



The Values Associated with the Sport: Analysis and Evaluation of *Sportspersonship*

Luis-María Iturbide-Luquin* and Paula Elosua-Oliden

Facultad de Psicología, Universidad del País Vasco, San Sebastián, Guipúzcoa, Spain

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ABSTRACT

There is a general opinion that social and moral values play an essential role in learning sports among children and teenagers. This article identifies some of the values associated with sports. Based on a content analysis of the Code of Sports Ethics of the Council of Europe, the values associated with sportspersonship have been categorized: Commitment, Enjoyment, Respect, Fair Play and Participation. Using this categorization, the article describes the development of an instrument designed to assess sportspersonship in young athletes: the MSQ (Multidimensional Sportspersonship Questionnaire), consisting of 21 typical performance items which show an adequate internal structure. Lastly, in light of developing future training programs to reinforce positive values, an analysis was performed on the relationships between the different categories of values, gender and type of sport.

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Los valores asociados al deporte: análisis y evaluación de la *deportividad*

R E S U M E N

Dada la importancia que los valores sociales y morales juegan en el proceso de aprendizaje deportivo en la infancia y adolescencia temprana, el objetivo de este trabajo es identificar los valores asociados a la práctica deportiva. Sobre un análisis de contenido del Código de Ética Deportiva del Consejo de Europa, se definen los valores de compromiso, disfrute, respeto, juego limpio y participación. A partir de esta categorización, se describen la construcción y las propiedades del Cuestionario Multidimensional de Deportividad (CMD). Compuesto por 21 ítems de rendimiento típico, el CMD presenta una adecuada estructura interna e invarianza factorial con respecto al sexo. Con el fin de desarrollar programas de formación que puedan potenciar valores, se analizan las relaciones entre las dimensiones postuladas, el sexo y la modalidad deportiva.

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Introduction

In the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), explicit reference is made to a child's right to practice sport in a safe and healthy environment under the supervision of competent adults. This declaration of intent, which materialised in the Code of Sports Ethics of the Council of Europe, represents a commitment by European sport authorities not only to promote physical fitness and enjoyment but also to encourage respect, tolerance, equality and sportspersonship (Iturbide & Elosua, 2012).

However, there is no consensus among the scientific community on the most effective formula for developing training programmes that nurture values associated with sport. As pointed out by Gutiérrez, Carratalá, Guzmán, and Pablos (2010), there are discrepancies in both how to define the values of sportspersonship and how to develop and transmit them. In fact, the lack of a theoretical framework consistent enough to integrate the training needs of young people and the educational aspirations of families may be one of the primary reasons behind the current proliferation of programmes geared to fomenting sportspersonship (Martín-Albo, Núñez, Navarro, & González, 2006).

A retrospective review of the topic shows an initial period in the 1980s, when scientific research focused evaluating attitudes, interpreting attributions and estimating perceived competence. In the 1990s the first systematic studies were published on the evaluation

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: luismaria.iturbide@ehu.eus (L.M. Iturbide-Luquin).

and cultivation of sports-related values, the most noteworthy by Lee (1993, 1996) as part of an international research project on the ethics in sports among young athletes.

Since that time, research on sportspersonship has been scarce, and at times based on very rudimentary instruments (Gómez-Mármol, De la Cruz, & Valero, 2014; Sáenz et al., 2014). Moreover, the absence of a universally accepted definition of “sportspersonship” and the lack of consensus regarding its inherent values, leads us to speak more of fair play than sportspersonship (Simon, 2015).

In this regard, Gómez-Mármol and Sánchez-Pato (2014) claim that sportspersonship is an ethical ideal made real by following the rules of the game, respecting opponents, and a committing to fair play; thus, a one-dimensional focus is insufficient. Sportspersonship, they claim, is an ideal of ethical conduct that gives meaning to fair play behaviors; while fair play is identified with particular behaviors characterised by respect for rules, maintaining equal opportunities and impartiality.

This focus, which considers values as desirable goals that serve as peoples’ guidelines in life, brings us closer to the educational dimension of sport, a dimension which beyond acquiring psychomotor skills (Sallis et al., 2012), producing adaptive mental schemes (Kulina, Brusseau, Cothran, & Tudor-Locke, 2012) and creating healthy behavior habits (González & Portolés, 2013), seeks the integral training and development of people (Gómez-Mármol & Valero, 2013). Sport—as Dorado (2012) contends—is the perfect scenario for establishing interpersonal relationships and learning values, which, as they consolidate, are reflected in social behaviors such as solidarity, cooperation and teamwork.

However, taking part in sport does not on its own accord ensure the learning and development of values (García-Calvo, Sánchez-Oliva, Sánchez-Miguel, Leo, & Amado, 2012). On the contrary, it can also bring about disadvantages, especially if those responsible for organizing children’s sports reproduce a model of professional sport that is competition- and result-oriented, putting the interests of adults over the educational needs of children and adolescents (Pinheiro, Camerino, & Sequeira, 2013).

Martínez et al. (2014) claim that while sports can be used as a driver for behaviors and attitudes, sport in itself does not have intrinsic values: it is neutral by nature, an aseptic thing on which the *environment* exerts its influence. This means that practicing sports, if organized according to models suitable to the age and skills of the participants, can be an effective educational tool. However, if it is focused on early-age specialisation and a reverence for results, it can generate anti-sportspersonship behaviors and truncate the learning process (Durán, 2013). For this reason, speaking of sport-related values tends to generate a certain vagueness and confusion (Hartmann, Sullivan, & Nelson, 2012). The term “value” lacks precision; the scarcity of instruments oriented to assessing values and the appearance of *constructs* difficult to conceptualize, like “countervalues” and “negative values”, seem to explain the precariousness of the study of sport-related values in general and of sportspersonship in particular (Sáenz et al., 2014).

The RVS (Rokeach Value Survey) is among the instruments most commonly used to assess the values associated with sport. Conceived by Rokeach (1967, 1973), the objective of this scale is to determine which values people prefer or which values they most identify with. The RVS offers an inventory of 36 values, 18 instrumental values relating to modes of conduct such as responsibility, obedience or honesty, and 18 terminal values relating to states of existence such as interior harmony, freedom or happiness. The survey takers then have to rank the values according to how important they are as guidelines in life. The order of preference indicates which criteria they use to select and justify their actions, and to assess both people and situations.

Similar in structure and popularity is the SVS (Schwartz Value Survey), a list of 56 values (30 terminal and 26 instrumental) cre-

ated by Schwartz (1992) which athletes rate on a Likert-type scale. Unlike the RVS, the classification criteria of this scale leans toward the motivations on which the values are based, considered a cognitive response of individuals to 3 types of basic needs: physiological, social and institutional. This approach to measuring values has been highly criticized, in some cases because the difference between instrumental and terminal values is imprecise, and in others because the distinction between personal and social values has received little empirical verification (Gouveia et al., 2010).

In an attempt to overcome these theoretical and methodological shortcomings, Lee, Whitehead, and Balchin (2000) created the YSVQ (Youth Sports Values Questionnaire), an 18-item list of values (enjoyment, sportspersonship, companionship, compliance, fairness, etc.) to be evaluated by athletes on a 7-point rating scale of importance. This questionnaire showed that the most important values for young athletes were enjoyment, personal achievement and self-worth, while the least important were imitating idols and winning (Lee, Whitehead, Ntoumanis, & Hatzigeorgiadis, 2013).

Lastly, Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, and Provencher (1997) developed and validated the MSOS (Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientations Scale), a 25-item questionnaire divided into 5 subscales (*commitment* toward sport participation; respect for *social conventions*; respect for *rules and officials*; respect for *opponents*, and *negative approach* toward sportspersonship) for determining individual differences in orientation to sportspersonship (Merino, Arraiz, & Sabirón, 2016).

The MSOS has been used in a number of studies on sportspersonship (Can, 2016; De Bofarull & Cusí, 2014; Lamoneda, Huertas, Córdoba, & García, 2015; Monacis, De Palo, & Sinatra, 2015; Pulido, Sánchez-Miguel, Leo, Sánchez-Oliva, & Amado, 2013; Sezen-Balçikani, 2014; etc.) and has been translated into different languages and validated in different cultures. Many authors, however, have questioned the *negative approach* subscale of the MSOS because of low internal consistency and deficient factor structure; it has even been excluded, as Lamoneda, Huertas, Córdoba, and García (2014) point out, in numerous studies on sportspersonship.

Having set this panorama, the aim of this study is three-fold: (a) identify the values that underlie the *sportspersonship* construct, based on the content analysis of the Council of Europe Code of Sport Ethics [annex to Recommendation No. R (92) 14 on the European Sports Charter (1992)]; (b) develop and validate a measurement instrument that will evaluate individual differences in orientation toward sportspersonship in the identified values, and (c) analyse the relationships between the variables gender and type of sport and between each of the values associated with sportspersonship.

Method

Scale construction

Content analysis

In the first phase, an inductive content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was conducted on the Code of Sports Ethics of the Council of Europe, a document in which the European Union ministers responsible for sport lay out the institutional framework for the practice of sport and sign an agreement to preserve and promote the educational values of youth sport.

The purpose of this analysis is to detect categories related to values that distinguish sportspersonship as an ideal of ethical conduct and fair play as a behavior characterized by respect for the rules, maintaining equal opportunities and impartiality.

This tentative list of categories is then revised and filtered process by a panel of 10 sports psychology specialists and 2 experts in methodology. The procedure used is the Delphi method adapted to the

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