Adolescents' sport values and their perceptions of their parents' sport socialization values and involvement in their sporting activity

**INTRODUCTION**

Value transmission between parents and children is generally considered the hallmark of successful socialization (Barni, Ranieri, Scablini, & Rosani, 2011). It has been widely discussed but surprisingly little research especially with reference to core concepts such as values.

Psychosocial research has shown a growing interest in the role of sport in the development of young athletes' life skills and moral values (Lee & Rosani, 2008). The importance of values in sport, particularly moral values, partly corresponding to Schwartz's Theory of values (1992). Lee and colleagues (2000) confirmed the existence of sport core values, namely:

- Moral values (e.g., contract maintenance and obedience), which emphasize the respect for the rules and for the others;
- Competence values (e.g., achievement and showing skills), which highlight the pursuit of one's own objectives in the sport practice;
- Status values (e.g., public image and winning), which emphasize one's own image compared to others.

Moreover, research has shown that when playing sport, young athletes tend to give the greatest importance to competence and moral values and the weakest importance to status values (e.g., Goggioli, 2015; Lee, Whitehead, Nisunmar, & Hatzigeorgiou, 2008).

**TRANSMISSION OF SPORT VALUES**

Little research has focused on the way values are passed from parents to children, even if they provide a major source of influence for their children within the sport context (Neppl, E. & Eccles, 2004). The extent to which young athletes feel that their parents transmit their sportive activity has indeed significant consequences on the child's sport experience (Tormogren et al., 2007).

In general, value transmission is a dynamic and bidirectional process, where both parents and children play an active role, and accept and endorse the transmission of the values that are composed of two different phases: first, children perceive (more or less accurately) which values their parents want them to endorse, namely their parents' socialization values. Second, children choose to accept or to reject these perceived values if children perceive their parents' socialization values accurately and accept them, value similarity should be high. The parent-child relationship is a relevant predictor of value endorsement; when the family context is characterized by high levels of acceptance and support, children are more ready to endorse their parents' socialization values (Barni et al., 2011).

When considering adolescents' acceptance of the sport values their parents want them to endorse, it is thus important to analyze the parent-child relationship quality and parental involvement in the child's sport activity (Lee & Maclean, 2011). Helscheidt (1987) stated that parental involvement in child's sport activity may be considered as a continuum that ranges from underinvolvement to overinvolvement. According to the author, for conditions may negatively influence the sport experience of young athletes, the lack of emotional, financial, or functional involvement that characterizes parental underinvolvement may make it more difficult for young athletes to pursue a sport career, while parental overinvolvement may be harmful because of the possible consequences of perceived parental pressure.

**THE STUDY**

In the light of the above background, by referring to Lee and colleagues' classification of sport values (2000), this study aimed at:

1. Measuring adolescent athletes' willingness to accept the sport values their parents want them to endorse (i.e., parental acceptance of values).
2. Analyzing the association between parental involvement in their children's sport activity and adolescents' values acceptance.

**Participants**

Participants were 172 adolescents (48.3% male, 51.7% female) aged between 13 and 19 years (mean age=15.41, s.d.=1.73). They live in northern and central Italy, where practiced a team sport (volleyball: 60.4%; soccer: 19.8%; baseball: 12.2%; rugby: 1.6%).

**Sport Values Questionnaire-2 (SVQ-2, Lee, & E., 2008).** The scale, which is composed of 15 items (e.g., “When I do sport it is important to me to have fun, have a good time”), assesses the importance children give to moral, competence, and status values. Using a 7-point Likert scale (from -1 to 7, opposite of the values that I believe to be extremely important to me), respondents indicated the extent to which they consider such values as a guiding principle in their sport activity. We computed three scores assessing the importance adolescents give to moral values (α=.73), competence values (four items, i.e., “44” and “45”), and status values (four items, i.e., “82”).

To assess adolescents' perceptions of their sport values their parents want them to endorse, the SVQ-2 was once more used and adolescents were asked to rate the extent to which they believed each value was real or probable (e.g., “It is important for my father/mother to show me...”). We computed the family consensus index (FCI), which is the extent to which children consider their parents as actively involved in their athletic experience, praise and understanding (r=.48 for fathers and r=.75 for mothers); that is, parental encouragement characterized by affective and verbal support (i.e., parental encouragement). Moreover, we have considered the following:Directive Behavior (four items, i.e., “47” and “48” for fathers and “46” and “46” for mothers), competence values (four items, i.e., “44” for fathers and “45” for mothers) and status values (r=.83 for fathers and r=.81 for mothers).  

**Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (PSIQ. Lee & Maclean, 1997).** Using a 5-point Likert scale (from -1 to 5, opposite of the values that I believe to be extremely important to me), respondents indicated the extent to which they consider such values as a guiding principle in their sport activity. Within the sport experience and pressure towards children sport activity, which was assessed through a survey of the child's athlete.

**Data analysis**

To measure the degree of adolescents' acceptance of sport values, we computed the within-dyad correlations across values, by correlating the parent's 13 value ratings, as perceived by the adolescent, with adolescents' 13 own sport values (Kennyon & Askari, 1994). Within-dyad correlation coefficients can range from -1 to 1, with 0 indicating no correlation. To assess whether and to what extent the quality of parental and maternal involvement in their children's sport activity is related to adolescents' perceived degree such adolescents' perceived their parents' sport values, we performed a multiple regression analysis. There is a growing consensus that when faced with correlated predictors – an issue likely in the case of the four patterns of involvement, two parent-child pairs should combine MR with other techniques available for intervention, such as RWA (see Johnson, 2000, for details). In the analyses, the patterns of parental involvement were the predictors while adolescents' sport value acceptance (transformed to 2 scores) was the criterion variable.

As shown in Table 1, the four predictors yielded a R² of .70 for fathers and .11 for mothers. From the exploration of βs, the family consensus index (FCI) emerged as the most significant predictor, followed by the two predictors of children's activity, moral, and emotional support. The latter two predictors, morality and emotional support, had a similar contribution to explained variance, while family consensus index was the most significant predictor, explaining about two-thirds of the variance in adolescents' acceptance of parental sport values.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The study aimed at analyzing adolescent athletes' sport values and their acceptance of those sport values their parents wanted them to endorse, while examining the impact of parental involvement in children's sport activity on value acceptance.

Adolescents showed great importance to competence values (e.g., self-direction) and moral values (e.g., helpfulness) while attributing little importance to status values (e.g., leadership). This result is in line with previous studies (Goggioli, 2015; Lee et al., 2000). In line with the sport context, children were more influenced by their parents' values and perceived their parents' socialization values accurately and accepted them. However, the importance children give to moral, emotional, or functional involvement was negatively correlated with perceived parental pressure.

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**REFERENCES**


