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**SPORT AND AGGRESSION; A REVIEW OF FIELD STUDIES**

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## ABSTRACT

Aggression is a condition that includes the attitude and behavior of intentionally harming another living thing physically or emotionally (Ballard et al. 2004). According to emotional definitions, aggression is a behavior caused by anger. According to motivational definitions, intention determines whether a behavior is offensive or not. According to behavioral definitions, the underlying intention of the behavior is not important; Any behavior that causes physical or psychological harm to another is aggression (Erkuş, 1994). But, to a certain extent, aggression is the source and impetus for the behaviors necessary to sustain life (Köknel, 1996). For this reason, the present study was conducted to reveal whether the subject of aggression and sports is important for athletes, trainers and spectators, and whether they affect the performance of athletes in a positive way. Since the aim of the study was to evaluate the researches on a specific subject, the compilation method was used. During the research, a wide field survey was made, the relationship between sports and aggression was examined, and the studies conducted in Turkey and abroad in recent years were reviewed. In the research, it was stated how important the issue of aggression in sports is. Lenzi et al. (1997) suggested in their study that there is a positive relationship between aggression and sports, and hypothesized that sports activities serve as a means of controlling women's aggression and help men's individual psychosocial development. In addition, it is understood that individuals who do sports are more controlled during anger and aggression, and they emerge from the bad situations encountered during the competition with the least damage.

**Keywords:** Sport, Athlete, Fan, Aggression

## INTRODUCTION

Aggression; Today, it appears in various forms in different areas of life. Aggressive behaviors are frequently encountered in sports areas where people interact with each other (Erdoğan et al., 2018). Aggression is a set of negative behaviors that individuals may encounter throughout their lives. (Camadan and Yazıcı, 2017). Aggressive attitude includes actions that are faced verbally or physically and basically aim to harm the person in front of them (Yücel et al., 2015).

Today's competitive conditions have become very difficult and even a small factor has begun to play an effective role in achieving a successful position in international competition (Kumar, 2015). Due to the element of competition, rewards and success, sport has begun to turn into a window to the complexity of aggressive and violent behavior (Harwood et al., 2017; Mutz and Baur, 2009; Spaaija and Schaillec, 2019).

Sports are seen as a means of relaxation and ejaculation in the society. Considering the studies, it has been stated that sports reduce aggressive behaviors in people and even positively affect mental health (Canan and Ataoğlu, 2010; Özcan, Çelik and Paktaş, 2015). In some studies, it has been stated that the increase in the level of satisfaction from sports reduces aggression, and therefore, with the decrease of aggression with sports, people are quite calm, peaceful and happy compared to normal. (Özdevecioğlu and Yalçın, 2010; Yıldız and Ekici, 2017).

Although it is thought that the sports environment can destroy the aggressive behaviors prohibited by the society, the opposite situation can be encountered especially in performance-oriented sports (Derwent et al., 2010). Today, unfortunately, many human sports are also seen as an area where athletes verbally or physically attack their opponents and acts such as contempt (Stranger et al., 2017). Aggression and violence can be seen at all levels of sport, both professionally and amateur, and can affect athletes of all ages (Fields et al., 2010; Spaaija and Schaillec, 2019).

Although there is aggression in sports, it is undesirable for these two concepts to be together. Because the athletes are expected to exhibit an attitude of honesty and virtue and to act within the framework of fair play during the competition. In addition to this, displaying aggressive behaviors in sports is not suitable for the purpose of existence of sports. In addition, it is observed that in the sports environment, sometimes the athletes themselves and sometimes the fan groups exhibit verbal or physical violence-related behaviors with each other, especially in team sports (Mil and Şanlı, 2015).

The purpose of this review, made in the light of this information, is to see the ways in which aggression in sports is handled and to determine how aggression in sports has an effect according to various variables.

## METHODS

The presented study was prepared in a systematic review format. Basically, an answer was sought to the question of how aggression has an effect on various variables in terms of athletes, fans and students according to their sports status. In order to find the answers to these questions, a comprehensive research was conducted by examining full-text articles on aggression published between 2010-2021 in journals in TR index databases. “Aggression, “Aggression in Sports” and “Aggression in Athletes” are the keywords used when conducting research. After examining the “title” and “summary” sections, respectively, the findings related to the study questions and the conditions for including information about aggression in sports were sought. While examining the studies; No restrictions were applied regarding classifications such as review, meta-analysis, research article, or variables such as sport branch, type of exercise, and gender. As a result, a total of 30 articles that met the specified conditions were examined.

## RESULTS

A total of 30 full-text articles meeting the specified conditions were examined. As a result, it has been determined that aggressive behaviors in sports are affected by the sports branch and various sub-dimensions. It is seen that scientific studies on the subject have increased even more today. Considering the findings, important findings were obtained about the aggression levels of the students according to their sports status and the reasons for the aggressive behavior of the fans.

In addition, findings related to the aggression levels of the athletes engaged in team sports and individual sports were also obtained.

Some findings of the studies examined are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Some Studies on the Level of Aggression in Sports

Authors	Participants	Method	Results
Tazegul et al. (2011)	218 Tavsanlı Linyit Spor Spectators	Aggression Scale	A significant difference was found between age, alcohol and education variables and aggression level.
Gülle et al. (2017)	400 fans (200 football, 200 basketball)	Aggression Scale	It was concluded that the destructive aggression and passive aggression levels of the outdoor fans were higher than those of the indoor fans. It has been revealed that fans between the ages of 15-24 show more destructive aggression than fans over the age of 25. In addition, it has been concluded that the aggression levels of the fans are higher in those who do not do sports, according to the status of doing sports.

Celik et al. (2017)	698 students (284 women, 414 men)	Aggression Inventory	According to the destructive and passive aggression scores, it was concluded that female students are at a higher level, that the students studying at a sports high school have higher assertive aggression levels, that the corrosive and assertive behaviors of the students who do less sports are at a very low level, and that the parents are more aggressive as the education level rises. they have revealed.
Eraslan et al. (2017)	100 muay thai athletes (55 men and 46 women)	Violence tendency scale	It has been determined that female muay thai athletes are more prone to violence than male athletes.
Yamak et al. (2019)	113 Sports High School and 146 Sports Sciences Faculty students	Aggression Scale Trait Anger-Anger Expression Style Scale	Sports sciences faculty students show more aggressive behavior than sports high school students.
Aksu et al. (2020)	200 amateur football players	Aggression Scale	It has been observed that the level of aggression in amateur football players is at a low level.
Güvendi et al. (2020)	182 Athletes (56 women, 126 men)	Unethical Behaviors for Trainers and Perception Status of Athletes Scale Aggression and Anger Scale for Sports	It has been determined that as the perception of unethical behavior increases in athletes, aggressive behaviors increase.
Sahinler et al. (2020)	159 Students	Aggression Inventory	It was concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the aggression levels and sub-dimensions of the undergraduate students according to age, gender and educational status.

## DISCUSSION

In the presented compilation study; The current publications on aggression in sports were examined. Studies on sports aggression and the findings they contain will be discussed under separate headings.

### *Aggression Level of Athletes*

Aggression; Today, it appears in various forms in different areas of life. The high level of contact between the athletes, especially during the competition, causes the athletes to show aggressive behavior (Erdoğan et al., 2018). Looking at the studies in recent years, there are many studies examining the level of aggression of athletes (Kaya and Akça, 2015; Yıldırım and Abakay, 2015; Özdemir and Abakay, 2017; Galata et al., 2019; Dönmez et al., 2019; Shokoufeh and Türkmen, 2019). ; Güvendi, 2020).

Eraslan et al. (2017) examined the violence tendencies of the athletes engaged in muay thai sports according to the gender variable in their study. The violence tendency of the athletes was evaluated with the violence tendency scale. As a result, it was determined that female muay thai athletes were more prone to violence than male athletes. Kahveci et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between the aggression level and happiness level of taekwondo athletes. According to the findings of the study, it was determined that while the level of happiness increased, the level of aggression decreased. In addition, physical and verbal aggression of athletes with low father education level; On the other hand, it has been determined that verbal aggression is at a high level in athletes with medium and good family income. In a different study, Güvendi et al. (2020) examined aggressive and anger behaviors according to the perception of unethical behaviors arising from

situations related to athlete trainers in basketball, kickboxing, football, wrestling, taekwondo, fencing, and volleyball branches. As a result, it has been determined that as the unethical behaviors perceived by the athletes increase, aggressive acts and anger situations increase. In addition, according to the experience variable, it was determined that the aggression levels of the inexperienced athletes were higher than the others. When the studies examining the level of aggression in team sports are examined; Erdođdu et al. (2018) tried to examine the relationship between the aggressive levels of female athletes in teams interested in football and futsal in secondary education in terms of some variables. When the findings of the study were examined, it was determined that as the education level of the father increased, the level of aggression decreased. In addition, it was found that the level of aggression of the participants decreased in parallel with the increase in maternal education status. In addition to these results, according to the sub-dimension of the number of siblings, it was determined that the aggression level of the athletes with fewer siblings increased compared to those with more siblings. In another study, Aksu and Tutar (2020) examined the aggression level of amateur football players and according to the results of the research, it was determined that the aggression levels of amateur athletes were at a low level. In the studies, it is seen that variables such as amateur or professional athletes, age, family education status, gender, happiness level, behavior styles of trainers, and duration of sports affect aggression in athletes. It was determined that as the education level of the parents increased, the aggression level of the athletes decreased. The reason for this is the attentive attitudes and behaviors of educated parents in child development. The reason why amateur athletes display less aggressive attitudes than professional athletes can be shown as their different goals, low expectations such as financial gain, lack of pressure from fans, and the fact that they do their sports branch for the purpose of enjoying and having fun. Again, the reason why the duration of doing sports affects aggression can be shown that the athletes who do sports for a longer time are more experienced and their approach to events is more constructive.

### ***Aggression Level of Students According to Sports Status***

Aggression is a negative behavior that can be encountered at all levels of education, from pre-school to university education (Camdan and Yazıcı, 2017). In this respect, it is necessary to define aggression as a behavior that does not cover a certain age period and that people are exposed to or perform at every moment of their lives (Dođan et al., 2017). In the literature, there are many studies examining the level of aggression of students according to their sports status. When the studies on the subject are examined, it has been determined that the state of doing sports and the sport branch affect the level of aggression (Bahadır and Erdođan, 2016; Dođan et al., 2017; Bostancı et al., 2017; Çelik et al., 2017; Yamak et al., 2019; Sözen, 2019; Şahinler et al., 2020). Çankaya and Ergin (2015) examined the aggression levels of primary school 4th grade students according to the games they played. As a result of the research, it was found that there was a negative relationship between the outdoor games and aggression levels of the students, a positive relationship between the games they played on the computer and their aggression levels, and the aggression levels between the fighting and war games they played on the computer and the games on social sites; They stated that there is a negative significant relationship between intelligence and logic games and the level of aggression. In another study, Alp et al. (2014) examined the aggression levels of children who do and do not exercise regularly, according to their socio-demographic characteristics. According to the findings of the study, no significant difference was found in the evaluation of aggression levels of students according to gender, sports status, family income, academic achievement and education levels of parents. However, in another study, Şahinler and Ulukan (2020) examined the aggressive situations of undergraduate students engaged in sports. In line with the results obtained, it

was found that there was a statistically significant difference according to age, gender and educational status of the participants included in the research. In addition, it was understood that the relationship between the student group and the destructive-aggressive dimension increased as the age decreased and decreased as the age progressed. Manage et al. (2016) examined the relationship between high school students' participation in recreational activities and their aggressive tendencies. As a result of this, it was concluded that the level of aggression decreased in the relationship between the variables of parental education, attitudes, income status, TV watching time and sports status. In addition to these studies, Şeker and Uslu (2020) examined the aggression level of university students who do and do not do sports, and as a result of the study, they found that university students who do sports show more aggression than those who do not.

While variables such as gender, sports status, family income, academic achievement, and education level do not affect the level of aggression in some studies, it is seen that they do in other studies. The reason for this may be the characteristics of the research group, geographical location, culture, age group and family occupation, education and income status.

### *Aggression Level of Fans*

Fans try to meet their emotional needs such as expectation, joy, sadness, and socialization needs by integrating themselves with the team (Koçer, 2012). It can be said that the emotional intensity arising from this integration causes the fans to exhibit more aggressive attitudes. In studies on the subject, it has been determined that the aggression levels of the fans increase according to various variables (Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2015; Can et al., 2020). Tazegül et al. (2011) examined the aggression level of football spectators according to some demographic variables. At the end of the study, a significant difference was found between the age, alcohol and education variables and the level of aggression. In another study, Dal et al. (2014) examined the anger and aggression behaviors of the Turkish Football Super League derby match audience. In the findings of the study, the rate of those who stated that they did not always get angry with the wrong decisions of the referees was 38.1%, and the rate of those who stated that they always cursed was 18.6%. After the match, the number of fans who hurt themselves and throw various substances on the field despite the referee's mistake is quite low. Some of the participants also stated that they sometimes drink alcohol before, after and while watching the match. In addition, after the lost match, the fans reported that they did not feel any hostility towards the opposing team's supporters, players and the referee, and they reported that the post-match conversations in the press and the simultaneous viewing of the match by two different groups of fans could increase aggression. Gülle et al. (2017), on the other hand, examined the aggression level of outdoor and indoor field fans. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the destructive and passive aggression levels of the outdoor sports fans were higher than the indoor sports fans. It was concluded that the fans between the ages of 15-24 showed more destructive aggression than the fans over the age of 25. In addition, when the aggression levels of the fans are examined according to the status of doing sports, it has been determined that the aggression levels of the fans who do not do sports are higher than those who do sports.

It can be said that the fact that sports media organs do not broadcast objectively, the sports culture of the country, referee mistakes during the match and the provocative actions of the opposing team players or coaches during the match cause the spectators to exhibit aggressive behavior. However, the misuse of social media, the provocative discourse and behavior of club officials can be thought to increase the level of aggression among the fans.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, aggression behavior was evaluated in three different categories as athletes, students and fans. In these studies, aggression was examined according to various independent variables and some dependent variables.

In studies on aggression in athletes; It was determined that as the unethical behaviors perceived by the athletes from the coaches increased, the aggression levels also increased. In addition, it was found that inexperienced athletes showed more aggressive behavior than experienced athletes and the aggression levels of amateur athletes were lower. It was stated that as the happiness level of the athletes increased, their aggression level decreased. It has been stated that aggression in athletes is affected by variables such as mother's education level, father's education level, communication skills, and number of siblings.

It was determined that the aggression attitudes of the students were affected according to the sports patch status. According to the findings, it was determined that the aggression levels of primary school students were affected by the games they played, and the games played in the open area decreased the aggression level compared to the games played on the computer. In addition, it was observed that demographic variables such as students' family income, parental education level, age, gender and academic achievement affect aggression levels. It was also found that students who do sports exhibit more aggressive attitudes than students who do not.

When the findings of the aggression level of the fans were examined, it was seen that it changed depending on age, alcohol, education level and wrong decisions of the referees. It has been found that outdoor fans exhibit more aggressive behavior than indoor fans. In addition to these findings, it was concluded that the aggression levels of the fans who do sports are higher than those who do not do sports.

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