

AUDIENCE EFFECTS IN ACCURACY PERFORMANCE OF LAY UP SHOT AMONG COLLEGE BASKETBALL PLAYERS

DR. FADOJU, ANDREW OLU

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University
OF Ibadan, Ibadan

ABSTRACT.....

This paper sought to find out the effects of audience on the performance of layup shots by basketball players of F.C.E Abeokuta. Four hypotheses were postulated and tested in the study. The AAHPER Basketball Skill Test was employed for data collection while the data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and 't' test.

The results revealed that the performances of the players improved before a positive audience but dropped before a negative audience. It is therefore suggested that coaches should encourage their athletes to familiarize with the audience similar to the one under which they play.

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INTRODUCTION

Sport has been acclaimed to be one of the strongest factors that bring people of different races, colours and creed together. It is a unifying factor in social and political issues. This therefore, accounts for why sports, more than any other activity of life attracts the attention of a large number of people who are participating actively as athletes or indirectly as spectators, coaches, psychologists and the likes; perhaps, that is why Onifade (2000) described sport as an instrument for political, economic as well as social emancipation.

Sport audiences are often made of an aggregate group composed of spectators, fanatics, mob and supporters. It could also be made of what Eboh (2008) described as the active and passive audience. The active audience, he said 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 or booing, by the audience; such behaviour is capable of gearing players up and could enhance or deter performance. He further described the passive audience as those members of the playing ability of the competitors.

In the opinion of Hollingsworth (1996), audience can be classified as supportive and non-supportive. They are supportive when they tend to cheer the moves 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. He concluded that the non-supportive audience are mere spectators while the supportive audience are fans who are keen on cheering their team to victory.

In a related development, Harris (2001) opined that audience behaviour to occurrences in the field of play is usually characterized by positivity, negativity and neutrality. The positivity characteristic is 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, he explained, is to encourage their team to perform excellently and the atmosphere is generally relaxed.

The negative audience as described by Harris (2001) behave in an extreme way to the positive audience. They are generally hostile to the performers and they boo, hiss as well as shout abuses at players. Sometimes, they keep mute in the performance that actually deserves cheering and ovation under normal circumstances. Their motive he said is to distract and discourage the performers as well as create a stressful situation in order to destabilize the performance pattern. They do not take side and their assessment of competition is usually objective, fair and unbiased.

Singer (1996) reported that mere presence of co-actors acted as an arousal for his athletes and caused a decrease in their sports performance. In the same way, Herbert (2003) found out that his subjects performed worse in a competitive situation due to the presence of a hostile audience. However, studies carried out by the Triplett (1991) revealed that athletes' performance fluctuates as a result of the positivity and negativity of audience. Loy and Kenyon (1999) even said that a small group of spectators had no significant effect on the performance of a simple motor task. Whereas, it was earlier found (Williams and Krane 1993) that the skill performance of adolescent girls improved in the presence of male experimenters who verbally

reinforce their efforts. This paper therefore, aimed at finding out the effects of audience on the performance of layup shots by College Basketball players at Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Theoretical overview of audience effects in sports performance

An important area of study in sport psychology has been the audience or spectator influence on performance. It has repeatedly been shown that the effects of audience presence on task performance may vary with the individual and the circumstances. In the meta-analysis of 241 social facilitation studies carried out by Allport (1924), Dashiell (1930), Travis (1925) and Triplets (1897); as cited by Bond and Titus (1993), it was found that the presence of others facilitated task performance. Other researchers documented performance decrements in the presence of others (Husband, 1931; Kopfler, 1958; and Pessin, 1933; cited in Guido, 1997). Efforts to clarify the nature of social facilitation were stimulated by Zajonc's (1965) classic appropriation of drive theory as an explanation for the influential nature of spectators. He concluded that the mere presence of others was sufficient to increase drive, which would in turn elicit an individual's dominant response tendency. Cottrell (1968, 1972) expanded on Zajonc's (1965) review. He postulated that it is the perception that others can observe and evaluate performance, or evaluation apprehension that facilitates drive and thus, affects performance. The most recent interpretations of audience effects have been offered by Bond (1993) and Leary (1992). These researchers, in discussing self-presentation processes, state that self-presentational concerns, with their accompanying anxiety or activation, can be instrumental in performance outcome.

Research regarding the influence of audience size has been contradictory. Studies have demonstrated that the number of spectators is relatively unimportant in motor performance (Bond & Titus, 1993; McCullagh & Landers, 1976; Wankel, 1975), although arousal levels have been positively correlated with the number of observers present. Other research, especially field study, suggests that performance level increases with audience size, most notably for home teams (Schwartz & Barsky, 1977).

It is plausible that the presence of arousing spectators, when combined with other situational variables, may influence athletic performance. The operant influences, nevertheless are likely attributed to situational and self-referent thought processes. Experimental evidence suggests that there are situations in which drive theory fails to explain audience effects. Cox (1990) states that it may be necessary to turn to Easterbrook's (1959) cue utilization theory in such situations. This theory is based on constructs of audience distraction and attention focus. Additional explanations are offered by Duval and Wicklund (1972). These theorists propose that the presence of others raises the individual's objective self-awareness. Both theories reflect cognitive foundations in their accounts of social facilitation effects. While drive interpretations have received extensive consideration in the social facilitation literature, cognitive interpretations may be equally relevant. This is especially true when activation or drive is seemingly unaffected by experimental treatments.

Burtler and Baumeister (1998) experimented the effects of supportive audience on performance of arithmetic tasks (experiment 1) involved two audience conditions (friend or stranger). The result showed that poorer occurrence and speed were evident in the supportive audience condition.

Experiment 2 involved 2 conditions also (supportive and neutral) and performed a video game with two trials (practice and experiment). The results showed that performance was significantly worse in the supportive audience condition, while experiment 3 involved addition audience categories such as an adversarial audience who made negative comments about the participants' chances of being successful. In the experiment, participants were randomly assigned into four categories (supportive adversarial, neutral and control) and performed two trials of a video game (baseline and experiment). The results indicated that the presence of the supportive and adversarial audiences caused larger performance. Although, a supportive audience may promote pressure and positive perceptions are associated with a supportive audience, debilitating performance may occur. They concluded that a supportive audience creates friendly faces to performers but still may hinder performance.

Statement of the problem

The fact that audience behaviour has diverse effects on competition leaves controversy as to which type of audience will facilitate performance in sports. The study was therefore set to find out if there would be a difference in the performance of lay up shot skill in Basketball by selected Basketball players in the presence of a positive audience as opposed to negative or neutral audience types.

Hypotheses

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the performance of lay-up-shot by selected college Basketball Players upon exposure to positive audience.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the performance of lay-up-shot by selected college Basketball Players upon exposure to negative audience.
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference in the performance of lay-up-shot by selected college Basketball Players upon exposure to neutral audience.
- H₀₄ There is no significant difference in the performance of lay-up-shot by selected college Basketball Players upon exposure to positive and negative audience.

Methodology

The pre-post test experimental and control group research design was used for this study. The participants were ten (10) Basketball players selected from the F.C.E., Abeokuta Basketball team who have represented the College in the Nigeria College of Education Games. (NICEGA).

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation as well inferential statistics of student's t-test. The descriptive statistics would give an insight to the demographic information of the respondents while the inferential statistics would proffer directions to whether or not the hypotheses should be accepted.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection in this study was the modified AAPHER Basketball sports skill test, with a reliability coefficient of .70

Order of testing

The testing programme was carried out twice in a week for 12 weeks, the pretest was held on Monday with the 10 players performing the skill of layup shot on a Basketball court with only the researcher recording each athlete's score. On Wednesday, a positive audience of about 200 people and who have been briefed on how to manifest positivity was made to watch the players' execution of layup shots and the researcher recorded their scores. While on Monday of the following week, a negative or hostile audience of the same number of people was introduced and the scores were also noted according.

Finally, the players were watched by a crowd of about 200 people who had been instructed to keep mute throughout the performance of layup shot skill. In other words, a neutral audience watched them while they performed. Results were also recorded by the researcher

The test

Employing the modified AAPHER Basketball Sport Skill Test, with face validity and reliability coefficients of .70, the subjects began from a marked spot on the left of the court, just outside the circle. Each player attempted to make a Basket from a layup shot. Five trials were allowed on the left, later each player was allowed another five attempts on the right side. a basket made counted 2 points; but 1 point was awarded for shot that hits the rim but did not go in; a total of 20 points were possible.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE I

Analysis of audience effects on players' performance of layup shots before a positive supportive audience

(NO AUDIENCE)				(POSITIVE AUDIENCE)			
N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E	N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E
10	5	4.6	0.6	10	5.6	1.2	0.6

tc (calculated value of t-test): 5.9

tt (table value of t-test): 1.83

It is highly significant.

TABLE II

Analysis of audience effects on players' performance of layup shots before a negative nor non-supportive / hostile audience

(NO AUDIENCE)				(NEGATIVE AUDIENCE)			
N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E	N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E
10	5	1.6	1.1	10	4.5	1.8	1.1

tc (calculated value of t-test): 9.1

tt (table value of t-test): 1.83

TABLE III

Analysis of audience effects on players' performance of layup shots before a neutral audience

(NO AUDIENCE)				(NEUTRAL AUDIENCE)			
N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E	N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E
10	5	1.6	0.7	10	5.7	1.9	0.7

tc (calculated value of t-test): 0.93

tt (table value of t-test): 1.83

TABLE IV

Analysis of audience effects on players' performance of layup shots before the positive and negative audiences

(POSITIVE AUDIENCE)				(NEGATIVE AUDIENCE)			
N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E	N	\bar{X} MEAN	S.D	S.E
10	5.6	1.2	0.68	10	4.5	1.8	.68

tc (calculated value of t-test): 1.62

tt (table value of t-test): 1.83

Discussion of findings

This study, being an empirical type made use of the data collected before and after in the introduction of a type of audience. In Table I, for instance, the critical value of 't' is significantly lower than the 't' calculated, implying that there is difference in the performance of players when there is no spectator and when exposed to a positive audience. In other words, players did better as a result of the motivation received from the positive audience; compared to when they are playing under a non

audience condition. The presence of audience is an environmental factor that may mediate the perception of pressure to competitive situations. The components of the audience, such as size, support (or opposition) and performing before an informed audience may also affect the perceived performance of an athlete. Studies by Baumeister and Burtler (1998), Hardy, Mullen and Jones (1996), and Masters (1992) revealed that an audience used as manipulated deteriorated performance. Pressure manipulated in most of these studies as an independent variable with an expectation that the dependent variable (performance) would be affected.

In the case of exposure to a hostile audience, presented in table II above, players' performances differ greatly and as a result, the calculated value of 't' is significantly greater than the critical value implying that hostile audience have negatively influenced their shooting ability with mean values of 5 and 4.5 for the 'no audience' and hostile audience categories respectively. Baumeister and Showers (1986) reported that the presence of an audience relates to choking, because they (audience) add to the importance of performing well resulting in performance decrements. However, the audience in many studies have been manipulated either as supportive or opposing; or as passive or active. Hardy, Mullen and Jones (1996) performed a golf putting task with an audience that comprised a professional golfer and without an audience. Performance decrements occurred when the professional golfer evaluated recorded low performances. Based on these studies, unsupportive audience are likely to increase pressure and impede performance.

The performance of the players when they were exposed to a neutral audience did not remarkably differ from their playing ability without the crowd. Table III revealed that the critical value of t-test is significantly higher than the calculated value. This submission corroborates with that of Loy and Kenyon (1999) that a small group of spectators had no significant effect on the performance of a simple motor task.

Finally, in comparing the table value of 't' in Table IV with the calculated value, it was discovered that the difference in the performances was not significant. This might be due to their level of skill mastery. In Burtler's and Baumeister's (1998) experiment of audience effects on performance of arithmetic tasks, the results indicated that the presence of the supportive and adversarial audiences caused larger performance. Although, a supportive audience may promote pressure and positive perceptions are associated with a supportive audience, debilitating performance may occur. They concluded that a supportive audience creates friendly faces to performers but still may hinder performance.

Conclusion

From the findings, it could be concluded that the performance of athletes will definitely be affected by the presence of audience and more greatly influenced if the audience is of the positive or negative type. The positive audience enhanced greater performance while the hostile or negative audience intimidated the players to the extent that they lost concentration and performance level was low.

Recommendations

There is a marked advantage of playing before varying categories of audience and so; coaches should always familiarize their athletes with situations similar to the one under which they are likely to play. This is obtainable by organizing friendly matches for them.

Administrators of sports should provide for supportive audience in form of supporters', clubs, fans, etc. to accompany competing teams.

Skills should be well taught and mastered before exposure to crowd.

Public enlightenment could be embarked upon to campaign against hostility of spectators.

Matches should be played on neutral ground if possible.

Officiating and facilities should be adequate for the level of contest.

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