

Group Dynamics and Youth Development

Group Dynamics and Youth Development through Sport and Physical Activity Laboratory



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Thank You!

Hockey teams in your association participated in our research which aimed to better understand how the identities youth form from membership on sport teams (i.e., team identities) may influence moral behaviour towards team members in competitive youth ice hockey. Results of this research have added valuable understanding to the area, and we could not have done it without you. Please take a moment to read through this document and gain a better understanding of the research projects that were completed and the key findings that were discovered. Your contributions have not gone unnoticed and we greatly appreciate the time and effort you and your athletes put into this project. Thank you!

Why Study Group Dynamics in Youth Sport?

The role of team sport on youth development is not very well understood. Specifically, it is unclear how group processes (e.g., team identity) shape youth's moral behaviour and developmental experiences within a sport context.

What Were the Goals of this Project?

To investigate the influence of team identity on moral behaviour towards teammates including prosocial (e.g., encouraging a teammate) and antisocial (e.g., criticized a teammate) behaviour.

What Did We Do?

Study 1 – Athlete Interviews

36 male and female competitive youth ice hockey players from nine teams participated in one-on-one interviews at two time points during their regular season. The aim of this study was to examine how team identity can influence prosocial and antisocial behaviour specifically in competitive youth ice hockey. Four unique perspectives of the team (i.e., team captain, verbal cheerleader, social captain and most aggressive athlete) were interviewed from the nine teams.

Study 2 - Video Observation & Interviews

Eight competitive youth ice hockey teams agreed to have two practice sessions video recorded. 24 male and female competitive youth ice hockey players who engaged in different levels of antisocial behaviour (high, median, or low) were invited to participate in a one-on-one interview to discuss the video observations. Athletes were asked to recall their thinking of prosocial/antisocial interactions with teammates, prompted by relevant video sequences from the two practice sessions. The aim of this study was to further examine athletes' team identity and teammate moral behaviour in competitive youth ice hockey using video observation.

Study 3 – Athlete Survey

422 male and female hockey players from 29 competitive youth ice hockey teams completed a survey during their regular season assessing team identity, prosocial and antisocial behaviours towards teammates and opponents. The aim was to investigate the individual and team influences of team identity on moral behaviour in competitive youth ice hockey players.

What Were The Key Findings?

STUDY 1

Athlete Interviews

Three distinct team narratives were identified by the athletes:

(1) Adaptive Team Narrative:

teams with high frequency of prosocial teammate behaviour and low frequency of antisocial teammate behaviour.

(2) Conflicted Team Narrative:

teams with high frequencies of both prosocial and antisocial teammate behaviour.

(3) Maladaptive Team Narrative:

teams with high frequencies of antisocial teammate behaviour and low frequency of prosocial teammate behaviour.

An athlete's team identity may influence and be influenced by their moral behaviours towards teammates.

Athletes' team identities were shown to have a protective effect against antisocial teammate behaviour following poor performances. If athletes had a strong team identity they were less likely to act antisocially toward teammates after a loss.

STUDY 2

Video Observation & Interviews

Main Findings:

(1) All athletes felt prosocial interactions with teammates enhanced their team identity.

(2) Athletes who reported more antisocial behaviour towards teammates perceived antisocial behaviour as having less of an impact on their team and team identity.

(3) Athletes who reported less antisocial behaviour towards teammates perceived antisocial behaviour as harmful to the team and their team identity.

Gender Findings:

(1) Male athletes reported more physical antisocial behaviour toward teammates than females and often viewed antisocial behaviour as beneficial to the team and not harmful.

(2) Female athletes reported more verbal and covert antisocial behaviour toward team members as well as more cliques and off-ice issues than male athletes.

STUDY 3

Athlete Survey

Team identity and moral behaviour questionnaire data revealed:

(a) Stronger team identity in terms of feelings toward the team known as ingroup affect were associated with increased prosocial behaviour toward teammates (e.g., giving positive feedback to a teammate) and decreased antisocial behaviour towards teammates (e.g., showing frustration at a teammate's poor play) and opponents (e.g., trying to injure an opponent).

(b) Stronger bonds with the team known as the team identity dimension of ingroup ties were associated with less prosocial behaviour toward opponents (e.g., helping opponent off the floor), and greater antisocial behaviour towards teammates and opponents.

Findings indicate that ingroup affect has an adaptive effect on moral behaviour while the ingroup ties-moral behaviour relationship is more complex and less adaptive as ingroup ties was associated with greater antisocial behaviour toward opponents.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

- (a) Gain a better understanding of team identity and teammate moral behaviour in social team settings.
- (b) Investigate youth coaches' perceptions of team identity and moral behaviour.
- (c) Explore the efficacy of an intervention to improve team identity and teammate moral behaviour.

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