



RESEARCH ON THE ORIENTATION TO SPORTSMANSHIP IN STUDENTS - FUTURE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The formation of students' personalities depends on the teacher's professional qualities and personality traits. In implementing the school subject's educational tasks, the physical education teacher becomes the main factor in building the students' moral behavior and relationships during the educational activity. **The research aims** to reveal the focus on sportsmanship as a leading personality trait of students – future physical education teachers. The study covered 134 students majoring in the specialty of ‘Physical Education and Sport Teacher’ at the National Sports Academy ‘Vassil Levski’ **Methods:** The main research method was the psychological questionnaire ‘Multidimensional Sportsmanship Orientation Scale’ (MSOS), adapted by M. Georgiev and D. Fenerova and developed by Vallerand, Briere, Blanchard, and Provencher. The results were processed mathematically and statistically using Frequency Analysis and the Mann-Whitney U-test. **Results:** We found a significant impact of students' gender and the type of sport they practice on their attitudes toward sportsmanship. Notably, students engaged in individual sports show more positive attitudes towards their opponents, the training process, the competition process, and the officials. Conversely, students involved in sport only for health demonstrate more unstable attitudes toward sportsmanship. **Conclusion:** The studied students preparing to become PE teachers actively engaged in sport demonstrate positive attitudes toward various manifestations of sportsmanship. The other students, who have not actively participated in sports but only for health reasons, demonstrate significantly lower levels of respect towards their opponents and officials and established rules and norms.

Key words: sportsmanship, attitudes, students, professional qualities, and personality traits.

INTRODUCTION

Physical education, as an educational function, plays a significant role in shaping students' personalities. In school, it is implemented through the developing and formative nature of the lessons, which include many games. These games provide opportunities to fully reveal the moral dimensions of physical education, provoking praiseworthy and morally reprehensible behavior. They offer favorable situations for teachers to use appropriate educational methods, thereby shaping the students' moral behavior and contributing to the formation of their personalities. In pedagogy, it has been clarified that the formation of students' personalities depends on the professional and personal qualities of the teacher (1). In

implementing the subject's educational objectives, the physical education teacher is the key factor in shaping students' moral behavior and relationships. This is best achieved during games, where the teacher must provide the necessary knowledge and examples that leave a lasting impression in students' minds, helping them to form behavior based on the universally accepted principles of fair play. In sports literature, 'fair play' and 'sportsmanship' concepts are often used interchangeably. At its core, sportsmanship embodies the idea of fair play and is closely linked to moral behavior in sports (2, 3). Fair play, a virtue rooted in reason, serves to temper the desire for unconditional victory in any competitive situation. It's a reminder that victory should not come at any cost. Fairness in the game is not just about following the rules but also about respecting the game itself and the opponents (4, 5). Thomas Arnold, the person who outlined the five fundamental principles of fair play, believed in the importance of

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respecting the opponent, referee, and teammates; selflessness and preserving the free spirit of competition; conscientious compliance to the rules; prioritizing norms over personal gain and the desire for victory; and maintaining dignified behavior when faced with the challenges of the game. As the author asserts, without adherence to the principles of fair play, true sport would not exist. These principles, embraced by the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, have been integrated into the educational systems of many countries – England, France, Germany, and Bulgaria (6-8). Understanding and following the rules in the spirit of fair play is a cornerstone of the educational objectives during lessons, games, and competitions. This approach not only teaches students how to win and lose with dignity but also instills in them the crucial aspect of sportsmanship as a behavior and a way of thinking (9, 10).

Numerous models have been experimented with to achieve an educational impact, proving their effectiveness (11, 12). Based on the concept of 'fair play,' the social skills of students from various age groups are successfully developed (13-15). However, there are few studies on the attitudes toward sportsmanship among sports educators – teachers and coaches – who play the most significant role in shaping students' and athletes' personalities, both in the educational process of physical education and training and competition. From this perspective, the essence of the present study arises.

METHODS

The study aims to reveal the orientation towards sportsmanship as a leading personal characteristic of students who are future physical education teachers. To achieve this, the following tasks were carried out:

- 1) Development of a theoretical framework on the issue.
- 2) Conducting a study to determine the orientation of students towards sportsmanship.
- 3) Uncovering the specific attitudes of the participants regarding sportsmanship.

The subject of the research is the orientation toward sportsmanship of future physical education teachers.

The study involved 134 students majoring in 'Physical Education Teacher' at the National Sports Academy 'Vassil Levski.' For the study, we divided the students by gender and according to the following criteria: 1) Type of

sport – individual (including sports such as athletics, combat sports, tennis, fitness, and swimming) and team sports (including various team games); and 2) Based on the objective – those participating in sports for health purposes and those aiming for athletic achievements.

The main research method was the Bulgarian-adapted version of the psychological questionnaire Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientation Scale (MSOS), developed by Vallerand, Briere, Blanchard, and Provencher (16). The questionnaire consists of 25 questions grouped into the following five subscales: 1) Respect for the rules and social conventions; 2) Respect for the opponent and officials; 3) Respect for one's full commitment to sports participation; 4) Respect for the opponent, concern for their mental and physical health; 5) Negative approach toward the practice of sport (17).

The results were statistically processed using variation analysis and the Mann-Whitney U-test (18).

RESULTS

The statistical analysis of the test results revealed specific patterns in the participants' attitudes toward sportsmanship. Men and women engaged in individual sports demonstrated higher moral behavior, influencing their sportsmanship than those involved in team sports (**Table 1 and Table 2**).

For men practicing individual sports, the mean value of the indicator 'Respect for the rules and social conventions' is 23.4 units ($S = 1.74$). This is 1.2 units higher than the mean value of 22.2 units ($S = 2.64$) for those practicing team sports. The difference in favor of individual sports is statistically significant and supported by $P = 97.6\%$ ($U_{emp} = 2.253$). The difference for women on this indicator was also statistically significant (**Table 2**). For women, it favors individual sports, with a difference of 1.4 units higher than the team sports indicator, supported by $P = 95.3\%$ ($U_{emp} = 2.099$). From the responses of participants practicing team sports, it becomes clear that, in most cases, when they lose a competition, they tend not to congratulate their opponent for their victory or good performance. This is somewhat normal, given that the outcome depends heavily on the team's actions in team sports. When a loss occurs, the reason is often attributed to poor teamwork rather than weaker individual performance by players. As a result, after a loss, the defeated

player may not be inclined to acknowledge failure as their own and, therefore, does not congratulate the opponent for a good game. In this context, the results of the studied indicator provide us, as educators, with the opportunity to clarify, through organized sports activities in

schools, the approaches for implementing educational tasks in teaching. This way, future teachers can effectively cultivate honesty and dignified behavior in the face of defeat among their students.

Table 1. Mean values and differences in sportsmanship attitudes among the surveyed men practicing individual and team sports

Indicators	Individual Sports		Team Sports		d	U _{emp}	P%
	\bar{X}_1	s	\bar{X}_2	s			
Respect for the rules and social conventions	23,4	1,74	22,2	2,64	1,2	2,253	97,6
Respect for the opponent and officials	20,9	2,54	20,2	2,90	0,7	1,041	70,1
Respect for one's full commitment to sports participation	23,5	1,12	22,3	1,45	1,2	2,386	96,9
Respect for the opponent, concern for their mental and physical health	19,1	3,17	17,0	2,71	2,1	2,701	99,3
Negative approach toward the practice of sport	5,1	0,75	5,4	0,82	0,7	1,564	75,2

Table 2. Mean values and differences in sportsmanship attitudes among the surveyed women practicing individual and team sports

Indicators	Individual Sports		Team Sports		d	U _{emp}	P%
	\bar{X}_1	s	\bar{X}_2	s			
Respect for the rules and social conventions	23,5	1,69	22,1	1,66	1,4	2,099	95,3
Respect for the opponent and officials	20,8	3,29	21,5	2,32	0,7	0,523	40,0
Respect for one's full commitment to sports participation	24,0	1,09	22,9	1,70	1,1	2,489	98,7
Respect for the opponent, concern for their mental and physical health	17,7	2,21	17,8	2,23	0,1	0,177	14,1
Negative approach toward the practice of sport	5,7	1,00	5,9	1,08	0,2	1,064	71,6

The surveyed men and women involved in individual sports demonstrated significantly better 'Respect for one's full commitment to sports participation' than those practicing team sports. For men, the difference between the mean values of the two groups was 1.2 units, with $P = 96.9\%$, and for women, it was 1.1 units, with $P = 98.7\%$. A key indicator of the significantly better results among those practicing individual sports is their motivation to give their best during training and competition, even when they think they will

lose. In individual sports, the athlete's willpower is better developed, which is crucial for achieving goals in practice. Future physical education teachers should prioritize the tools and methods of individual sports, especially those from single-combat sports, where respect for the sport, the coach, and the opponent comes first. Through these means, they can more effectively influence the development of students' willpower qualities, such as discipline, determination, and perseverance – qualities that

help regulate behavior toward achieving set goals.

The results showed another statistically significant difference in the sportsmanship indicators among the men surveyed. Those practicing individual sports showed a better 'Respect for the opponent, concern for their mental and physical health.' Their mean value of 19.1 units ($S = 3.17$) was 2.1 units higher ($P = 99.3\%$, $U_{emp} = 2.701$) than that of those practicing team sports, whose mean value was 17.0 units ($S = 2.71$). In team sports (e.g., football), victory is sometimes achieved solely by following the game's written rules, which often allow for violation of the fair play principles, leading to so-called 'formal honesty.' This is normal in high performance sports and is dictated by the rules that permit it. As a result, athletes in team sports often stray

beyond the moral norms of fair play, driven by the belief that only victory defines success.

For the other two sportsmanship indicators, 'Respect for the opponent and officials' and 'Negative approach toward the practice of sport,' no statistically significant differences were found between the surveyed groups of men and women ($P < 95.0\%$). Regardless of the type of sport (individual or team), sportsmanship is a part of the athletes' fair behavior and everybody involved in their activities (coaches, referees, managers).

We found interesting patterns when comparing the attitudes of the surveyed men and women, divided into two groups: 'practicing sports for health' and 'practicing sports for athletic results' – **Figure 1 and Figure 2.**

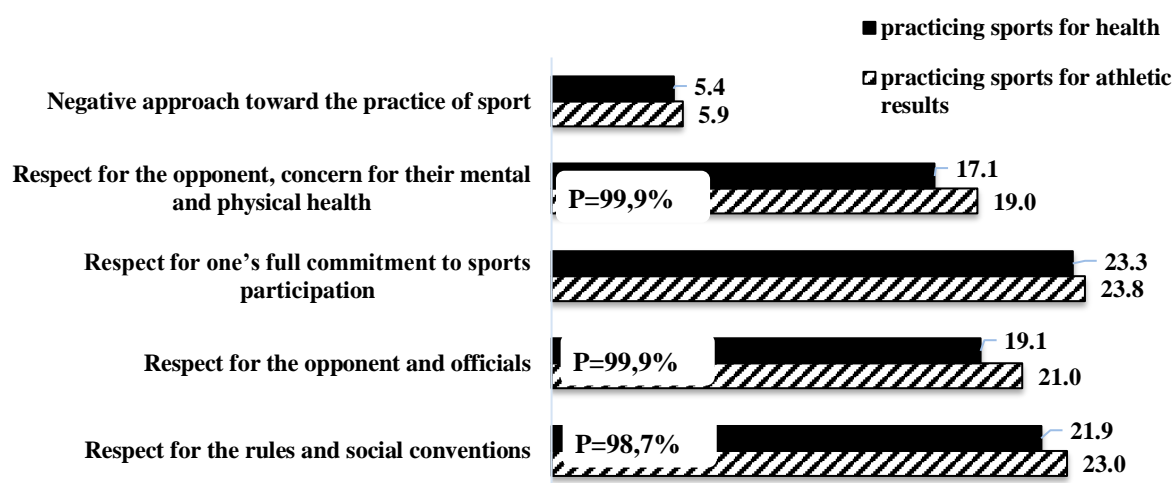


Figure 1. Mean values and differences in attitude toward sportsmanship among surveyed men practicing sports for health versus those practicing sports for athletic results

The reliable differences are identical for three out of five indicators revealing sportsmanship attitudes in men and women. For the first indicator, 'Respect for the rules and social conventions,' men practicing sports for athletic results showed a result of 23.0 units, which is, on average, 1.1 units higher ($P = 98.7\%$) than men practicing sports for health, whose result was 21.9 units. For women, the difference in favor of those practicing sports for athletic results is, on average, 1.0 unit ($P = 95.1\%$).

For the second indicator, 'Respect for the opponent and officials,' the difference in men's results is, on average, 2.9 units ($P = 99.9\%$) in favor of those aiming for athletic results. In contrast, for women, the difference is, on average, 1.8 units, also supported by $P = 99.9\%$.

In the third indicator, 'Respect for the opponent, concern for their mental and physical health,' both men and women practicing sports for athletic achievements showed significantly higher values than those practicing sports for health. The difference for men is an average of 2.9 units ($P = 99.9\%$), and for women, it is an average of 1.4 units, with a guaranteed probability of $P = 99.4\%$.

All three indicators are interrelated. It can be confidently stated that those pursuing sports for athletic results have better attitudes toward showing sportsmanship than their peers who engage in sports solely for health. The statistically significant differences suggest that for both men and women aiming for sports achievements, sportsmanship is not just about

following the rules as a condition for participating in competitions but also about respecting the competition and their opponents' individuality.

For the indicators 'Respect for one's full commitment to sports participation' and 'Negative approach toward the practice of

sport,' the differences in results among the respondents are insignificant ($P < 95.0\%$). Both groups, whether practicing sports for health or athletic results, have a positive attitude towards the training process, strictly follow the training routine, and respect the game's challenges.

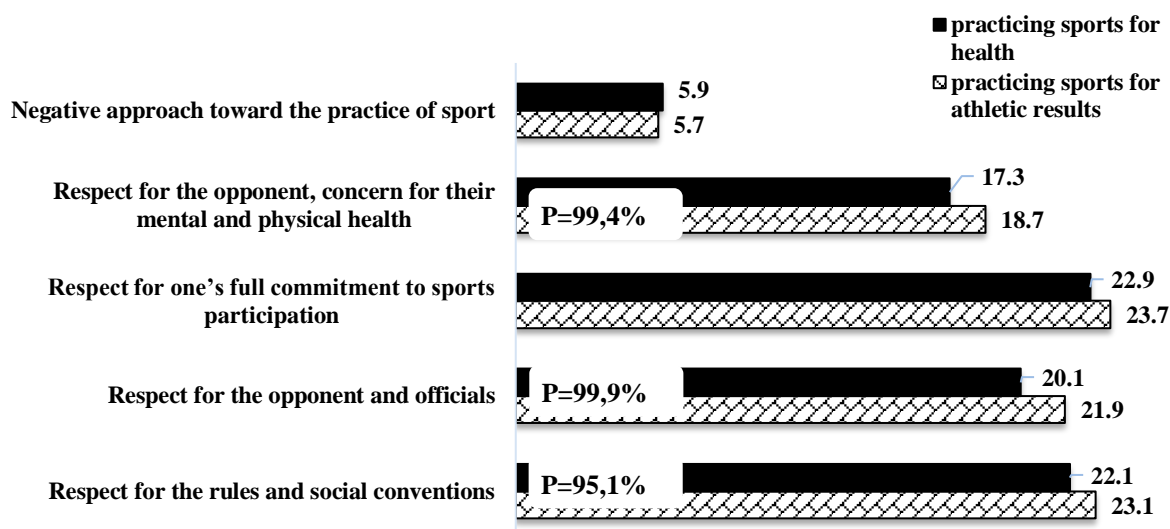


Figure 2. Mean values and differences in attitude toward sportsmanship among surveyed men practicing sports for health versus those practicing sports for athletic results

CONCLUSION

As a result of the analysis, the following conclusion can be drawn: Practicing individual sports has a significantly more positive impact on attitudes toward sportsmanship than practicing team sports. The surveyed students – future physical education teachers – who purposefully engage in sports have developed positive attitudes towards various aspects of sportsmanship. In contrast, students who have not actively participated in sports and only engage in sports for health reasons demonstrate significantly lower levels in terms of attitudes towards both opponents and officials, as well as established rules and norms. The findings of this study provide physical education lecturers in higher education institutions with the opportunity to offer more specific methodological guidance to their students – future teachers on effectively implementing the educational tasks of physical education, particularly in shaping students' behavior in the spirit of fair play.

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