

Exploring Aggression in Boxing: A Comparative Study of Male and Female Boxers

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Cite this paper as: Dr. Man Singh (2024). Exploring Aggression in Boxing: A Comparative Study of Male and Female Boxers. *Frontiers in Health Informatics*, 13 (8) 6356-6359

Abstract:

This study investigates gender differences in sports aggression among state-level male and female boxers in Delhi. Using Makarowski's Sports Aggression Questionnaire, the study measured three aggression sub-components: Go-Ahead, Foul Play, and Assertiveness. Results indicated a significant difference in Foul Play scores, with males exhibiting higher tendencies. However, no significant differences were observed in Go-Ahead and Assertiveness between genders. These findings contribute to the growing discourse on gendered aggression in sports and provide useful insights for coaching and sports psychology practices.

Introduction

In modern competitive sports, aggression is a frequent psychological component that can influence both performance and behavior on and off the field. Sports such as boxing, which demand physical endurance, mental resilience, and strategic confrontation, naturally evoke various forms of aggression (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). The development of sports psychology has highlighted aggression not solely as a negative behavior but also as a potential asset when directed constructively (Bredemeier, 1994). As such, aggression in sports exists on a spectrum—from assertive play within the rules to hostile actions aimed at causing harm (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Boxing, a high-contact combat sport, exemplifies the fine line between controlled aggression and foul play. While assertiveness and initiative are essential for success, crossing the boundaries of sportsmanship can result in ethical breaches and penalties. Historically, the sport has reflected broader gender dynamics, with male aggression often normalized and even valorized, whereas female aggression has been more socially constrained (Sugden, 1996; Wacquant, 2004). This discrepancy raises important questions about how male and female athletes express aggression differently in the same sporting context.

Despite the increasing participation of women in boxing, empirical research exploring gender-based psychological traits like aggression remains limited, particularly in the Indian context. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to compare the aggression levels of male and female state-level boxers, offering insights that can inform athlete management, coaching techniques, and mental training interventions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research contributes to the nuanced understanding of how aggression manifests differently among male and female boxers. By identifying specific areas where gender disparities exist—particularly in foul play behaviors—coaches, trainers, and sports psychologists can tailor interventions to promote healthy emotional regulation and ethical conduct in competitive settings. Additionally, the findings offer a valuable reference for future gender-focused research in Indian

combat sports and can support the development of gender-sensitive training programs aimed at improving both performance and sportsmanship.

METHODOLOGY

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

Ninety (N=90) male and female Boxing players from Delhi, all of whom have competed at the state level, were selected for the study using stratified purposive sampling. The age of the subject's selected were ranging from 18 to 28 years.

SELECTION OF VARIABLES

The study was focus on the mentioned variable and Sub variables:

Variable: Sports Aggression

Sub Variables: -

- Go-Ahead
- Foul Play
- Assertiveness.

CRITERION MEASURES

Three aspects of aggression—the "go-ahead," foul play, and assertiveness—were measured for manifestation using the Makarowski's Aggression Questionnaire.

COLLECTION OF THE DATA

The data for the present study was gathered in person during the Delhi State Boxing Championship using the Makarowski's Aggression Questionnaire developed by **Radosław Makarowski (2013)**, A total of 90 boxer participated, consisting of 45 males and 45 females, all between the ages of 18 and 28 years. A stratified purposive sampling method was employed, targeting athletes who were actively competing in the event. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants, and informed consent was obtained from each athlete.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical significance was established at a level of 0.05. The mean and standard deviation of the sample were summarized using descriptive statistics, and the level of aggression between male and female boxing players from Delhi was compared using the Independent Samples t-test.

RESULTS

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Go Ahead	Female	45	21.35	2.83	0.42	-0.36	-0.49	0.624
	Male	45	21.71	3.93	0.58		-0.49	0.624
Foul Play	Female	45	11.64	3.79	0.56	-1.76	-2.07	0.041
	Male	45	13.40	4.22	0.63		-2.07	0.041
Assertiveness	Female	45	18.44	3.15	0.47	-0.87	-1.26	0.211
	Male	45	19.31	3.35	0.50		-1.26	0.211

Descriptive Statistics:

The mean and standard deviation (SD) for each subscale of aggression were calculated separately for male and female

participants:

The mean score for **Go-Ahead** for male boxers was 21.71 (SD = 3.93), while the mean score for female boxers was 21.35 (SD = 2.83). The mean score for **foul play** was 13.40 (SD = 4.22) for male boxers and 11.64 (SD = 3.79) for female boxers. The mean score for **assertiveness** was 19.31 (SD = 3.35) for male boxers and 18.44 (SD = 3.15) for female boxers.

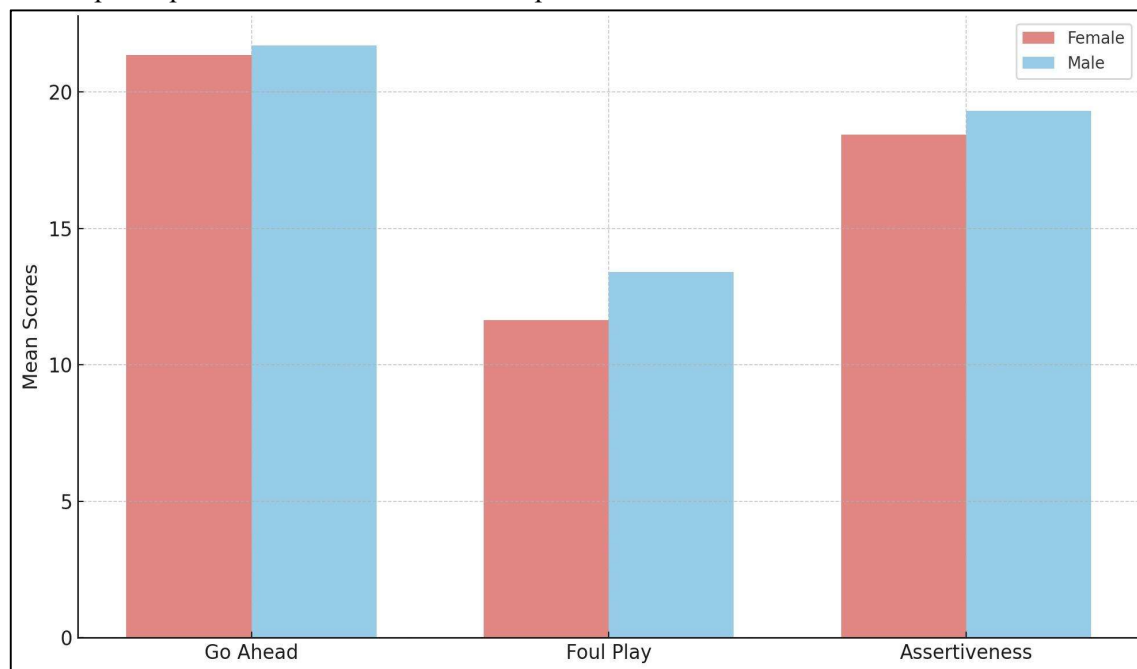
Inferential Statistics:

Gender-specific aggressiveness scores were compared using independent samples t-tests:

The mean difference of -0.36 for the Go-Ahead component was not statistically significant ($t = -0.49$, $p = 0.624$). This implies that the degrees of initiative and competitive drive exhibited by male and female boxers are comparable.

There was a statistically significant difference in the Foul Play dimension ($t = -2.07$, $p = 0.041$). Compared to female boxers, male boxers displayed more behaviors suggestive of rule-breaking or unsportsmanlike conduct.

There was no discernible gender difference in the Assertiveness subscale ($t = -1.26$, $p = 0.211$), suggesting that male and female participants had similar levels of competitive communication and self-confidence.



Discussion

The Go-Ahead and Assertiveness aspects of aggression did not significantly differ by gender, according to the study's findings. The mean scores in these categories were identical for male and female boxers, indicating a similar level of drive to take initiative and remain confident under duress. These findings are in line with previous research that highlights how female athletes' psychological preparedness and assertiveness frequently equal those of men athletes when they are given similar training opportunities (Gould & Maynard, 2009). This research dispels antiquated notions about women's passivity in competitive settings.

Conversely, the Foul Play component showed a statistically significant difference, with male boxers scoring higher than females. This aligns with studies indicating that male athletes, especially in contact sports, are more inclined toward rule-breaking behaviors under competitive pressure (Smith, 2000; Coulomb & Pfister, 1998). Cultural factors, gender norms, and societal expectations may contribute to this behavior, as male athletes might perceive aggressive conduct as a legitimate tool for gaining a competitive edge. Female boxers, possibly due to stricter social conditioning or different

risk perceptions, displayed greater restraint.

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