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Final Literature Review

Deceptive Nonverbal Behaviors in Soccer

**Introduction**

Soccer players have been known to embellish injuries on the field so I wanted to take a deeper look at why players use deceptive behaviors in games. First, I gained a better understanding of possible motives of players by reviewing previous research. Next, I provided an overview of nonverbal communication and deception behaviors in soccer using information from my textbooks. Lastly, I created two research questions to display the relationship between deceptive behavior during the game and its effects on free kicks awarded by referees as well as winning percentage.

**Literature Review**

Ademilokun's study consists of qualitative research of the nonverbal aspects of soccer fans at a college in Nigeria. He gathered information by photographing and videotaping fans from various viewing centers located on the "Obafemi Awolowo University" campus. He give an in-depth analysis on soccer fan's nonverbal gestures, and explains the significance of different articles of clothing worn at games. He explains that soccer jerseys can convey different meanings. They communicate being a fan by displaying the teams colors and logos, and can displaying your social status if you can afford an expensive jersey in a very poor area. He points out that in Nigeria soccer jerseys can been seen as a luxury especially for college students. Since most people cannot afford jerseys they wear headbands, belts, and head warmers in an attempt to communicate their association with the team. I also found it interesting that even if there is a language barrier between fans at an international soccer game, it is still easy to tell what team someone supports from a passionate gesture or their clothing.. Ademilokun concluded that soccer fans at his university effectively communicate meanings nonverbally through their clothing and how they react to plays on the field with gestures.

Furley, Dicks, and Memmert were interested in studying how a soccer shooters body language can affect how he is perceived by other players and the goalie in a penalty kick situation. They believe that when a kickers body language is signaling dominance they will be viewed more positively then a kicker with a submissive body language. They tested this by filming four actors with soccer experience as they got ready to take a penalty shot. They implemented dominant or submissive body postures as they prepared for the penalty kick. The participants consisted of 22 male goalkeepers with an average of 14 years of experience. They were shown the clips of the actors penalty shots stopping the film right before the shots are taken. Next, they filled out scales rating the players on multiple categories including if the kick was successful, perception of the player, power of the shot, and accuracy of the penalty kick. They found that the players who displayed dominant body language were perceived more positively by the participants than the players that exhibited a submissive body language. This shows that a shooters nonverbal behaviors affect the other players perception of them. This study helps contribute to my area of interest by demonstrating how nonverbal behaviors in soccer can change players perceptions.

Furley, Dicks, Stendtke, and Memmert wanted to examine if rushing and quickly taking a penalty shot, not looking at the goal before the shot, would cause a poor performance. They also wanted to see how it affects other players outlook as well as the opposing goalkeeper's behavior. The first experiment that they implemented in this study was broken into two parts so it could test for the nonverbal behaviors of both hiding and hastening with goalies and outfield players. The results indicated that both goalkeepers and players perceived the behaviors negatively, and the shooter is likely to do worse when taking a penalty shot.

The second experiment was testing to see if this shooting technique affects a skilled goalkeepers ability to save a shot. They tested this with twelve semi-professional goalies and had two shooters take twenty penalty shots each. They observed and found evidence that the goalies were slightly delayed by the hastening and hiding behaviors. This study is very relevant to my topic because it shows how nonverbal behaviors can affect the outcome of a penalty shot in a soccer game.

Greenlees, Leyland, Thelwell, and Filby were interested in studying how both gaze and uniform color affect the goalie's perception of the shooter in a penalty kick situation. They tested this by putting a camera at face height, in the center of the goal, where the goalie would typically be standing. They then filmed four players set up the soccer ball and prepare to take a penalty kick. The players did this for four shots each implementing 10% gaze and 90% gaze while wearing both red and white uniforms. The participants for this study were 12 goalkeepers with years of semi-profession experience who had to watch the 16 videos and answer various questions about their perceptions of the shooter. The results indicated that players with 90% gaze were seen as having more positive characteristics then players with 10% gaze. The same was shown with uniform color, red was perceived as more positive then white. Shooters who wore white uniforms and used 10% gaze were the most likely to be saved by the participants. This study directly relates to my topic by showing that nonverbal aspects of soccer such as gaze and uniform color can affect the goalkeeper's expectation of the shooter.

The main focus of this study is to show sex differences in sports related touching behaviors. Kneidinger, Maple, and Tross took a sample of one hundred nineteen male college baseball players and fifty-two female college softball players for this study. The teams were observed and touch interactions were recorded on a sheet of thirty-eight behaviors. Over three thousand touches were recorded over the course of the study. Their first hypothesis, "that females would perform touching behaviors more frequently than males", was supported. The females in the study did in fact use more frequent touching behaviors then males. Furthermore, males and females utilized different types of nonverbal touching behaviors which supports their second hypothesis. The third hypothesis, "that females would perform touching behaviors associated with negative game events more frequently than males", and fourth hypothesis, "that game location (home versus away) would moderate the frequency of touching behaviors performed by each sex" were both supported as well. They confirmed from the information that they gathered, females touched more than males in losing games, and males touched more at away games while females touched more at home games. It would be very interesting to see this study done for other sports like soccer in the future. This study shows how nonverbal touch can play a major role in a sports setting, and can vary in frequency based on the given scenario and sex.

Soccer players have been known to embellish injuries on the field in an effort to get a free kick by misleading the referee. Morris and Lewis wanted to look into how soccer players who; "attempt to deceptively exaggerate the effects of a tackle", are judged by viewers. They examined this by conducting three different studies. The first study took three hundred fifteen college students and broke them into groups of 15. Each group then watched one of the 21 soccer tackle videos and had to decide if the person being fouled was exaggerating the effect, not exaggerating, or unsure of their intention. They found that the participants agreed on the players that were trying to be deceptive, and they also agreed on the tackles that were unclear.

In the second study Morris and Lewis filmed a player attempting to dribble around a defender, but if the defender is able to tackle him then he must convincingly exaggerate the outcome. Next, they took 45 college students and broke them into three groups based on their own rating of their soccer knowledge. They viewed each of the five videos, two times, and then rated the level of exaggeration of the tackle by choosing one of five percentages. Although the level of the participants knowledge had no effect on the results, they still demonstrated that the observers decisions matched up with the players intentions. Their third study compiled behaviors into multiple categories and decided if they were deceptive or not. From this study they were able to find that deceptive interactions on the soccer field are observable to an extent based on behaviors.

In this study Turman set out to discover if a coach's immediacy behaviors can predict an athlete's satisfaction and team cohesion. The participants for this study consisted of 307 high school athletes from various sports. Turman had thirty-two coaches hand out surveys to their players to test for numerous attitudes and behaviors including coach nonverbal immediacy, athlete satisfaction, and teen cohesion levels. Turman successfully demonstrated that verbal immediacy from a coach is a predictor of the athletes' satisfaction. This information provides numerous future implications. Coaches can use this knowledge to their advantage and have a more satisfied team by being aware of their intimacy behaviors. Furthermore, future research could be done to see if player satisfaction relates to the winning percentage of a team.

Wood and Wilson wanted to study goalkeeper movement on penalty shots in high and low threat situations and its affect on the shooter. They had 18 college soccer players take five penalty shots each while wearing eye tracking equipment. The goalie would either be stationary or waving his arms before the shot in a high or low threat situation. They found that the shooters were more distracted when the goalkeeper was waving his hands before the shot. They also tracked the accuracy of the shots and observed that when the goalie was waving his arms the shots were less accurate, hitting closer to the center of the goal. This study applies to my overall area of interest by indicating that a nonverbal hand gesture made by a goalie can affect the accuracy of a shot and distract the shooter.

**Overview of Soccer & Nonverbal Communication**

These articles helped to support my overall topic of nonverbal communication in sports, primarily in soccer. Nonverbal gestures and clothing worn by fans of a team can communicate multiple meanings including social status in some areas of the world. A player's posture and body language on the soccer field can change how he is perceived by the other team. Quickly taking a penalty shot can cause it to be less accurate, but it can also slow down a highly skilled goalkeeper's reaction time. Nonverbal gaze and even the color of a players uniform can affect a goalies perception and expectation of the shooter in a penalty kick situation. Nonverbal touch is frequently experienced in sports and is generally used more by females. Just by waving his hands, a goalkeeper can reduce the accuracy of a penalty shot by distracting the shooter's nonverbal gaze.

Nonverbal communication is prevalent in sports, it can be used by fans to support their favorite team, or by players to help win the game. A high five or slap on the butt is a common way for a player to communicate a job well done to a teammate. These examples tend to be very active and intentional forms of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal gaze, posture, injures, and body language are particularly interesting to me. These behaviors tend to be more passive and less intentional then the high five or pat on the butt, especially in soccer. Many soccer players may not be thinking about things like body language or gaze, but they should because they can affect both the outcome of a penalty kick and others perception of them. Finally, players are not the only receivers of these nonverbal messages, referees can also be influenced by the actions and clothing of the players on the field.

**Deceptive Behaviors in Soccer**

Soccer players around the world are known for faking or exaggerating injuries in games. Chapter 48 of our textbook say that, "deception is a complex social activity because those who engage in it must hide their true feelings and thoughts while trying to make a reliable and credible impression." Players who use deceptive behaviors in a game do just that by utilizing different display rules, to manage their emotions after a collision occurs. Players who are slightly injured from a tackle use intensification by giving the appearance of having a worse injury then they actually have. Some players use the simulation display rule by acting like they are in severe pain when in reality, no such feeling is present. These utterly blatant acts of deception are synonymous with Machiavellianism.

I wanted to look into why soccer players would utilize such negative tactics, just to fake an injury. One reason that could explain this is high Machiavellian traits in the person who is faking the injury. My persuasive communication textbook states that, "People with highly Machiavellian belief systems are cynical and believe that most people are unscrupulous." The player may feel that the immoral action is acceptable if the ends justify the means. This means that players objectives (getting a free kick/winning the game) are of major importance to them, and they will use any method to achieve them. This idea was the motivation for my research questions on why soccer players use deceptive behaviors.

**Outcomes**

Soccer players have been known to embellish injuries on the field, but research has yet to display the relationship between deceptive behavior during the game and its effects on free kicks awarded by referees as well as winning percentage. Previous studies such as, "Morris and Lewis's Tackling Diving: The Perception of Deceptive Intentions in Association Football (Soccer)" have indicated that deceptive actions on the soccer field are observable to an extent based on behaviors. Using this information, a study should be conducted to determine noticeable deceptive behavior's affect on a referee's decision to award a free kick. This can be done by analyzing video of professional soccer matches for a season, recording all of the instances of deceptive behaviors and observing their effects on the referee. Taking the next step with information found in prior research lead to the following research question:

RQ1: What is the relationship between soccer player's deceptive behaviors and free kicks awarded by referees?

Furthermore, this study can be used to find out if exaggerating or faking an injury increases a team's chance of winning the game. If these two variables are positively related they would indicate a reason or motive for players to use deceptive behaviors. It could also show that players with a Machiavellian belief system use nonverbal deceptive behaviors to persuade referees and ultimately win the game. As such, the study would also test the following research question:

RQ2: What relationship exists between deceptive behaviors related to winning percentage.

**Conclusion**

Soccer players have frequently exaggerate injuries in games, and I wanted to figure out why players use deceptive behaviors in games. I gained a better understanding of possible motives of players by reviewing previous research. I found that nonverbal communication can be used by fans to support their favorite team, or by players to help win the game. Many soccer players may not be thinking about things like body language or gaze, but they should because they can affect both the outcome of a penalty kick and others perception of them. Players are not the only receivers of these nonverbal messages, referees can also be influenced by the actions and clothing of the players on the field.

Next, I provided an overview of nonverbal communication and deception behaviors in soccer using information from my textbooks. I concluded that players have a Machiavellian view point that the ends justify the means. They also use display rules to intensify a feeling of pain or simulate emotion that is not present to deceive everyone viewing the tackle.   
 Lastly, I created two research questions to display the relationship between deceptive behavior during the game and its effects on free kicks awarded by referees as well as winning percentage. Previous studies such as, "Morris and Lewis's Tackling Diving: The Perception of Deceptive Intentions in Association Football (Soccer)" have indicated that deceptive actions on the soccer field are observable to an extent based on behaviors. Using this knowledge, I can view video of soccer games, determine when deceptive actions take place, and determine their effect on winning percentage as well as free kicks.

Some possible limitations could be people's ability to detect deceptive behaviors. Although people usually feel that they are good at detecting deception it is not always the case. Our textbook states that, "some individuals' natural behavior gives the impression that they are telling the truth (honest demeanor bias), whereas others' natural behavior leaves an impression that they are lying (dishonest demeanor bias)". This was made apparent in the study in chapter 48, where police were only 49% accurate at distinguishing deceptive behavior. This could also be a non-factor because that study involved both verbal and nonverbal aspects and Morris and Lewis already found that people can accurately identify deceptive nonverbal behaviors in a soccer match.

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