

Assessment of Sportsmanship in Case of Institutionalized Adolescents, Deprived of Parental Cares

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Abstract

Sportsmanship is a behavior, coherent to the normative standards concerning social and moral interrelation communications in the field of sport activities. Our aim is to study the purposefulness to a sportsmanlike behavior in the group of actively sporting children deprived of parental cares, who were brought up in the Bulgarian special social institutions. The respondent group includes 36 children – 27 girls, training basketball and track-and-field athletics, and 9 boys, training basketball; all are coming from children social institutions. We evaluate the meaningfulness towards fair sportive behavior using the *Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientation Scale Measurements*, MSOS, developed by Vallerand, Briere, Blanchard and Provencher (1997). The children, deprived of parental cares, who were engaged in various sports, do not demonstrate lower sportsmanship standards than the children, coming from normal families and engaged in the same form of sport activities. Social status of the institutionalized children does not negatively influence their respect for the established fair play rules in case of purposeful sport activities. The athletic behavior helps to diminish the ill-tempered or harmful sportsmen manifestations in a sport competition environment. However, whether it will be transferred into a normative practice into their everyday life out of the sport terrain is a subject matter to future studies.

Keywords: sportsmanship, adolescents, social institution, sport.

1. Introduction

It is proved that in human communication sport is a universal language and powerful tool for mutual understanding. Due to its capacity to unite people without paying attention to their culture or religion, it could contribute to the development of behavioral skills as tolerance and reconciliation as universal values. The idea about the fair play is a focus, a central spot at each athletic level (Knortz, 2002). Sportsmanship is a multifactorial construct, constituted of five subscales that measure the attitudes towards the rules and norms established in the respective environment; toward the training and competition process; the opponent athletes and officials; towards empathy for the rival; it is an attitude towards the training process, *per se*. Sportsmanship is coherent to the normative standards of social and moral relationships in the sporting field. Usually sportsmanship is bound with behavioral virtues and norms, consistent with the sportive spirit (Stornes & Bru, 2002). According to Arnold (1984) the sportsmanship is depicted as generosity/magnanimity, good sense of humor, respect, good manners and civility, amiability, compassion, altruism and liberality. The good sportsman holds in the competition spirit; in his mind its perception is strongly connected with the above-mentioned virtues. To be a sportsman means to adhere to the dividing lines drawn by the imposed already set of stereotypes for what is permitted, what is collegial and moral; some sportsmen often jump over these limits because of their will to win a victory “at any cost”. (Georgiev, Fenerova, 2014). The sportsmen, even the most renowned, possess some defects that are typical for everybody in the general human population. They also follow some explicit behavioral lines, they have their own personal life-standards and norms like all common people. Participation in competitions imposes on them specific rules and norms which quite often unfavorably and destructively influence over the competitor, himself/herself. Thus, s/he may demonstrate lack of respect and self-control, intolerant behavior, and even aggression towards the people around him/her - athletes, trainers of the opposite team, judges, officials. In other cases, the athlete refuses to fulfill the trainer’s instructions and breaks through every restraint. Each behavior may be non-sportive if the sportsman uses unallowed, illegal, i.e. non-sanctioned actions against their opponents and so affects the final results.

Children, who start to attend sport activities, learn about sportsmanship from their trainers, parents and relatives, from the television sport broadcasts. The grow-ups perceive the behavior models of their sport idols and if they operate in sportive manners, the future sportsmen will set up a conduct, adequate not only to the field of sportive games, but also to the field of the life games. In any case, no matter whether the final result is

perceived as a fair game, never mind whether it is a victory or a loss, the fair play and the well-deserved, merited behaviors are the foundations of the real sportsmanship. The trainers and the parents should set models for their children through their personal demeanors, as well. Greeting before and after the match, even in case of loss, attitude towards the opponent team and players, respect for the officials – these are just a part of the normal sportsmanlike normative environment. To internalize them is a difficult but necessary task for each child, who grows up in such a virtue environment; the role of the sportive educators comes here. Non-sportive acts and activities relevant to the verbal and even physical aggression against the opponent or the officials may move out from sport schools to other social fields, directly into the child's social contexts – family, school, peer groups, etc. Is it possible the children and the institutionalized grow-ups, engaged with sport activities, may demonstrate sportsmanlike behavior even if there is obviously a lack of parents' bearing model during the time of their development? According to the research findings, the institutionalized care has a negative impact on the psychological child's health, on its social (Tharp-Taylor A., 2003; Pantiukhina E., 2009; Shakhmanova A., 2010) and cognitive development (McCall J., 1996; Sloutsky V., 1997; MacLean K., 2003), on the feeling of loneliness and anxiety. Most often these problems occur in the adolescence time period and are pursued by intensive changes in the cognitive, social and emotional specific characteristics of the grow-ups (Kingery J. et al., 2011). The changes in the child's development in the age between the 7th and 14th year usually lead to creating a sense of personal identity. In the so-called middle child's age they develop a sense of self-respect and individuality through comparison with the peers. At the beginning of the adolescence some impetuous physical and psycho-social changes are occurring; they accompany the puberty and may cost the youngsters some troubles. When the adolescents are in an environment (school, home or institution), which is not adapted to their needs and forthcoming necessity for independence, they may lose the confidence in themselves and be susceptible to negative behavior models such as laziness, lack of respect for the Self of the other and of their own, aggressiveness, etc. The lack of enough self-respect during this transition usually leads to the indispensability to set up a new type of adherence to the peers' group. The adolescents evaluate themselves and their own personal conduct while observing the peers' reactions and not only waiting for the assessment and acclamation of the adults. To be accepted by the peer group is of paramount importance; the rejection may be destructive. They are usually becoming vulnerable to negative partnership pressures and risk behavior which is usually in combination with their limited life-experience and undeveloped capacities to make a decision. On the other hand, the adolescents are emotionally unstable and rapidly change their mood; this, in combination with more complex social interactions, may sharpen and aggravate the negative state in the emotional balance of the growing up individual. The behavior of the young person is guided, managed and run by a frequent deprivation; of course, the specific characteristics of each person have strong impact, as well. The research results, outlined by Ignatov, one of the co-authors of this text (Ignatov, Mosin, 2014), concerning the factors in reference to health and long life, show the importance of the psychological status and motivated activity. They are formed in the children and youth age. The studies of other authors show that participation in extracurricular sport activities improves the personalized sense for physical and psychical well-being, improves the speed of socialization for children, deprived of parental cares, as in respect to social activity, autonomy and social adaptation (Angelcheva, 2014; Vilhjaimsson & Kristjansdottir, 2003; Moore et al., 1991; Sallis et al., 1998, Iannotti et al., Group HPAF, 2009). Therefore, the hours spent at the sport area have positive effect on many life spheres of the institutionalized children as a protector counteracting to the risk factors which are linked to the deprivation environment of the social institution, namely general physical and psycho-social retardness, if compared to the peers coming from the general population and two-parent families.

In reference to the above-mentioned we, the co-authors, formulated the following **hypothesis**: The institutionalized children deprived of parental care, manifest lower degree of sportive tolerance in comparison to the children coming from families with parents; the reason is in deprivation and lack of adequate social environment and upbringing

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The respondent group consists of 36 children – 27 girls training basketball and track-and-field athletics (both collective and individual sports), and 9 boys training only basketball (just collective sport); they are coming from the Bulgarian social institutions for children, deprived of parental cares. We compare their sport results with the results of the 16 girls and 19 boys, who are actively training basketball in a Sofia sport club. Arbitrarily, we divide the observed respondents in experimental groups (children, deprived of parental cares) and control groups (children with normal two-parent families). The girls in EG1 who train basketball are 15, and the young male basketball players in EG2 are 9. The control group (CG1) of the children, training basketball, is of 16 girls and the boys control group (CG1) is of 19 boys. Additionally, we supplement an Experiment group of children, training track-and-field athletics (EG2), which is constituted of 12 girls from the institutions for children, deprived of parental cares, in order to find out and to measure whether there is any difference between the

attitudes toward sportsmanship in the two cases – collective and individual sports. The specific features of the observed adolescent respondents are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the observed persons according to sex, age and sport of the respondents

№	Sport	Group	Girls		Group	Boys	
			Number	Age		Number	Age
1	Basketball	EG1	15	14,6	EG2	9	15,3
		CG1	16	16,4	CG2	19	17,2
2	Track-and-field athletics	EG3	12	13,7		-	-

2.2. Instruments

We evaluate the adolescent orientation to sportsmanship using the *Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientation Scale Measurements (MSOS)*, developed by Vallerand, Briere, Blanchard and Provencher (1997) which is adapted to the Bulgarian case (Georgiev M, Fenerova D.2014). The original MSOS scale is a multidimensional construct of 25 items and consists of 5 subscales, each with 5 items: 1. *Respect for social conventions* (1,5,11,16,21); 2. *Concern and*

Respect for Rules and Officials (2,7,12,17,22); 3. *Concern and Respect for One's Full Commitment Towards Sport Participation* (3,8,13,18,23); 4. *Respect and concern for the opponent* (4,9,14,19,24); 5. *Negative approach toward the practice of sport* (5,10,15,20,25). The assessment is made by the 5-point Likert's scale, from one to five: not at all, to some extent, I cannot judge, in a considerable extent, fully. According to the Bulgarian adaptation of the test there is a strongly expressed inner coordination between the items included in the five subscales. On the other hand, the mutual links between the five subscales are rather low; this evidence confirms the orthogonal factorial structure of the methodology (Georgiev , Fenerova 2014). The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, limited between 1 (does not correspond at all to me) and 5 (corresponds exactly to me) (Vallerand et al., 1997).

2.3. Procedure

Before to start the administration process we met the trainers and the educators and informed them for the purpose of the study and the whole research procedure.

Before to start the administration process we met the trainers and the educators and informed them for the purpose of the study and the whole research procedure. The questionnaires were given to the institutionalized children to fill them in quiet surroundings but before important competitions. The trainers of the respondents did not personally present at this act and the researchers were presenting in order to help if any question or problem was arising during their completion. The questionnaires were anonymous. The respondents were explained that the questionnaire completion did not take up more than 20 min, that the analysts would not assess their sport development and also that there is no correct or/and incorrect answer. The fieldwork results were processed mathematically and statistically by implementation of the hypothesis approbation (Student's t-criteria for independent samples with guaranteed probability of $P \geq 95, 0\%$).

3.Results

The findings of our research show that in the collective sport of basketball a comparison between the institutionalized girls and girls from the sport club registers statistically a considerable difference in favor of the children, deprived of parental cares, in four indicators from the sportsmanship test (Table 2).

Table 2. Data comparison of EG1 and CG1. Girls training basketball

№	Indicators	Girls EG1		Girls CG1		d	t _{emp}	P%
		\bar{X}_1	s	\bar{X}_2	S			
1	Concern and Respect for Social Conventions	22,4	3,74	18,5	4,84	3,9	2,500	98,2
2	Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials	23,1	2,95	17,5	4,56	5,6	4,053	99,9
3	Concern and Respect for One's full Commitment Towards Sport Participation	23,6	2,87	23,9	1,48	0,3	0,415	31,9
4	Respect and concern for the opponent	21,4	3,70	14,3	4,09	7,2	5,092	99,9
5	Negative approach toward the practice of sport	12,7	4,42	6,5	2,25	6,2	4,950	99,9

In the case of factors *Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials*, *Respect and concern for the opponent*, and *Negative approach toward the practice of sport* the difference guaranteed probability is $P = 99,9\%$. In the case of factor *Concern and Respect for Social Conventions* the difference guaranteed probability is $P = 98,2\%$. There is no considerable difference between the data obtained in the field of indicator of attitude to the training and competition process – a criterion which was equally seriously accepted by the respondents from both groups - $P = 31,9\%$. Similar were the results obtained while comparing the data from the five criteria in the basketball training boy-groups both from the institutions and the sport club (Table 3). Again there is a lack of registered statistically considerable differences in respect to the motivation for training and competition ($P = 32,0\%$). Both respondent groups demonstrate positive attitude towards the selected sport. We registered statistically considerable differences in the indicator *Respect and concern for the opponent* and they are in favor of the institutionalized boys ($P = 99,8\%$). In this comparison we registered more strongly expressed *negative approach toward the practice of sport* ($P = 99,7\%$); in our view, it is probably related to the higher degree of criticism. With regard to the factors *Concern and Respect for Social Conventions* and *Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials* we also registered statistically considerable differences ($P > 95,0\%$). All of them manifest that the social status of the institutionalized children does not influence negatively over the observance of the established fair play rules when there is a purposeful sport activity.

Table 3. Data comparison of EG2 and CG2. Boys training basketball

№	Indicators	Boys EG2		Boys EG2		d	t _{emp}	P%
		\bar{X}_1	S	\bar{X}_2	S			
1	Respect for social conventions	21,2	3,53	23,7	2,05	2,5	2,392	97,6
2	Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials	22,6	2,88	19,1	3,42	3,5	2,636	98,6
3	Concern and Respect for One's full Commitment Towards Sport Participation	23,7	2,69	23,4	1,42	0,3	0,417	32,0
4	Respect and concern for the opponent	23,7	2,06	17,7	4,99	6,0	3,433	99,8
5	Negative approach toward the practice of sport	11,4	4,67	7,30	2,32	4,1	3,227	99,7

The results we got in case of girls after comparing the data from the collective sport basketball and the individual sport track-and-field athletics also arrested our attention (Table 4).

Table 4. Data comparison of EG1 and EG3. Girls training track-and-field athletics and basketball

№	Indicators	Girls Basketball EG1		Girls Athletics EG3		d	t _{emp}	P%
		\bar{X}_1	s	\bar{X}_2	s			
1	Respect for social conventions	22,4	3,74	21,1	3,58	1,4	,973	66,0
2	Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials	23,1	2,95	22,8	3,31	0,4	,318	24,7
3	Concern and Respect for One's full Commitment Towards Sport Participation	23,6	2,87	23,8	1,96	0,2	-,154	12,1
4	Respect and concern for the opponent	21,4	3,70	18,9	5,14	2,6	1,498	85,3
5	Negative approach toward the practice of sport	12,7	4,42	11,8	4,57	0,9	,518	39,1

We had expected to obtain differences in constructing the sense of collectivism in the basketball group, which might bring about higher values of the studied variables as compared to the data from the group engaged only in track-and-field athletics. However, we registered a lack of statistically considerable distinctions in all five indicators included in the questionnaire ($P < 95,0\%$). The only trend observed was towards higher values in case of girl basketball team and in reference to indicator *Respect and concern for the opponent* as compared to the data for the girls training individual track-and-field athletics; we concluded that it is likely determined by the game collectivism of the former ($P = 85,3\%$). In this case a probable reason for the lack of statistical difference obtained, while analyzing both EGs, was the correct approach of the sport experts who had properly worked on personality formation of each individual sports girl – everyone should be prepared to take part as a competitor in

the collective and in the individual sport as well. Similar regularities were found while comparing the achievements in each separate indicator that is included in our questionnaire concerning the sportsmanship in both EG respondent girls and boy's groups (Table 5). The lack of statistical differences ($P < 95,0\%$) is an objective criterion for our assumption that the education direction and methods, used in communicating with these children, is correct as far as it concerns the development of a set of systematic values through the sport activities simultaneously with providing a favorable impact on their psychological development and their physical efficiency.

Table 5. Data comparison of the EG1 and EG 2. Girls and boys training basketball

№	Indicators	Girls EG1		Boys EG2		d	t_{emp}	P%
		\bar{X}_1	s	\bar{X}_2	s			
1	Respect for social conventions	22,4	3,74	21,2	3,53	1,2	0,806	57,0
2	Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials	23,1	2,95	22,5	2,88	0,6	0,469	43,6
3	Concern and Respect for One's full Commitment Towards Sport Participation	23,6	2,87	23,6	2,69	0,1	0,056	4,2
4	Respect and concern for the opponent	21,4	3,70	23,6	2,06	-2,2	1,629	88,2
5	Negative approach toward the practice of sport	12,7	4,42	11,4	4,67	1,3	0,678	50,8

However, the situation in the control groups (CG1 and CG 2) of the girls and boys training actively basketball differs, differs. To some extent we have been surprised by the reliably better result of the boy respondents from CG2 as to indicator *Respect for social conventions* compared to the data obtained in the girls CG1 – $t_{emp} = 4,296$ c $P = 99,9\%$ (Table 6). In this case the boys, obviously, form more successfully their attitudes and behavior to conduct a correct “sport struggle” with the rival players during the basketball game. Probably, the trainers ‘approach in the case of the boys is more relevant and the competitors, themselves, demonstrate virtues which are key virtues for the win-strategy of each sport competition. Here one more indicator appears – the difference, established between both groups in respect to *Respect and concern for the opponent*. The data obtained by CG1 (girls) is with 3,4 units lower than the outcomes of EG2 (boys). This difference is statistically considerable - $P = 96,4\%$.

Table 6. Data comparison of CG1 and CG2. Girls and boys training basketball

№	Indicators	Girls CG1		Boys CG2		d	t_{emp}	P%
		\bar{X}_1	s	\bar{X}_2	s			
1	Respect for social conventions	18,6	4,84	23,7	2,05	5,1	4,296	99,9
2	Concern and Respect for Rules and Officials	17,5	4,56	19,1	3,42	1,6	1,204	77,3
3	Concern and Respect for One's full Commitment Towards Sport Participation	24,0	1,48	23,4	1,42	0,6	1,208	77,2
4	Respect and concern for the opponent	14,3	4,09	17,7	4,99	3,4	2,189	96,4
5	Negative approach toward the practice of sport	6,6	2,25	7,3	2,32	0,7	0,961	65,6

Shields et al. (2007) claim that in case of male sportsmen it is more likely to observe no sportsmanlike behavior because they are more aggressive compared to women. Some studies support this theory (Coulomb Cabagno and Rasclé, 2006; Tsai and Fung, 2005, cited after Dorak F. , 2015). Conversely, Miller et al. (2005) claim that male sportsmen possess higher degree of “concern and respect to the rival and commitment and recognition of the rules and norms in the sport they practice in comparison to the sportswomen”. Obviously, there is no unanimous opinion on this question and so, it is necessary to make additional fieldwork. The considerable statistical data we registered in the separate sportsmanship indicators in respect to the differences between the respondent groups of the training children from the institutions and the children training in professional sport clubs, is, probably, effected by the fact that the institutionalized grow-ups perceive the sport as a socialization and entertainment channel, as a kind of enjoyment of the discipline they are training and not as a tool or instrument to reach high sportive achievements. Evidence we find in the lack of statistically considerable differences between the girls and the boys in case of factorial variables included in the questionnaire. In the adolescent age, the idea that the trainers should set high demands in order to pursue high scores and high rating in the professional sport, may provoke behavior which, if and when aiming at victory at any cost and by all means, may bring about a loss of empathy towards the rest of the children in the sport area. Usually there is a prejudice that the institutionalized kids, because of deprivation and lack of parental control, possess abnormal

aggressive behavior. In the study of Gencheva, N. et al. (2016), however, this claim is refuted and its outcomes show that sport activities, to higher extent, have learnt the children, deprived of parental cares, to obey definite behavior norms and rules, to demonstrate empathy and to be motivated to engage in sports not just because of the great wins but also because of the emotions and social contacts and communication which the sport channels grant them. Due to their abilities and achievements, the children from the institutions feel equals to the children who have parents. Another study of Dorak F. (2015) shows a correlation between the personal characteristics and the sportsman behavior. In the group of the sportsmen with strongly expressed extrovertness we observed high rate of correlation between the behavior respecting the norms and social environment and the neurotic and psychic sportsmen; as well as it is more likely they to experience difficulties while obeying the regulations and respecting the trainers, the opposition competitors, the judges, etc. It is possible in the social communication the positive sport influence to be very strong over children deprived from parental cares. The sportsmen take part in such activities because of different reasons - social acceptance, personal aims and goals to prove another inner motivation, etc. It is possible to accept that a child, who respects the work, the efforts, the achievements of the opposite player, to behave in the same way to people in the very day-life out of the sport area and independently to build up good social interrelations, neglecting the fact that s/he has no parents; this again still more focuses on the importance of the sport activities.

Conclusion

This is a pilot study and the small number of the respondents does not provide us a stable base to make explicit findings. However, it registers and finds out that we may reject our hypothesis concerning the notion that the children, deprived of parental cares but involved in sport activities, demonstrate lower sportsmanship than children coming from normal two-parent families. Participation in sport activities decreases the stress, the pressure and aggressiveness and pulls them out of the routine and conventionality of the everyday life in the social institutions. It proves that it is necessary to measure sportsmanship in all its manifestations and to stimulate it because of the very strong professionalization of the sport, itself. The sportsmanlike behavior decreases the tendency, typical for the sportsmen, to use ill-tempered or harmful conduct model in a competitive sport environment. However, whether it will be possible valuably to transfer this into their future lifestyle patterns is also a subject matter to future studies

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