

Athletic Behavioral Practices in the Perspective of the Confucian Values and Team Cohesion towards a Behavior Management Program in Jiangsu Province, China



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ABSTRACT: This study examined the interplay between Confucian values, athletic behavior, and team cohesion among student-athletes. A diverse cohort of student-athletes, spanning various grade levels and genders, participated in the research. The study delves into six key Confucian values: cultivation of appropriate behavior, filial piety, respect for others, adherence to societal norms, respect for authority, and rituals and etiquette. Results indicate a robust commitment to these values in athletic conduct, with particular emphasis on filial piety and respect for authority. Team cohesion assessments reveal strong team identities, positive moods, and a sense of belonging among athletes. Furthermore, correlations between adherence to Confucian values and team cohesion were observed, with ethical behavior and the importance of rituals and etiquette positively impacting team identity. Recommendations include ethical conduct training, mentorship programs, and continued research to enhance athlete development and foster a culturally aware and cohesive sports environment.

KEYWORDS: athletic behavioral practices, Confucian values, team cohesion, behavior management program

1. INTRODUCTION

In China, Confucian values have played a significant role in shaping the behavioral practices and social dynamics of athletes. The resurgence of Confucian education in China during the late 1980s and early 2000s marked a turning point in the country's approach to traditional Chinese culture. With the government's support, Confucian education initiatives, particularly during education involving the reading of classical texts, gained popularity, aiming to promote cultural universalism and humane commonality, transcending national boundaries (Center for Religion and Civic Culture, 2009).

Confucianism's influence on education led to the implementation of a compulsory education system that aims to provide free and universal access to education for all individuals, regardless of their social status or hierarchical position. Confucius believed that education was the key to societal prosperity, economic advancement, and efficient governance, emphasizing moral development, adherence to regulations, and the cultivation of conscience. The teachings of Confucius also emphasized the importance of morality based on empathetic and intimate sentiments within family units, fostering shared ethical values and reciprocal responsibilities (Lee, 2015).

The philosophical principles of Confucianism emphasized introspection, critical analysis of surroundings, and proactive problem-solving, aiming for individuals to attain a heightened state of humanity. Moral education, according to Confucius, plays a central role in character development, ethical behavior, and the establishment of significant interpersonal relationships (Tan, 2017; Kajawo, 2019). Confucian values encourage individuals to refrain from oppressing others and strive to help them reach their full potential.

In sports, the concept of team cohesion holds significant importance. Team cohesion refers to the unity, emotional connection, and sense of belongingness among team members, which directly impact team performance and success. Sports teams with strong cohesion tend to work together more effectively, optimizing team tactics and strategies (Pescosolido & Saavedra, 2012).

Previous research by Brisimis et al. (2018) explored the relationship between group cohesion, athletes' satisfaction, and team performance among Greek athletes. The study highlighted the role of team sports type in influencing both group cohesion and athletes' satisfaction, underscoring the importance of cohesive teams in enhancing team performance.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the assessment of athletic behavioral practices from the perspective of Confucian values among athletes and its correlation with team cohesion. By exploring the interplay between

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Confucian ideals and athletes' behavior, this study seeks to shed light on the efficacy of Confucian education initiatives in promoting holistic development among athletes. Moreover, the examination of team cohesion in relation to Confucian values have provided valuable insights into creating a positive and cohesive team environment, ultimately benefiting the athletes and informing the development of a behavior management program in Qingjiangpu Province, China.

Research Questions

1. What is the assessment of the athletic behavioral practices in the perspective of the Confucian values of athletes in terms of: cultivation of appropriate behavior; filial piety; respect for others; adherence to societal norms; respect for authority; and rituals and etiquette?
2. What is assessment of the team cohesion of the athletes in terms of: identity; mood; and belongingness?
3. What is significant relationship between the assessment of the athletic behavior in the perspective of the Confucian values of athletes and assessment of the team cohesion of the athletes?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative-correlational design to examine the relationship between Confucian values, athletic behavior, and team cohesion among athletes at Jiangsu Vocational College of Electronics and Information in Qingjiangpu, China.

The goal of this study was to provide empirical evidence and insights that could inform the development of a teacher training program to enhance sports coaching and behavior management practices, effectively integrating Confucian values into sports education. With this, a sample of 109 respondents was selected based on the total population of 150. This was based on Qualtrics with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level.

The study conducted rigorous testing to ensure the quality and dependability of a survey instrument for physical education (PE) instruction. Content validity was assessed through expert reviewers, while reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's alpha. Participants were briefed on the research topic, objectives, and survey questions, with authorization and approval from the educational institution and relevant third-party entities. Confidentiality was maintained in both communication to participants and the survey instrument.

The researcher informed participants about the research topic, objectives, survey questionnaire methodology, and other relevant information. Confidentiality was maintained by the researcher and used only for the current study and related academic goals. The study included adult educators and staff members who exhibited autonomy and preparedness to engage in the study.

Statistical analysis involved collecting, organizing, and analyzing collected data to draw meaningful conclusions and insights. Various statistical techniques were employed, including frequency distributions, percentages, standard deviations, weighted means, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The Likert scale was used as a psychometric tool for measuring perceptions.

Ethical considerations were thoroughly evaluated to ensure the protection of human subjects and adherence to ethical standards. The research protocol involved adhering to ethical principles such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and minimizing potential harm or discomfort to participants. The integrity of the study was safeguarded by adhering to rigorous ethical guidelines, including informed consent, confidentiality, reliability, and privacy concerns, and following APA citation guidelines.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The overall mean score for this comprehensive assessment stands at 3.154, exhibiting a relatively low standard deviation of 0.161. This overarching mean comfortably falls within the "Practiced" category, aligning with the legend's indications. It collectively portrays a robust and consistent commitment among the athletes in the study towards Confucian values across various dimensions of their athletic behavior. For Cultivation of Appropriate Behavior, while this indicator obtains the lowest score among the six assessed values, it still maintains its place within the "Practiced" category. This suggests that athletes exhibit a degree of commitment to cultivating appropriate behavior in sports, though there is room for enhancement in this aspect. Filial piety emerges as the highest-ranked indicator, securing a "Practiced" status. This result underscores athletes' deep respect and gratitude towards their parents or guardians for their unwavering support throughout their sports journey. In Addition, respect for Authority is on par with "Filial Piety," attains the highest rank. It reflects athletes' respect for their coaches, valuing their guidance and trust in their decisions. Their commitment to honoring authority figures within the team is noteworthy. In terms of Respect for Others, athletes demonstrate a commendable commitment to respecting others, whether they are teammates, opponents, or individuals with diverse viewpoints within the team. This behavior ranks third among the assessed values and falls within the "Practiced" category. As for Adherence to Societal Norms, athletes consistently adhere to cultural and societal norms governing sports conduct. They comprehend the importance of representing their teams and nations in a manner that aligns with

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societal values. This behavior is positioned fourth and falls within the "Practiced" category. In terms of Rituals and Etiquette, athletes also demonstrate a commitment to rituals and etiquette within the sports context. They recognize the significance of team customs and professionalism during sports events. This behavior ranks fifth and falls within the "Practiced" category. In summation, the collective mean score of 3.154 underscores the athletes' robust commitment to Confucian values across various facets of their athletic conduct. While there is an opportunity for further refinement in the cultivation of appropriate behavior, their unwavering dedication to filial piety, respect for others, adherence to societal norms, respect for authority, and observance of rituals and etiquette is commendable. These findings offer valuable insights into the ethical and cultural dimensions of athletes' behavior, serving as a foundational platform for fostering positive values and behaviors within the sports community. Coaches, educators, and sports organizations can leverage these insights to amplify athlete development and instill a culture centered on respect and responsibility in sports.

2. For assessment of the team cohesion in terms of identity, the athletes exhibit a solid sense of belonging to their teams, as indicated by a respectable weighted mean score of 3.090. This suggests that they strongly identify with their teams, considering them integral to their athletic experiences. While this dimension ranks second among the indicators, the high mean score underscores a noteworthy attachment and identification with the team. Also, when considering mood, the weighted mean score of 3.108 takes the top rank among the indicators. This result indicates that athletes generally experience positive emotions and enthusiasm when participating in team activities and competitions. It suggests that the team environment fosters a sense of camaraderie and joy among teammates, enhancing the overall sports experience. Moreover, the dimension of belongingness, reflects a mean score of 2.936, ranking it third among the indicators. Athletes feel supported and encouraged by their teammates, which contributes to their sense of belonging within the team. While slightly lower than the other dimensions, this score still signifies a notable level of belongingness within the team context. Overall, the study's results are highly encouraging, with an overall mean score of 3.092 falling within the "Identifiable" category. This indicates a robust sense of team cohesion among the student-athletes. These findings bear substantial implications for athletic performance, as cohesive teams with well-defined identities tend to exhibit effective collaboration, seamless communication, and a greater likelihood of achieving their athletic objectives. The athletes' strong identification with their teams, positive mood, and sense of belonging all contribute to a thriving team dynamic, ultimately enhancing their chances of success in sports.
3. The found significant correlations between athletes' adherence to Confucian values and their assessment of team cohesion. Notably, there is a positive and significant correlation between "Cultivation of Appropriate Behavior" and "Identity," indicating that athletes prioritizing ethical conduct tend to have a stronger team identity. Conversely, a negative but significant correlation exists between "Cultivation of Appropriate Behavior" and "Belongingness," suggesting that strict adherence to ethical standards may be associated with a somewhat weaker sense of team belonging. However, "Filial Piety," "Mood," and "Belongingness" show no significant correlations with any team cohesion indicators, suggesting that these values and emotional factors may not strongly influence athletes' perception of team cohesion. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that "Respect For Others," "Adherence To Societal Norms," and "Respect For Authority" do not exhibit significant correlations with any of the team cohesion aspects, indicating that athletes' levels of respect, adherence to societal norms, and respect for authority, as assessed through Confucian values, do not significantly impact their team identity, mood, or sense of belonging within the team. Additionally, while there is a significant correlation between "Rituals and Etiquette" and "Identity," indicating that athletes who value rituals and etiquette tend to have a stronger team identity, this aspect of Confucian values does not significantly impact athletes' mood or their sense of belonging within the team. Overall, the analysis suggests a positive and statistically significant relationship between athletes' adherence to Confucian values in their athletic behavior and team cohesion. However, this relationship is moderate in strength, and other factors also contribute to team cohesion. While ethical conduct and the importance of rituals and etiquette appear to influence team identity, other Confucian values and emotional factors have limited impact on athletes' overall team cohesion.

IV. CONCLUSION

Athletes in the study display a robust commitment to Confucian values, with the overall mean score falling within the "Practiced" category. While there is room for improvement in the cultivation of appropriate behavior, their dedication to values like filial piety, respect for authority, and respect for others is commendable. On the other hand, team cohesion among student-athletes is strong, as indicated by high mean scores for team identity, positive mood, and belongingness. This cohesion is essential for effective collaboration and achieving athletic objectives.

Athletic Behavioral Practices in the Perspective of the Confucian Values and Team Cohesion towards a Behavior Management Program in Jiangsu Province, China

The analysis reveals significant correlations between athletes' adherence to Confucian values and their assessment of team cohesion. Ethical behavior and the importance of rituals and etiquette positively impact team identity, while strict adherence to ethical standards may weaken the sense of team belonging. Other Confucian values and emotional factors have limited influence on overall team cohesion, emphasizing the complexity of factors contributing to team dynamics.

In practical terms, this means that there is a meaningful connection between how athletes perceive and embody Confucian values in their athletic behavior and the overall cohesion within their sports teams. A positive correlation coefficient indicates that as athletes exhibit behaviors and attitudes aligned with Confucian values, such as filial piety, respect for others, adherence to societal norms, respect for authority, and the importance of rituals and etiquette, their teams tend to experience higher levels of cohesion. This cohesion may manifest as stronger team bonds, effective communication, mutual support, and shared team goals.

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