

The Concept of Morality in National Athletes: A Phenomenological Approach

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out young elite athletes' views on the concept of moral because of being a role model in society with their values and moral structures. In this study qualitative method was used and as a research design, psychological phenomenology approach, which is one of the phenomenological patterns, was preferred. The sample group of the study consists of 11 young national team athletes who were determined with maximum variation sampling method, which is one of the purposive sampling methods. With these athletes, individual interviews for each participant which lasted for an average of 45 minutes within the context of semi structured interview technique were conducted. In accordance with the permission taken from the participants, their answers were recorded and then textualized. Descriptive and content analysis method were used to analyse the data. According to athletes who assess moral in terms of behaviour and protection, sports can contribute to individuals' moral development. While athletes have individual values, and values related with the team and opponent, events which sometimes motivate athletes positively and which sometimes influence them negatively occur in sport environment. In addition, according to athletes, first of all the family, then coaches and environment have responsibilities in the moral development of an athlete.

Keywords: Approach, Athlete, Concept, Moral, National, Phenomenology

Milli Sporcularda Ahlak Kavramı: Fenomenolojik Bir Yaklaşım

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, değerleri ve ahlaki yapıları ile toplumda rol model olmalarından dolayı genç elit sporcuların ahlak kavramına ilişkin görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışmada nitel yöntem kullanılmış ve araştırma deseni olarak fenomenolojik desenlerden psikolojik fenomenoloji yaklaşımı tercih edilmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklem grubunu amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenen 11 genç milli takım sporcusu oluşturmaktadır. Bu sporcularla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kapsamında her bir katılımcı için ortalama 45 dakika süren bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Katılımcılardan alınan izin doğrultusunda yanıtları kayıt altına alınarak metin haline getirilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde betimsel ve içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak ahlaki davranış ve koruma açısından değerlendiren sporculara göre spor, bireylerin ahlaki gelişimine katkı sağlayabilmektedir. Sporcuların bireysel değerleri, takım ve rakip ile ilgili değerleri bulunurken, spor ortamında sporcuları bazen olumlu, bazen olumsuz etkileyen olaylar meydana gelmektedir. Ayrıca sporculara göre bir sporcunun ahlaki gelişiminde önce aile, sonra antrenörler ve çevrenin sorumlulukları vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahlak, Kavram, Fenomenoloji, Milli, Sporcu, Yaklaşım

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Introduction

Moral is defined as a cognitive structure which include an individual's innate or acquired attitudes and behaviours, reasoning consciously about subjects such as justice-injustice, right-wrong, good-bad, and making a decision to act (Çitemel, 2010). That is, it is a process about assessing what we do with right-wrong, good-bad and virtue-vice (Gündüz, 2010). According to Candee and Kohlberg, morality is associated with rights, missions or having behaviours which include the well-being of people from all sections (Sılay, 2014). In addition, moral is the integration of principles, rules and values which shape a person and that person's relationships with others and a way of life that comes into existence as a result of that person's experiences which becomes universal in the environment it exists (Kesgin, 2010). In time, the concept of moral has become a determining and leading situation in defining social values and building the society. As the influence of this concept, which is closely related with almost every field, on the health of society and individual has begun to be understood, it has begun to be mentioned with sport and take its place within the efforts to be beneficial for the society through sports. Sezer et al. (2015) also point out that sport, which is considered as a social phenomenon, increases its importance gradually due to its relation with morality and ethics.

In 1800s, especially in America and England, the tradition of using sports as a means in equipping students with socialisation, multi-culturalism, social control and moral ideology in secondary schools through school teams emerged. Authorities shaping educational policies and those who had a right to say in the field considered sports as a means to develop values associated with effectual citizenship in society. Through organized sport activities, a citizenship perception with high institutional conscious was aimed (Collins, 2014). Researches in sports and moral which gained importance in time contributed to the development of research areas such as sport ethics or sport moral. Researches in the moral of sport have concluded that sport creates positive effects on anti-social behaviours (Alerding, 2011).

It is advocated that it is critical to shape children's behaviours in sport environment (C. Jones, 2005), and also the moral character of students doing sports is influenced by coaches who are sincere, constructive, communicative, and good role models (Roth, 2013). In addition, it is believed that sport, which has the characteristics of perfection and human virtues, promotes moral functioning and ethical behaviour (Mallia et al., 2016). It is considered that sport does not only help developing physical capabilities, but also influences all the developmental areas of an individual, especially humane values and helps individuals to internalize values such as responsibility, appropriateness and ambition (Danioni et al., 2017). Thus, as the awareness for healthy lifestyle increases in society, more people start to tend to physical activity and sport branches. Parents show serious amounts of material and

non-material efforts so that their children regularly do physical activities and develop socially and morally. As a result of this effort, sometimes individuals who start doing sports outclass other individuals and they compete as elite athletes and represent their countries in their branches. While they meet their physical and emotional needs this way, they also become a public figure and they lead people to sports branches.

In many modern countries, elite sport is considered as one of the main means of creating and maintaining the idea of national unity. It can be seen that elite sport and sport activities promote the integration of different ethnic groups and classes, increase self-esteem, promote values such as Fair Play, create a factor of contentment for the population, and create a national pride and a national identity (Hallmann, Breuer and Kühnreich, 2013). Elite athletes have a distinct lifestyle in the media and their actions have an influence on the society, especially on young people. Thus, it is thought that they will play an important role in the determination of behaviours about health such as physical activity, diet and alcohol consumption (Macniven et al., 2010). Besides being a role model to individuals and supporting individuals' social and cognitive processes, elite athletes are assessed as a strategic tool between countries.

Elite athletes, who are also defined as national team athletes, are used as a means of political, economical and cultural superiority among countries. According to Green and Houlihan (2005), while rich and populated countries are on top in medal rankings, they are also in a continuous search not to lose this advantage they gain with their position. In addition, they present offers effectively to organize the games. In terms of sport, these countries still have an important advantage. In order to protect this advantage, they show more systematic, professional and science-based approaches. Governments show a great willingness to allocate or use financial power controlled by the state or government to maintain or develop elite sport achievement.

The fact that countries show a great effort to outclass other countries in every field in the development of the individual and the society necessitates conducting studies on elite sports and especially elite athletes. Since these athletes are the visible faces of the society or the country they represent, everything they do attracts attention or is imitated. Thus, the character, values or moral structures of these athletes are very important. Conducting studies to find out and develop what athletes think about the concept of moral, who has more influence on their moral structure, how they interpret the situations they come across in sport environment in terms of moral and how immoral situations are reflected on their performance will provide useful information and proof for plans and programs of countries about elite branches and elite athletes. The present study was conducted for this purpose by interviewing with national athletes.

Method

The present study is a qualitative study prepared to find out the information levels of young national athletes on the concept of moral, immoral situations in sport environment and moral development through sports. Qualitative research is defined as a type of research which follows a process to show events which are included with qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis through a realistic and integrative way (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013, p. 45); as an umbrella term which comprises techniques trying to reach terms about solving, interpreting and making sense (Merriam, 2013, p. 13). Phenomenology design was used in the study. Phenomenology is a research method with its specific characteristics and philosophical content. This method contains researching the individual universe that is individual experiences, individuals' perceptions and their interpretations of the events (Baş and Akturan, 2013, p. 84). The phenomenological pattern is divided into two different types: Hermeneutic and empirical, transcendental or psychological phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology helps the researcher to interpret the participant's life experiences and texts of life with his experiences related to the phenomenon; Empirical, transcendental or psychological phenomenology, on the other hand, is based on the blocking of the experiences of the researcher as if he had no knowledge about the phenomenon and the emphasis only on the experience and opinions of the participant (Cresswell and Poth, 2018). Therefore, the use of empirical, transcendental or psychological phenomenology was adopted because of offering the experience and opinions of the participants rather than the researcher's experiences in our study. Within the scope of this approach, the researcher did not add personal experiences to the process and only collected data on the experience and opinions of the participants about the phenomena and took the role of not making any intervention

Research Group

Research group consists of 11 young elite athletes from different branches. Maximum variation sampling method was used to determine the participants. The purpose of this method is to create a relatively small sample and to reflect the variations of the individuals that can be a side of the problem studied in the sample. This method is not used for making generalizations; on the contrary, the purpose is to try to find out whether there are common or shared cases among various situations and to present different dimensions of the problem according to this variation (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Information about the athletes who participated in the study are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Information about the Participants

Number	Participant Code	Gender	Age	Branch	Type of National Team	Years in the National Team
1	N1	Female	19	Arm wrestling	B National	3 Years
2	N2	Female	19	Arm wrestling	B National	3 Years
3	N3	Female	20	Judo	C National	4 Years
4	N4	Female	20	Football	B National	6 Years
5	N5	Female	21	Kickboxing	A National	4 Years
6	N6	Male	21	Badminton	C National	3 Years
7	N7	Male	21	Athleticism	C National	4 Years
8	N8	Female	24	Handball	A National	8 Years
9	N9	Male	24	Volleyball	A National	4 Years
10	N10	Male	25	Halter	C National	5 Years
11	N11	Male	26	Basketball	B National	7 Years

Data Collection Process

Semi-structured interview technique was used to find out what national athletes think about the concept of moral, the characteristics a moral athlete should have, immoral situations in sport, moral development and their contributions to moral development through sport. After the questions that were planned to be asked to participants were organized, they were checked by experts in the field for both content and construct validity and 5 questions were decided on. The participants were first told their voices would be recorded to prevent data loss and to act quickly. After a comfortable environment was provided and the participant's approval was taken, the interview was performed face to face through a voice recorder. The interviews for each participant lasted for about 30-45 minutes. The questions asked in the interview are below:

Question 1: What do you understand from the concept of moral?

Question 2: What are your thoughts about values an athlete with moral should have?

Question 3: Who can be effective in what ways in an athletes' moral development?

Question 4: What kind of situations you consider as immoral do you come across in sport environment? How do these situations influence you?

Question 5: How can sports contribute to individuals' moral development?

Data Analysis

The interviews recorded by the researchers were textualized in computer. Athletes were coded as N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6, N7, N8, N9, N10 and N11. Descriptive and content analysis were conducted on the obtained texts. Categories were created for the moral concept of young national athletes. First of all, content analysis was included to reach categories and descriptions and quotations were included for reliability.

Results and Interpretation

The young national athletes were asked the question “*What do you understand from the concept of moral?*” The athletes expressed their thoughts on the concept as follows.

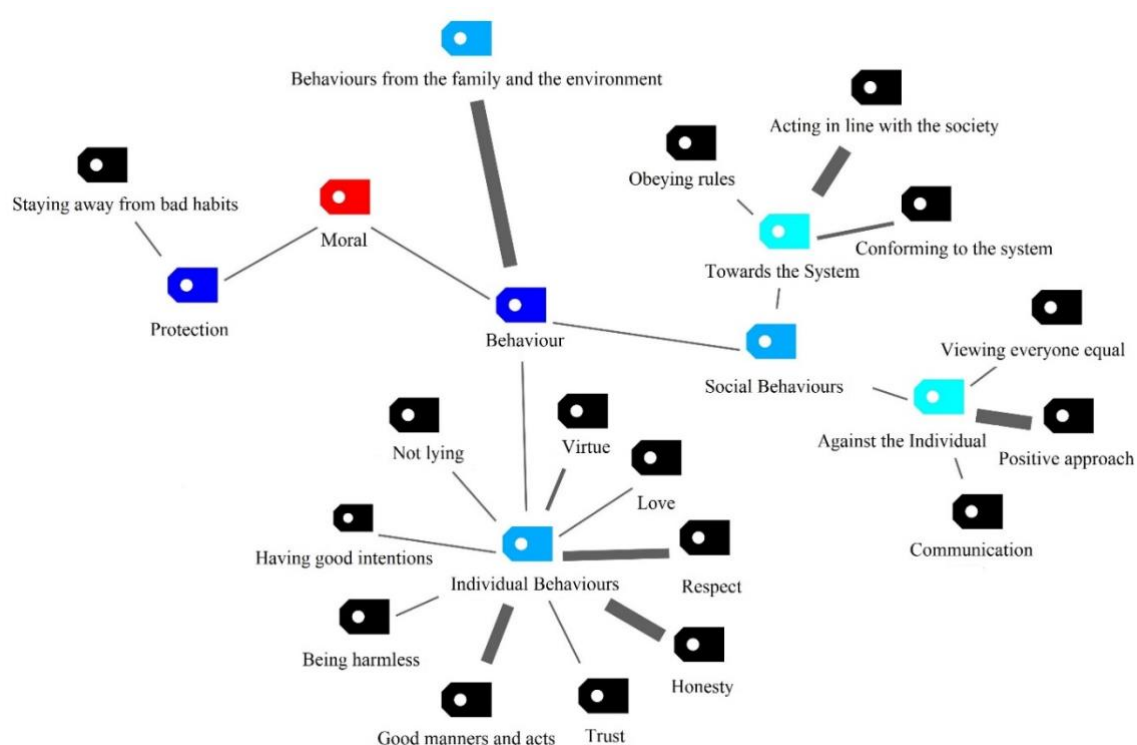


Figure 1. Young national athletes' thoughts about the concept of moral

Young national athletes defined the concept of moral under two titles as behaviour and protection. They classified behaviours as behaviours acquired from the family and the environment, individual behaviours and social behaviours. Individual behaviours are behaviours shown by the person such as not lying, having good intentions, being harmless, good manners and acts, trust, honesty, love and virtue. Social behaviours are grouped in two as those towards the society and those towards the individual. The behaviours towards the system are behaviours such as acting in line with the system, obeying rules and acting in line with the society. The behaviours towards the individual are communication, positive approach and viewing everyone equal. Some of the answers given by national athletes to the related question are below.

N2: It is a person's manners, acts and behaviours, that is, everything positive a person shows in the world is moral. It means a person's knowing how to behave and act in the society and to act within the moral.

N3: It is a person's knowing how to act in a setting, not disobeying the system, that is, obeying rules and not hurting anyone. It is being honest, not lying, and staying away from bad habits.

N4: It is the development of a person coming from family and forming with personal thoughts. It is the character of the person that will show the right, the good and not make bad behaviours. A person's moral structure is important in all of his/her thoughts, acts and dialogues with others.

N6: Moral is a person's manners and acts affected by and affecting his/her environment. It is having a decent way of talking, not upsetting other people and being respectful to them, being honest and not lying.

The young national athletes who participated in the study were asked the question “*What are your thoughts about values an athlete with moral should have?*”. The national athletes expressed their opinions about the values an athlete should have as follows:

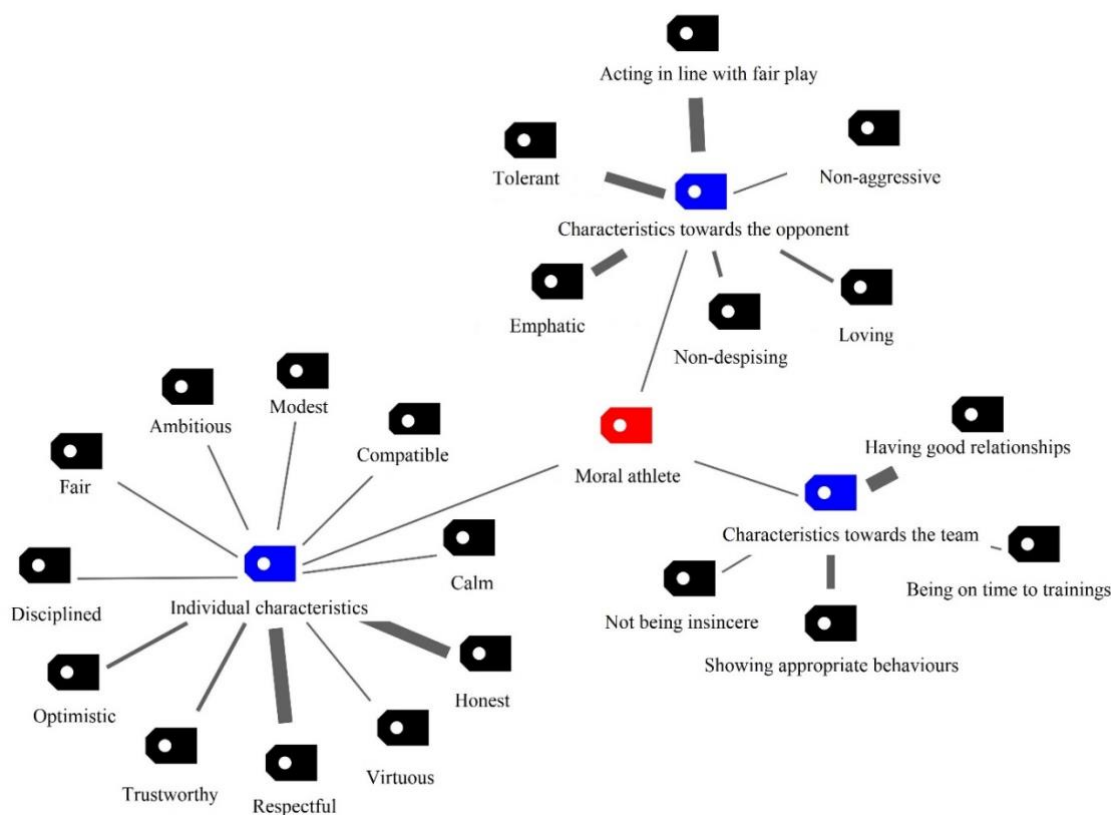


Figure 2. Young national athletes' views about what values athletes should have

According to young national athletes, a moral athlete has to have individual values and values towards the opponent and the team. Individual values include values such as being modest, compatible, calm, honest, virtuous, respectful, trustworthy, optimistic, disciplined, fair and ambitious. Values towards the opponent are acting in line with fair play, not being aggressive, not despising, being emphatic, loving and tolerant. Values towards the team are having good relationships, being on time to trainings, showing appropriate behaviours and not being insincere. Some of the answers given by national athletes to the related question are below.

N1: An athlete should not despise the opponent and tell the opponent offending or despising things, should not fight or show violence, should be loving, honest, virtuous and communicative.

N3: Moral values that a good athlete should have are being respectful to coaches, considering trainings as a job and training regularly, being respectful to coaches and friends, and being disciplined.

N4: Being optimistic, being fair, being good and tolerant to friends, not having bad thoughts. Thinking good of things even if negative things happen.

N5: A moral athlete should be honest, good, respectful and not do things behind people's backs.

N6: A moral athlete should not give up on what he/she thinks is right, no matter what happens. He/she should be honest and tell the truth to the opponent or the referee even if this means losing.

N11: Being honest and respectful, fighting within the context of fair-play, being tolerant to team mate, coach and opponent, acting sportsmanlike and being modest. It is the character an athlete shows to team mates and more importantly to opponents. A moral athlete should first of all know about sportsmanship, show all activities within respect, not ever get nasty and should not impose on the opponent even if he/she loses or does bad.

The young national athletes who participated in the study were asked the question “*Who can be effective in what ways in an athletes’ moral development?*”. The national athletes expressed their opinions as follows:

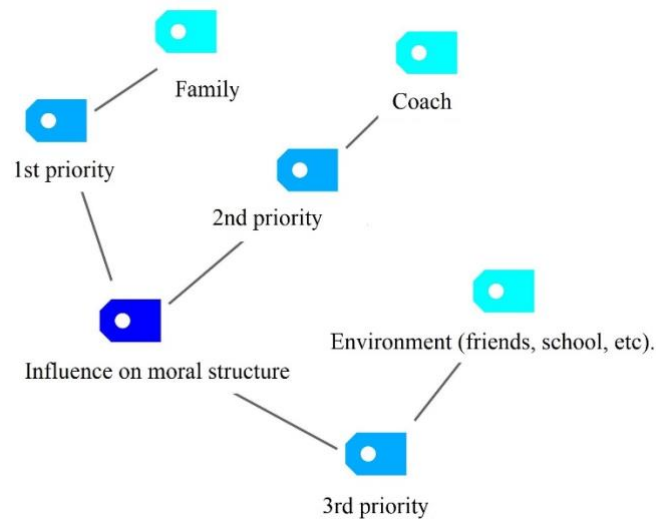


Figure 3. Young national athletes’ views on who is effective in athletes’ moral development

According to young national athletes, in athletes’ moral development, first comes the family, followed by coach and lastly the environment which consists of the team, school or the friend group. Some of the answers given by national athletes to the related question are below.

N1: Moral starts in the family first; thus, the family is effective, then comes the coach who is a role model all the time and lastly friends.

N7: Coaches have a big importance in an athlete’s moral values. During their sports life, athletes can work with more than one coach. In my opinion, family has the most influence on an athlete. The person who cannot get these values from family can be as successful as he wants, it won’t matter. Secondly comes the coach, and lastly friends.

N8: Since a person learns moral from the family first, family is most effective, then comes friends and lastly sport environment in which there are people he takes as example (coach, team mate, etc.)

N10: First comes the coach, and then the family. Team mates, I mean the environment is also very important. Shifts can occur when there are people in the environment who have immoral behaviours. However, from me coach comes first, then the family and friend environment lastly.

The young national athletes who participated in the study were asked the question “*What kind of situations you consider as immoral do you come across in sport environment? How do these situations influence you?*”. The national athletes expressed their opinions about immoral events in sport environment as follows:

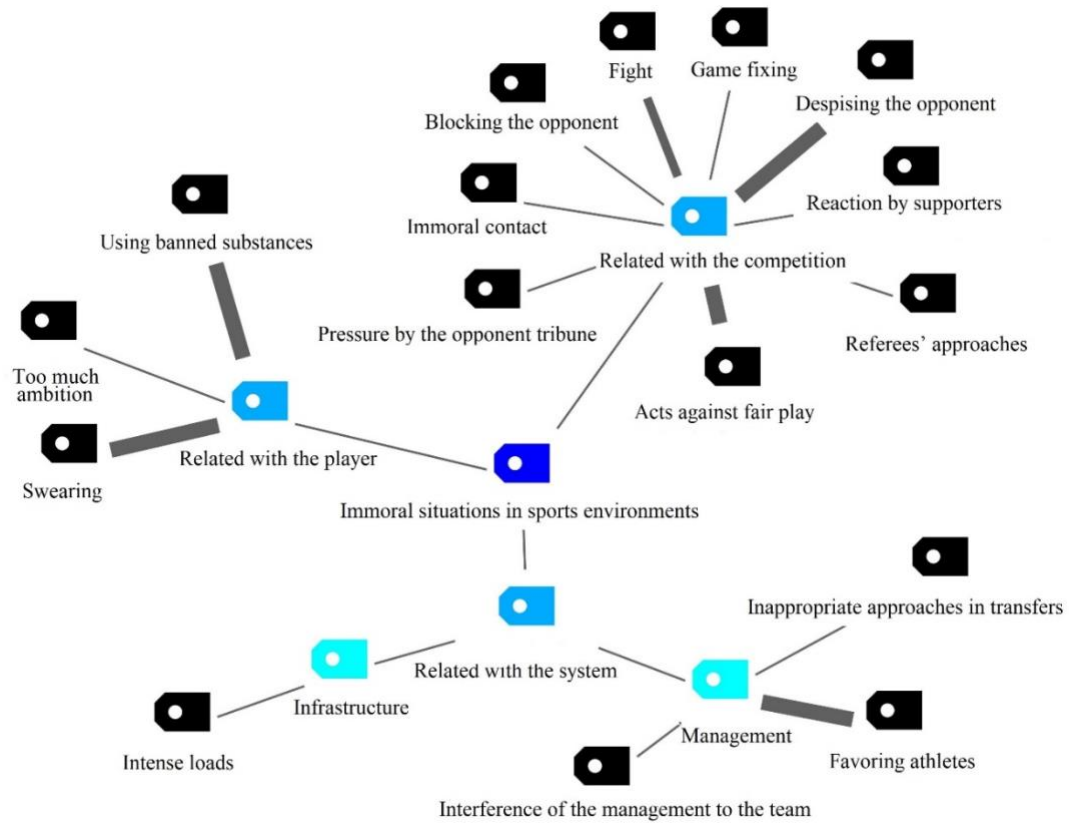


Figure 4. Young national athletes' views on immoral events in sports environments

Young national athletes stated that they faced immoral situations related with players, competition and the system in sport environments. Situations related with players are using banned substances, too much ambition and swearing. Situations related with competition are game fixing, fights, despising the opponent, reactions by the team's supporters, referees' approaches to players, acts against fair play, opponent tribune pressure, immoral physical contact and blocking the opponent. Situations related with the system are infrastructure problems with intense loading and the interference of the management to the team, favouring athletes and inappropriate transfer approach. Some of the answers given by national athletes to the related question are below.

N1: Using additional substances, doping, fights, cheating, favouring athletes

N2: Acting like the opponent team is a loser; that is, showing acts which are not suitable for modesty and fair play.

N5: Managers and coaches who are not good at their jobs. During a transfer, people do not pay attention to whether the athlete is good or not or whether he has a good character or not, other things are determinant. People try to interfere with the business of managers and coaches and try to give tactics.

N6: Lying to the referee, to the opponent, showing bad behaviours to the opponent are immoral behaviours in sport environments.

N7: I've been exposed to physically inappropriate immoral behaviours by opponents who tried to let me down and decrease my motivation. In addition, a player's swearing is also an immoral behaviour in sports environment.

N8: Unsportsmanlike behaviours, insulting words and provoking behaviours to the opponent, not respecting the opponent.

N10: Referee's approaches towards athletes, shouting at the athlete and negativities from tribunes can be shown as immoral behaviours.

In addition, the athletes were also asked the question of “*what kind of influences immoral situations had*” on athletes. National athletes expressed their opinions about the reflections of this situation on them.

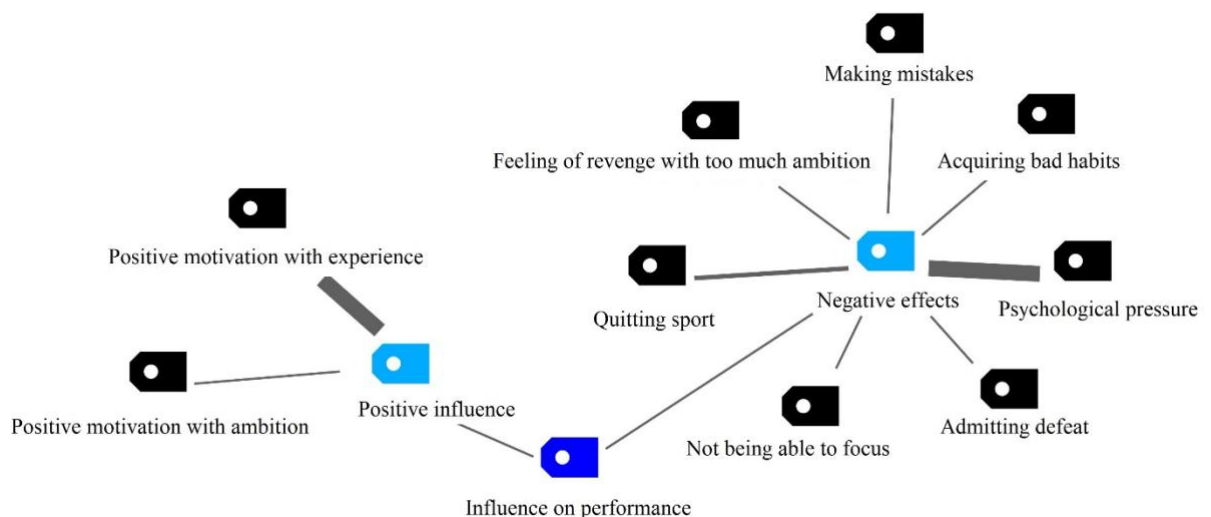


Figure 5. Young national athletes' opinions about the influences of immoral situations in sports environment on them

For young national athletes, while the situations in sport environments caused positive influences, these situations caused negative influences for some others. Those positively influenced were motivated by ambition and experience. Those negatively influenced mentioned some situations

such as psychological pressures, acquiring bad habits, making mistakes, feeling of revenge with too much ambition, quitting sport, not being able to focus and admitting defeat. Some of the answers given by national athletes to the related question are below.

N1: When I know that my opponent uses supplementary substances, the thought that we are not competing under equal conditions causes me not to be able to focus and admit defeat, these in turn cause a psychological pressure in me and this is reflected in my performance.

N3: It had bad reflections on me, I came to the point of quitting sport and became psychologically unwell.

N4: These types of events do not cause any effects on my performance because since I mentally prepared myself, I think that I can win the race without showing any immoral behaviour.

N5: A manager's watching all the trainings influences both athletes and coaches and cause stress. Coaches get stressed, leave the training program and cause overloading. This in turn influences performance because if you are under pressure, this pressure gets back to you in the form of stress and harms your body.

N6: I'll lose my confidence in the opponent and my team mate. Athletes who are exposed to training for long years have a state of weariness and they can even reach the point of quitting sport.

N7: It does not influence my performance any way cause training performance and match performance are quite different. Your first performances and training performance are not the same because in every match you play, you get more experienced. You even have to ignore the swearing at the tribunes after you reach a specific level of maturity; that is, after a specific point, you don't care about these any more since you become more experienced and you understand this.

N9: Negative situations are reflected negatively on my performance because I get more ambitious and this creates an ambition to work in me.

The young national athletes who participated in the study were asked the question “*How can sport contribute to individuals’ moral development?*”. The national athletes expressed their opinions about immoral events in sport environment as follows:

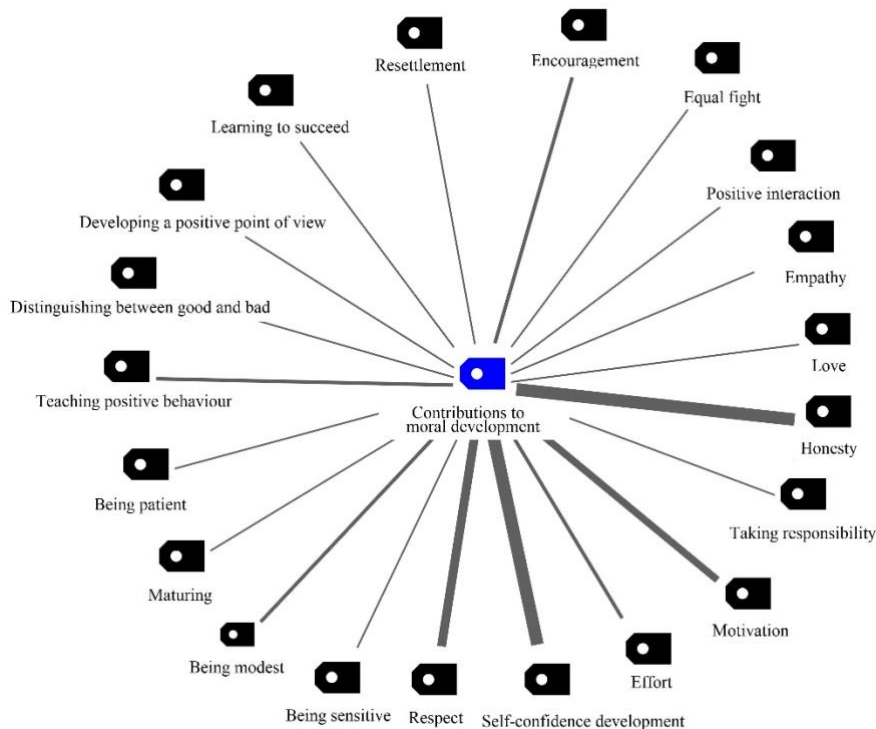


Figure 6. Young national athletes’ opinions about contributing to individuals’ moral development through sports

According to young national athletes, an individual’s moral development can be supported through sports. Sports can contribute to a person’s being sensitive, modest and patient, self-confidence development, showing efforts, motivation, taking responsibility, honesty, loving, showing empathy, positive interaction, distinguishing good from bad and teaching positive behaviours. Some of the answers given by national athletes to the related question are below.

N1: In terms of health, we can prevent bad habits such as alcohol, smoking, etc. In terms of moral, it can develop characteristics such as ambition and effort to reach the predetermined targets and to overcome the obstacles. That is, it can motivate individuals to reach goals.

N3: Sport made my self-confidence get higher; we learned how to become smaller while becoming greater. Showing off has become a thing of the past and we became mature.

N4: When sport restraints individuals, athletes become more patient. Since individuals who do sports are in the same environment with beautiful and successful people, they become better morally and they show behaviours such as honesty and tolerance.

N6: We develop the feeling of friendship. Feelings of honesty and trust develop.

N7: People may have more courage through sport. We can develop self-confidence. Honesty is very important in athletes; thus, we can contribute to honesty through sport.

N10: Individuals can develop a point of view against opponents. Instead of bad temper, fair play can be instilled. Immoral situations such as using slang, theft and lying can be changed through sports.

Discussion and Conclusion

The concept of moral is assessed in terms of behaviours shown by young national athletes and in terms of protecting the individual from bad habits. The aforementioned behaviours are classified as behaviours an individual forms from the family or the environment. An individual is expected not to lie, to have good intentions, to give confidence, to be harmless and to have values such as love and virtue. In addition, the individual is also expected to show social behaviours like obeying rules and order, acting in line with the society, being able to communicate, having positive approaches and considering everyone as equal.

Moral education plays an important role in shaping the personality of an athlete. It directly influences the development of an athletes' adaptation to competitions and competences of preparation (Veronica, 2010). All these situations such as respecting others, opponents and team mates, complying with the rules of the game and social behaviours help athletes to be trained within the context of fair play concept which can be seen in almost every field of life (Popescu and Masari, 2011). In sports education, the purpose is to attain the transition from heteronomy (rules/laws dictated by others) to socionomy (rules/laws dictated by the society). Hetero-morality is external and it aims freedom and morality as individual responsibility. In socionomy, decisions emerge when they are shaped and formed socially by relations with others (Cucos, 2002). In our study, athletes assess the concept of moral within individual and social behaviours. Thus, it is thought that the source and intensity of behaviours which are important for the formation of athlete's character should be chosen carefully.

According to the results of the study, young national athletes believe that a moral athlete should have some values of himself/herself and values related with the team and the opponent. The athletes stated that a moral athlete should be modest, easygoing, calm, honest, virtuous, respectful, reliable, optimistic, disciplined, fair and ambitious. A moral athlete should also have good relations, participate in trainings on time, be sincere and show appropriate behaviours. In addition, he/she should act according to fair play, not be aggressive, should show empathy, not despise the opponent, be tolerant and be loving to other people.

In professional sports which require high performance, moral rules of athletes consist of rules in sport competitions, trainings and social life. Sport rules and regulations shape the behaviours and rules internalized by athletes such as social norms and social life rules. That is, athletes acting within the context of fair play in competitions show the same behaviours in their social lives. However, athletes who do not receive such behaviours from their opponents show less respect for rules and regulations and care less about being fair in social life (Popescu and Masari, 2011). This brings to mind the thought that the most important characteristic of a moral athlete is the thought that he/she should have internalized the required human values in his/her sport life and social life. That is, his/her characteristics in social life and sport life should overlap.

According to data obtained from young national athletes, it was found that first of all the family, then coaches and after that the friend circle of the athlete are responsible for the moral development of the athlete.

The family's positive support has the primary importance for participation in sport and success (Wylleman, DeKnop, Ewing and Cumming, 2000; Wylleman and Lavallee, 2004). Parental support, praise and understanding are especially important among young athletes since they are associated with high intrinsic motivation and the feeling of pleasure (Ullrich-French and Smith, 2006). It has been found that families have an influence in encouraging children to join sports clubs and to maintain this participation (Light, Harvey and Memmert, 2011). In addition, competing under equal terms, that is, the ideals of fair-play environment or being an athlete form the logical platform which make parents want their children to do sports regularly (Kremer-Sadlik and Kim, 2007). In addition, athletes are under the influence of their families in the decisions they make during their sports career. It is possible to see the influence of parents in a great number of fields from participation in a sports branch to the intensity of training and to performance (Eccles and Harrold, 1991) because families are the primary institutions children are in. The first trainings for sportive abilities take part in this institution. A great number of young people even emphasize the supportive influence of their families in their elite sport career (Hemery, 1986). Athletes who cannot get the necessary instrumental and emotional support they need to maintain their sport career are more inclined to quit sports and to need the help of other social supporters such as teachers and coaches (Hellstedt, 1987).

The role of coaches is also of great importance in easing the positive developmental experience of young athletes (Horn, 2008). Coaches' behaviours contribute to athletes' sport experience through making athletes realize the functioning of an autonomous individual (Erickson and Côté, 2016). The influence of parental autonomy support is influenced by the autonomy support provided by children's' peers and coaches. In addition, it is thought that motivational climate created by coaches and peers has more influence on sports behaviours of athletes rather than the influence of

only parents (Knight, Berrow and Harwood, 2017). Although coaches are seen as a central and critical success factor since they have a direct influence on elite athletes' development and performance, this factor alone is not sufficient. Athletes' abilities, sacrifices and decisiveness about training are also significant in this process (Sotiriadou and Shilbury, 2009). Thus, it is estimated that in case of many different factors such as parents, coach and environment working together in harmony for a more effective moral development, it is estimated that the required influence will be created.

When the athletes were asked to state the unpleasant situations they came across in sports environments, young national athletes expressed that they experienced a few problems resulting from the player, competition and the system. Use of banned substances, too much ambition and swearing are seen as problems resulting from players. Match fixing, fight, despising the opponent, reactions of the supporters, referees' approaches to athletes, behaviours against fair play and pressure from the opponent tribunes are problems related with the competition. In addition, problems related with intense loading, interventions of the management to the team, favouring athletes and inappropriate transfers are stated as management problems. While these negative situations influence the performance of some athletes negatively, they influence some positively. The athletes who stated that they were negatively influenced stated reasons such as psychological pressure, taking up bad habits, making mistakes, feelings of revenge with too much ambition, thinking of quitting sport, not being able to focus and admitting defeat. The athletes who stated that they were positively motivated claimed that they were motivated due to their ambitions and experience. According to Keegan et al. (2014), elite athletes have to be motivated for a long time so that they can be trained frequently and intensely. However, problems in training and motivation will cause the emergence of unwanted situations such as game fixing, use of banned substances, not being able to tolerate supporters' pressure and thus acting against fair play.

According to some studies in literature, while athletes' competing on the home team creates less anxiety, it also increases the ability to move with the level of trust and motivation (Jurkovic, 1985; Bray and Widmeyer, 1995; Bray et al., 1998; Bray and Widmeyer, 2000). However, despite the general opinion that being the home team will give an advantage, it is disputed that not every player performing will benefit from this advantage (Poulter, 2009). As a result of individuals' efforts to show themselves in front of viewers and the stress environment resulting from this, they also have the possibility to damage the performance or automatic behaviours (Baumeister, 1984). In addition, Thirer and Rampey (1979) stated that the presence of supporters who do things like swearing, throwing things at the opponent and fighting, which do not comply with fair play, encourage home team to violate the rules more during the competition. In addition, it is also seen that the number of

supporters also gives advantage to home team and influence the decisions of the referee significantly (Nevill et al., 2002).

Other negative events in sports environments which athletes resort to increase their performance and beat their opponents are using banned substances and bribes or game fixing. Alaranta, Holmila, Palmu, Pietila and Helenius (2006) found that 22% of athletes doing team sports, 37% of the athletes doing endurance sports and 43% of athletes doing speed and strength sports used banned substances. Bribery and game fixing are also continuous threats within context money, competition and power are included in. Sports industry also has an environment in which such a threat is frequently seen (Aquilina and Chetcuti, 2014). The most important reason for this situation is thought to be the fact that countries use elite sports as a way to gain superiority and national prestige rather than athletes' personal expectations (Krüger, 1993; Arnaud and Rordan, 2013). Individuals, organizations and the states have missions in solving this problem which is gradually growing in the long run. These are conducting preventive activities through education, good management and self-sacrificing and preventive interventions of the police organization which is needed in this field (Aquilina and Chetcuti, 2014). As can be seen, unpleasant situations stated by the athletes and the literature are in parallel. In order to prevent these unpleasant situations, coaches, managers and supporters should be trained and at the same time sport authorities should resort to effective plans and disincentives. It is thought that this way negativity will decrease in the first place and disappear in the long run.

It is thought that through contributions it makes to individuals such as being sensitive, modest and patient, self-confidence development, showing efforts, motivation, taking responsibility, honesty, being loving, showing empathy, positive interaction, equal fighting, encouraging, learning to succeed, developing point of view, distinguishing between good and bad and teaching positive behaviours, sports can support moral development.

Sport provides positive characteristics and qualifications that can be transferred to non-sport environments (Rutten t al., 2007). Physical education is a field which produces and stimulates human behaviour, and values all human capabilities, abilities and attitudes. Ideal personal characteristic occurs as a result of the harmony between an individual's physical, intellectual and moral development (Veronica, 2010). Children and adolescents live some positive experiences in participating in sports such as friendship, developing self respect, closeness, and emotional support (Weiss et al., 1996). When the developments it provides to individual are considered, the possibility comes to the forefront that with the help of enriching and individualizing the experiences, positive contributions can be made to the idea of supporting moral development through sports or physical activity and efficiency can be increased.

As a conclusion, it can be seen that young national athletes have an accumulation of knowledge for the concept of moral and that they define moral as consistent behaviours shown in social and sports environment. Moral is expressed as positive behaviours that should be shown to the team mate, coach and opponent. Although the family is on the forefront in moral development, the family, coach and the environment should work together in harmony. In sports environments, there are negative situations influencing athletes' performances such as doping, bribery and tribune pressure, and it is thought that to minimize the negations and to make them disappear, all the sections having a responsibility should work in cooperation. Thanks to experience environment provided by sport, moral development can be supported, and the purposes can be reached as a result of organizations suitable for the level and competence of participants. In future studies, applications which include real life experiences of national athletes can be prepared to measure their levels for the concept of moral, and these programs can be applied on different age groups. Thus, contributions can be made to make the researchers comprehend the issue and to present different points of views.

Conflicts of interest

The authors certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript

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