

Identification of integrity issues in sports: Training of agents of change

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IDENTIFICATION OF INTEGRITY ISSUES IN SPORTS: TRAINING OF AGENTS OF CHANGE

KEYWORDS: Sport; agents of change; gender; discrimination; aggression.

ABSTRACT: Psytool is a European project, conceived to support youth development through the practice of sport in positive and safe environments, which has looked to create innovative approaches in promoting integrity in sport. To this end, an e-learning platform was created to train agents of change who act as transmitters and instigators of this framework of well-being in accordance with their respective responsibilities and who know how to recognize unsporting situations, react against them and promote positive experiences in sports. The objective of this research was to assess the degree of satisfaction of the agents of change ($N=18$) trained by the University of León on the content of the different lessons of the Psytool educational platform. Once selected, agents of change started a training course over three months. The Satisfaction Questionnaire, which was distributed once the lessons were over, was composed by 10 items related with the content and application in real situations of the different topics, and the responses were registered on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Results show that the level of satisfaction ($M=4.08$; $SD=0.66$) was high and particularly so in the perceived value of the contents of lessons related to gender, aggression or racism and discrimination. Participants valued training in a positive way and felt prepared to better deal with situations they face day to day helping to bring about behavioural changes across all stakeholders in the field of sport.

Sport has always been considered as one of the most useful educational tools for promoting social inclusion. In fact, many studies show how positive values and desirable personal qualities for all can be achieved through the correct orientation of sports practice (Côté, 2002; Cruz et al., 2011; Escartí, Gutiérrez, Pascual and Llopis, 2010; Roig and Ballew, 1994). However, sport is a social activity in which individuals can be exposed to numerous kinds of discrimination, for example gender inequality, homophobia, and/or sexism (Cleland, 2014). It is a context where in such conduct is frequently manifest and can give rise to direct conflict, being an activity associated with a set of social standards that serve to establish and attribute masculine and feminine behaviour (Roper, 2014). Moreover, the high competitiveness atmosphere around the sport is one of the other factors that can end up leading to anti-social behaviours such as violent attitudes, aggressiveness and low sportsmanship (Bredemeier, 1995; Lemyre, Roberts and Ommundsen, 2002) or match-fixing and gamesmanship (Masters, 2015; Ponseti, Cantallops and Muntaner-Mas, 2016; Serby, 2017; Tak, Sam and Jackson, 2016). Even more, when the main goal of sport practice is to reach victory and the values of sport are in the background, this could invite to inappropriate behaviours like cheating or taking drugs, for better performances and higher earnings (Barez, 2008; Doty, 2006), so that sportsmanship could be declined by such 'bad' influences (Ponseti et al., 2016).

The major part of studies regarding these topics are aimed at analyzing behaviours associated with fair play and sportsmanship (Kavussanu, Stamp, Slade and Ring, 2009; Lee, Whitehead and Ntoumanis, 2007; Sage, Kavussanu and Duda, 2006).

Nevertheless, sport confronts with several threats to which athletes, particularly younger athletes, can be exposed and against which they should be protected, for example any displays of violence and all forms of discrimination and/or intolerance.

Psytool, a European project financed by the ERASMUS + Sport program, was conceived in this context, seeking to support youth development through the practice of sport in positive and safe environments. The aim of the project is the promotion of psychological well-being in all areas of athletes' personal development via sports programs that are free of intimidation, have zero tolerance of substance use, adopt low acceptance of manipulation, and promote fair play. Psytool has taken the educational, social and cultural aspects of sport and looked to create innovative approaches in promoting integrity in sport. To this end a collaborative network comprising various entities and research groups of renown in the world of sport and sport psychology was formed and an e-learning platform created to train practitioners (trainers, physical education teachers, referees, civil servants, directors, etc.) as agents of change who act as transmitters and instigators of this framework of well-being in accordance with their respective responsibilities and who know how to recognize unsporting situations, react against them and promote positive experiences in sports.

The Psytool educational course contains a series of lessons developed internally by the project's partnership, which cover the following topics: sport psychology as a strategic tool for prevention and training in grassroots sport, sportspersonship, disposition to cheating and gamesmanship, doping, the role of the coach in promoting personal social development in youth sport, ethical

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This research has been carried out, in part, thanks to the Project PsyTool "Sport Psychology as a Strategic Tool for Prevention and training on Grassroots Sports" Erasmus+ Sport Programme. Application Nr.: 567199-EPP-1-2015-2-ES-SPO-SCP.

principles in sport, and aggression in sport, racism and discrimination in sport, personal and discrimination in sport, match-fixing in sport, gender and sport, and aggression in sport (Table 1).

The lessons are structured in a way that is simple and easy to understand, even if English is not the learner's native language. Each lesson contains: a case study that outlines the need to address the issue in question; objectives and main components; definition of the various terms associated with the lesson's topic; theoretical knowledge related to the topic; proposed methodologies and practices to tackle the issue; case studies to identify the topic and relevant issues in real-life situations, additional teaching and implementation materials; and a questionnaire to assess student learning. The main objective of this research was to assess the degree of satisfaction of the agents of change trained by the University of León on the content of the different lessons of the Psytool educational platform.

Method

Participants

The agents of change were defined as sport stakeholders who play an active role in tackling social issues by upholding integrity as a means to bring about behavioural change. Their adequate selection was important, because it could have direct impact in the project results, given the fact that they will be directly in touch with the athletes in the sport context and they will have to apply all the concepts learned during the educational period. Sample was composed by 18 subjects (16 men and two women), including three physical trainers, two trainers of soccer goalkeepers, 12 coaches (four soccer, four handball, one volleyball, two swimming, one basketball) and one soccer team manager.

Instruments and procedures

To develop the Psytool e-learning platform, in a first phase, the state of the art on the various aspects covered by the project, such as violence, discrimination, intolerance or match-fixing in the

practice of sports was identified. Then, the e-learning tool and learning materials (10 lessons) were developed. Each lesson contains a short theoretical background to the topic in question followed by case studies, suggested further reading and links to other online materials such as videos or presentations. Students on the platform have access to an 'online teacher', which will support their learning, as well as to a community forum where they can raise questions and share their experiences with other students. The platform is functional across all types of digital devices and its materials are downloadable and operate under an open licence.

Once selected, agents of change started a training course during three months. This course was composed by both online and face-to-face trainings, and by pilot workshops. During the online training through the Psytool platform, they all had to read lessons 1 and 2 about the principles of project philosophy, presentation of material, methodology of work and evaluation system. Supervisors were available to answer all the possible doubts and checked that participants learnt all this information. Then participants had a period for studying and assimilating all the concepts from lesson 3 to 10.

Finally, all agents of change answered a Satisfaction Questionnaire, distributed once the lessons were over (Table 2). The questionnaire was composed by 10 items, related with the content and application in real situations of the different topics and the responses were registered on a Likert scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very Much).

Data analysis

A descriptive analysis was performed on the results of the questionnaire. Asymmetry and kurtosis indexes were calculated in order to provide further information about dispersion level of answers. In addition, a comparative analysis was carried out by ANOVA and Bonferroni posthoc test, to find differences between lessons. All analyses were conducted using the SPSS for Windows software, version 24.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL, USA), and statistical significance level was set at $p < .05$.

Table 1. Lessons of the Psytool Educational Course.

Lessons	Objectives
Lesson 1. Introduction	
Lesson 2. Sportspersonship, disposition to cheating and gamesmanship	To be able to design appropriate activities, show adequate models, reinforce flair play behavior and take advantage of teachable situations.
Lesson 3. Doping	To provide an overview of the doping process and to understand how it is possible for an individual to consider this illicit and unhealthy behavior.
Lesson 4. The role of the coach in promoting positive personal development in youth athletes	To explain what is mean by personal development from the perspective of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) movement. To develop a variety of strategies to foster positive development in young athletes.
Lesson 5. Ethical principles in sport – Practical dimension	To know what to do when you are confronted with a case of match-fixing or doping, and also to understand how to handle a corruption issue such as a conflict of interest.
Lesson 6. Racism and discrimination in sport	To explain what racism and discrimination in sport means, and how to identify acts and messages that are deemed as racist and discriminatory and that do not promote positive social values.
Lesson 7. Personal and social development	To help athletes develop themselves as people, learning to be responsible for the ways they conduct themselves and treat other people.
Lesson 8. Match fixing in sport	To provide tools that identify those circumstances that may be considered against the competition, and help to prevent and face this type of situations.
Lesson 9. Gender and sport	To learn how sport in its social sense influences gender and vice-versa, outlines the stereotypes created in society and how these affect sport participations.
Lesson 10. Aggression in sport	To learn what constitutes anger and aggression, the role of these concepts in sports and the potential implications of aggressive athletes.

Table 2. Items included in the Psytool Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Items	Description
1	Overall. I am satisfied with the lesson
2	The lesson content was relevant to the topic in question
3	The lesson content has helped me to understand this topic
4	The lesson content was clear and pitched at the right level for me
5	The inclusion of case studies helped me to further understand the topic
6	This lesson has motivated me to seek further information about the topic
7	This lesson will be useful in my role as an agent of change in my environment
8	After completing the lesson I now know how to act in any of the situations or issues covered by it.
9	After completing the lesson I feel capable to intervene in any of the situations or issues covered by it.
10	After completing the lesson I feel confident to introduce the topic to others who may be unfamiliar with it.

Results

Results in Table 3 summarize the descriptive analysis of the agents of change answers to the questionnaire assessing satisfaction level with topics from each of the Psytool lessons. Mean scores and standard deviation corresponding to the ten different lessons are provided for each item, and a total score (Total Satisfaction Index) was calculated from the mean score of the ten items.

The most discriminatory items (considering standard deviations) were six, seven, eight and nine. Indices asymmetry and kurtosis revealed permissible values, with normality of distributions of conforming data. About the degree of item asymmetry, indexes were negative in all cases (asymmetry index < 0), which means light tails and flat distribution. As for the degree of kurtosis obtained, items one, five and 10 had a platykurtic distribution (kurtosis index < 0), with a minor distribution around mean score indicating heavy tails and peakedness relative to the normal distribution. Remainder of items presented a leptokurtic distribution (kurtosis index > 0), with a higher data concentration around mean score.

Scores were generally high, with no significant differences found between lessons in each of the items, except for item nine. Focusing on the different items, lesson 9 and 10 on gender and aggression in the sport, respectively, were the most valued concerning satisfaction with the topic (item one). Lesson contents were considered relevant for each of the topics (item two), with higher scores for lesson 6 (racism and discrimination) and 9 (aggression). Lesson content helped to understand each of the addressed topics (item three), although scores were slightly lower for lessons 7 (personal and social development) and 8 (match fixing). Content of the lessons was considered clear and pitched to the right level (item four), especially in lesson 10 (aggression). Case studies included (item five) were useful to further understand the topics, with higher scores for lessons 4 (role of coaches) and 5 (ethical principles). Lesson 9 was that which motivated to a higher extent to seek further information on the topic (item six). Scores for item seven indicated that all lessons were considered useful for the role as agents of change of the different participants in their respective environment, giving higher scores to lessons 4 (the role of the coach) and 9 (gender). Participants also recognized knowing

Table 3. Statistical analysis of the answers to the Psytool Satisfaction Questionnaire by the agents of change.

Items	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8	Lesson 9	Lesson 10	Total	p	Asymmetry	Kurtosis	
1	M	4.13	4.19	4.19	4.19	4.06	4.25	3.94	4.00	4.13	4.38	4.14	.705	-0.046	-0.242
	(SD)	(0.5)	(0.54)	(0.66)	(0.66)	(0.68)	(0.45)	(0.68)	(0.63)	(0.5)	(0.62)	(0.59)			
2	M	4.19	4.06	4.25	4.25	4.06	4.31	4.06	3.94	4.25	4.31	4.17	.835	-0.586	0.578
	(SD)	(0.75)	(0.68)	(0.58)	(0.68)	(0.772)	(0.48)	(0.93)	(0.85)	(0.45)	(0.60)	(0.68)			
3	M	4.25	4.19	4.00	4.13	4.19	4.25	3.94	3.88	4.19	4.19	4.12	.840	-0.493	0.120
	(SD)	(0.68)	(0.66)	(0.73)	(0.5)	(0.75)	(0.78)	(0.93)	(0.72)	(0.66)	(0.75)	(0.71)			
4	M	4.19	4.19	4.00	4.13	4.06	4.19	3.56	3.94	4.13	4.38	4.08	.195	-0.874	1.769
	(SD)	(0.66)	(0.54)	(0.82)	(0.62)	(0.85)	(0.75)	(1.03)	(0.68)	(0.62)	(0.62)	(0.74)			
5	M	3.75	4.13	4.13	4.37	4.31	4.19	4.06	3.88	4.25	4.25	4.13	.273	-0.409	-0.131
	(SD)	(1.00)	(0.62)	(0.72)	(0.62)	(0.48)	(0.66)	(0.77)	(0.72)	(0.58)	(0.68)	(0.70)			
6	M	3.81	4.06	3.94	4.19	4.06	4.13	3.94	3.94	4.38	4.00	4.04	.815	-1.164	2.055
	(SD)	(0.91)	(0.85)	(0.86)	(0.98)	(0.93)	(0.62)	(0.85)	(0.93)	(0.62)	(0.73)	(0.83)			
7	M	3.88	4.00	4.06	4.31	4.19	4.19	4.13	4.06	4.31	4.19	4.13	.865	-0.579	0.025
	(SD)	(0.89)	(0.73)	(0.93)	(0.79)	(0.75)	(0.66)	(0.81)	(0.68)	(0.60)	(0.75)	(0.75)			
8	M	3.44	3.75	4.13	4.13	4.06	4.19	3.93	3.94	4.19	4.25	4.00	.085	-0.504	0.045
	(SD)	(1.03)	(0.93)	(0.72)	(0.62)	(0.85)	(0.66)	(0.77)	(0.57)	(0.54)	(0.68)	(0.77)			
9	M	3.25	3.81	4.06	3.94	4.13	4.00	4.13	3.94	4.25	4.06	3.96	.034*	-0.547	0.104
	(SD)	(1.13)	(0.91)	(0.77)	(0.68)	(0.72)	(0.63)	(0.81)	(0.57)	(0.58)	(0.68)	(0.79)			
10	M	3.94	3.88	3.81	4.00	4.13	4.13	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.31	4.04	.630	-0.381	-0.018
	(SD)	(0.93)	(0.72)	(0.83)	(0.73)	(0.72)	(0.62)	(0.82)	(0.37)	(0.68)	(0.60)	(0.71)			
Total Satisfaction Index	M	3.88	4.03	4.06	4.16	4.13	4.18	3.97	3.95	4.23	4.23	4.08	.840	-0.376	-0.202
(SD)	(0.78)	(0.67)	(0.71)	(0.63)	(0.71)	(0.58)	(0.79)	(0.61)	(0.54)	(0.63)	(0.66)				

Note. M: mean; SD: standard deviation; p: statistical significance; *p < .05.

how to act in any of the situations or issues covered by each lesson (item eight), especially in relation to aggression (lesson 10), gender (lesson 9) and racism and discrimination (lesson 6). However, when asked if they felt capable to intervene in any of the situations or issues covered by the different lessons (item 9), participants gave higher scores to lesson 9 (gender), which was supported by post hoc analysis ($p_{\text{Lesson1-Lesson9}}=.014$). Finally, subjects felt capable to introduce the different topics to others unfamiliar with them (item 10), with higher scores for lessons 10 (aggression) and 9 (gender). The total satisfaction index did not differ between lessons, although scores tended to be higher for lessons 6 (racism/discrimination), 9 (gender) and 10 (aggression).

Discussion

Themes addressed in the different Psytool lessons refer to highly topical areas closely linked to the application of fundamental values that integrate European politics and culture. In addition, they highlight the value of sport as a crucial element to consider in the fields of education and social inclusion. Sport is a social activity in which individuals expose, among other circumstances, to discrimination and exclusion (e.g., gender inequality and homophobia), harassment and violence (Cleland, 2014; Iglesias, Lozano and Manchado, 2013). The applied satisfaction questionnaire helps to assess adequacy degree and motivation level of agents of change in the knowledge and understanding of issues related to the different lessons. Attending to results shown on Table 3, lessons 6, 9 and 10 appeared to be those that generated the greatest interest among the agents of change. In addition, topics covered by those lessons were those in which participants considered most qualified to intervene after the received training.

In order of preference, contents on gender (lesson 9) and aggression (lesson 10) were those showing the highest satisfaction levels. Traditional predominance of men in sport had led to the extended perception of being a masculine activity, based on the idea that it is a synonym of skills such as strength and aggression (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2016) whereas “feminine” activity is associated with passivity, weakness, gentleness and elegance (Hargreaves, 1986). As Fink (2016) points out, we are facing one of the most extensively approached topics in Sport Psychology. Studies place special emphasis on the existence of stereotypes which can be explained through different approaches (Chalavaev, Sarrazin, Fontayne and Clément-Guillotin, 2013). Furthermore, female sports are not considered in social media where even comments concerning major events tend to be few and far between (Angelini, MacArthur and Billing, 2012). In addition to this it is important to highlight the sexist connotations reflected in the clear majority of reports on female sports which serves to reaffirm hegemonic masculinity of sports and of the sporting media (LaVoi, Buysse, Maxwell and Kane, 2007; Lumpkin, 2009; McKay and Johnson, 2008). Results obtained suggest that, due to their participation in the Psytool Project, agents of change feel better prepared to work on more egalitarian transmission of gender role and to fight against environments that promote sexist stereotypes (Pederson, 2002; Trolan, 2013).

Aggression in sport (lesson 10) is also a current problem, as the Communication of the European Commission "Developing the European Dimension in Sport" has already pointed out in 2011, highlighting the importance of preventing and fighting against violence and intolerance, including the amateur level. A relatively

recent review of general aggression in sport highlighted the high prevalence of on-field violence and suggested that the masculine norms and confrontational nature of some sports attracts and/or socializes aggression in those who participate (Sønderlund et al., 2014), but also found that research on off-field violence and antisocial behaviour was sparse (Kimble, Russo, Bergman and Galindo, 2010). Sport is a context where in such conducts are frequently related with direct conflict and aggression (Sønderlund et al., 2014). Personal variables (e.g. sport, parents, coach, competitive experience, win-lose, media) can have an influence on aggression (González-García, Pelegrín and Garcés de los Fayos, 2017). Training of agents of change focused to all these aspects, which could help to reverse the current situation about this problem. It is necessary to find the largest number of variables (both internal and external) that threaten their personal, social and family stability to analyze the source of aggressive and violent attitude in athletes (Pelegrín and Garcés de los Fayos, 2008). This concern and interest is clearly shown in the agents of change participating in our study, according to the results obtained.

For decades, aggressive behavior in sport has been reaching a considerable incidence. It is necessary to propose solutions that reduce it in this context making sport an educational tool, in order to equip children and adolescents with appropriate and adapted behaviors in peer interaction development, and be able to generalize this prosocial behavior to daily-life contexts (Pelegrín, 2002). Agents also highlighted as valued aspects, those related to racism and discrimination (lesson 6). Globalization is a reality that has facilitates a close coexistence between individuals from different races, and there are evidences that show how sport choice is clearly conditioned or coerced for reasons of race and/or ethnic origin (Jarvie, 2005). The increasing success of different races athletes is undeniable, but it must not be used to argue that sport is free of racism (Jarvie, 2005). The multicultural reality to which our agents of change have to face, is a today's society reflection, explaining their appreciation of the corresponding Psytool lesson, possibly due to its applicability to the closest sporting context.

Other aspects covered by the Psytool lessons, although reaching lower scores in the satisfaction questionnaire, are also of relevance to promote integrity in sport. Thus, coaches have been depicted as strongly influencing their athletes' behaviours and the consensus is that what a coach says carries significant weight for athletes. Understanding what happens in an athlete's mind when faces a doping situation, which temptations he/she has to cope with or the wide range of match fixing implications (Erickson, McKenna and Backhouse, 2015; Tak et al., 2016) is also important so agents of change can help to overcome those situations and promote positive personal development in youth athletes (Lerner, Roeser and Phelps, 2008), facing ethical challenges with practical consequences (Aggerholm, 2017).

In summary, the results of our study show that the level of satisfaction of agents of change formed by the University of León was high and particularly so in the perceived value of the contents of lessons related to gender, aggression or racism and discrimination. Participants valued training in a positive way and felt prepared to better deal with situations they face day to day helping to bring about behavioural changes across all stakeholders in the field of sport. The Psytool project gives opportunities to students, coaches, technical staff and volunteers, among others, to improve their skills and employability, offering support to institutions to work in a transnational collaboration and share innovative practices.

IDENTIFICACIÓN DE CUESTIONES RELATIVAS A LA INTEGRIDAD EN EL DEPORTE: FORMACIÓN DE LOS AGENTES DE CAMBIO

PALABRAS CLAVE: Deporte; agentes de cambio; género; discriminación; agresión.

RESUMEN: Psytool es un Proyecto Europeo, creado para apoyar el desarrollo de los jóvenes a través de la práctica de deporte en contextos positivos y seguros, que busca crear enfoques innovadores para promover la integridad en el deporte. Con este fin, se ha creado una plataforma para entrenar a agentes de cambios, los cuales tienen el rol de transmisores e instigadores de este marco de bienestar de acuerdo con sus respectivas responsabilidades y son capaces de reconocer situaciones no deportivas, reaccionar contra estas y promover experiencias positivas en los deportes. El objetivo de esta investigación fue evaluar el grado de satisfacción de los agentes de cambio ($N = 18$) formados por la Universidad de León sobre el contenido de las diferentes lecciones de la plataforma educativa Psytool. Una vez seleccionados, los agentes de cambio iniciaron un curso de formación durante tres meses. El Cuestionario de Satisfacción, que se distribuyó una vez terminadas las clases, estaba compuesto por 10 ítems relacionados con el contenido y la aplicación en situaciones reales de los diferentes temas, y las respuestas se registraron en una escala de Likert de 1 a 5. Los resultados muestran que el nivel de satisfacción ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.66$) fue alto y particularmente en el valor percibido de los contenidos de las lecciones relacionadas con el género, la agresión o el racismo y la discriminación. Los participantes valoraron la formación de una manera positiva y se sintieron más preparados para afrontar mejor las situaciones a las que se enfrentan día a día, ayudando así a generar cambios comportamentales en todos aquellos involucrados en el campo del deporte.

IDENTIFICAÇÃO DE QUESTÕES DE INTEGRIDADE NOS DESPORTOS: TREINAMENTO DOS AGENTES DE MUDANÇA

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Desporto; agentes de mudança; género; discriminação; agressão.

RESUMO: Psytool é um projeto europeu, criado para apoiar o desenvolvimento dos jovens através da prática do desporto em contextos positivos e seguros, que busca criar abordagens inovadoras para promover a integridade no esporte. Para isso, foi criada uma plataforma para treinar agentes de mudança, que têm o papel de transmisores e instigadores dessa estrutura de bem-estar de acordo com suas respectivas responsabilidades e são capazes de reconhecer situações não-esportivas, reagir contra elas e promover experiências positivas no desporto. O objetivo desta pesquisa foi avaliar o grau de satisfação dos agentes de mudança ($N = 18$) formados pela Universidade de León sobre o conteúdo das diferentes lições da plataforma educacional Psytool. Uma vez selecionados, os agentes de mudança iniciaram um curso de treinamento por três meses. O Questionário de Satisfação, foi composto por 10 itens referentes ao conteúdo e aplicação em situações reais dos diferentes temas, e as respostas foram registradas em uma escala Likert de 1 a 5. A prova foi distribuída após o término das aulas. Os resultados mostram que o nível de satisfação ($M = 4,08$, $DP = 0,66$) foi alto, particularmente no valor percebido dos conteúdos das aulas relacionadas a gênero, agressividade ou racismo e discriminação. Os participantes valorizaram a formação de forma positiva e se sentiram mais preparados para lidar com as situações que enfrentam todos os dias, ajudando a gerar mudanças comportamentais em todos os envolvidos no campo do desporto.

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