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Characteristics of the Sportsmanship and Unsportsmanlike Conduct Evaluation Tools in Youth Sport

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Abstract

In youth sport contexts, aggressiveness and violence constitute a deplorable social phenomenon. There are sportsmanlike conducts as forms of alternatives to these types of behaviors. Specifically, the present paper aims to introduce the characteristics of the evaluation tools used to assess the sportiveness, aggressiveness and violence constructs in sporting environments in general and, more precisely, in youth sport. The methods used to evaluate the previous constructs are described based on a bibliometric analysis of the information base obtained from psychology, physical activity and sports specialized data bases. From the documents review it appears that, on the one hand, a few instruments are used to evaluate sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conducts in educational sports, and most of them focus on professional sport. Furthermore, performed researches concerning common sporting environments tend to focus on evaluating attitudes and conducts of sportsmen while ignoring the influence of other social agents such as coaches, parents/spectators, referees. Therefore, it would be desirable that some proper instruments were elaborated and allowed evaluating sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct, particularly in youth sport. The evaluation must enable the type of pro social and antisocial attitudes and conducts to be identified, as well as the agents which carry them out.

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1. Introduction

The present paper intends to know the specific characteristics of the tools used to assess the sportsmanship, aggressiveness and violence constructs in sports contexts, emphasizing specially in those used youth sports contexts. In these contexts, priority is given to building a scale of values together with their moral development. Weinberg and Gould (2011) point out sportsmen's experiences during their training stages can have far-reaching consequences in their personalities and psychological development. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of lack of sportsmanship is a significant issue in current society in sports environments in general and, particularly in youth sports.

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Aggressive and violent conducts are sometimes the way the agents act among them, both direct agents (coaches, referees, spectators) and indirect agents (the media, club's executives) who participate in sports spheres. That is why it is concluded that sportsmanship, aggressiveness and violence are multi-causal or multi-variant by nature (Gimeno et al. 2011), aspects to which there must be given an answer based on an accurate assessment of the agents that participate in sports contexts. These constructs are linked to a range of: agents (coaches, referees, parents/spectators); situations (matches, trainings, scorings...) and various explanatory theories (no theoretical setting offers a complete explanation). Considering this argument, in sports contexts, assessments have been developed and have intended mainly, to know if the practice of sports is noted for the presence of sporting behaviors in the various groups or social agents involved, or, far from it, if the presence of aggressive or violent behaviors is usual or significant.

Several tools have tried to evaluate the sportsmanship quality of sports contexts in general and particularly in youth sports. This fact justifies the necessity of knowing the assessment tools used to evaluate the sportsmanship, aggressiveness and violence constructs on the basis on a comprehensive bibliometric analysis and, also to analyze the characteristics of the evaluation tools in youth sports to assess the above noted conducts.

2. Method

Through a search criterion and later bibliometric analysis of the documents located in psychology, physical activity and sport field specialized data bases (Sportdiscus, Psycodoc, Psyquinfo, & Dialnet) and other sources (minute books, doctoral theses, web pages, reports), it has been intended to analyze the tools used to evaluate the sportsmanship, aggressiveness and violence constructs in sport contexts, putting special emphasis on those used in youth sport contexts. The research has been narrowed down to between 1996 until 2012. The descriptors utilized in the mentioned data bases for the research have been: *evaluation* and violence or sportsmanship* and sport**.

3. Results

The tools which have been identified through the previous searching strategy in sports contexts in general (see table 1) and in concrete sports (see table 2) are specified below. In tables 1 and 2 the assessment tools are shown, the evaluation method which has been utilized is specified, the evaluated constructs as well as the agents and the period of time in which the assessment is executed are concreted.

From the analysis of the found documents, firstly it can be remarked that only a few investigations have utilized assessment tools to evaluate the incidence of sportsmanship/unsportsmanlike conducts in youth sports, as previous related studies have shown (Gimeno, Sáenz, Ariño, & Aznar, 2007; Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995; Horrocks, 1979). The vast majority of the tools have been elaborated to execute evaluations of any sphere (Butt, 1979; Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001; Vallerand, 1997; Lee, 1999; Cruz et al.; 1996; Pelegrín, 2005; Kavussanu & Broadley, 2009; Stephens, Bredemeier & Shields, 1997; Bredemeier, 1985; García Calvo, 2006; Borrás et al.; 2003). Secondly, it is noticed that the most utilized method for the assessment of sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conducts is the questionnaire. Thirdly, the analysis of the documents shows that only a few instruments allow scope for simultaneous assessment of the sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct constructs (Cruz et al., 1996; Borrás et al., 2003; Gimeno et al., 2007). Fourthly, it is stated that, among the assessment tools elaborated to evaluate sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conducts, in general, they are only focused on evaluating sportsmen's attitudes and conducts, ignoring other influences of social behaviors (coaches, parents/spectators). Among those used in a specific way in youth sport, the "*Registro de evaluación de partidos de fútbol*" (Gimeno et al., 2007) allows to collect the attitudes and conducts shown by parents/spectators, sportsmen, coaches and referees. Finally, it is stated that there are a few tools which allow the execution of assessments of the constructs which are subject of studies for over a period of time (Gimeno et al., 2007; Borrás et al., 2003).

Table 1. Characteristics of the sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct evaluation tools in sports contexts in general

Tool	Assessment Method	Evaluated Construct	Evaluated Agent	Assessment timing	Sphere (Youth Sport:1; Any Sphere:2)
Sport protocol (Butt, 1979)	Questionnaire	Unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen	punctual	2
Escala de actitudes hacia la deportividad (Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001)	Questionnaire	Sportsmanship	Sportsmen	punctual	2
Multidimensional sportpersonship orientations (Vallerand, 1997)	Questionnaire	Sportsmanship	Sportsmen	punctual	2
Horroks prosocial play behavior inventory (Horroks, 1979)	Observation and questionnaire	Sportsmanship	Sportsmen	punctual	1
Measure of moral judgment, reason and intention (Gibbons et al., 1995)	Observation, questionnaire and interview	Sportsmanship	Sportsmen	punctual	1
The sports values questionnaire (Lee, 1999)	Questionnaire	Sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen	punctual	2
Escala actitudes de fair play (Cruz et al., 1996)	Questionnaire	Sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen	punctual	2
Cuestionario actitudes antideportivas deportistas en (Pelegrín, 2005)	Questionnaire	unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen	punctual	2
Cuestionario de comportamientos prosociales y antisociales en el deporte (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009)	Questionnaire	Sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen	punctual	2

Table 2. Characteristics of the sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct evaluation tools in concrete sports

Tool	Assessment Method	Evaluated Construct	Evaluated Agent	Assessment timing	Sphere (Youth Sport:1; Any Sphere:2)
Judgments about moral behavior in short questionnaire (Stephens, 1996)	Interview (card presentation)	unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen basketball	punctual	2
Continuum of injurious acts (Bredemeier, 1985)	Interview (card presentation)	unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen basketball	punctual	2
Cuestionario sobre intenciones y comportamientos antisociales en fútbol (García Calvo, 2006)	Questionnaire	unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen football	punctual	2
Instrumento de observación de fair play en fútbol (Borrás, et al., 2003)	Observation	Sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen referees	punctual	2
Registro de evaluación de partidos de fútbol (Gimeno et al., 2007)	Questionnaire	Sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct	Sportsmen Coaches Spectators referee	longitudinal	1

Discussion

This paper adds an analysis of the characteristics of the assessment tools used to evaluate sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conducts in general sports contexts, specifying those which have been used in a specific way in youth sports. Based on the analysis of the revised tools, some common limitations can be observed: (1) most of questionnaires are filled in only by an agent, the sportsman, which increases the slant of individual trends; (2) those are tools that are mostly used in punctual isolated moments and not during a period of time; (3) most of tools evaluate well sportsmanship, and unsportsmanlike conducts, there being only a few the tools which jointly allow the assessment of both constructs; (4) some tools add limited information related to the construct which is to be measured; (5) the measurement of other variables, apart from sportsmanship and/or unsportsmanlike conducts, entails that such measure has difficulties when being analyzed psychometrically; (6) those tools can almost be used in full in any sports context, being slender limited the tools which, in a specific way, allow the assessment of youth sports contexts.

Thus, it would be desirable the development of tools which allowed a joint assessment of sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conducts during a period of time, in a specific way in youth sports contexts. The evaluation must allow revealing the kind of pro social or antisocial attitudes and conducts, apart from allowing the identification of those agents that develop them.

Finally, it would be suitable that the elaborated tools proposed multi-item scales with the aim of foreseeing possible responses.

From limited a suitable assessment of youth sports contexts, from an ecological framework, the implementation, it is necessary the execution of multi component programs (Gimeno et al., 2011) which provide a precise methodology, with strategies and resources completely adapted to the agents that affect the reality of sportsmen. Furthermore, these programs must take into account the different situation and circumstances which can take place in training sport contexts. These programs should include; 1) informative and formative actions (primary prevention); 2) prevention and intervention actions (secondary prevention); and 3) crisis intervention actions (tertiary prevention).

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