

Shaping Success:
Organizational Citizenship Behavior and its
prevalence in Athlete versus Non-athlete Texas
State University Student Populations

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By

Nicholas Wyss
San Marcos, Texas

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NICHOLAS WYSS

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ABSTRACT. The body of research concerning the effects that competitive sports may have on its participants present a variety of viewpoints. Some believe sports fosters character building, teamwork, and pro-social development, while others contend that the selfish, exclusionary, and rule-bound world of sports may degrade the moral development of its athletes. In order to address the issue of whether sport participation has an effect on a functional measure of group effectiveness, empirical data was obtained from 81 college athletes and non-athletes. This data was designed to measure organizational citizenship behavior, as composed by three dimensions: helping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. The data was statistically analyzed to search for significant differences. Overall scores of athletes ($\bar{M} = 3.97$, $SD \pm .41$) were higher than non-athletes ($\bar{M} = 3.82$, $SD \pm .56$). Athletes scored significantly higher on sportsmanship ($\bar{M} = 3.94$, $SD \pm 0.53$) than the non-athletes ($\bar{M} = 3.63$, $SD \pm 0.54$). Similarly, the athletes ($\bar{M} = 4.12$, $SD \pm 0.57$) scored significantly higher on the civic virtue measure than the non-athletes, ($\bar{M} = 3.85$, $SD \pm 0.47$). In contrast to the rest of the findings, athletes ($\bar{M} = 3.84$, $SD \pm 0.47$) actually scored lower on the helping dimension of OCB than the non-athletes ($\bar{M} = 3.96$, $SD \pm 0.39$). The results suggest that the competitive experience in fact does assist athletes in developing skills that lead to more effective functioning as group members. The athletes relatively lower scores on the helping dimension, which is confined to assisting specific individuals, could be a result of their competitive nature or a result of the possibility that in an organizational setting such as sport, helping behavior does not lead to increased team effectiveness, and thus is never reinforced.

Introduction

It is commonly known that the experience of athletics is beneficial to its participants, adults and children alike. The exercise involved can improve muscular and cardio-respiratory fitness, which in turn promotes overall health. Additionally, the experience can help to improve coordination in a variety of tasks. But what psychological affects may athletics have on its participants? Does the competitive experience play a role in developing or influencing personalities? If changes do occur, is it possible they may “overflow” into other areas of an athlete’s life and result in positive benefits outside their specific sport?

Conversely, is it possible that the experience is detrimental to the world outside of sports? It should come as no surprise that many people believe that the athletic experience does influence our lives in ways that extend beyond the area of physical fitness. Some believe for the better, others believe for the worse.

Sports and Self-Esteem

It is a widely held belief that participation in sports positively affects the psychological well-being of its participants. Parents involve their children in athletics, with the intent of helping them to mature. The world of sports is usually structured, involves discipline, and follows strict sets of rules. It is a logical assumption to conclude that time spent within these circumstances may help a child to learn “what it takes” to succeed in life.

Many also maintain that involving their children in sports will occupy their bodies and minds to an extent that they will be less likely to engage in delinquent activities.

Adults also participate in sports, some for socialization, some for an outlet for their competitive spirit and others to add some richness to their lives. Scores of benefits have been supposed about participation in athletics: meeting new friends, learning to work in teams, how to win and lose with dignity, as well as building “character,” sportsmanship, and confidence.

Research on self-esteem. While many of these suppositions have not been investigated empirically, there has been some research performed that supports the idea that participation in sports may have a positive effect on people, namely on their self-esteem. Several studies using adult males as well as mixed-gender samples as the subjects have shown that participation in sports is positively correlated with global self-worth (Rao & Overman, 1986; Taylor, 1995; Boland & Albinson, 1991).

These findings have also been replicated in experiments using children as the subjects (Biddle, 1993; Steitz and Owen, 1992). Further investigation with children showed that when sports participation is supplemented by parental support, rather than parental pressure, that the probability for increased self-esteem is even greater (Leff & Hoyle, 1995). So it appears that while sports participation is not acting autonomously on self-esteem, it is having a noteworthy effect.

In another study, Richman and Shaffer (2000) undertook an original approach to their research. Drawing on several studies on suspected contributors to self-esteem (Harter, 1986; Marsh, 1984; Rao & Overman, 1986, Wilkens et al., 1991, Spence &

Helmreich, 1978), Richman and Shaffer (2000) decided to undertake a study using solely females. What was unique about their study was that rather than measuring a broad construct like “global self-worth,” they decided to test for three subcategories that have been shown to influence self-esteem. “Favorable body image,” the first category, refers to how positively the athlete views their own body. “Perceived physical competencies” refers to the confidence that the subject has in their own physical capabilities. The final subcategory, gender flexibility, refers to how comfortable the subject is in assuming roles that may be androgynous or usually particular to the opposite sex.

The all female sample used showed a positive relationship between sports participation and each of the three contributors. Apart from these benefits, the study showed sports participation to have little benefit for the females and may have even undermined their self-esteem (Richman & Shaffer, 2000). The authors suggest this may be due to the fact that if the athlete is very unsuccessful at the sport, they will experience feelings of inadequacy and that these feelings will replace the positive benefits. This supports the idea that athletic participation does leave a mark on us, be it for the better or worse. Also worth mentioning is that according to some research (Jackson & Marsh, 1986; Marsh and Jackson, 1986; Spreitzer, 1994), sports participation is a weak predictor of self-esteem at best.

Athletes and the media

Recently, a variety of athletes have gained national media attention for their activities off of the playing field, and many have seen this as a reason to question just what effect

sports are having on society. In the world of professional sports, contract disputes have become a common occurrence. Terrell Owens, who in sports circles has become the poster boy of contract dispute, ended up being inactivated by the Philadelphia Eagles for most of an entire season because of “conduct detrimental to the team.” While Owens’ situation was escalated to a level not commonly seen, it has become routine for players to skip out on their teams’ training camps in order to attain a more lucrative contract. The animosity this breeds among players has also become routine. The problems in sports are not confined to football.

Major League Baseball has just gone through its own painful process of attempting to clean up the league’s image after revelations of widespread use of performance enhancing drugs became common knowledge. In the short term, the drugs perhaps gave ballplayers a performance edge. But the backlash that was brought about when their actions came to light may have hurt the sport in ways yet unknown. The NHL is just beginning to get back into swing after losing an entire season during a lockout because of a dispute between the players union and the owners. In basketball, no fan will soon forget the Pacers-Pistons brawl, and the chaos that ensued when several players from the visiting Pacers got involved in a physical confrontation with the home teams fans.

The problems have become evident in college athletics as well. Marcus Vick, star quarterback for Division 1-A Virginia Tech, repeatedly had troubles that were publicized. Vick was charged with speeding, contributing to the delinquency of minors, possession of marijuana and having sex with a minor. After serving a suspension from playing for his actions, Vick returned to his team only to flagrantly stomp on an opponent’s leg after a

play had ended on a nationally televised game. Virginia Tech removed Vick permanently from the team for his unsportsmanlike conduct.

Athletes and Morality

The image of athletes presented to the general public by the media paints many athletes as selfish and morally compromised. Some may say that athlete's actions in such situations prove that the negative connotations associated with them are justified. Others argue that many honest, decent, and respectable athletes simply go unnoticed, as their lives are "boring" compared to their immoral counterparts. Do athletes really differ in their morals from non-athletes, or has media sensationalism allowed many of the "good" athletes to fly under the radar?

Moral Reasoning in NCAA athletes. Research into this area by Beller and Stoll (1993,1995) showed that Division I athletes scored lower on a test of moral reasoning than their non-athlete counterparts. Moral reasoning is defined as "the ability to systematically think through a moral problem taking into consideration one's own values and beliefs while weighing them against what others and society values and believes" (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 1995). The authors concluded that competition itself adversely affected the athlete's moral reasoning.

Other parties have argued with these findings and hypothesized that Division III athletes would not show such deficits in their morality. These naysayers offer that perhaps the money, prestige, and glamour associated with Division I college sports has

led the athletes at these institutions to their defunct morality test scores. These parties contend that Division III, with its low budgets, almost non-existent media coverage, and very low number of players going onto the professional world may create the ideal atmosphere for sports, as participants are playing “for the love of the game.”

In response to these arguments, Stoll, Kay et al. (1995) performed research involving both Division I and Division III athletes. The results showed that athletes from both divisions scored significantly lower than non-athlete students of either division. The authors concluded that it is not “money, national prestige, coaches’ salaries or glamour that affects the moral reasoning of athletes, but how competitive activity is viewed.”

The authors give several reasons to explain their conclusions. Quoting Thomas (1983), who describes sports as characterized by “competitiveness, contention of interest, physical skill and prowess,” the authors purport that sports imply a selfish and exclusionary philosophy. This combined with the competition of NCAA sports may cause athletes to see winning and the prestige associated with it as more important than idealistic values. They also quote Bredemeier (1984) as saying that a part of competition “is a tendency to objectify one’s opponents, project responsibility for moral decision making onto coaches and officials, and take an unbalanced interest in one’s own gain.”

Game Reasoning. Certainly these explanations provide some insight into why athletes score lower on the morality tests than non-athletes. But that is not the whole picture. Further investigation shows that the research performed used a test that asked very sport specific questions to determine morality. The questions asked about performance

enhancing drugs, retaliating for being wronged in the game, intentional fouls, and fairness to competitors.

Research by Bredemeier and Shields (2001) has hypothesized that in-game situations form a “bracketed morality” that is set apart from normal moral reasoning. This research tested athletes and non-athletes in both “game reasoning” and “life reasoning” situations. Both were compared to any changes in the organizational framework of moral decision making in either type of reasoning.

The type of decision making searched for was based on Haan’s (1978, 1983, 1985) five stage model of moral development. During levels one and two, known as the Assimilative Phase, egocentricity is paramount. Thus, the interests and needs of the self are given more importance than the needs of others. During levels three and four, known as the Accommodative Phase, personal interests and needs become subordinate to those of others. In the fifth level, the Equilibrative Phase, the interests and needs of both parties are balanced in an attempt to make the best of the situation for both parties involved.

The results confirmed that when questioned about in-game situations, athletes and non-athletes both used assimilative reasoning more frequently to resolve dilemmas, whereas they used accommodative or equilibrative reasoning more frequently when faced with life dilemmas (Bredemeier & Shields, 2001). This study does not provide the answers for why the athletes score lower on a moral reasoning test involving sports, but it does offer that reduced moral reasoning in sports situations does not necessarily mean a reduced moral reasoning in all other situations.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The studies heretofore described have tried to address the question of how competition affects its competitors, but not in the context of interacting with others in groups. The research has established that athletes likely have higher self-confidence than non-athletes, especially regarding their body image, physical prowess, and gender flexibility. They have also established that athletes seem to use a compromised morality when put into game situations, to a greater degree than the rest of the population.

What these studies have not addressed is what exactly these or other changes possibly experienced might mean in the context of living life outside of sports, specifically working in organizational settings. Do athletes experience a pro-social change that makes them a better “team player?” One characteristic of an effectively functioning group member has been the display of what has been described as “organizational citizenship behavior,” or “OCB.”

The History of OCB. In 1964 Katz noted that “an organization which depends solely upon its blueprints of prescribed behavior is a very fragile social system.” He determined that one of the essential behaviors for a functioning organization was “innovative and spontaneous activity that goes beyond role prescriptions.”

Around the same time, Roethlisberger and Dickson (1964) used the word “cooperation” in their book *Management and the Worker*, which they defined as acts that maintained an internal equilibrium. They referred to the numerous pro-social gestures,

acts of helpfulness, and other instances of citizenship behaviors that occurred everyday as being rooted in the “logic of sentiment.”

Four decades later, it is generally acknowledged that a fundamental condition of organizational effectiveness is the willingness of members to go above and beyond their official job duties (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Organ, 1990). Organizational citizenship behavior, also described by Organ (1988) as “the good soldier syndrome” consists of cooperative and constructive gestures that are not mandatory in-role behaviors. The behaviors have been broken down into various dimensions, including altruism, cheerleading, courtesy, peacekeeping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue (Podsakoff, Ahearne, et al., 1997).

OCB in the workplace. What makes organizational citizenship behavior interesting to researchers is that since it often goes beyond formal role requirements, it is harder to enforce with the threat of punishment. Therefore, motivating employees to display such behaviors is more complex than motivating them to perform their contractual duties.

Research has indicated, however, that the display of organizational citizenship behaviors is positively correlated with promotions. It is hypothesized that the supervisor may pay back the good citizenship behavior, even if the employee is not the most productive qualitatively or quantitatively (Hui, Lam, et al., 2000, MacKenzie, Podsakoff et al., 1991).

That being said, research has shown that organizational citizenship behavior is in fact correlated with work group performance. Helping, sportsmanship and civic virtue,

three dimensions of OCB, have all been shown to have a positive correlation with work group performance throughout a number of studies (Podsakoff, Ahearne, et al., 1997).

The hypothetical justifications as to why these behaviors may influence work group performance are spread throughout the literature on OCB. Many reasons have been suggested as to why helping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue are positively correlated with work group performance as suggested in previous research (Borman and Motowildo, 1993; George and Bettenhausen, 1990; Karambayya, 1989; Organ, 1988, 1990; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994; Smith et al., 1983). Simply stated, organizational citizenship behaviors optimize the performance of the organization by “lubricating” the social machinery common to all organizations, reducing hostilities and enhancing effectiveness (Borman and Motowildo, 1993; Smith et al., 1983). As summarized by Allen & Rush (1998),

“Indeed, it has been noted that OCBs may increase organizational performance because they (a) reduce the need to devote scarce resources to purely maintenance functions (Organ, 1988); (b) free up those resources for more productive purposes (Borman and Motowildo, 1993; Organ, 1988); (c) enhance coworker or managerial productivity (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991, 1993; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994); (d) serve as an effective means of coordinating activities between team members and across work groups (Karambayya, 1989; Smith et al., 1989); and (e) enhance the organizations ability to attract and retain the best people by making it a more attractive place to work.”

The benefits of organizational citizenship behavior are apparent, to both the individual and the organization. As such, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, to address the question of whether or not participation in athletics indeed does help develop or contribute to skills that lead to more effective functioning as a member of an organization, as measured by OCB. Secondly, the test explores whether specific segments of the population may be more or less likely to exhibit organizational

citizenship behaviors, which may help employers effectively target their recruitment efforts for new employees.

Method

Subjects

Eighty-one college students, 31 athletes and 50 non-athletes, participated in the study. The sample included males and females, all of whom were students at Texas State University - San Marcos. The athletes were defined as being participants in official school sports sanctioned by the NCAA. A majority (14 of 15) of the male athletes were football players, while a majority (14 of 16) of the female athletes were soccer players.

Procedure

Each subject was administered an eighteen-item questionnaire. Male and female athletes were found in campus computer labs and in their team weight training facility; non-athletes were found in campus computer labs and in general University courses. Subjects were told that no right or wrong answer existed, and that they should independently answer each question based on their own feelings or beliefs. The participants were told to not put their name onto the questionnaire, and that their responses would remain anonymous.

Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the author based primarily on previous questionnaires (Organ & Near et al., 1983; Hui, Lam et al., 2000.) The first twelve questions used a Likert Scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree (Stoll, Kay, et al., 1995). These questions were designed to determine the participant's level of inclination towards displaying organizational citizenship behaviors. The final 6 questions asked general information about the participant, including gender, age, field of study, whether they were employed, whether or not they were an NCAA athlete, and whether or not they participated in other campus organizations. The twelve items used to establish the level of organizational citizenship behavior consisted of three groups of four questions, each meant to measure a distinct dimension of OCB. The test items were randomly arranged. The three dimensions used: helping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue; were the same which research by Podsakoff, Ahearne et al. (1997) were shown to have a positive correlation with work group performance. To assist in interpretation, a copy of the test, as well as a short description of each of the dimensions tested for, as well as what data from the general information section is as follows:

Sample Test

Please answer the following questions about how you behave in a work setting.
Please circle one answer:

1. I help others who have been absent to catch up

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

2. I am punctual and report to work on time

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

3. I volunteer for tasks that are not required

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

4. I "moan and groan" if asked to complete tasks beyond the normal scope of my duties

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

5. I would help someone with a workload heavier than my own

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

6. If I don't like a co-worker of mine for personal reasons, I will tell my supervisor about it

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

7. I spend considerable time in personal conversations, email or surfing the web while at work.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

8. I try to smile at my co-workers, even if I am having a bad day

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

9. I make innovative suggestions to improve the department

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

10. I spend more time on breaks than I am allotted

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

11. I complain to my co-workers about why I don't like my job

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

12. I would help a new person "learn the ropes," even if I wasn't required to

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

General Information

What is your gender? A. Male B. Female

What is your age? A. 18-20 B. 21-23 C. 24-26 D. 27-29 E. 30+

What is your major?

Are you currently employed? A. Yes B. No

Are you an NCAA athlete? A. Yes B. No

Are you a member of any campus organizations (Fraternity, Sorority, Clubs, ASG, etc.)?

A. Yes B. No

*Test items 4, 6, 7, 10, and 11 used reverse scoring.

Explanation of Test Items

Helping. Helping behavior is based on the altruism, courtesy, peacekeeping, and cheerleading dimensions defined by Organ (1988, 1990). Previous research suggested that subjects had a hard time finding distinctions between the four dimensions and grouped them into one “helping” dimension. (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991 , 1993; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994). This dimension deals principally with helping a specific person or persons with work-related problems, or helping to prevent those problems. Test items 1, 3, 5 and 12 were designed to measure helping behaviors.

Sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is the willingness on the part of an employee to put up with less than perfect conditions without “complaining... railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes (Organ, 1998).” Test items 4, 6, 8 and 11 were designed to measure sportsmanship.

Civic Virtue. Civic virtue is actions demonstrating that an employee conscientiously participates in, and is concerned about, the well-being of the organization. Test items 2, 7, 9, and 10 were designed to measure civic virtue.

General Information. The information in this section was used to determine gender, age, employment status, athletic status, major, and whether or not the subject participated in other campus activities. Only the questions concerning gender and whether or not the subject was an athlete were considered when analyzing the results. The remainder of the

questions were designed to make the participant less certain exactly what the test was seeking to find.

Results

Profiles were compiled for male athletes, male non-athletes, female athletes, female non-athletes, as well as combined gender athlete and non-athlete. Means and standard deviations were calculated for overall organizational citizenship behavior, as well as for each of the three dimensions: helping, civic virtue, and altruism. In previous studies, it has been shown that females score significantly higher on measures of OCB than in males. As will be shown below, that finding held true on this study. As it was suspected that this may be the case, the results for overall OCB as well as the results for each of the three dimensions of OCB were calculated for males and females independently, as well as a combined gender sample.

Athlete vs. non-athlete samples were also subjected to a two-tailed independent measures t-test to search for statistically significant results. The similarity of the test results across both genders provided some reliability to the data collected. Across all three samples, athletes showed a higher over all OCB score than non-athletes, though not significantly higher. Female athletes (\underline{M} = 4.07, $SD \pm 0.38$) scored .11 higher than female non-athletes (\underline{M} = 3.96, $SD \pm 0.43$). Male athletes (\underline{M} = 3.86, $SD \pm 0.38$) scored 0.19 higher than male non-athletes (\underline{M} = 3.67, $SD \pm 0.35$). Combined gender athletes (\underline{M} = 3.97, $SD \pm .41$) scored 0.15 higher than the combined gender non-athletes (\underline{M} = 3.82, $SD \pm .56$). On the individual dimensions of OCB, the results showed some interesting findings. Athletes scored significantly higher on sportsmanship (\underline{M} = 3.94, $SD \pm 0.53$)

than the non-athletes, with a .31 difference ($\underline{M} = 3.63$, $SD \pm 0.54$). Similarly, the athletes ($\underline{M} = 4.12$, $SD \pm 0.57$) scored significantly higher on the civic virtue measure than the non-athletes, with a difference of .27 ($\underline{M} = 3.85$, $SD \pm 0.47$). These results held true for the female and male samples when they were isolated as well. Sportsmanship for the male athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.70$, $SD \pm 0.47$) was 0.28 higher than the non-male athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.42$, $SD \pm 0.57$), while the female athletes ($\underline{M} = 4.16$, $SD \pm 0.49$) scored 0.31 higher, a significant difference, than the female non-athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.85$, $SD \pm 0.38$). In the measure of civic virtue, both male ($\underline{M} = 4.07$, $SD \pm 0.55$) and female athletes ($\underline{M} = 4.17$, $SD \pm 0.60$) scored 0.36 and 0.18 higher than their non-athlete counterparts, respectively. (males $\underline{M} = 3.71$, $SD \pm 0.45$; females $\underline{M} = 3.99$, $SD \pm 0.44$). In the measure of civic virtue the male's scores were statistically significant. In contradiction to the rest of the findings, athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.84$, $SD \pm 0.47$) actually scored 0.12 lower on the helping dimension of OCB than the non-athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.96$, $SD \pm 0.39$). Akin to the rest of the study, this behavior held true for both males and females. Male athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.80$, $SD \pm 0.48$) scored 0.08 lower than the male non-athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.88$, $SD \pm 0.36$), while female athletes ($\underline{M} = 3.88$, $SD \pm 0.47$) scored 0.17 lower than the female non-athletes ($\underline{M} = 4.05$, $SD \pm 0.42$). Consistent throughout the study was that females scored higher than males on measures of OCB (overall, and each of the three dimensions). Also consistent was the fact that on each dimension of OCB and overall, the male and female samples never contradicted each other, and in fact the athlete vs. non-athlete samples deviated from each other to a remarkably similar degree. The following tables summarize the t-test results.

Table 1 – 1 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Number	Hypothesis	t-statistic	p-value	p-value requirement	Significant
1	Female athletes differ from female non-athletes	.86	.39	< .05	No
2	Male athletes differ from male non-athletes	1.58	.12	< .05	No
3	Overall athletes differ from overall non-athletes	1.67	.09	< .05	No

Table 1 – 2 Helping Dimension

Number	Hypothesis	t-statistic	p-value	p-value requirement	Significant
1	Female athletes differ from female non-athletes	-1.25	.22	< .05	No
2	Male athletes differ from male non-athletes	-0.56	.57	< .05	No
3	Overall athletes differ from overall non-athletes	-1.28	.20	< .05	No

Table 1 – 3 Civic Virtue Dimension

Number	Hypothesis	t-statistic	p-value	p-value requirement	Significant
1	Female athletes differ from female non-athletes	1.12	.27	< .05	No
2	Male athletes differ from male non-athletes	2.23	.03	<.05	Yes
3	Overall athletes differ from overall non-athletes	2.35	.02	<.05	Yes

Table 1 – 4 Sportsmanship Dimension

Number	Hypothesis	t-statistic	p-value	p-value requirement	Significant
1	Female athletes differ from female non-athletes	2.47	.02	<.05	Yes
2	Male athletes differ from male non-athletes	1.56	.13	<.05	No
3	Overall athletes differ from overall non-athletes	2.49	.01	<.05	Yes

Discussion

The intention of this study was to compare the organizational citizenship behaviors of NCAA athletes vs. non-athletes. The question to be addressed was- does the competitive experience influence the development of pro-social skills to the extent that it leads to displaying behaviors that contribute to an organization functioning more effectively, or would the impaired morality reported by Stoll & Kay et al. cause the athletes to actually become less effective members of a working group?

It appears that NCAA athletes in fact do display more organizational citizenship behaviors on a whole. This is especially apparent within the sportsmanship and civic virtue dimensions of OCB, both of which showed statistically significant differences. It is possible that the time spent working in teams has led to the athletes having a better understanding of what research has shown - that complaining or reacting outwardly to a less than ideal situation does not further the goals of the team, and that by intentionally withholding such behaviors improvements can be seen within their organization. Non-athletes, especially college students without much working experience may be more likely to not understand this “big picture,” and therefore be more likely to complain or show poor sportsmanship.

Likewise, the athletes may have learned in their experiences in sports that displaying civic virtue behaviors, such as showing up on time, remaining on task, and making suggestions for improvement can lead to rewards in the form of better team performances, winning more games, and so on. Non-athletes likely have not been in

situations where the display of civic virtue behaviors can have such a profound effect as they can on a sports team.

The fact that athletes scored lower, though not significantly so, on the helping dimension is an interesting finding. Some may point to the fact that an impaired morality might lead to the athletes behaving less altruistically. Considering the athletes' superior scores on civic virtue and sportsmanship, the morality issue becomes muddled. It may be that on a sports team, the competition among players to compete for starting spots, playing time, and the opportunities to showcase their talents leads to the players seeing other individuals much like opponents. This may lead them to be less likely to help individuals, whereas they would still help the organization as a whole by exhibiting sportsmanship and civic virtue behaviors. As was discussed earlier, the defining factor of the helping dimension is that the behavior is targeted at a single individual, whereas sportsmanship and civic virtue have no such specific target. The athletes' competitive natures may have cancelled out the elevated scores seen in the measures of civic virtue and sportsmanship.

Also relevant is that within certain specific types of organizations, certain organizational citizenship behaviors do not contribute to increased quantity or quality of output. This was the case within an insurance sales organization in the research of Podsakoff, Ahearne et al. (1997). It was postulated by the authors of that study that due to the large amount of employee turnover in such an organization, the time veteran employees spent helping new employees may have been better spent by producing themselves, since it is likely that the new employee would not be around long enough to benefit from the fruits of the veteran employees assistance. Similar to the insurance

company in this example, it may be that within a sports organization, helping behaviors displayed by athletes simply do not have a positive effect on the effectiveness of the team. Therefore, these behaviors would never have been reinforced, and so do not exceed those of the non-athlete population.

A final note about the research is that since the previous research done on athletes suggested both benefits and detriments as a result of the competitive experience, a two-tailed t-test was used. Had the research been seeking to find whether or not athletes benefited from research, a one-tailed t-test could have been used. This would have resulted in a significant difference being found in overall citizenship behavior, with a t-statistic of 1.68, and a p-value of .04, which meets the significant criteria of being less than .05. The rest of the results would have remained as they were for the two-tailed test.

Implications for Future Research. There are many possible avenues for future research on this topic. First, although the data presented is suggestive of a pattern and is reliable across both male and female samples, it is not all statistically significant. This test used a 5-item Likert Scale as the method of measurement. However, few of the subjects chose to rate themselves unfavorably on many of the questions. As a result, it is very possible that the test had a leniency bias, with most subjects rating themselves around a 4 on most questions. As such, the sample was lacking in variance, and statistically significant results were not attained. It is known that people generally prefer not to rate themselves poorly on self-surveys.

A few options are available to remedy this situation and provide for more variance in the sample. One option would be to use teachers, coaches, or someone else

familiar with the subjects as the raters. A party other than the individual would be more likely to rate a subject poorly if they saw fit. Still, a possibility for bias remains. Another problem with this solution is that for a large sample size, it is likely a multitude of scorers would need to be employed. They would have to be trained as to how to score subjects, and even then it is likely they would introduce some bias to the test, be it the Halo effect, the recency bias, or the similarity bias.

A second option for providing more variability and would be to use a Likert scale using 6, 7, or 8 items. This would provide subjects with more possibilities to represent themselves, without necessarily having to rate themselves on the lower or “unfavorable” half of the scale.

It is fair to say that the scope of the research was narrow. While this research does suggest that athletes have superior organizational citizenship behaviors to non-athletes, it remains uncertain whether these behaviors are learned through the experience of athletics, or whether people with a predisposition to showing the organizational citizenship behaviors that help sports organizations function are drawn to the sports. A longitudinal study could help to shed some light on this topic. Will an individual’s OCB score begin to change after they have been involved in competitive sports? It could also be investigated whether the length of time that the individual is involved in competitive activity may affect OCB more or less.

Additionally, it could be examined whether or not the effects of athletics are lasting. Do NCAA athletes still have higher OCB scores than non-athletes several years after competing? Does the post-graduate work experience help to improve the OCB

scores of their non-athlete peers? Do the two groups scored approach each other until they normalize, and if so, how long would this take?

Another avenue that could be explored with a larger sample size is whether athletes from different sports react differently to the competitive experience. The athletes in this sample were primarily male football players and female soccer players. These are both team sports. It would be reasonable to assume that participants in team sports may affect athletes differently than participation in more individualistic sport, such as track, or swimming.

Another implication on future research could be to explore what dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior displayed by athletes help their professional or college sports organizations to function more effectively. It was hypothesized that perhaps civic virtue and sportsmanship contribute to the success of a sports organization, where helping behaviors may not. If it was discovered that particular behaviors did indeed contribute to an organizations' chances for achievement, then sports organizations, especially those in the professional world, may find it prudent to screen possible additions to their team for such behaviors.

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