
THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE ANTI-DOPING WORK OF SPORT FEDERATIONS

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Abstract

Theoretical background

Sport federations, which organize sport and its protagonists, are responsible for the fight against doping. But by doping scandals and studies about high prevalence rates of doping (e.g. 10 - 35% estimated by random-response-technique; Pietsch & Emrich, 2011), the trustworthiness of sport federations is called into question (Breuer & Hallmann, 2013).

Therefore, sport federations' methods to fight against doping must be successful and reliable. But also, they have to present these methods and their Anti-Doping programs to spectators, sponsors, politicians and the athletes, they are responsible for.

Trust (in organizations) is defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998, p. 398). This means that sport federations have to show that they meet the expectations of the public but also of their athletes, sponsors etc. The trustworthiness of an organization is based on the antecedents of trust, 'ability' 'benevolence' and 'integrity' (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). For instance, sport federations must be able to fight and detect doping (ability), they have to care for their athletes, especially for those who are not suspected to take doping substances (benevolence) and they have to state and show clearly and transparently that they are against doping (integrity). In this study, the perceived trustworthiness of sport federations is investigated, because it can be an important factor for successful Anti-Doping work.

The research questions were: Do athletes and the public trust in the anti-doping work of sport federations? and: How are sport federations able to improve the trustworthiness of their Anti-Doping work by using digital communication.

Methods

In a first study, based on the model of trust by Mayer et al. (1995) a questionnaire about antecedents of trustworthiness were adapted for sport setting. N = 142 athletes (age 18-36) from handball (low prevalence rate; Pitsch & Emrich, 2011), swimming and cycling (high prevalence rate, Pitsch & Emrich, 2011) were asked for the trustworthiness of the anti-doping work of their sport federation as well as for trustworthiness of the talent program of their federation and of the anti-doping work of German football association (DFB) (comparisons because trust in different trustees is measured). Anonymous online questionnaire about trustworthiness consisted of 15 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$) on three subscales (ability (6), benevolence (4), integrity (5), mean was built from three subscale means) on a 5-point-likert scale. Results were controlled for doping attitudes (17 items-PEAS-scale), sport expertise and general propensity to trust.

Following studies investigated the influence of web-based presentations of Anti-Doping work on the perceived trustworthiness of sport federations. The affective priming paradigm is used to analyze the influence of presented Anti-Doping websites and special Anti-Doping-programs on implicit trustworthiness perception. Studies four and five focused on special parameters of web-based presentation of Anti-Doping work and how they influence perceived trustworthiness. Investigated factors were methods of online presentation (e.g. FAQ, Online-Newsletter etc.) and formal criteria of Anti-doping webpages.

Results

Trustworthiness of cycling federations was significantly lower rated ($n = 43$, $M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.65$) than those of handball federation ($n = 40$, $M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.61$) and swim federation ($n = 59$, $M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.58$) ($F(2, 139) = 32.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .32$). Significant interactions between sport disciplines and comparison between anti-doping-work and talent programs were found ($p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .06$). Individual doping attitude correlates significantly with perceived trustworthiness of anti-doping work ($r = -.31$).

First results of following studies indicate, that the presentation of Anti-Doping websites can influence implicit perceived trustworthiness of recipients. Also, sport federations seem to be able to improve their trustworthiness by using digital communication via homepages or online presentations of Anti-Doping programs if they take into account important factors of online trust (Beldad, de Jong & Steehouder, 2010).

Discussion

Results show that trustworthiness of sport federations seems to depend on sport's perceived closeness to doping. Sport federations' social responsibility will be to find successful methods to fight doping transparently and reliably. To enlarge their trustworthiness, especially for young athletes, sport federations have to create education programs and

transparent information strategies against doping. All in all the studies show, that it is necessary for sport federations not only to fight against doping but also to present the Anti-Doping work transparently. Further research has to focus on opportunities and limits of Anti-Doping work of sport federations and how the federations can make the most of the opportunities of good Anti-Doping work.

References

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