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## Selected Socio-Educational and Personal Aspects of Conditioning Attitudes of Fair Play in Sport

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## Selected Socio-Educational and Personal Aspects of Conditioning Attitudes of Fair Play in Sport

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A – Study Design  
 B – Data Collection  
 C – Statistical Analysis  
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 F – Literature Search  
 G – Funds Collection

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**Key words:** *religious education, hierarchy of qualities/attitudes, fair play attitudes*

### Abstract

**Background:** *It is becoming more realistic in sport to experience and achieve certain qualities that create 'the highest good'. One of the conditions of this transgression is to obey categorically the rules of fair play.*

**Material/Methods:** *This paper describes personal, social and educational determinants of moral values represented by young athletes. 212 young sportsmen were selected for purposes of this research. They were students from schools with religious and sports background.*

**Results:** *The results of the research show the relation between levels of morality of fair play in sport and preferred attitudes as well as educational and religious influence of teachers.*

**Conclusions:** *Personality and temperamental gauges influence the declared moral convictions considerably: neurotics declare higher social morality than non-neurotics, also due to sport behaviours.*

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## Introduction

Many representatives of sports ethics claim that the highest good in sport are the principles of moral behaviour called the fair play norms [1,2,3,4,5]. Andrzej Pawłucki even claims that thanks to the body ("the divine deposit") it becomes possible to elevate oneself to a higher level of spirituality and dignity in one's own humanity, to learn and achieve the values determining the "highest good" [1]. However, the condition to attain the highest good lies in the categorical observation of moral norms (including the obligatory norms of fair play).

Józef Lipiec [2] thinks that a sports stadium creates physical conditions to carry out a social experiment which would contribute to the intensification of axiological upbringing. Sport creates an opportunity to discover socially utilitarian values (the catalytic function), supports their selection (the selective function), tests their power and attractiveness (the testing function) and verifies their practicality (the pedagogic function). Such understood socialising testing ground of a stadium becomes a manifestation of a universal axiological offer aimed at both athletes and spectators.

But when does sport play a role of an institution dealing with infusing the spectators with spirituality? Only when it will show the whole society a wide perspective of life, a timeless vision of becoming human based on striving at religious and eschatological aims [6]. Andrzej Pawłucki even constructs a hypothesis on Christian morality as a condition for sports morality and claims that "there are as many true sportsmen as there are true Christians among them" [7]. Sport will only fully contribute to the spiritual dimension of a man if it forms an alliance with religion appreciating its didactic (integrating the community) message, the more so that, ontologically speaking, sports competition, similarly to religion, stems from the basic anthropological need for self-fulfilment and crossing boundaries. Only sport promoting the Christian culture of humanity, which like some "invisible influence of verified moral patterns" permeates each aspect of pure agonistics, has any *raison d'être* in the contemporary world [7].

Reading the deep sense of sports competition correctly, we can ascertain whether an athlete with his behaviour towards his opponent symbolises an image of an ideal man (in Jesus Christ's image, the perfect man), capable of retaining the essential human spiritual values, such as dignity and honour, justice and honesty, asceticism and moderation, social solidarity and noble rivalry, respect for truth and aversion for lies, even in such unfavourable conditions as a competition [1,2,8]. The mentioned spiritual values contribute to the moral personality of both a sportsperson and a participant of religious life. According to Pawłucki [1], not all sportsmen are morally mature, both with respect to the social and the religious understanding of morality. Unfortunately, only few sportsmen (supernormal, or rather supermoral in the post-conventional sense) manage to develop the "deposit of sports faith" and become fully irreproachable participants of stadium agonistics. The author of *The Person in the Pedagogy of the Body* claims that a stadium is a temptation for athletes to turn to all available means leading to the competition victory. Yet athletes must not sacrifice their humanity in order to win. By remaining faithful to themselves, athletes win in their humanity even if they lose bodily. Thus they prove that the impossible is possible, and that honesty is attainable even when private interests, primitive instincts or basic needs are engaged in the play for victory.

## Aim of the research

This paper describes selected aspects of socio-educational and personal determinants of social morality of young athletes participating in school sport, with special consideration for their fair play attitudes. Fair play attitudes are referred to as the interpretation (considering convictions and moral assessments) of sports activities on the basis of universal and obligatory directives of

fair play and the resulting from this tendency for a particular moral conduct. Fair play attitudes are a component of sports social morality.

The primary aim of the paper was to verify a hypothesis for the connection between religious morality and sports social morality and thus to describe personal and socio-educational determinants of fair play attitudes in youth undertaking systematic physical activity, including the sports one.

The secondary aim of the paper was an attempt to interpret a theoretical premise that certain personality and temperament traits influence sports morality of pupils participating in school sport. In designing this premise Hans Eysenck's temperamental-personality theory [9], modified by Jeffrey Gray [10] was useful. According to Jan Strelau, Eysenck's biological theory has the status of the theory of temperament [11].

For thus assumed problem two research hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Religious education in Catholic schools forms a more mature fair play attitude in their physically active pupils in comparison with the secular system of education of sports schools.

Hypothesis 2: A higher level of neuroticism has a stronger correlation with a more rigorous fair play moral attitude and with a higher preference for moral and religious values than with a lower intensity of this trait.

## **Material and methods**

The study was carried out in 2000 and 2008 among pupils of the final grades of Tricity secondary comprehensive schools differentiated according to being religious or secular schools. The present study was a repetition of a research project carried out by one of the authors of the article in 2000. Over 100 pupils of the final grades of secondary religious schools and over 100 pupils of the final grades of secondary secular schools were subject to the study in the selected years. About 50% of the studied youth were girls and 50% boys.

From among religious schools the study encompassed Salesian Comprehensive School, Gdynia Catholic Comprehensive School and Jesuit Comprehensive School. The variable that distinguishes subjects from this group of schools is the overrepresentation of religious education. In these schools pupils follow a compulsory two-hour (weekly) religious syllabus, obligatorily participate in holy masses (on selected holidays and on the first Friday of a month); each day begins with a morning prayer (reading the Bible, sermon); the syllabus is enriched with classes in philosophy, psychology, methodology and rhetoric.

From among secular schools the study encompassed No 11 Gdańsk Comprehensive School, No 10 Gdynia Comprehensive School, Non-state Secondary School of Sports Mastery of the Polish Handball Federation, Sopot Tennis Academy Comprehensive School. The variable distinguishing subjects from this group of schools is the sports level of the studied youth. Most pupils had a sport class, carried out physical education syllabus in an extended number of hours; a large percentage planned to study at the Academy of Physical Education (in one school as many as 50% of all pupils).

To verify attitudes connected with fair play directives and to measure the subjects' attitudes towards these universal values, the Questionnaire of Sports Morality (QSM) constructed by Artur Ziółkowski was used. It measures the intensity of sports moral conduct and consists of three sub-scales: 1. Sub-scale of sensitivity to human suffering StoS; 2. Sub-scale of minimalist morality – MMin (not conforming to moral evil), further divided into: a) attitude to revenge – Rev, b) attitude to honesty and admitting one's guilt – HandAG, c) attitude to encouraging others to evil deeds –

EtoEvil, d) attitude to the protection of biological existence (life and health) – PrLife; 3. Sub-scale of supererogatory morality – MMax or MSuper (excessive striving at moral good). However, differentiation into scales 1 and 2 in this case has purely theoretical value, not the practical one (a intercorrelative analysis of the tool proved that it is more appropriate to treat scale 1 as a sub-scale of scale 2). An analysis of the reliability of the tool was carried out by means of Cronbach's alpha method. Alpha statistics was calculated for the whole tool and it amounts to 0.819. Hence, it can be assumed that the scale is a reliable measurement tool.

Extroversion, introversion and neuroticism were examined by means of personality questionnaire NEO-FFI in the Polish adaptation by Bogdan Zawadzki, Jan Strelau, Piotr Szczepaniak and Magdalena Śliwińska [12]. The model of five basic personality traits NEOUS corresponds with Hans Eysenck's PEN temperament dimensions. The first two factors correspond with neuroticism and extroversion dimensions, while the factors of agreeableness and conscientiousness (their negative values) are the factors constituting the psychoticism dimension [11]. It is worth remembering that when Eysenck formulated the postulate of susceptibility to conditioning, he understood the dimension of neuroticism very widely [13].

The measurements of the studied values were made by means of Scheler's Values Scale (SWS) constructed by Piotr Brzozowski [14]. Scheler's Values Scale consists of fifty values grouped in six scales. Among them moral values (M) were especially analysed; Vital values (V), aesthetic (E), truth (T), sanctities (S), including both secular (SS) and religious (SR) sanctities were treated rather cursorily.

## **Results**

The presentation of results starts with the list of the results of correlative analyses of the diagnosed values and fair play attitudes components. Table 1 presents only the characteristics being results of studies carried out in 2008 (in 2000 similar results were obtained in this respect).

Simple correlations (presented further in Table 5) between values assessed by the whole group of the studied youth (N=212, 2008 study) and components of fair play attitudes prove that sports moral conduct (fair play conduct) positively correlates with moral values ( $r=0.37$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), values of truth ( $r=0.25$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and sanctity values (for the index of religious sanctities  $r=0.22$ ,  $p<0.001$ , for the index of overall sanctities  $r=0.24$ ,  $p<0.001$ , for the index of secular sanctities  $r=0.20$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). It is worth adding that the measures of the the level of co-variability presented in the below table are not strong. Finally, it is worth pointing out the negative moderate correlation of the fair play attitude with hedonistic values ( $r=-0.31$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This means that a higher assessment of hedonistic values (for example, connected with wealthy life, erotic love, possessions, comfort and relaxation in life) is accompanied by a more liberal (less rigorous) fair play attitude. One can thus conclude that a higher assessment of hedonistic values is accompanied by a less mature sports moral conduct, while a higher assessment of moral values, the truth and sanctity ones, is connected with a more mature fair play attitude (sports moral attitude).

Another step in the analysis of results was to verify the statistical significance in the relevant areas of the assessed values and the fair play attitude. The first stage in this procedure was to check the normality of distribution of the variables considered in the study within the whole sample by means of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The above results force the assumption that the distribution of a dependent variable in the whole sample is normal (the Z test is statistically insignificant within the whole construct of the fair play attitude, and for the 2008 study it amounts to:  $Z=0.55$ ,  $p=0.92$ ). To verify the statistical significance of the obtained differences, the t-Student

test was used for independent samples, and in the corresponding lines appropriate correction was introduced for unequal variance measured by Levene’s test (statistics F).

Tab. 1. Simple t-Pearson's correlations between the diagnosed values and sub-scales of fair play attitudes (youth in general, N=212; 2008 study)

Variables	SO	SR	SS	M	T	E	V	H	StoS	MMin	MMax	FPo
Sanctities overall – SO	-											
Religious sanctities – SR	.86**	-										
Secular sanctities - SS	.80**	.38**	-									
Moral - M	.28**	.15**	.33**	-								
Truth - T	.18**	.03	.28**	.66**	-							
Aesthetic - E	.13	.22	.21**	.42**	.47**	-						
Vital - V	-.17*	.03	-.26**	.23**	.25**		-					
Hedonistic - H	.18	-.05	.08	.05	.25**	.53**	.33**	-				
Sensitivity to suffering - StoS	.06	.05	.06	.30**	.14*	.06	-.01	-.21**	-			
Minimalist morality - MMin	.25**	.23**	.20**	.35**	.18**	-.07	-.16*	-.30**	.57**	-		
Maximalist morality - MMax	.24**	.21**	.20**	.36**	.30**	.09	-.05	-.20**	.60**	.74**	-	
Fair Play attitude overall - FPo	.24**	.22**	.20**	.37**	.25**	-.01	-.12	-.31**	.72**	.96**	.86**	-

\*\*significant correlation at 0.01

\*significant correlation at 0.05

Tab. 2. Verification of the significance of differences in the assessed values between youth from sports and Catholic schools (2000 study)

Variables	SPORTS SCHOOLS N=100		CATHOLIC SCHOOLS N=100		Difference of averages	“t” value	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Hedonistic	73.80	16.68	73.16	17.18	-0.64	-0.27	0.79
Vital	67.69	18.24	59.03	20.70	-8.66	-3.14	0.001
Aesthetic	61.75	16.96	60.64	16.35	-1.15	-0.47	0.63
Truth	78.80	13.56	77.64	12.40	-1.20	-0.63	0.52
Moral	81.96	12.58	80.02	10.70	-1.94	-1.17	0.24
Secular sanctities	70.69	20.18	76.13	12.94	5.44	-0.49	0.6
Religious sanctities	71.80	27.35	86.74	16.87	-1.53	4.65	0.0001

An analysis of results obtained in 2000 (Table 2) did not reveal too great a differentiation. Sports schools youth assessed vital values higher [ $t(198)=-3.14$ ;  $p=0.001$ ] than physically active youth from Catholic schools. Catholic schools youth assessed religious values higher [ $t(208)=4.65$ ;  $p=0.0001$ ] than active youth from sports schools. The compared groups of physically active youth do not differ in the remaining values.

Tab. 3. Verification of the significance of differences in the assessed values between youth from sports and Catholic schools (2008 study)

Variables	SPORTS SCHOOLS N=100		CATHOLIC SCHOOLS N=100		Difference of averages	“t” value	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Sanctities – SO	73.80	21.71	68.93	18.21	-4.87	-1.76	0.08
Religious	73.66	26.70	72.87	25.07	-0.79	-0.22	0.82
Secular	73.48	23.99	65.09	20.42	-8.39	-2.73	,007
Moral	79.27	12.61	76.83	12.75	-2.44	378	0.28
Truth	79.30	11.29	75.95	12.01	-3.34	-2.08	0.03
Aesthetic	62.64	15.05	55.37	18.19	-7.27	-3.15	0.002
Vital	71.61	14.21	56.80	19.06	-14.80	-6.37	0.0001
Hedonistic	74.16	13.35	74.07	15.04	-0.08	-0.04	0.96

An analysis of results obtained in 2008 (Table 3) indicates more intergroup differences as far as the preferred values are concerned. Sports schools youth assess secular sanctities values [ $t(210) = -8.39$ ;  $p=0.007$ ], truth [ $t(210) = -3.34$ ;  $p=0.03$ ], aesthetic [ $t(210) = -7.27$ ;  $p=0.002$ ], vital [ $t(210) = -6.37$ ;  $p=0.0001$ ] higher than physically active youth from Catholic schools. The compared groups of physically active youth do not differ as far as the assessment of religious sanctities values [ $t(210) = -0.22$ ;  $p=0.82$ ], moral [ $t(210) = -2.44$ ;  $p=0.22$ ] and hedonistic ones [ $t(210) = -0.08$ ;  $p=0.96$ ].

Also an analysis of the obtained results indicates certain intergroup differences as far as the maturity of the fair play attitude is concerned (Tables 4 and 5).

Tab. 4. Verification of the significance of differences in the fair play attitude between youth from sports and Catholic schools (2000 study)

Variables	SPORTS SCHOOLS N=100		CATHOLIC SCHOOLS N=100		Difference of averages	“t” value	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Sensitivity to suffering	22.95	4.09	23.99	3.61	1.04	1.90	0.05
Minimalist morality	90.02	11.95	90.89	12.12	0.87	0.51	0.6
Supererogatory morality	31.00	4.28	31.56	4.43	0.56	0.91	0.3
FAIR PLAY ATTITUDE	143.88	18.09	146.45	17.93	2.57	1.01	0.3

Results from 2000 (Tab.4) do not show that youth from Catholic schools declare a more rigorous (mature) fair play attitude. Exclusively the result of the sub-scale Sensitivity to opponent's

suffering is higher in Catholic school youth in comparison with sports schools youth [ $t(98) = 1.90$ ;  $p=0.05$ ].

Tab. 5. Verification of the significance of differences in the fair play attitude between youth from sports and Catholic schools (2008 study)

Variables	SPORTS SCHOOLS N=100		CATHOLIC SCHOOLS N=100		Difference of averages	“t” value	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
<b>Sensitivity to suffering</b>	21.16	3.44	22.22	4.26	1.06	2.00	0.04
<b>Minimalist morality</b>	80.90	12.61	89.25	13.43	8.34	4.65	0.001
<b>Supererogatory morality</b>	27.85	5.71	29.83	4.91	1.98	2.70	0.007
<b>FAIR PLAY ATTITUDE</b>	129.90	19.32	141.32	20.43	11.42	4.16	0.0001

The results from 2008 (Tab. 5) show that youth from Catholic schools declare a more rigorous (mature) fair play attitude in all its dimensions. Also the overall result of fair play attitude is higher in Catholic schools youth in comparison with youth from sports schools [ $t(210) = 11.42$ ;  $p=0.0001$ ]. It is difficult, however, to unequivocally ascertain whether the observed differences are sufficient to regulate a more mature behaviour in relations with others. Yet, it is certain that religious education in religious schools shapes a more mature fair play attitude in their physically active pupils in comparison with the secular system of education in sports schools.

In order to single out groups unified in moralising sports behaviour, the results of the whole population of subjects from 2000 were sorted into six groups variously moralising behaviours in sports by means of the k-mean analysis of the concentration method. Thus six smaller concentrations with various intensity of sports moral conduct, measured with the questionnaire of sports morality (QSM) were obtained. For the purposes of analysis only two groups of subjects were selected, namely the ones achieving the highest (concentration 6) and the lowest (concentration 5) results insofar as the fair play attitude. Subject to statistical analysis were the results which characterise concentrations with the lowest (concentration 5) and the highest (concentration 6) intensity of the discussed fair play attitude. Table 6 presents an analysis of intergroup differences insofar as the assessment of values and particular temperamental-personality dimensions achieved by subjects from the analysed concentrations.

Tab. 6. Differences in assessing values and temperamental-personality traits in youth achieving the highest (concentration 6) and the lowest (concentration 5) results insofar as fair play attitude (2000 study)

Variables	M for conc. 6 n=30	M for conc. 5 n=48	Difference in mean values	“t” value	p
<b>MORAL</b>	87.13	69.50	-17.63	5.54	.000001
<b>RELIGIOUS SANCTITIES</b>	88.83	60.60	-28.23	4.06	.0001
<b>NEURITICISM</b>	23.50	19.50	-4.00	1.65	.10

If follows from statistical analyses that persons declaring the most rigorous level of fair play conduct also assess moral values higher [ $t(198) = 5.54$ ;  $p=0.000001$ ]; they also assess religious sanctities higher [ $t(198) = 4.06$ ;  $p=0.0001$ ] and reveal a certain tendency to achieve higher results

insofar as neuroticism [ $t(198) = 1.65$ ;  $p=0.1$ ] than youth manifesting a more liberal form of sports moral fair play conduct.

## **Conclusions**

The results of this paper indicate a possibility of conditioning sports morality by a socio-educational factor and by personality.

Assuming that the cultural-religious environment of religious schools generates higher intensity of religious attitudes in their pupils than the cultural-secular environment of non-religious schools in their pupils, we have presumed that pupils from religious schools, characterised by higher intensity of religious attitudes, will declare higher intensity of positive convictions about sports competition consistent with fair play directives than pupils from secular schools.

Verification of this hypothesis brought the unequivocal resolution in studies from 2008. The majority of sub-scales in the distinguished by authors sports moral attitude: the sub-scales of minimalist and supererogatory morality, does not differentiate the discussed groups of pupils in studies from 2000. One can, however, state with a certain degree of probability that pupils from Catholic schools are more moral (in our understanding more mature) at the declarative level than pupils from secular schools insofar as moralising behaviours connected with sport.

Many authors seeing the interdependence between religiousness and social morality of a human being [15,16,17,18] claim that religiousness may condition human morality, including the sports social morality [1]. Andrzej Pawłucki [7], entitling one of the chapters of his monograph "A Hypothesis on Christian Morality As a Condition of Sports Morality," emphasises the fact that its is owing to faith in God that athletes, although not knowing the fair play ethos, know about "the obligation to respect human dignity in all circumstances of social contact, even in the circumstances of meeting with their neighbour as an enemy." Science knows the relations between sport and morality or religion [1,6,19], their relations of permeation, or even the same identity in certain respects. Ethical and moral areas can be traced in sport without difficulty. Sport itself is considered by some scholars as a carrier of essential values of culture [2,3].

The study also proved that in the whole population of subjects from 2000 a higher (though still average) level of neuroticism can be connected with declaring: 1) high importance of moral values (understood as a generalised declared moral conduct in life) and 2) more positive convictions about sports behaviours consistent with the fair play spirit.

Let us remember that Hans Eysenck connected the postulate of susceptibility to conditioning with the extroversion-introversion dimension [20], which gave foundations of distinguishing general inborn ability to condition (conditionability) or lack thereof. Studies have proved that extroverts (with predominance of restraint over cortical arousal) are less prone to the conditioning of anxiety (learning behaviours removing the source of anxiety, e.g. being good, is slower in their case), while introverts (with the predominance of arousal over cortical restraint) are characterised by an increased tendency to condition anxiety reactions (they faster learn behaviours reducing the source of anxiety) [20]. The postulate of susceptibility to conditioning was verified in Jeffrey Gray's studies [10]. Jeffrey Gray proved that: a) introverts, depending on the intensity of their neuroticism (emotionality), are more (with higher neuroticism) or less (with lower neuroticism) sensitive to punishment – hence moral upbringing, taking place mainly by means of punishment, is faster in their case; b) extroverts, depending on the intensity of their neuroticism (emotionality), are more (with higher neuroticism) or less (with lower neuroticism) sensitive to rewards – hence moral upbringing, rich in punishments, is slower in their case. In his opinion, conditioning takes place

faster and easier in introverts, but only when punishment is the unconditional stimulus. In the same vein, in a situation in which a reward is the unconditional stimulus, extroverts are conditioned easier and faster. This fact has significance importance for a deeper understanding of the process of socialising as children and youth are both punished for evil acts and rewarded for the good ones (in categories of moral good and evil). The key dimension, differentiating subjects insofar as moralising in sport, was also the dimension of neuroticism.

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