

# Reflection of immoral and unethical sport events upon the society and mass media throughout history

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore immoral occasions in sport which appear on media recently and analyse their impacts on society. Sport is a social phenomenon that enhances the concepts of brotherhood and friendship, and it promotes notion of fair play. Especially in recent years, sport has gained an increasing income share in today's industrialized world. This growth has caused news related to sport appear in visual, written and social media more often. As a matter of broadcasting principle, all moral and immoral events take place in media and immoral events draw public attention more. The study was conducted on literature reviews that include several events, news and interviews related to sport appeared in mass media. According to the research results, sport appears as a phenomenon increasing in importance and integrating more societies and people day by day. With industrialization of sport, its scope has been enlarged and this is situation has made it hard to control. Nowadays, shareholder in sport tend to benefit from unethical situations for more popularity, and more income. With the increase in communication facilities, news about undesirable situation related to sports appear on media faster and more often. Therefore, supporters of sport get affected negatively and this leads social dislocation.

**Keywords:** Sport, society, media.

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's societies, Sport is, indeed, one of the rapidly developing and changing concepts. It is renewed by fresh definitions and concepts day by day. Especially, since the beginning of 2000, lots of developments and adverse events have been experienced in Sport. Recently, there have been too many unfavourable articles, news, and information related to athletic events in mass media. Nowadays, individuals and institutions tend to get out of line in order to generate more monetary profit, or gain recognition. This study has mentioned some recent athletic events related to morality and ethics and their interpretations in media.

### Description of morality and its basic concepts

Morality is "all the rules, codes and principals through

which conventional code of conducts organize human relations adopted by certain human communities in a certain time" (Akarsu, 1984). All these rules, codes, and principals make up for the social aspects of morality, which let people live together in harmony. Morality is a system of thinking and belief and this is the clearest feature of morality's social aspect (Güngör, 1998).

Basically, morality refers to all the active rules providing ways to reach the determined goals in an accepted set of values (Türer, 2005). In general, morality is the all the codes of conducts which have an absolute acceptance and they stem from a certain life sense (Cevizci, 1999).

As gregarious beings, humans set their behaviours in accordance with an altruist interest and concern and they define their behaviours as good or bad (Doğan, 2004). Morality and all its distinctive features may differ depending upon the surrounding, goals and inclinations

of individuals (Landy et al., 2008). Sense of morality has developed as a result of efforts made to find the best regardless of beliefs and languages.

Communities have struggled against authority by questioning and they have succeeded it to a large extent. Yet, moral codes compose a small part of a higher level of consciousness.

Applications of moral codes depend on individuals' conscience rather than any institutions and organizations. Only individuals can supervise the moral codes which they recognize (MEB, 2008).

Norms of morality may stand out either districting people from doing something or encouraging them to do. If someone backs off doing something which he desires to do so much, it means that, norms of morality work there (Schopenhauer, 2018)

### **Morality and ethics**

The concepts specific to morality have been evolved through several periods in history. Each individual interprets the sense of morality on his own. Also, behaviours which are praised as moral vary from one society to another. Despite the view that there is no a common consensus on what right or wrong is, it is argued that morality principals are constant (Kabaday and Aladağ, 2010).

Ethics is a branch of domain that deals with moral knowledge, moral philosophy and examines human behaviours as a field of study. It examines the qualities of both this domain and its principals governing the field (Arslan, 2001).

The word 'ethics' is mostly used interchangeably with morality and being moral in daily life. Even in scientific studies, it is possible to see the concept of ethics is used instead of traditions. In general, ethics comprises all the principals generating human relations and the behavioural codes (Akarsu, 1997). Ethics does not claim a specific activity or behaviour but being moral inferred human-specific freedom. Furthermore; it guides people how to identify moral actions (Pieper, 1999).

Common points agreed upon the definition of Ethics are; it a branch of philosophy, it regards something good or bad. In short, Ethics is the process of evaluating human behaviours as good or bad according to some basic values.

### **Morality in sport**

Before industrial revolution, sport was in a very close relationship with religious practices, social conventions, rituals, and ceremonies. It was not universal or organized (Aslım, 2007). It enables people to interact with others from different cultures, religions, and who have different points of view. It gives ways to people to get rid of their

constraints (Küçük and Koç, 2004; Bayraktar, 2003). Although, sometimes, it has been affected negatively by changes in social structures, sport has gained a universal tongue just like art (Bayraktar, 2003). Sport is a phenomenon that needs a private moral concern and joy of living. People struggle not only for victory but also for revealing moral and aesthetic values (Erdemli, 2006). 'Divine' competitions in Ancient Olympics might be dealt as the first representation of these moral values. The criticism about Ancient Olympic players' moral behaviours were made upon rather epic data and related to personal perspectives based on all-or -none principle. Yet, studies on ancient references are capable of declaring infractions, counter-measures and ways of punishment (Yıldıran, 2013). While upgrading to Modern Olympics, it is perfectly understood that Coubertin intended to reform the youth in France both physically and morally by means of sport and to inspire the whole world. Coubertin, who was deeply interested in education systems since his youth, highly influenced by classic-age Athens education system, which set curriculum to educate young people physically, mentally, psychologically, socially and morally through sport. Meanwhile, The British used sport as an educational device to teach social virtues and moral behaviour codes (Yıldıran, 2014). On that basis, Coubertin imagined to clean all the boundaries, especially in France, and then all over the world through integrative and moral aspects of sport.

Nevertheless, nowadays, as far as the sport morality is concerned in western countries, the very first things coming to mind are athletes, trainers, and leagues that they compete in (Smith and Lord, 2018). Yet, sport morality encompasses not only the performers, directors and trainers but also the audiences and supporters. Therefore, both supporters' and athletes' behaviours should be criticized morally (Tanrıverdi, 2012). It is clearly seen that there is no enough work on particularly supporters and fans of sport. Especially nowadays, fans of sport responses by swearing athletes, officials, and opposing athletes and supporters when they face unfavourable scores (Smith and Lord, 2018). Moreover; desire for victory leads the athletes and teams to overlook moral codes in sport. Yet, athletic activities should be done based on some certain moral codes and principals. Appreciating sport requires accepting all the rules in advance and obeying them without questioning (Erdemli, 2006).

### **Samples of unethical and immoral events in sport**

From the beginning of sport history, communities interested in sport have believed that sport has some specific ethical rules which should be improved and learned by sport supporters (Bucher and Wuest, 1987).

In sport, concept of fair play refers to the highest ethical

values. From this perspective, fair play stands for a general and universal morality perception rather than athletes and supporters obeying the rules (Öngel, 1997). Rules that clash with moral codes of sport take part in fair play concept and form the sport ethics. One of the samples which does not match moral codes in sport is doping, athletes' use steroids (Akgün, 1991). The declaration published in 1974 by International Fair Play Commission fair play is described as a word-view that emphasizes respect to opponents, teammates, referees, supporters, audiences. This notion opposes the victory and getting the success at all costs (Şahin, 1998). In Turkey, in accordance with law no. 5894, TFF is responsible for faithfulness within the frame of fair play notion, honest, and fairness principals.

Many of international sport institutions (IOC, IPC, IAAF, FINA, FIFA, etc...) struggle against doping and chicanery. Despite these serious measurements, there are still some athletes who are tested positive for doping. They are punished seriously and banned from the competitions. Especially, individual sport athletes come up with news about their steroid uses and they are reported in news with the punishments given to them.

Recently, in 2012 we witnessed that Russian athletes used steroids in Sochi Olympic Games and they were banned from the competitions. This occasion showed us the severity of the situation. Also, in 2015 European Weightlifting Championships, Bulgarian weightlifting team with 8 male and 3 female athletes was charged with doping and Bulgarian Sport Minister decided to withdraw the whole team from events until doping issue was solved absolutely (NTV, 2015).

563 athletes participating in a survey in America gave some unexpected answers about steroid use. 94% of the participants explained that doping is necessary for getting strength, improvement and success (Baysaling, 2000).

Definitely, one of the basic problems related to morality in sport is chicanery. Previously, Juventus Football team in Italy got relegated to the second tier as a punishment because of a chicanery case. There are many other samples of chicanery in recent years. Chicanery in Football, especially in European countries like Germany, Italy, and France, is one of the immoral events that occupy the agenda. The chairman of Osasuna Football team in Spain was charged with chicanery and sentenced in March 6, 2015 (Fotomaç, 2015).

Güngör Kaya, Dirk Jasmund, Kevin Lehmann confessed that they bet on Borussia Dortmund II during the match between Borussia Dortmund and Rot Weiss Essen. The match was ended with Borussia Dortmund 4-0 shootout playoff victory against Rot Weiss Essen in May 5. Hereupon, contracts with these three players were terminated unilaterally. German Football Federation also declared that they were punished to lifetime ban (Sabah, 2012).

Finally, in October 2018 Federal Prosecutor of Belgium declared that 9 gross football clubs were indicted

because of financial fraud, tax evasion and chicanery and 28 people were taken into custody in Jupiler League. They had been charged with preventing Mechelen Football Team from being relegated. Federal Prosecutor of Belgium stated that investigation about the case would be investigated deeply (BBC, 2018).

Chicanery is one of the basic issues which contrast to moral codes in sport. Also, it appears as a social problem. It brings up the situation of ignoring sport rules, equality and humanistic virtues (Zelyurt, 2013). Besides being a fair play and humanism issue, chicanery is a crime against humanity.

Other immoral cases in football are bribery and unlawful profit and news about with these occasions is heard so often. The sharpest case of bribery was that authorities of American Salt City, who organized 2002 Winter Olympics, bribed IOC jurists in exchange for hosting 1995 Olympics Games in their city. International Olympics Committee withdrew 10 members related to this case and reformed the rules about hosting Olympics Games (Habertürk, 2007).

European Union supports the struggle and protection efforts against racism, and other discriminatory attitudes, violence, and intolerance in sport. EU enacts to improve athletic facilities, and to struggle against all stated negative situations (European Committee, 2013b). Furthermore, EU EFUS runs a project titled "Sport for Social Adoption" and offers solutions to racism, any kinds of discrimination and violence in sport through local organizations. In comparison with Turkey, western countries encounter more cases related to religious and ethnic discriminations. Especially, the discrimination between black and white races is the sharpest problem in western countries. One of the outstanding samples of this situation is that Barcelona Football player, Samuel Eto'o was associated to monkey by the audiences. It was criticized intensely by media but respondent supporters were never punished.

Besides doping, violence, chicanery, bribery, and racism, a recent immoral case in sport is abuse. In England people have witnessed a recent sample of abuse in football. It is rather dishonourable and the investigation has been getting deeper day by day. According to report by Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children the number of people taken into custody has increased to 155 and total number of victims aged 4-20 is 429. 148 clubs in premier and amateur leagues have been questioned.

News from the country which is recognized as the cradle of football is not limited to this occasion. Garry Johnson, who is a former football player in Chelsea, a premier league football club, alleged that he enrolled to the football club at the age of eleven and he had been subject of sexual abuse since he was 13. Also, he added that the club offered him 50,000 pounds in exchange for not disclosing the scandal (Akit, 2016).

Sport Federation of Netherlands assigned a

commission of inquiry to investigate the sexual abuse cases in sport clubs. 130 applications for complaint were made in May 2017. Commission examined 2200 sexual abuse cases and 1500 rape cases on the official records from 2001 to 2017. According to the report results, most of the victims of sexual abuse were under the age of 16. 75% of the athletes in this age group were subjected to attacks beyond sexual abuse. Commission report stated that police did not deal with enough with sexual abuse cases. Very few of the perpetrators of 2200 abuse cases and 1500 rapes were punished last year (BBC, 2017).

It is quite normal for an organization which has billion dollars financial income and millions of audiences to have some special problems. Besides doping, chicanery, bribery, violence, abuse cases all the immoral attitudes are punished according to different punitive measures.

In order to create a fair environment for athletic facilities, appropriate circumstances on and off the field should be done. For instance, a fair ruling system on the field should be presented. And, off the field, any cases of bribery, chicanery or violence should be prevented.

What are the measures of good or bad in sport? Is anything which brings success good or is anything which prevents success bad? What is the main purpose of sport? Is the notion of winning at all costs moral? Do athletic successes, victories, championships or medals come before some moral and humanistic virtues? Is it worth wasting moral values for any championships, medals or victories? Is it right to call an event as sport, which does not care any moral values (Tanrıverdi, 2012)

In order to find the proper answers to asserted questions, it will be quite appropriate to describe concept of sport as the most suitable way to adopt individuals to societies' moral norms. Winning and losing concepts in sport have got more uncontrollable because of globalization. Despite the measurements against the problems there are still faults in sport universally.

## METHOD

This study was prepared in the form of review. National and international internet sites, reports, television news, and other media documents were analysed to find answer to research question. Social reflections were investigated concerning the views, interpretations and news appearing on sports media.

## RESULTS

Athletic games started with ceremonies to praise and bestow gods and goddesses in Ancient Olympics in 7th century BC. In fact it gained a traditional form through religious rituals. The winners of these games were described as mythological gods and four years following their victory until the next Olympics was named after them. These athletes were admitted as superior ones

both physically and morally and people valued them to reach gods and goddesses. The concept of physical maturity asserted by Aristotle and Platoon appears as a result of this philosophy. Likewise, yoga which developed in East and Far East sports has the same basis to improve moral values and physical strength. Also, performing salaah which is a ritual in Islamic belief is based on physical wellness and spiritual maturation. This relation between morality and physical maturation established the basis of philosophy of sport over time. Pierre De Coubert, who is accepted as the founder of Modern Olympics imagined a global competition setting restricting all kinds of discriminations and supporting people's moral values through sport. The basic notion of Olympics, completing human morally, should be reanimated as it has lost its significance since the beginning of modern Olympic games. The basic cause for this corruption is that sport has been industrialized in many aspects in 21st century and drifted away from notion of fellowship, and struggle. This situation leded an immoral course in sport. Western countries likewise our country, have faced some undesirable and immoral events and situations. All these incidences show the necessity of morals education in community. We may take advantage of sport to develop people morally. Sport should be praised by appealing fair competition and valuing the efforts of both sides. This moral principle proceeds from universality notion in sport.

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**Citation:** Özlü, K., Çeviker, A., Paktaş, Y., Mumcu, H. E., and Kusan, O. (2020). Reflection of immoral and unethical sport events upon the society and mass media throughout history. *African Educational Research Journal*, 8(1): S49-S53.

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