

Sportsmanship Profiles among Urban and Rural Young People and Implications for Inclusive Sport

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Abstract. Sportsmanship may support constructive sporting relationships, but participation alone does not establish fair play or inclusion. This study described sportsmanship-related indicators among young people and compared urban and rural response profiles. A descriptive cross-sectional study involved 41 respondents aged 14–24 years with experience in different sports. Data were collected using a 21-item questionnaire described as the Multidimensional Sportspersonship Questionnaire, with five-point response options. Available aggregate percentages were examined across participation, enjoyment, fair play, respect, and commitment. Commitment and respect had the highest overall scores, at 86.0% and 84.3%, respectively; enjoyment reached 80.3%, whereas fair play and participation were lower, at 68.5% and 61.7%. Urban respondents had higher reported scores on four indicators, while rural respondents had higher fair-play scores. These differences were descriptive and were not tested for statistical significance. The contribution is the identification of an uneven profile in which stronger reported commitment coexists with lower fair play and participation. The findings suggest priorities for explicit fair-play education and accessible participation opportunities, while limited measurement documentation and aggregate data restrict causal interpretation and generalization.

Key words: fair play; inclusive sport; sportsmanship; urban and rural communities; young people

Abstract in Indonesia. Sportivitas dapat mendukung hubungan yang positif dalam olahraga, tetapi keikutsertaan saja tidak membuktikan perilaku fair play atau inklusi. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan indikator terkait sportivitas pada kelompok usia muda dan membandingkan profil jawaban responden kota dan desa. Penelitian deskriptif dengan desain potong lintang melibatkan 41 responden berusia 14–24 tahun yang memiliki pengalaman dalam berbagai cabang olahraga. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner 21 butir yang disebut Multidimensional Sportspersonship Questionnaire, dengan lima pilihan respons. Persentase agregat dianalisis pada indikator partisipasi, kesenangan, fair play, rasa hormat, dan komitmen. Komitmen dan rasa hormat memperoleh skor keseluruhan tertinggi, yaitu 86,0% dan 84,3%; kesenangan mencapai 80,3%, sedangkan fair play dan partisipasi lebih rendah, yaitu 68,5% dan 61,7%. Responden kota memiliki skor lebih tinggi pada empat indikator, sementara responden desa memiliki skor fair play lebih tinggi. Perbedaan tersebut bersifat deskriptif dan tidak diuji signifikansinya. Kontribusi penelitian terletak pada identifikasi profil yang tidak merata antara komitmen, fair play, dan partisipasi. Temuan mengarahkan perhatian pada pendidikan fair play dan akses partisipasi yang lebih baik, dengan mempertimbangkan keterbatasan dokumentasi instrumen serta ketersediaan data agregat.

Kata Kunci: fair play; inklusi olahraga; kaum muda; masyarakat kota dan desa; sportivitas

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INTRODUCTION

Sport provides opportunities for cooperation, competition, and learning to respond to rules and other people. These opportunities do not guarantee positive development. Athletes interact with coaches, parents, peers, officials, and organizations whose expectations may reinforce or undermine constructive conduct. A systems perspective therefore places the athlete within interconnected relationships rather than treating sportsmanship as an isolated personal characteristic (Dorsch et al., 2022). Differences between sport-focused and development-focused programs also indicate that organizational purposes and resources shape the experiences available to participants (Hartmann et al., 2024).

For this study, sportsmanship concerns respectful and fair conduct in sporting relationships. Participation, enjoyment, and commitment are related experiences but should not automatically be treated as evidence of moral behavior. Research distinguishing moral, competence, and status values

illustrates why these constructs require careful measurement (Albouza et al., 2021). Likewise, developmental outcomes can vary by age, gender, and sport type (Kilic & Ince, 2021), while associations between psychological need satisfaction and life skills are not uniform across participant groups (Freire et al., 2023). An assessment of several indicators can therefore reveal an uneven profile that a single favorable description of sport would conceal.

The quality of everyday relationships is particularly relevant during adolescence and early adulthood. Enjoyment during transitions in youth soccer involves friendships, learning, and perceived success (Jørgensen et al., 2024). Coach autonomy support and controlling behavior are associated with different motivational experiences and commitment (Sevil-Serrano et al., 2021), and perceived pressures from parents and coaches vary with athlete age (Dunn et al., 2022). Community coaching research further emphasizes stable, authentic relationships (Crisp, 2024). These findings provide possible interpretive contexts, although none establishes the causes of responses in the present sample.

Inclusion also extends beyond attendance. Young people with care experience navigate constraints involving activities, places, and people (Sandford et al., 2021). Research with Special Olympics participants examines autonomy, belonging, mastery, and meaning as dimensions of participation quality (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2022). Accounts from autistic pupils show that sharing a physical education setting need not produce belonging (Haegele & Maher, 2022), while outdoor activities for young people with visual impairments require appropriate instructional support and modifications (Lieberman et al., 2023). Consequently, favorable respect scores should not be equated with direct evidence that all participants experience inclusion.

Urban and rural residence offers a useful descriptive comparison because sporting opportunities may differ across settings. Community needs assessments identify equipment and environmental barriers alongside individual interests (Greeven et al., 2023), and school provision depends on facilities, costs, management, and policy (Rocliffe, O’Keeffe, Sherwin, et al., 2023). However, residence alone cannot identify which mechanisms operate. This study therefore aimed to describe five sportsmanship-related indicators among 41 respondents aged 14–24 years, compare their urban and rural profiles, and discuss implications for inclusive sport. Its contribution is a local descriptive profile to guide further inquiry, rather than a test of whether sport causes character development.

METHODS

Study design and participants

The study used a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional design. The sample comprised 41 respondents aged 14–24 years who had experience in particular sports and lived in urban or rural areas. Residence was the grouping variable for the descriptive comparison. The age range encompasses adolescents and young adults; findings are not extended to the adult population generally. No intervention, repeated assessment, or prospective follow-up was reported.

Measurement and analysis

The instrument was described as the Multidimensional Sportspersonship Questionnaire (MSQ), comprising 21 items answered on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reported indicators were participation, enjoyment, fair play, respect, and commitment. The interpretation retains these labels without assuming equivalence to another published instrument. Item wording, item-to-indicator allocation, reverse scoring, translation procedures, and reliability coefficients were not available for assessment. Accordingly, the scores are treated as reported questionnaire indicators rather than validated estimates of a single underlying trait.

The analysis used the available overall and residence-specific percentages. Table 1 reproduces the stated descriptive categories. The numerator, denominator, and treatment of missing responses used to generate each percentage were not documented, so scores were not reconstructed from assumed item totals. Differences between urban and rural values were calculated by subtracting the rural percentage from the urban percentage and are expressed in percentage points. No confidence intervals, significance tests, effect sizes, or causal estimates were calculated because participant-level observations and subgroup sizes were unavailable. Categories summarize scores and do not represent proportions of respondents meeting a criterion.

Table 1. Descriptive classification of indicator percentages

Reported percentage	Category
<75	Low
75–82	Adequate
83–91	High
92–100	Very high

Note. Thresholds are reproduced as stated. Their source and rules for decimal values between intervals were not reported.

Literature provided contextual interpretation, not additional participant observations or a systematic review. Conceptual papers, qualitative accounts, measurement studies, and intervention research were distinguished by purpose. Two articles concerning injury prevention or diagnosis were identified as retracted and were excluded from evidentiary interpretation (Ning et al., 2023; Zhao, 2022). Their reference entries identify their status for transparency; neither supports the conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sportsmanship profile

Table 2 shows an uneven distribution of indicator scores. Commitment and respect were classified as high, enjoyment as adequate, and participation and fair play as low. The practical concern is the coexistence of stronger reported attachment to sport with lower scores on fair play and participation. This pattern does not demonstrate that the same individuals combined these responses, because only aggregate values were available. It nevertheless suggests that program evaluation should examine behavioral expectations and opportunities to take part alongside commitment.

Table 2. Overall questionnaire indicator scores

Indicator	Score (%)	Category
Participation	61.7	Low
Enjoyment	80.3	Adequate
Fair play	68.5	Low
Respect	84.3	High
Commitment	86.0	High

Note. Total sample N = 41. Percentages summarize questionnaire scores, not the prevalence of individual behaviors.

A favorable commitment score cannot establish that competition is experienced positively. Research on negative experiences in organized sport associates those experiences with depressive symptoms in children (Carver et al., 2024), while a broader wellness commentary emphasizes the importance of contextual support for disadvantaged youth (Gamble et al., 2024). These sources do not establish health outcomes in the present respondents. They instead support examining what committed participation feels like and whether it occurs in a supportive environment. Youth athletes may remain involved while experiencing pressure, exclusion, or limited choice.

Urban and rural comparisons

The residence-specific results appear in Table 3. Urban values were higher for participation, enjoyment, respect, and commitment; the direction was reversed for fair play. Participation had the largest absolute difference, at 5.4 percentage points. Rural fair play exceeded urban fair play by 3.3 percentage points, yet both values remained in the low category. Residence therefore did not produce a consistently favorable profile across all indicators. Rural respect was 82.0%, which falls in the adequate

category under the stated thresholds, rather than the high category.

Table 3. Urban and rural indicator scores

Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Difference
Participation	63.1	57.7	+5.4
Enjoyment	80.8	78.8	+2.0
Fair play	67.7	71.0	-3.3
Respect	85.0	82.0	+3.0
Commitment	86.8	83.5	+3.3

Note. Difference = urban minus rural, in percentage points. Subgroup sizes were not reported. No significance tests were performed.

These contrasts should not be interpreted as evidence that urban or rural communities possess stronger moral values. Age composition, sport type, competitive level, access, and measurement variation could affect group profiles. Their contributions cannot be separated here. The qualitative study of participation barriers during the post-16 transition shows how previous educational experiences can influence later motivation (Cowley et al., 2021). Research on withdrawal also distinguishes transfers between settings from termination of organized sport (Battaglia et al., 2022), while stakeholders may regard leaving as a developmentally appropriate transition rather than failure (Battaglia & Kerr, 2022). Thus, lower participation scores cannot be translated into dropout rates or moral deficiencies.

Fair play and the social environment

The lower fair-play score identifies a topic for further observation and instruction, not proof of particular misconduct. No observations of cheating, conflict, discriminatory behavior, or referee interactions were collected. Research on youth floorball nevertheless demonstrates that officials' communication can be examined as part of the sporting climate (Firek et al., 2022). Coaches and teachers could similarly use clear explanations of rules, structured discussion of contested decisions, and opportunities to practice respectful disagreement. These are proposed applications, not interventions evaluated in this study.

Adults influence that environment in different ways. Parents may form strong social communities around youth teams (Bjork & Hoynes, 2022), yet their expectations can exceed the capacity of volunteer coaches (Pill et al., 2023). Findings on coaches' perceptions of inappropriate relationships also show why safeguarding cannot be reduced to general appeals for respect (Kim et al., 2023). Inclusive practice requires explicit boundaries and dependable responses to concerns. Research linking supplement acceptance and doping attitudes provides a further example of how sport-related ethical attitudes require specific assessment (Kristensen et al., 2024); the present questionnaire results cannot establish doping behavior or safeguarding compliance.

Participation and inclusion

The low participation score may justify asking respondents about access and belonging, but the questionnaire summary does not identify barriers. Studies of gender-diverse adolescents report differences in participation (Espinoza et al., 2023), and research distinguishing physical activity, physical education, and team sport cautions against treating them as interchangeable outcomes (Voss et al., 2023). These findings concern different populations and settings. They help define questions for future work rather than establish the identities or experiences of the current respondents.

Accounts of sport among incarcerated Black young people demonstrate the importance of listening to participants' interpretations (Jacobs et al., 2023). A separate sport-leadership program in a detention setting measured physical activity and lesson context (Wahl-Alexander et al., 2022), illustrating that activity exposure and personal meaning require different evidence. Similarly, adult amateur gymnastics research describes opportunities for continued engagement (Enchenko et al., 2023), whereas longitudinal tracking research cautions that youth sport participation need not predict adult physical

activity uniformly (Martin et al., 2021). Inclusion and lifelong participation remain potential program aims, not observed outcomes of this cross-sectional study.

Educational and community implications

Programs could use the profile to identify three connected priorities: explicit fair-play learning, opportunities for meaningful participation, and respectful relationships. Sport Education research in teacher preparation illustrates how responsibility for tasks can support learning and performance (Hastie et al., 2023). Work on identity leadership provides a youth-specific approach to assessing shared leadership (Butalia et al., 2024), and research on mental education through sport examines resilience as a separate developmental outcome (Marheni et al., 2024). Together, these studies suggest possible directions for program design, but their findings should not be presented as intervention effects in this sample.

Evaluation should match each intended outcome. A football tactical assessment instrument assesses tactical learning (Barquero-Ruiz et al., 2024), while research on teachers' assessment practices identifies limitations in approaches that overemphasize isolated skills (Williams et al., 2021). Neither tactical competence nor athletic performance should substitute for fair-play measurement. Findings on personality, team support, and performance similarly concern related but distinct constructs (Al-Ameri et al., 2022). For community use, behavioral examples and participant feedback could accompany questionnaires so that decisions are informed by observed conduct as well as attitudes.

Physical welfare also matters to sustainable access, but physical and moral outcomes require separate interpretation. Studies of bone density (Liu & Gao, 2022), health indicators in strength-focused education (Rebryna et al., 2022), body composition (Gasperín-Rodríguez et al., 2022), and growth timing (Kozieł et al., 2024) address bodily characteristics rather than sportsmanship. Research on adiposity and injury (Toomey et al., 2022) and specialization-related injury history (Zoellner et al., 2022) similarly does not validate the present instrument. Adult decisions about contact sport can reflect previous experience and gender expectations (Memmini et al., 2022). These sources suggest that participation settings have multiple dimensions; they do not demonstrate that better physical health produces fair conduct.

Historical research on health-oriented physical education situates sport within broader educational purposes (Bilavych et al., 2024). Contemporary evidence reviewing school provision also identifies varied effects and methodological limitations (Roccliffe, O'Keeffe, Walsh, et al., 2023). For the present findings, the implication is modest: contextual information should accompany individual scores before schools or clubs decide which changes are appropriate. A program might investigate access constraints, opportunities to contribute, and the consistency of adult responses to unfair behavior, then evaluate those changes using measures suited to each objective.

Measurement and study limitations

The principal measurement limitation is that a 21-item instrument and five indicator labels are insufficient to establish validity. Validation research on motivational climate (Zhang et al., 2024) and on the Sport Experience Measure for Children and Youth (Jefferies et al., 2024) demonstrates that different instruments require evidence for their intended constructs and populations. Such evidence cannot be transferred to this questionnaire merely because all concern sport. Internal consistency, factor structure, item interpretation, and comparability between residence groups therefore remain unresolved. The descriptive thresholds also leave gaps between some decimal values and have no reported validation; scores should be interpreted primarily as continuous summaries.

CONCLUSION

The 41 respondents showed an uneven sportsmanship-related profile, with higher commitment and respect than fair play and participation. Urban scores were higher on four indicators, whereas rural respondents scored higher on fair play; these contrasts are descriptive and do not establish significant or causal differences. The study contributes a preliminary profile that directs attention to explicit fair-play learning, meaningful participation opportunities, and respectful sporting relationships. Claims about character development or inclusive communities require stronger measurement and direct evidence of participants' experiences. Better documented sampling, scoring, ethics, and individual-level data are

necessary before broader conclusions or program-effectiveness claims can be made.

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