowd safety and control of spectators' behaviour and seats provided especially for the popular side should not be easily removable.

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