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Questionnaire of Sports Ethics – A Tool for Assessing Moral Behaviour in Sport

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Authors' Contribution:

A – Study Design
B – Data Collection
C – Statistical Analysis
D – Data Interpretation
E – Manuscript Preparation
F – Literature Search
G – Funds Collection

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Abstract

Background: *The concept of ethical codes describes and explains morality of modern sports-persons. Authors of the article constructed a tool for assessing methods of moral behaviour in sport on the basis of the concept of ethical codes.*

The aim of this work is to present a tool for assessing a profile of moral behaviour of people involved in sport (both competitors, coaches and sports activists).

Material/Methods: *The Questionnaire of Sports Ethics consists of 52 statements which are classified into 5 scales that correspond to specific ethical codes. Respondents assess to what extent a form of behaviour described in the questionnaire is proper (praiseworthy, mark 3) or improper (needed to be condemned, mark -3).*

Results: *The new tool is both reliable and accurate.*

Conclusions: *A theory of 5 ethical codes organizes a multitude of worldview thoughts explaining the way of activities assessment in the sphere of sport depending on the culture.*

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Introduction

When moralising (assessing) any human behaviour, a cultural context is crucial [1, 2]. The reports of culture anthropologists show that what is subject to moral assessment in one culture does not have to be subject to it in another one [3]. Formulation of moral assessments is therefore influenced by certain beliefs and appraisals connected with human behaviour dominating in a given culture and being reflected in patterns of features called ethical codes or ethics [4].

In order to diagnose the way of moral behaviour in sport, the authors of this article formulated the Questionnaire of Sports Ethics (QSE). An inspiration for creating the tool was the idea of five ethical codes suggested by Wiesław Baryła and Bogdan Wojciszke [5, 6]. The authors list the following types of codes: ethics of autonomy, productivity, dignity, collectivism and divinity. They believe that each of the listed codes is independent of the remaining ones and oscillates around a kind of central tendency determined by its typical sins and virtues. There is more than one code that is fundamental as far as the basis for moral assessment of every human being is concerned. Every code (ethics) has got its call signals (releases) in the environment which either activates it or not. Therefore, moralising is conditioned by a specific situational context, connected with the presence or with the lack of call signals, responsible for releasing a specific ethical code.

A description of ethical codes including typical central values, virtues and major sins can be found in Table 1.

Tab. 1. Characteristics of five ethical codes [7]

	ETHICS OF AUTONOMY	ETHICS OF COLLECTIVISM	ETHICS OF COMMON GOOD
Central value	good of another individual	good of a social group	good of a community as a whole
Cardinal virtues	respect for good, law and freedom of individuals; helping other people, loyalty towards individuals	respect for good, law and interests of a social group; sustaining a group integrity, loyalty towards the group, conformism	respect for norms of which the society as a whole is a beneficiary, even when a specific individual or social groups gain nothing or they lose
Major sins	doing harm to another individual, violating rights of individuals (physical, psychological, moral), disloyalty to individuals	acting to the detriment of a group, disloyalty to the group, non-conformism, breaking the group's integrity, disavowing the group	violating norms of which the society as a whole is a beneficiary, even when a subject, a specific individual or social groups gain nothing when obeying them
	ETHICS OF DIGNITY	ETHICS OF PRODUCTIVITY	
Central value	living with dignity	production of goodness	
Cardinal virtues	spirituality (terrestrial or extra-terrestrial), honour, contempt for material values, sustaining integrity (of class, of caste)	usefulness, effectiveness, diligence, economy, postponing bonuses, success	
Major sins	self-tarnishing, loss of "honourable capability", improper form, pursuit of material values, changing time-honoured customs	lack of productivity, laziness, waste (of values, time), rapid consumption, valuing emotions	

When constructing the tool, we made an assumption that if one can discuss popular moral behaviour (in out-of-sports situations), one can also discuss moral behaviour with regard to sport basis, adopting cultural and social factors for differentiation of moral assessments, resulting from a participation in sports culture. It has been assumed that moral assessments with regard to sport are based on the same central values which determine major “virtues” and “sins” within five ethical codes.

Aim

The aim of this work is to present a tool for assessing a profile of moral behaviour of people involved in sport (competitors, coaches and sports activists). In the following part, the Questionnaire of Sports Ethics has been presented. A way of its formulation has been described and selected evaluation analyses of the new diagnostic tool have been presented.

Method

The construction of the questionnaire has been divided into three phases. In the first phase 50 people (students from different fields of study at the University of Physical Education and Sport) were asked to express their opinion concerning typical moral and immoral behaviour in sport. Each student was supposed to list at least 5 examples of good and bad behaviour connected with sports competition in the prepared form. After collecting the material, the repeated content was eliminated and possibly uniform grammatical form was given to the remaining material. In the second phase of formulating the tool, the list of morally relevant behaviour in sport was assessed by three competent referees. The referees were given a thorough instruction being a development of the specific codes' characteristics. Each referee assessed behaviour paying special attention to one specific ethical code. Only those examples of behaviour were chosen as to which referees' opinions were unanimous as far as specific ethical code was concerned. At this stage of formulating the tool, some items were modified or completely rejected. Then, the referees used a seven-point scale in order to assess whether the behaviour was moral or immoral. Taking into consideration different referees' assessments, an average assessment was assumed which presented information on the level of intensification of each of the five ethical codes within each behaviour. In the third phase of formulating the tool, 10-11 items (behaviour patterns) were chosen which were markers of ethics according to the referees, i.e. behaviour patterns strongly indicating one of the ethical codes to which they were related.

100 students from secondary schools were tested with a usage of the sample version of the test and after calculating an accuracy of each scale, the final version has been assumed.

The final version of the questionnaire comprises 52 statements divided into 5 scales corresponding to individual ethical codes. Respondents assess to what extent a form of behaviour described in the questionnaire is proper (praiseworthy) or improper (needed to be condemned). Assessment has been made with a usage of a seven-point scale, from -3 (in the case of very inappropriate behaviour) to +3 (in the case of very appropriate behaviour). On average it took 15 minutes to fill in the form.

The instruction and the sheet have been enclosed in the Appendix (Tables A1 and A2).

A Way of Calculating QSE's Results

For each ethical code in sport one can calculate an average result (summing up points achieved by the respondents for their answers according to the key and dividing them by the number of questions on the scale. A respondent gets from 1 to 7 points for every answer. In the case of some items, the direction of marking on the scale is turned around so as the higher number on a given scale showed a more intense influence of the ethical code. Because of different numerical strength on scales (ethical codes) it is suggested that results be presented with a usage of arithmetic means. A key for calculation of average results for each scale (ethical code) is presented in the table below (Table 2).

Tab. 2. A key for calculation of the results in separate sports ethics

Name of the scale	Number of an item in the text	Number of items
Ethics of autonomy	1*, 6, 11*, 16, 21*, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46*, 51*	11
Ethics of dignity	2, 7*, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32*, 37*, 42*, 47, 52*	11
Ethics of collectivism	3*, 8, 13*, 18*, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43*, 48*	10
Ethics of common good	4*, 9*, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34*, 39*, 44, 49*	10
Ethics of productivity	5, 10*, 15*, 20*, 25*, 30, 35, 40*, 45, 50	10

Comment: when the number is followed by "*" turn the scale around

Results

Accuracy

The accuracy research of the Questionnaire of Sports Ethics was conducted among secondary school students from the last years (sport championship schools and sports secondary schools) and among first year's students of Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport. After verification of the research material, in total 244 respondents were among the examined sample. In the group of respondents there were 36.2% of women and 63.8% of men aged 17-22. Active sports persons constituted 58.9% and the percentage of those who did not train or who practiced sport recreationally was 41.1%.

The Questionnaire of Sports Ethics is characterized by high accuracy (Cronbach's Alpha=0.891).

External Accuracy

The tool's accuracy has also been confirmed by the research. Separate ethical codes characterizing popular reasoning of respondents correlate positively with all ethical codes in sport. The highest correlations were noted between analogous general ethical codes (EC) and ethical codes in sports situations (SEC).

Tab. 3. Ethical codes and sports ethics of young people (N=244)

	Ethics of autonomy in sport	Ethics of dignity in sport	Ethics of collectivism in sport	Ethics of common good in sport	Ethics of productivity in sport
Ethics of autonomy	0.36	0.31	0.22	0.23	0.12
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.066
	244	244	244	244	244
Ethics of collectivism	0.30	0.33	0.38	0.27	0.25
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	244	244	244	244	244
Ethics of common good	0.36	0.42	0.25	0.39	0.15
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.016
	244	244	244	244	244
Ethics of dignity	0.32	0.39	0.31	0.24	0.26
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	244	244	244	244	244
Ethics of productivity	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.30	0.27
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	244	244	244	244	244

Factor Accuracy (Internal)

In order to determine the structure of ethical codes, factor analyses were conducted with a usage of the principal components method with non-orthogonal Promax rotation with Kaiser's normalization (for subscales that can correlate with one another) [7]. In order to identify the number of factors, a criterion of scree graph was used. During the analysis, 4 factors were distinguished which saturated similar sets of items. Positions with considerable factor charges were taken into consideration. Two more factors could not have been identified.

Factor I includes the biggest number of items and can be interpreted in the field of two ethics: common good and collectivism. The most representative positions for the factor are:

- a) counted to the subscale of collectivism in the questionnaire, in other words 8 (0.56), 18 (0.45), 23 (0.55), 33 (0.61), 38 (0.46), 43 (0.57), 48 (0.48);
- b) counted to the subscale of common good in the questionnaire, in other words 14 (0.50), 19 (0.61), 24 (0.68), 29 (0.38), 34 (0.49), 44 (0.48), 49 (0.63).

Factor II can be interpreted as ethics of autonomy. The most representative positions for the factor are: 1 (0.43), 11 (0.64), 16 (0.57), 21 (0.63), 26 (0.46), 46 (0.60), 51 (0.56).

Factor III can be interpreted as ethics of productivity. The most representative positions for the factor are: 5 (0.43), 10 (0.63), 15 (0.64), 20 (0.65), 25 (0.67), 30 (0.42), 35 (0.54), 50 (0.52).

The last factor from the distinguished ones, factor IV can be interpreted as ethics of dignity (however, factor charges of some items included in them are not significant. The most representative positions for the factor are: 2 (0.56), 12 (0.54), 17 (0.54), 42 (0.48), 47 (0.43).

One can therefore assume that the Questionnaire of Sports Ethics measures at least 4 distinguished ethics in the concept of Baryła and Wojciszke [5, 6]. The presented data indicate a certain compliance of the Questionnaire of Sports Ethics' factor structure with the theoretical model being fundamental for its construction. The tool can be recognized as accurate and reliable.

Conclusions

So far quite a lot of diagnostic tools concerning the moral sphere have been developed [8, 9, 10]. The concept of ethical codes can gain significant value in describing and explaining the character of contemporary sports persons' morality. A theory of 5 ethical codes organizes a multitude of worldview thoughts explaining the way of activities assessment in the sphere of sport depending on the culture.

Sport as an occurrence of social globalism and universalism is based on theories that interpret moral good and bad in a different way. So far not much research concerning ethical codes understood in such a way and conditioning a direction for moralizing (using rules for determining assessment criteria for specific behaviour patterns in sport depending on the situation) has been conducted [11].

One should remember about the cultural determinants as far as moralizing sports situations is concerned. With regard to conducting research it is worth searching for criteria for moral assessment both for sport fouls and desirable behaviour patterns with a usage of proper assessment tools depending on types of moral behaviour.

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Appendix

QSE INSTRUCTION

These tests are connected with types of actions in sport and they are to determine which behaviour patterns are appropriate and which are inappropriate. Of course people's opinions differ markedly – what is praiseworthy for one person can be condemned by another one. Therefore, we would like you to be guided by your own opinion and not by other people's opinion.

Below we have presented descriptions of many behaviour patterns of sports persons. You are asked to present your own attitude as far as these behaviour patterns are concerned, which means to answer to what extent it is appropriate (praiseworthy) and inappropriate (should be condemned). Next to the number of each behaviour pattern, circle the number which describes your attitude in the best way:

Tab. A1. Scale

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very inappropriate	Inappropriate	Slightly inappropriate	Neither that nor that	Slightly appropriate	Appropriate	Very appropriate

QSE SHEET

Table A2. Sheet with QSE's items

1.	<i>Offends a referee with whom he/she disagrees on the result.</i>	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
2.	Restrictively obeys rules of a game even in a situation when the victory is at risk.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
3.	Leaves the team after an argument with the coach.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
4.	Obtains big compensation under false pretences from the State on the basis of false documents.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
5.	Prolongs training in order to eliminate repeated mistake.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
6.	Respects every rival, even the weakest one.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
7.	Lies to a referee in order to win.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
8.	Never expresses a bad opinion on his/her team publicly.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
9.	Consciously buys stolen equipment.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
10.	Misses trainings without an important reason.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
11.	Fouls an opponent in a brutal way on purpose.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
12.	Does not make use of accidental advantage even when the referee and fans did not see it.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
13.	Does not come to the award ceremony of his/her team's colleagues.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
14.	Fights against corruption in sport.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
15.	Does not train diligently.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
16.	Protects a fan who has been attacked by a group of football fans.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
17.	During competition, he/she always acts according to the dictates of one's conscience.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
18.	Does not acknowledge he/she is at fault although the whole team will suffer the consequences.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
19.	Takes part in actions propagating healthy lifestyle, e.g. preventive screening.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
20.	Has no sporting ambition.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
21.	Behaves aggressively towards another sports person without any reason.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
22.	Is classy and acts with dignity even after his/her defeat.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
23.	Takes over part of duties of injured colleague at the sports camp.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
24.	Tries to set a good example for other people because he/she believes that sport should propagate important values.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
25.	Gives up the idea of moving to a better club in order not to train more.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
26.	Respects opinion and beliefs of every sports person even if they are incompatible with his/her beliefs.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
27.	Takes care of not only physical form but also develops mentally and spiritually.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
28.	Maintains permanent relations with his/her first team.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
29.	Hands over a part of his/her remuneration to charity.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
30.	Postpones planned holiday because he/she does not want to give up a training cycle.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
31.	After noticing a serious mistake of another sports person, he/she reprimands him/her only when there are no witnesses.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
32.	Lies to a coach when explaining his/her absence on trainings.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
33.	Puts a lot of effort so that the whole team gets a good result.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
34.	Sets a bad example as a recognizable person (starts fights, drinks until he/she passes out).	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
35.	Divides time effectively between trainings, family and rest.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
36.	Believes that every sports person has right to different and personal opinions.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
37.	Creeps to a coach in order to be in a team.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
38.	Resolves conflicts between members of a team.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
39.	Does not pay taxes on all his/her earnings.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
40.	Spends time in front of TV or doing nothing after trainings.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
41.	Defends an unknown sports person from groundless slander.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
42.	Takes drugs to win a contest.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
43.	Speaks about a national team contemptuously in the presence of foreigners.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
44.	He/she selflessly takes part in a TV commercial for tolerance.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
45.	Works hard to be a success as a sports person.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
46.	Laughs at the sports person who achieves poor results.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
47.	Is able to lose with honour and always honestly congratulates his/her rival.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
48.	Tells strangers about situations that are embarrassing to the team.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
49.	Contributes to corruption in sport by e.g. selling a match.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
50.	Invests part of earned money taking into consideration that a sports person's career is short.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
51.	He/she contemptuously watches a sports person from another team.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
52.	Has no sense of fair play.	-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3