

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



The Effect of Moral Orientation on the Performance of Iranian Wrestlers: Explaining the Model and Providing a Strategy

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Submitted 12 Dec 2018; Accepted in final form 17 Jun 2019.

ABSTRACT

Background. Today, the necessity of studying the ethics of sport in the world of sports is obvious in national and international dimensions, especially given that in contemporary sport unfortunately ethical standards is less considered in the sports fields and is going to be weaker every day. **Objectives.** The current study aimed at investigating the effect of moral orientation on the performance of wrestlers in Iran by explaining the model and providing a strategy. **Methods.** The statistical population of the study included wrestlers participating in Iranian national Greco-Roman and freestyle (adults, youth, adolescents), Alich and Grapling (men and women), and Pahlavani (N = 220) wrestling teams. The current field study with descriptive-correlational design was specifically conducted based on structural equation modeling (SEM), relied on covariance. To collect data, questionnaire of moral orientation in physical education developed by Miltiadis in 2010 and the individual performance scale developed by Koopmans (2014) were used. **Results.** The results showed that moral orientation had a positive and significant effect ($r = 0.404$, $p = 0.001$) on performance. Also, the components of deontological ethics, Teological ethics, and civil liability had a significant effect on the level of performance. Also, the path analysis model showed a positive and significant relationship between moral orientation (t -value = 6.04, $r = 0.52$). **Conclusion.** Finally, it is concluded that moral orientation as one of the important criteria in the field of wrestling can have a significant effect on the performance of wrestlers and leads to an increase in their performance.

KEY WORDS: *Ethics, Ethical Theory, Ethicists, Liability, Wrestling*

INTRODUCTION

With the growing complexity of today's societies, the mission of organizations to meet the expectations of communities is more sensitive and important; so that it can be stated that our world is the world of organizations and what today has become unanimous among experts is the essential role of human resources as the main driver of organizations (1). Meanwhile, psychologists continue to seek out those personality traits that affect the performance of individuals. The personality of managers is also

affected by the process and the choice of conflict resolution method and management style (2). The comprehensive development of physical education and sports science over the past decades, on the one hand, expands the field of practitioners of sport and, on the other hand, poses deep ethical issues. New knowledge and practices need to be clarified and formulated with new rules, and the responsibility and ability to explain the basics necessary for this issue in sports should be sought from the ethics of sport. Today, many

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factors affect the relationship between managers and athletes, and so on. The tremendous access to sports news and knowledge, the replacement of speed, precision and computer transfer, in lieu of human counterparts, human exuberance, and comfort seeking have all contributed to this transformation. The growing complexity of organizations and the increase in the number of unethical, illegal, and irresponsible work in the workplace has focused the attention of managers and experts on the issue of occupational ethics and ethics management, especially as highly specialized organizations active in different fields also deal with moral issues and dilemmas (3). The need to pay attention to ethical values and in particular to support moral behaviors around the world is increasing. This issue is apparent due to the number of researches published in recent years in the field of the relationship between moral behaviors and other variables in scientific and research journals; therefore, the attention paid indicates the need for the resuscitation of ethical standards to guide the human behaviors (4). In the current world, developed countries have introduced ethics as one of the variables that affect development of countries, and studied in this field forms part of sociological research. Therefore, many scholars link the success of developed countries to their attention to ethical issues (5). During recent years, researchers have always sought to identify ways to explore and advance the level of moral judgment amongst people. On the other hand, the sensitivity of ethical issues has made research in the field of sport ethics difficult (6). On the other hand, the formation of immoral behaviors in various organizations is one of the most important problems of the current world and the promotion of the level of ethics is always emphasized by different people. Immoral behaviors among the public institutions, given their widespread importance, may face major crises, as it undermines the public trust of institutions (7). Exercise from various aspects affects the individual and social life of human beings and engages many people in various ways in cultural, social, economic, and political issues. In the discussion of applied ethics, one of the most important topics is the "sport ethics". In this regard, different subjects are evaluated; one of the challenge topics is "doping" or use of unsafe substances and methods. Although physical activity leads to physical health and increased and

physical strength in athletes, the main function of exercise emerges in the society, and in fact sport has a social mission. Exercise for young people is an opportunity to attend together and practice important social skills in sports environment where a person can experience and practice skills such as role-playing, responsibility, compliance, division of tasks, law-abiding, etc. (8).

Moradi and Zargar (2015) in the study on the relationship between coaching behavior and ethical climate in a football team of the Premier League showed a significant relationship between coaching behavior (positive reaction behavior, negative reaction behavior, normal behavior) and ethical climate (9). Shakerinia (2012) found a significant relationship between ethical climate, organizational support, and organizational citizenship behavior (7). The results of regression analysis showed that the variables of ethical climate and organizational support could predict the variance attributed to organizational civil behavior. Jao et al., (2016) concluded in a research on the business industries using the structural equation model that moral orientation tendencies can have a significant impact on the innovation performance of different companies (10). Olga et al., (2014) concluded in a research entitled "Norms of Moral Orientation and Responsibility in Adolescence" that there is a positive and significant relationship between moral orientation and students' responsibility (11). On the other hand, moral orientation plays a positive role in solving ethical problems. Stella et al., (2014) concluded that there was a significant relationship between moral orientation and performance in a research entitled "Positive Moral Orientation Among Adolescents Through Teaching Christian Religion" (12). Also, there was a significant difference in moral orientation among students based on their personal characteristics. Yu et al., (2009) in a research entitled "The Effect of Ethical Leadership on Job Satisfaction, Commitment, and Performance", concluded that ethical leadership of managers had a significant effect on employee commitment. Today, expanding sport is accompanied by new issues, which have contributed to the development of sports rights (13). On the other hand, the most important and fundamental issue in each field is the performance of the human forces and athletes in the sports teams (13). The performance of athletes as the overall expected value of the organization is defined as distinct

behavioral patches that a person performs over a given period of time (14). Many managers and coaches use financial incentives to increase the performance of athletes in sports teams and keep people happy; however, this does not only encourage people to improve performance. The problems that such organizations face are rooted in the perception of their managers who think all problems are solved with money only (15). In general, research showed that positive excitement plays an important role in improving job performance. In fact, athletes' performance is mixed with the excitement of their lives (16). The continuous improvement of athlete performance creates a synergistic force that can support the growth and development program and create opportunities for organizational excellence (17). Organizations make a strenuous effort in this regard. In today's organizations, without knowing the extent to which progress is being made and goals achieved, without identifying the challenges facing the organization and gaining feedback, without knowing the extent to which policies have been implemented or identifying those areas that require serious improvement, as well as without continuous improvement, the performance of athletes in the sports teams is not achievable; therefore, conflicts in roles may lead to decrease the trend of performance improvement in athletes (2).

In the present conditions, the wrestling plays an important role among all sport disciplines, which is often referred to as the first sport field of Iran and many international achievements are obtained in this field. Obviously, active wrestlers can influence the success or failure of the field and consequently the success of the Iran's sports. Since many wrestlers in Iran deal with factors, such as insensitivity, dissatisfaction, mental fatigue, and indifference to this sport, and they are somewhat exhausted and even in some cases tend to withdraw from the discipline, this issue made the researcher to try to answer the question that "whether moral orientation affects the performance of wrestlers in Iran? Is path analysis a moral orientation and meaningful performance? Can deontological ethics and theological ethics affect the performance of wrestlers?"

The necessity of studying the ethics of sport in the world of sports today is obvious in national and international dimensions, especially given that in contemporary sport

unfortunately ethical standards is less considered in the sports fields and is going to be weaker every day. At the same time, morality plays a key role in the formation of human values and the necessity of success in sports is also rooted in human values.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design. Since the current study has an applicable design, descriptive correlations and, in particular, covariance-based structural equation model is used to collect data, which was done as a field experiment.

Participants. The statistical population of the study was constituted of wrestlers participating in the national freestyle and Greco-Roman (adults, youth, adolescents), Alich and Grapling (men and women), and Pahlavani wrestling team camps in 2017 at the Wrestling House (N = 220). According to the population, all the subjects were selected and according to the completed questionnaires, finally, 197 subjects were enrolled and their information was analyzed.

Measurement Tool. In order to collect data, questionnaires used were as follows:

1- The questionnaire of moral orientation in physical education developed by Miltiadis (18) consists of 14 items and has two components of "deontological ethics" (items 1 to 7) and "teleological ethics" (items 8 to 14). Regarding the legal and civil liability component, a researcher-made questionnaire was used based on theoretical foundations and research background. The questionnaire had closed-ended design and the items were scored based on a 10-point Likert scale from completely disagree = 1 to completely agree = 9.

2- The individual performance questionnaire developed by Koopmans (19), which includes 27 items and has three components of task performance (items 1-7), underlying performance (items 8-19) and inverse behavior (items 20 to 27). The questionnaire has closed-ended design and items are scored based on a six-point Likert scale from very low = 1 to very high = 5.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was examined using the standard method of translation-back translation. First, the questionnaire was translated into English by English language experts and then returned back to English. Subsequently, with the adaptation of the translated texts with the original text, the final version of questionnaire was prepared and placed at disposal to 10 professors of sport management.

After applying the modifications and amendments, the questionnaire was finally prepared and compiled.

By performing a pilot test on 30 wrestlers, the reliability of the moral orientation and individual performance questionnaires were 0.84 and 0.81, respectively.

Statistical Analysis. Descriptive indicators (frequency, mean, standard deviation) were used to describe the data. In order to inferential analysis of the research data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, multiple correlation, regression analysis, and path analysis were used. Data analysis was performed with SPSS software (LISREL) at a significance level of ≥ 0.05 .

RESULTS

The descriptive findings showed that the mean \pm SD of wrestlers' age was 22.94 ± 4.35 years. There are 181 men (91.9%) and 16 women (8.1%) in the studied population. Also, there are 167 singles (84.8%) and 30 married (15.2%) subjects. The results showed that 68 subjects (34.5%) had high school diploma, 55 held associated degree (27.9%), 64 bachelor's degree (32.5%), seven master's degree (3.6%), and three (1.5%) were PhD holders. Of the total enrolled subjects, 32 (16.2%) awarded medals at national level, 101 (51.3%) at Asian and 62 (31.5%) at international tournaments, and two (1.1%) at Olympics. Finally, the mean \pm SD of the sports experience was 10.66 ± 4.03 among the studied wrestlers.

Table 1. Descriptive findings

Groups	Abundance	Percentage
Sex		
Single	181	91.9
Married	16	8.1
Level of Education		
Diploma	68	34.5
Associate Degree	55	27.9
Bachelor	64	32.5
MA	7	3.6
P.H.D	3	1.5
Championship		
National	32	16.2
Asian	101	51.3
The world	62	31.5
Olympic	2	1.1

According to the results of Table 2, the orientation ($P = 0.82$, $z = 1.26$) and performance ($P = 144$, $z = 1.14$) variables had a normal data distribution. Therefore, the parametric statistics were used.

Table 2. Evaluation of the normality of data

Indicator	Number	Z	P
Moral orientation	197	1.26	0.082
performance	197	1.14	0.144

According to the results of Table 3, it can be concluded that the moral orientation has a positive and significant effect on wrestlers' performance ($r = 0.440$; $P < 0.001$). This means that with increasing moral orientation, the level of wrestlers' performance improves. Also, according to the determination coefficient obtained from the test, it was determined that 0.164 of performance variations is justified by moral orientation in this regard. Also, the components of deontological ethics ($r = 0.399$, $P < 0.001$), teleological ethics ($P < 0.001$, $r = 0.345$) and legal and civil liability ($r = 0.256$; $P < 0.001$) have a positive and significant effect on wrestlers' performance.

The results obtained from Table 4 and Figure 1 show the coefficients and parameters obtained from the structural model of moral orientation and performance. According to the results, the path analysis model showed a positive and significant correlation between moral orientation and performance (t -value = 0.04, $r = 0.52$). Therefore, the structural model of research indicated that moral orientation has a significant effect on the performance of wrestlers.

In this test, the fit of the data set is examined. According to Table 5, the ratio of χ^2 to df was 2.97 and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.095. Also, CFI = 1.00, IFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, and NFI = 0.98 confirmed the goodness of fit of the model. Therefore, the structural model of research was suitable in terms of fitting indices and all of the proposed factors could be integrated into the structural model of research.

Table 3. The effect of moral orientation of performance

Variables	Constant	Correlation value	B	Significance level	t	f	The coefficient of determination
Moral orientation	59.47	0.404	0.338	0.001	38.12	6.17	0.164
Duty of Ethics	72.8	0.399	0.878	0.001	36.94	6.07	0.159
Ethics of teleology	73.22	0.345	0.849	0.001	26.41	5.14	0.119
Legal liability	94.76	0.256	0.352	0.001	13.62	3.69	0.065

Table 4. The correlation between moral orientation and performance

Variables	Relationship rate	standard error	The coefficient of determination	t-Value	Result
Moral orientation	0.52	0.73	0.27	6.04	Confirmed

Table 5. Indices of goodness of fit test

Variable	X ² / df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	IFI	GFI
Ethics and Performance	2.97	0.095	0.98	1.00	0.99	0.99
Result	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed

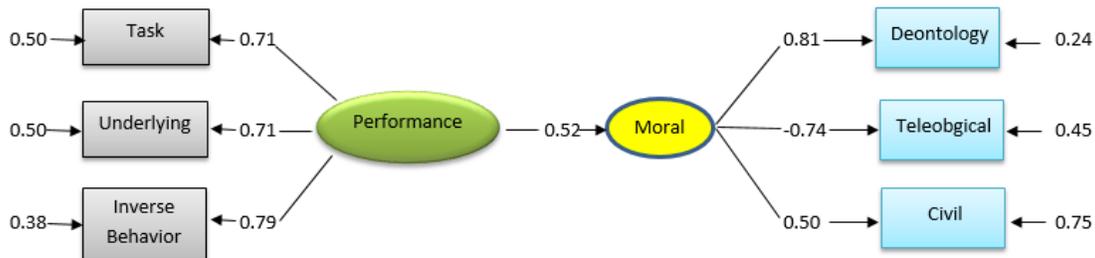


Figure 1. Route analysis: factor load and variance of structural model error in standard mode goodness of fit test

DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of the study hypotheses showed that moral orientation has a positive and significant effect on wrestlers' performance, which is similar to the results of Lan et al. (20), Janani et al. (21), Jao-Hong et al., Stella et al. (12), and Woo and Robert (22). This means that with increasing moral orientation, the level of wrestlers' performance improves. Also, according to the determination coefficient obtained from the test, it was determined that 0.164 of the performance variations is justified by moral orientation in this regard. Likewise, Rebecca et al., (23) concluded in their research that morality is the basis of tendency toward increased commitment; so, they attempt actions that are in the interest of the community. Maliza (22) also said that the commitment of environment activists increases if they work in a climate with better ethics. Ethical behaviors in wrestlers to some extent confirm the role that moral and human values play in athletic and professional attitudes. Akhavan and Yazdi Moghadam (24) stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between ethics and organizational performance. In fact, the most significant manifestation of the moral commitment of an organization to ethical values is the existence of justice and fairness in the way supervisors interact with employees. Among athletes, this means that adherence to values and ethics in sports organizations makes the wrestlers sure about their rights. It can be argued that the management commitment of sports organizations

to moral values guarantees the wrestlers that the organization deals fairly with them. Such a perception that is rooted in the trust of organizations makes the wrestlers to be dissatisfied with the various dimensions of the job, such as payment, promotion, colleagues, and supervision. In fact, it can be stated that morality helps wrestlers act smoothly, positively, and irresistibly against external stimuli, and subsequently manage their impulses well, and ultimately cope with other interventions that may ineffectively attenuate their performance levels. In this context, training on psychological skills for wrestlers helps them to be creative and develop creativity rather than feel helpless or unpleasant reactions and find a way to get rid of these problems; it ultimately reduces mental stress and increases the level of performance among wrestlers.

The results of the study showed that deontological ethics has a positive and significant effect on the performance of wrestlers, which is consistent with the results of the research by Jao et al. (10). This means that with the increase of deontological ethics, the level of performance of wrestlers improves. Also, according to the determination coefficient obtained from the test, it was determined that 0.159 of the functional changes are justified by deontological ethics in this regard. In addition, Pei Soo et al., (13) argued that organizational support could have a positive impact on the creation of ethical contexts in the staff, which increases job satisfaction and reduces

their tendency toward quitting the service. Bradley and Kavussanu (25) also showed that self-reliance directly and dutifulness indirectly in relation with antisocial behaviors in sport. The commitment to fulfill ethical obligations and commitment, it seems, banes the negative effects of immorality and pushes the athlete to fulfill his commitments. In fact, when ethical obligations are taken into account in the scope of the duties, sources of attention are addressed without disturbances, and the athlete's concentration is prohibited from negative thinking, which ultimately leads to an increase in the level of performance among individuals. In fact, deontological ethics includes moral orientation in the two areas of normative discipline and justice and fairness. The deontology theory expressed the ethical commitments and moral duties such as respecting the referee in the sport field. In this regard, the duty is referred to as the performance that individuals perform in the sport field. For example, in the field of sports, the duty of a wrestler is to offer his ultimate endeavor to win. Of course, this effort and performance should be within the framework of laws and regulations. Therefore, the advocates of deontology theory should consider what performance is right or wrong.

Based on the results obtained, teleological ethics has a positive and significant effect on the performance of wrestlers, which is consistent with the results of the research by Jao et al. (10). This means that with the increase of teleological ethics, the performance level of wrestlers improves. Also, according to the determination coefficient obtained from the test, it was determined that 0.119 of the variation of performance is justified by teleological ethics in this regard. Moreover, Kamel et al., (2) acknowledged that ethical climate has a significant effect on the level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment and can in fact promote the employees. The teleology theory holds that ethics is beneficial from both its idealized orientation and its implications. For example, if a wrestler sees a body member of his opponent's body damaged, he may think that he will not put pressure on the injured member to win. Or, maybe a football player may want to get a penalty for a victory by deceiving the referee. Therefore, advocates of teleology theory state that any action is ethical to achieve the joy and pleasure.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicated that legal and civil liability had a positive and significant impact on the performance of wrestlers, which is consistent with the results of Shakerinia (7), and Olga et al. (11). This means that with increasing legal and civil liability, the level of wrestlers' performance improves. Also, according to the determination coefficient obtained from the test, it was determined that 0.065 of the changes in performance are justified by legal and civil liability in this regard. Rebecca et al., (23) acknowledged that morality is the basis of the people's tendency toward increased commitment, in the sense that they carry out actions that are in the interest of the community. Today, expanding sport is accompanied by new issues; issues that have contributed to the development of sports rights. One of these issues is civil liability in sport, which has various forms and raises new claims in the courts. Meanwhile, the responsibility of the sports managers is of particular importance because it puts these professions as high-risk jobs; a job that is likely to threaten different claims of civil liability by a variety of people, and this situation is dangerous, which emphasizes the necessity of the sponsor's support.

Suggestions for further Research

Since the behavior and performance of people are directly under the influence of the individual's thoughts and today, psychological readiness plays a very important role in international tournaments, further research seems to be needed.

- Comparison of the psychological skills between wrestlers of different types can be a topic for applied research.
- Determining the relationship between psychological skills and wrestlers' performance.
- Evaluation of the effect of coaching styles on wrestlers' moral orientation.

APPLICABLE REMARKS

- Considering the positive effects of moral orientation and its components on the level of performance of wrestlers, the following items are suggested:

- Managers, officials, and planners in the field of wrestling are recommended to provide a comprehensive training program for the promotion of ethics among wrestlers of different types in order to enhance their moral behaviors under the

light of this program and increase their performance more than ever.

- The goals in terms of the tasks (i.e., how to set down and combining the tasks, the short- and long-term goals, assign tasks to practice and work, and finally paying attention to individuals' differences in doing task), self-confidence, commitment, and coping stresses Individually in precise planning and in combination with modern teaching methods. Also, introducing the ones with better deontological ethics as a tenet can be useful.

- Sports psychologists should be invited to the wrestling camps for training the skills of proper dealing with opponents, control emotions, and empowering the athletes and the way to nurture these skills by psychologists periodically be reviewed to provide the context for increasing the performance of wrestlers. It is also recommended to make an educational video that covers all educational aspects (illustration, concentration, mental practice) using various visual techniques for wrestlers.

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