

Use psychological theories to explain aggressive behaviour

Psychology, Behaviorism



Use Psychological theories to explain aggressive behaviour. Describe three methods a coach might use to eliminate aggressive tendencies of performers and to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. (6 Marks)

Aggression is the attempt to harm outside the rules of the game. There are many different theories of how aggression is formed. Instinct theory was proposed by Freud and is the trait view of behavior and shows the drawbacks of this perspective, that behaviour is at all time predictable.

It proposes that aggression is genetically inherited and that a violent trait lies within everyone. Freud called this innate characteristic the 'death instinct', which purpose is to seek aggressive destruction. Lorenze put forward the idea that aggressive energy is constantly building and needs to be released. Bandura presented the social learning theory, which has the view that all behaviour is learnt. Aggression is not a genetically based innate characteristic but it nurtured by the external environmental factors.

So aggression can therefore be learned by watching and copying from role models and becomes an acceptable way to behave if it is reinforced. Aggression is likely to occur if it is part of the social and cultural norm of a group. The Frustration aggression hypothesis was proposed by Dollard, he proposed that frustration develops when goal-directed behaviour or need to achieve is blocked. The tendency towards frustration is increased when the pursued goal reflects ego or outcome orientation. Frustration occurs from environmental situations such as defeat, good opposition and poor officiating.

This is an integrationist theory because frustration generated by the environment triggers the aggressive gene. If the aggressive act is successful, frustration is released and the aggressor feels good. This is known as a cathartic release. But if the aggression fails and results in punishment, further frustration is generated. The aggression cue hypothesis theory presents a second integrationist perspective and builds upon Dollard's work. Berkowitz believed that frustration leads to an increase in arousal.

However, he disagrees that frustration alone will always trigger aggression. He proposed that frustration creates a readiness for aggression, which is triggered when a provocative environmental cue is present. Aggressive cues such as perceived unfairness for example; biased officiators will trigger aggression in sport if arousal among participants is high. However, better players have the capacity to control frustration and arousal. A coach could introduce some cognitive strategies to lower psychological arousal such as counting to ten to regain composure.

They could introduce somatic methods to eliminate aggression such as relaxation techniques and breathing techniques to calm down. The aggressive person could also be given a role of responsibility or shown that dysfunctional behaviour will be punished, for example in a match aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and the player will be substituted. But also non-aggressive behaviour should be positively reinforced. Emphasis on non-aggressive role models will help to eliminate aggressive behaviour. The control of aggression positively promoted an active and healthy lifestyle.