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# THE IMPACT OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES ON SPORTING EVENTS

## Introduction

There are several unethical practices that take place today in sporting events. These include match fixing, cheating, bribery, commercialization of sports, acting against the rules, etc. All these events impact the sports in a negative manner as they are considered to be unethical practices. Anybody who is related to sports can influence a game such as the players, referees, media and fans. People think that what they do is right for instance, a player may think that fixing a match is fine and it will not bother anyone, a spectator thinks that because he has bought the ticket, he has the right to do anything during the match. However, they fail to realize that such practices fail the whole idea of sports and sportsmanship. There are increasing activities of unethical behaviour in sports, which diminishes the interest of playing and watching them (Danish Swimming Federation, 2014).

## Research Question

The research question of this proposal is, **‘What is the impact of unethical practices on sporting events?’** This proposal will revolve around the problems of unethical practices, the penetration of these practices and how it impacts people, communities and the stakeholders of sporting events. Following are the research objectives that will be addressed in this proposal:

1. To understand the ‘unethical behaviour’ in sporting events.
2. To design an appropriate methodology that takes account of different views and demonstrates the real data.
3. To keep up with the quality of research design that ensures its validity and generalisability (Black, T., 2000).

## Literature Review

The role of ethics is very important in the field of sports and competition however, most of the times people fail to understand the difference between gamesmanship and sportsmanship. Often the two are mixed together, which negatively impacts everybody who is related to the sports event. The principle of gamesmanship is that winning is everything, as it includes cheating, foul play, injuring the player of opposing team, bending the rules wherever possible and do anything simply to win the game. The process of gamesmanship emphasise on the result of the man rather than the manner in which the game has been played. Contrary to this, sportsmanship is a more ethical behaviour wherein the importance to healthy competition is given as it facilitates virtue, personal honour and character. It helps to develop respect and trust between the competitors and all the stakeholders involved with the sporting event. The main goal of sportsmanship is to win only with honour and best efforts. There are four virtues that are indispensable ethics in the field of sports (Danish Swimming Federation, 2014).

1. Fairness: Fairness is the first ethical virtue in sports wherein the athletes and coaches should follow the guidelines and rules of their sport and any team that adopts unfair means or violate the rules develop an uneven playing field. The players, referees and coaches are not discriminated on any grounds based on their gender, race, ethnicity or religion and referees apply same rules to all the teams that cannot be changed or personal bias cannot be shown for any of them.
2. Integrity: Integrity is the second ethical virtue in sports wherein all the players should keep up with the integrity of game and by no means should they gain advantage over another team or player with a skill that is not a part of the game. For instance, when a player acts of being injured and actually is not, it questions the integrity of the game. It means that the player is intentionally deceiving the officials that only affect the credibility of the game (Danish Swimming Federation, 2014).

3. Responsibility: Responsibility is the third ethical virtue of sports wherein it is a must for the players and coaches to take responsibility of the performance and their actions on the field. They should also be responsible for their emotions and not get involved in unnecessary fights or arguments during the game. Many a times it is seen that the players give excuses as to why they were not able to perform well. Responsibility is when they accept their faults and only focus on things that can be controlled like their performance. It is also important for the players and coaches to be up to date with the latest game rules, regulations and laws that govern their sports (Jones et al., 2001).
4. Respect: respect is the fourth and the final ethical virtue of sports wherein the athletes should respect their team mates, opponents, referees and officials. The coaches and referees should also show respect towards all the teams and their perspectives. In this regard, it is also important for the fans and spectators of the game to show respect towards the game, teams and officials (Jones et al., 2001).

The model of sportsmanship is built on the idea that it encourages development of the character that also influences moral character of the society. The manner in which sports is played can effect a person's or a community's ethical and personal moral behaviour. Further, literatures suggest that the field of sports is a highly influential activity that involves the whole nations, governments and different communities of people. In fact, sports is also related to nationalism as many people find it a symbol of their love for their lands, which is why if any unethical behaviour is practiced during sports or a game, it can cause a set back and question the credibility of the game and its players. It also questions the credibility of players and many people can be disheartened by knowing this fact. Furthermore, it is also important to point out that unethical practices are not only done by players, but referees, coaches and governing institutions as well. Many a times, the coaches and referees take bribes to make a particular team win the match. Such games do not set right example and the

fairness of the game is questioned. Referees are also paid off during betting that disrupts the game and makes wrong judgements (Huddleston, K., 2013).

Several times, unethical practices are also done by the fans and spectators of the game. They do not influence the game or make money out of it, but when they buy tickets, the spectators think that they have the right to do everything during the match. Hence, many times it is seen that the spectators litter in the stadium, they even spit on each other, throw away glasses, packets of chips and several other rubbish. The spectators also abuse the players during the matches, and sometimes they even throw items on them. The fans think that only their team has the right to win, without understanding that even the opponent team has equal chance and the right to win. Such activities by the spectators create a nuisance during the game and often disturb the match or sports that are being taken place. Such spectators take sports very seriously and often disrespect the authorities, players, coaches, other fans and the property grounds (Jones et al., 2001).

Media also is one of the elements that lead to unethical activities in sporting events because it tends to commercialize the sports industry. The commercialization of sports tends to built pressure on sports industry, which may lead to the occurrence of unethical activities. Moreover, media is also a very important media that builds a certain image of the players, events and authorities, which can show a biased behaviour. The biased nature is not an ethical practice that can lead into unethical practices (Danish Swimming Federation, 2014).

### **Research Design**

The research design for this research proposal is developed to understand the impact of unethical issues in sporting events and to what extent does it influences players, coaches, governing agencies, communities and societies as a whole. The research design in this context is based on ethnography wherein, we can understand the impact of unethical practices

over different sections of people in the society. It is a qualitative research design, in which a few cases from history will be taken into account and an understanding of its experiences and feelings will be considered (Girden, E., 2001). An exploration of the social phenomena of unethical practices will be considered in this regard instead of testing any hypothesis. Further, in this research the analysis of data will involve the interpretation of meanings and functions of unethical practices that takes place during sporting events. The main role will be taken by verbal explanations of people and their feelings will be given priority and statistical data and quantification will play secondary parts in it. Moreover, in this research design, a lot of importance will be given to the cultural context of people, their emotions on the national sport of their country, the sentiments that are attached to the whole event and with players in particular. A lot of field will also take place during this process in order to meet people from different backgrounds, ethnicity, and sexual orientations and race so that everyone's point of view can be added during this research. Finally, the patterns of people's behaviour, their ideas, beliefs, perspectives and emotions will be added through language and other mediums of communication, wherein their expression of behaviour will be understood during the research observation. Henceforth, the research study design will consist of ethnographical practices, because it is best used to understand the feelings and behavioural patterns of a particular section of society (Sage Publication, 2006).

### **Research Methodology and Methods**

The research methodology for this kind of study design will include field based studies, wherein actual people live and real emotions of people can be studied. There will be no laboratory based research because we are concerned about the impact of unethical practices in sporting events, which can only be understood if real life examples are taken. In this study, people will be selected on the basis of sampling, wherein a random population of people will be considered for data analysis. Different techniques will be considered in this research so

that a valid understanding is built for the conclusion. This study will also be personalized and researches will be carried out through face- to- face interaction and contact with people, players, authorities and other important stakeholders who are related to different sporting events. Furthermore, this research will also consider different sports and games so that the interest of every individual is taken into account. This research is multifactorial because more than one data collection technique will be used in this methodology that will be mostly qualitative in nature (StatPac, 2014). The study design will also require a long term commitment during the research for proper interaction and communication with people whose opinions will be considered during an extended period of time. The research setting will also be taken place during a sporting event so that live emotions and behavioural patterns of people are also included, which will definitely give a true picture of the influence of sports and unethical practices in the lives of players, coaches, governing institutions, media and fans or spectators. Further, the research methodology is inductive in nature wherein, descriptive details will be accumulated to generalize the behavioural patterns. Importance will also be given to include the maximum feelings and ideas of people, which will also make the research holistic in nature (Girden, E., 2001).

The research will show if unethical behaviour impacts its important stakeholders or not. If yes, then to what extent and how the behaviour of people, their feelings and attitudes change towards the sporting events (Durkheim, E., 2013).

### **Data Analysis**

The collection of data will take place in the context of capturing the meanings and activities of people in real settings. The data collection method in this research design will consist of different techniques that will include face- to- face interviews, telephonic interviews, discussions, participant observation, questionnaires and statistical techniques. The data

collection will be based on these above techniques and an analysis will be made in accordance to it. The analysis of data will be made to get a real picture and better understanding of how unethical practices impact sporting events. Moreover, the researcher will also focus to analyse the data with reflective technique so that biased opinions do not form the conclusion. Data analysis should be done with neutral values and without any stereotypical notions. The interviews will generally be recorded and transcribed later ensuring the interviewer to proceed with taking notes with availability of all the information that will be used for complete analysis. Secondary research and analysis of documents will also help to provide insight about the impact of sporting events to different sections of people. It is very important to note that most of the data collection will take place in urban settings because most of the people from urban settings comprise of becoming stakeholders to sporting events (Montie et al., 2009).

**Quality Issues**

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It is very important to keep up with the quality of research because only a good quality research design and procedures can ensure righteous and valid results. In order to ensure quality of the research methodologies, it is important to consider that during the collection of data and analysis of the research, the opinions of researchers should be free of all kinds of biases. Having a prejudiced opinion and including it during the research will only result in a biased research design and will not show a true picture of evidences. The aim of the research should be to study a field or topic, do proper research and analyse them with a neutral bend of mind. Such research ensures quality and credibility to the work done. While conducting the research, it is also important to follow all the instructions and guidelines and work only in accordance to the principles and standards of quality research. In many studies, a research is taken as high in quality if it is peer reviewed. Peer reviewed research ensures that the research is conducted in the best possible manner and can be validated properly. The study

should include all the important elements of a research and properly describe the data, sampling methods, population groups and the settings in which the data was recorded. The definitions should be clarified; subject of the study, concepts, statistics, variables, analytical techniques and every element of the research should be explained properly so that the reader is able to understand it. A complete research that adheres to all the principles and procedures is said to be a high quality research. In this research also, such implications will be given importance and a stress will be laid on the principles and instructions of conducting the study. Moreover, a high quality research is also validating and generalized, as it can be applied to a large population groups (Black, T., 2000).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethics are very important in any research design be it qualitative or quantitative. The researchers should understand the indispensable need of ethical research and give importance to it at every level. It is important to take responsibility of the study that is being conducted and understand its relevance in the society. A research also has the capability to impact the society, which is why it is always necessary to have ethical considerations. The aims of research can only be fulfilled when the research is conducted ethically with truth, validity and avoiding errors. Misinterpretation of data is extremely unethical and it cannot be considered as a good research, the conclusions will be misleading and a false picture will be created in this regard. The researchers should also consider the fact that the work and study should be original, because there is no place for copy and plagiarised work in a research design. It is cheating and removes mutual respect between the researchers and authorities. The research is also accountable to the public as people benefit from researches, which is why ethical consideration needs to take place in this study. In this context, the ethical considerations will also be considered while studying the impact of unethical behaviour during sporting events by removing any form of prejudice and stereotypical notions while conducting interviews and

interacting with people. In this field of study it is important to realize the fact that sports is an emotion for people, similarly it may also be a big deal for researchers. While carrying out data collection and processes of analyses, the researches should strictly prohibit any emotion and work with objectivity so that the research takes place successfully. It should also be noted that in this process, the sentiments of people are not hurt and every procedure takes place through a standardized method (Huddleston, K., 2013).

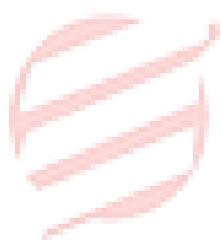
### **Limitations and Contributions of Research**

Following are the limitations to this research design:

- The population groups may not show their real emotions or provide with faulty behavioural patterns.
- While interviewing players, athletes and higher authorities it is possible that they give wrong answers because of the fear of media and their public image.
- The researcher may at sometime become prejudiced and misinterpret the data because of the fact that sports are very important to most of the people and it affects the emotions of a person. So keeping with the principles and standards laid by the research design can be difficult during this study and analysis.
- It is also possible that the quality of research is not maintained because of not being able to work in accordance with the instructions and guidelines.
- The research may also have flaws with the analysis of data and interpretation of results because of its sensitive topic (Montie et al., 2009).

This research will also contribute to other researchers in future who want to study the relationship of sports and emotions of the people. Since sports are very important part of human societies and communities, many researches are conducted in this field. This research will be helpful in sports section and may even benefit when people will understand the

impact of unethical behaviour and they might stop such practices. It will also create awareness among different communities and help to evolve the field of sports in a better manner (Danish Swimming Federation, 2014).



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