

Can Involvement with the Olympic Games Affect Perceptions of Human (Olympic) Values?

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Aim

To explore and describe the association between human values and sport as a function of the involvement with the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Theoretical Background

The goal of the Olympic Movement is “to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (IOC, 2017, p.11). To attain this goal, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has promoted the so-called Olympic values – friendship, excellence, and respect (IOC, 2014). Olympic values are in fact human values, which can and should be promoted through sports (Schwartz, 1994). Despite all economic and social controversies surrounding the most recent Olympic Games, the Games are the most important channel to promote the Olympic values. They create a unique media interest. Before and during the Games, the media reports stories of success and Olympic dreams, communicating values such as perseverance, fair play, hard-working, and respect for others. Involvement with the Games (Beaton et al., 2011; Shank & Beasley, 1998) may create in people a certain level of awareness about values.

Research Design and Methodology

We started creating items for the three dimensions of the Olympic values (friendship, excellence, and respect). After running a CFA, the model did not fit the data, indicating that the theoretical dimensions might not work in practice. Then, we gave a step back and conducted an EFA, from where we got the three dimensions of the Olympic values proposed in the abstract – friendship, excellence with respect (which comprises original items relate to both excellence and respect) and no discrimination. Although “no discrimination” is not formally recognized as an “official” value of the Olympic movement, this last value has been greatly explored by the IOC (see, for example, IOC (2017)). Therefore, we tested if this value could come along the official ones.

Chain-referral sampling technique was applied to reach a large, non-random sample ($n = 570$) of sport professionals and students in South Korea, the country of the host of the 2018 Winter OG. Most of the respondents were male (60.2%), single (92%), young (age $M = 22.9$, $SD = 4.6$) professionals (71.7%). They responded an online questionnaire, one to three weeks after the end of the 2018 PG. The association between human values and sport was measured after Rocha and Gratao’s (2018) values questionnaire. Behavioural involvement was measured based on how much time respondents spent watching TV and using the internet to watch competitions and to read news related to the Games, during the Games.

We opted to measure directly the association between sport and values instead of asking for both variables and measuring their association (for example, through correlation). We justify this option by saying that a person can have a very high perception about sport and a very high perception about human values, but not, necessarily, this person will see a strong association between these two constructs. Had you measured both and calculated the

correlation, the correlation would be high. However, this does not mean that the respondent perceived the association strength to be high.

Results

Results of the measurement model for the human values (CFI = .966; TLI = .956; RMSEA = .082) and for the attitudinal involvement (CFI = .984; TLI = .979; RMSEA = .075) scales showed an acceptable fit. Results indicated that the three factors model for values – friendship (3 items), excellence with respect (5 items), and no discrimination (9 items). Results of the structural model showed an acceptable fit (CFI = .951; TLI = .940; RMSEA = .068). The path coefficient from involvement with the OG to friendship was significant (afri = 0.112, $p = .03$), but it was not significant to either respect with excellence (arex = 0.083, $p = .10$) or no discrimination (anod = 0.071, $p = .15$). The path coefficient from involvement with the PG to friendship was no significant (afri = 0.073, $p = .16$), but it was significant to both respect with excellence (arex = 0.097, $p = .05$) and no discrimination (anod = 0.096, $p = .05$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Involvement with OG and PG may have some influence on the association strength between human values and sport. These results partially support the findings of Rocha and Gratao (2018), who investigated the same association in Rio 2016 OG. Other investigations have discussed differences between Olympic and Paralympic legacies (e.g. Dickson et al, 2011; Misener et al., 2013), but they have not explored possible influences of factors related to the Games on specific intangible legacies. Testing the effects of involvement with either OG or PG on association between human values and sport is innovative and generates new knowledge. The use of only two behaviours to represent involvement is a limitation of this study. Future studies should consider not only other behaviours, but also some type of attitudinal involvement.

References

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