

Thematic Article

Tools Supporting the Measurement of Fair Play in Sport

Gabriella Hideg¹

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Abstract

In the course of our work so far, we have repeatedly emphasized the loss of morality and value in societies, which has an impact on all areas of life (including sport). Today, we are far from the original values of sport and the ideals of Baron Coubertin; fair play as pure play. Among the ethical issues of sport, special attention should be given to two extremes: fair play and doping. In our study, we aimed to review the available literature related to the topic of fair play in both the domestic and international setting. In selecting the processed research, our main goal was to present results that are useful for Hungarian educational science, including specific, internationally validated fair play attitude surveys and educational programs. Our current study is the first theoretical partial result of a larger-scale research, which includes the Hungarian adaptation of the presented tests.

Keywords: fair play, fair play education, gamesmanship, fair play attitudes.

Introduction

Today, the rise of anti-fair play attitudes makes it necessary to teach fair play and the values associated with it, not just through physical education and sport. Contemporary bullying in schools, the negative effects of violent virtual games on student behaviour, a lesser understanding of the other person, and the resulting self-centered approach require serious action in the school environment. At the beginning of these measures is the use of sports that have been seen throughout history to be moral and character-training tools.

the values learned through sport are transferred to all areas of life. That is why it is important to teach fair play in public education systems.

The central concept of our work is fair play. Although there are several definitions associated with the term, most directly it can be connected to morality, empathy, sportsmanship and respect for others. The first written work in which fair play as a fair competition appears in the Bible, but it can also be found in the works of Shakespeare and Robin Hood's ballad (although in the case of the latter it had no ethical basis). For the world of sport and the purposes of our research, the definition of fair play can be taken from the Declaration on Sport, which was established by the International Council of Sport and Physical Education in 1964, followed by the Fair Play Charter adopted in 1974, as well as the European Charter of Sport and the Code of Ethics of Sport.

“Fair play is the essence of all sports competitions, and it is also of fundamental importance in both professional and amateur sports. It requires not only the strict respect of the rules but also the joyful and spontaneous reception of their inner and spirit. This concept includes respecting ourselves, and our opponents as well. Without the fair play principle, sporting events could become humiliating and degrading for the participants. If the perfidious practices that unfortunately continue to be present in international and world competitions today, would spread further, the sport as a teaching tool, a recreation, a group form of entertainment, and as a factor of agreement between nations would irrevocably lose its value.” (5–6 p.)

As stated within the definition, it is a mindset which is a central part of the sport itself. It highlights the importance of education in the spirit of fair play, as well as equal opportunities. European Council takes compliance with the rules for granted, but also complements it with friendship. It rejects fraud, doping, corruption, harassment, the use of unfair means. (European Council 1992/2001).

¹ Dr. Gabriella Hideg, University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary; gabriella.hideg@etk.pte.hu

The concept of fair play seems to be expanding almost every day and is not only appearing in the field of sports but is also penetrating the financial and political spheres. Linking the world of sport with financial activities, we can highlight the institution of Financial Fair Play (FFP), which was introduced to regulate European football clubs in DATE. The peculiarity of the system was the imbalance that arose from the fact that clubs with more money could buy better players. This was intended to be eliminated by regulation, which, however, led to new inequalities (e.g. it made it impossible to catch up with mid- and small-market leagues).

In our experience, sportsmanship and fair play are used as synonyms with each other. Nevertheless, fair play can be seen as a philosophy, which includes sportsmanship.

The research related to fair play found in the international literature, as mentioned in our introduction, can be divided into two major groups. First, some fair play programs were developed, in which different age groups, athletes and non-athletes were examined. They measured their attitude to fair play at the beginning and end of the programs. The second group includes research in which moral judgment and its development have been measured by sport. In each case, the authors started from the view that sport influences character in a positive direction and plays a decisive role in moral development, thus developing a sportsmanlike behaviour. In our previous research, we presented in detail the research and results related to the topic of fair play.

Research design and Methods

In our study, we aim to review the studies on the topic of fair play, which are available in the domestic and international literature. When choosing the processed research, our main goal was to present scales related to internationally validated fair play, sportsmanship, attitude studies, and educational and intervention programs.

The criteria for selection included that (1) the research includes a quantitative aspect, (2) data collected relates to sports and educational sciences, (3) holds the structure of a research paper (abstract, conference lecture exclusion factor), (4) is available online, and (5) has public access. In search of studies, we first used Hungarian databases, such as Matarka (searchable database of table of contents of Hungarian journals) and MTMT (Library of Hungarian Scientific Works).

Our keywords: “fair play education” (fair play oktatás), “gamesmanship” (technikai csalás/csalásbiztosság), “fair play attitudes” (fair play attitűd) and „sportsmanship” (sportszerűség).

In our key word, „fair play” on Matarka produced 26 results (3 of these being our own studies) and sportsmanship produced 6. Upon closer examination, we found that none of them met the criteria, because the articles fell outside the framework of academic research, were not directly related to the sports and educational sciences, or they did not contain empirical data.

In MTMT, we received 67 results (15 being our own publications) and 5 results for the same keywords, respectively. In the case of fair play, the exclusion criteria previously presented have been met. In addition, we found several studies in both Hungarian and English that contain the studies of the conference entitled „*The Power of Fair Play*” published in Hungarian and English, but these are not available online. In the search for sportsmanship, we found the studies of Prisztóka and Papp (1992, 1994), which has the potential to be valuable but neither are available online. There were no meaningful results for the other keywords other than our own past publications.

After that, we looked at the Google Scholar database. We also used the search terms „fair play” “fair play education”, “gamesmanship”, “fair play attitudes” and „sportsmanship”, in addition to combinations of them to further narrow the search. After narrowing the results by keywords, we found 1,700 studies. We had to further narrow down the list so we reviewed which articles are complete studies, which are available free of charge, and which are published in English. As a result, the number of hits decreased significantly, 223 studies were excluded from 592 results after the first reading, because they did not meet the criteria (there was no quantitative study or it was not related to the field of science). After studying the 169 articles, we focused on those that included internationally validated tests, scales, attitude tests, and educational programs. In the results of our study, we present some of them without the need for completeness.

Results

Among the empirical research related to fair play, the first study is Boixadós (1995), in which the author developed a questionnaire to measure fair play and sportsmanship. The questionnaire included 22 questions divided into five categories (rough play and cheating, enjoyment, fair play, respect for the rules, and the importance of winning) which reflect fair play attitudes. The study involved 762 young athletes from 80 different sports teams, 8 different sports, both male and female. The average age of the athletes was 14.22 years. The most striking of the results is that both genders considered the value of winning to be the least important of the five categories. For boys, enjoyment is the most important thing, while for girls it is fair play. There is a significant difference between rough play and cheating and respect for the rules categories between boys and girls. In both cases, the two categories are more important for girls, which reflects a very serious contradiction. None of this is significantly important for the boys. Boixadós formed three factors based on the results. The first factor, accounted for 18.9 % of the variance (eigenvalue 3.02), consisted of nine items, and was labeled rough play and cheating (alpha coefficient=0.74). The second factor (eigenvalue 2.5 accounting for 15.4 % of the variance) consisted of four items reflecting attitudes about the importance of winning (alpha coefficient=0.73). The third factor, consisted of three items (eigenvalue 1.9 accounting for 11.7 % of the variance), reflecting feelings of enjoyment (alpha coefficient=0.61). Following this analysis, six items were excluded (due to factor loadings less than .30).

Palou (2019) conducted Boixadós' examination, in addition to which he conducted a pre-and post-test as part of a development program. The study involved 1,097 athletes who were tap athletes (football, basketball, volleyball). Although the results show no indication of significance, the participants had a detectable difference in the importance of winning factor.

In both tests, the enjoyment factor was given a prominent role in both sexes.

The interesting thing about the research, which was also published in the results of the original research, is that women here considered the rough play and cheating factor to be more important at the second measurement than at the beginning of the program. For men, this factor decreased to the second measurement.

The second major fair play questionnaire is provided by Hassandra et al. (2002). Fair Play in Physical Education Questionnaire: The FPPEQ questionnaire was developed, which was used to assess self-reported fair play behaviors. The questionnaire consists of 16 items assessing four fair play dimensions (two pro-social and two antisocial) mostly applicable in physical education; in particular, respect to teammates, respect for conventions, cheating and gamesmanship. Later, this questionnaire will also be used under a fair play intervention program. The results of this research by Hassandra et al. (2007) are very promising. The aim of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the intervention program promoting the principles of fair play in schools where young people are studying. Of the four primary schools, 126 fifth graders participated in the study, 66 in the experimental group and 60 in the control group. The results showed significant improvements in all four dimensions studied, including observed fair play behavior, classroom support and autonomy, attitudes to play, and internal motivation in the experimental group. The results of the follow-up study showed that the results achieved remained for two months after the end of the program. In general, fair play intervention had an immediate and longer-term impact on students.

Mirzeoğlu (2015) conducted a four-step validation of 672 young people between the ages of 11 and 18 with a questionnaire created by Hassandra et al. The results were examined along gender, school level, and educational attainment variables for all four subscales. The results of the respect to teammates subscale were gender-independent, whereas there were significant differences in this subscale when examining educational attainment. In the case of the respect for conventions sub-scale, there was a significant difference for each variable, so gender, educational attainment, and level of education have an impact on how much respondents respect traditions. On the cheating and gamesmanship subscale, men scored higher than women. High school students also scored lower in this subscale than the primary school students surveyed, and this is also true for the female sex.

Among the fair play related programs, we should highlight a similar program for Hassandra et al's work. Sezen-Balcikanli (2009) conducted research among students of Gazi University, who implemented a fair play in sport and education. The study involved 50 students, a mix of men and women, over a 14-week period. During the classes, they participated in a number of lectures on the topic of fair play. By the end of week 14, their results, as with Hassandra et al., were positive. Serious and measurable progress has been made in empathy, and thus also in attitudes towards fair play, skills that have been put into practice.

All this proves that it is necessary to develop and implement theoretical and practical programs related to fair play and its concept among athletes, public education, and higher education.

Among our keywords, we also examined investigations related to cheating and sportsmanship. The Predisposition to Cheating in Sports Questionnaire (CDED), developed by Ponseti et al. (2012), which was based on the Attitudes to Moral Derived Decision-making in Youth Sport Questionnaire (AMDYSQ-1, Lee, et al., (2007)). Ponseti et al. created two factors (attitudes towards cheating and attitudes towards gamesmanship) with 3-3 items and asked participants to indicate their opinion on a 5-point Likert scale.

Palou et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between gamesmanship and cheating in motivational climates created by parents and coaches. The sample includes 110 team sports players, including 42 football players, 42 basketball players and 26 handball players of which 70 are boys and 40 are girls. The study involved young people aged 11-19 from the Balearic Islands. Palou et al. (2013) hypothesised that athletes prefer to win through tricks and tactics rather than cheating, though this also depends on the type of sport practiced. It was also hypothesized that ego-oriented motivational climates generated by coaches and parents are associated with more gamesmanship than task-oriented motivational climates.

Based on the study, we distinguish two motivational atmospheres. In one, parents (father, mother) have a prominent role, and in the other, this falls to the coaches. In both environments, the task climate and ecoclimate also appear, as well as the question of how athletes perceive them. The climate developed by the parents and coaches showed a statistically significant difference in terms of task or ego, similarities appeared in the environment created by the two parents, here the father was ego- and task-centric, while the mother was only task-centric.

Examining the relationship between athletes and gamesmanship, we can see that cheating is more difficult, while gamesmanship is more accepted by the subjects of the study.

Of course, it all depends on what impulses hit the athlete. Values from parents, compliance with the demands of the coach and the parent result in patterns of behavior in young people.

The Predisposition to Cheating in Sports (CDED) Questionnaire is also used by Palou et al. (2018) in their study of 1172 athletes from 35 teams in the Balearic Islands. For this research, they also used the Fair Play Attitude Scale (Boixadós, 1995) as well as the previously presented AMDYSQ. The results showed that young athletes have a positive perception of sport as a form of entertainment. Gamesmanship, because it is not confined and regulated, is gradually being adopted, especially in football. However, cheating is not universally accepted. Gamesmanship, cheating and playing hard were positively correlated with the winning factor, but negatively correlated with fun. In terms of gender, males scored higher on antisocial sport behaviours, while females scored higher on pro-social sport behaviours.

To further explore the research problem of the previous study that sport can also result in antisocial behaviour, it is worth presenting the Turkish adaptation of Sezen Balcikanli's (2013) study measuring prosocial and antisocial behaviour among elite athletes in the sports of football, basketball, handball and ice hockey. A total of 222 athletes participated in the survey, which consisted of 20 questions and 4 subscales (prosocial behaviours towards teammates, prosocial behaviours towards opponents, antisocial behaviours towards teammates and antisocial behaviours towards opponents).

The last test related to sportsmanship test was the Multidimensional Sport Orientation Scale (MSOS) developed by Vallerand et al. (1997). The scale was adapted and validated by Sezen-Balcikanli and Yildiran (2012). While the original scale consisted of 25 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, the adapted version consisted of four dimensions. The four dimensions were: a) caring for and respecting the rules and officials, b) caring for and respecting the opponent, c) caring for and respecting the social conventions of sport, d) caring and respecting the full commitment to participating in the sport towards.

Based on the results, we find significant differences by gender on the "extraversion" and "c" subscales, and between the "a" and "d" subscales. Overall, therefore, women performed better on all subscales in the study. All this confirms that those with extraversion personality traits are more likely to have a sport-like behaviour.

Discussion, Conclusion

We agree with Kavussanu et al. (2002) that the social environment in which study participants live can have a strong impact on their moral development.

Education in the spirit of fair play is a task at all levels of sport, but it is especially important in the training of school-age and prospective coaches/PE teachers. Studies show that years spent in sport and experience alone

do not guarantee the development of a value orientation for sporty behaviour. Differences between sports are not the determining factors for the development of moral, ethical consciousness, and norms. There are no sport-specific moral values, only sports moral values, which can regulate the behavior of the athlete in the struggle for victory if, by virtue of education, they are firmly integrated into the system of needs of the personality.

Based on the articles we have processed, it can be stated that in the field of fair play, several validated scales are used in the international literature in the field of ethical behavior, attitudes towards fair play, fraud, and gamesmanship.

We have presented education programs such as Hassandra et al. (2007) or Sezen-Balcikanli (2009) with positive results. It is effective and necessary to address the ethical issues of sport at all points in education, because the results show that the positive effects of the programs can be measured in the long run.

It can also be seen from the tests that athletes prefer gamesmanship over fraud, but this depends on the sport and the atmosphere created by parents and coaches, and even age (as older people are more prone to cheating than younger ones).

Another group of studies we processed examined the relationships between sport-like behavior and personality. Overall, extraverted personalities exhibit more sporty behaviors.

The studies presented and their results are the first theoretical results of a comprehensive research without claiming completeness.

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