

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Olympism and role of Olympic Values in Sport

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The Olympic Movement is one of the most amazing phenomena in the history of mankind. Olympism and the Olympic Movement strongly promote ethics, values, education, excellence, fair play and cultural understanding among people. Olympic games represent the largest sports festival in the world where the athletes get an opportunity to meet and compete with athletes from all over the world. Only a small number of people in the world become Olympians, but every person can enjoy the benefits of being physically active. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the education value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. Sport is the most effective tool that promotes education, health, peace, gender equality and violence prevention. In addition, it is globally valued as an excellent mechanism for developing character and contributing to world peace and safety. Over the past 120 years Olympism has been adapted by the Olympic Movement and associated with values present at the given times since its formative years. The Olympic Movement has lived with the need to articulate competition and education, individual and nation, sports for the elite and sports for everybody. To this day the Olympic Games present themselves to be a non-political festivity in the spirit of humanity, free from discrimination based on gender, sex, race, color, sexual orientation, religious or political opinion. The aim of this article is to discuss the concept of Olympism, Olympic Games, Olympic Values and the role of values which are extremely important currently in the 21st century.

Keywords: *Olympism, Olympic Games, Olympic Values*

Introduction

History of the Olympics shows that Olympic sports unifying sport with culture and education, have been seeking to create a lifestyle based on taking a delight in every effort, the educational power of a good example as well as holding in respect global ethics (Motiejunaite, 2019). Through Olympic Games, sport is becoming a global culture (Cartalis, 2000); meanwhile, Olympic Education is trying to improve humanity through balancing the physical and intellectual aspects of the body. Sport is considered as a valued human practice (Arnold, 1979, 1994, 1999). The discourse of what is undeniably one of sport's most vexatious discussion questions, essentially focuses upon the merits and demerits of the ideology of Olympism (Horton, 1998). The values and ideals of Olympism are derived from the Olympic Games, at Ancient Olympia, where they were held every four years with all the cities of antiquity participating. Olympic Games have been one of the

common values that were created by civilization and benefited by the entire society in today's world in which differences are regarded as richness (Parry, 2006). The new period Olympiad believed that the Olympic Games are not just considered as a sport event, but also is a milestone in the broader social and cultural movement (Lyan, 1992). The true excellence of the Games rests in their ability to unite humanity around universal aspirations: equality, fair play, sportsmanship, tolerance and, peace (Ramón, 2012). Therefore, the ancient Olympic Games were a venue for festivals in which not only athletes but also scholars and artists participated. Gathering athletes from all over the Earth in a specific place every four years create the biggest and the most unique sports festival which originated from the foundations and principles of Olympics Charter (Shantz, 1998). Through Olympic Games, sport is becoming a global culture (Cartalis, 2000). Becoming an Olympian requires not only exceptional athletic abilities but

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also perseverance, discipline, and a passion for the sport. It is remarkable journey that involves not just reaching the pinnacle of athletic achievement but also embodying the values that the Olympic Games stand for.

Olympians serve as role models and inspire others through their dedication, sportsmanship, and achievements. Olympians possess a strong competitive spirit, always aiming to improve and surpass their own records or their rival's achievements. The IOC leads the Olympic Movement with the main mission of promoting Olympism around the world, emphasizing the encouragement and support of the activities of the International Olympic Academy (Olympic Charter, 2020). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) encourages the development of sports. It cooperates with other sports organizations in order to bring sports at the service of humanity (Siljak & Djurovic, 2017).

It is important to note that the Olympic Charter states that the IOC has a role to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to host-cities and countries (Olympics, 2019). The objective of the Olympic Movement is to help to build a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport in accordance with Olympism and its values (IOC, 2017). Binder (2001) cites, Coubertin and the IOC came to specify the four aims of the Olympic Movement as follows:

1. To promote the development of physical and moral qualities which are the basis of sport;
2. To educate young people through sport in a spirit of better understanding between each other and of friendship, thereby helping to build a better and more peaceful world;
3. To spread the Olympic principles throughout the world, thereby creating international goodwill;
4. To bring together the athletes of the world in a great four-yearly sports festival the Olympic Games.

The mission of the IOC is to not just to celebrate the Olympic Games, but also to promote Olympism around the world, promote sport in society, and support sports organizations. The International Olympic Committee (IOC, 2010) argue that the goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute in building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced in accordance with Olympism and its values.

Olympism is a philosophy of life, harmoniously combining the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles (Olympic Charter, 2020).

The Olympic movement is a striking example on how leading social groups are able to control their own representation, by creating a narrative which is based on the "idolisation" of its particular authorities and a lack of self-criticism, while at the same time distancing itself from its image and culture which results in "institutional narcissism" (Cazorla, Minguet & Fernández, 2011). A structural implementation of perceived values is deemed one of the most important skills that an educational process needs to provide in order for the successful development of a healthy personality. Education is the foundation of modern society. The future of our civilization does not rest on political or economic foundations. It wholly depends on the direction given to education (Chenyu, 2022). Great examples are the International Olympic Academy, as well as the Olympic Study Centres which are key instruments to propagate the Olympic narrative (Cazorla, Minguet & Fernández, 2011).

The purpose of this review of current literature is to show the importance and role of Olympism, Olympic Games and the impact of Olympic Values. The methodology used for this literature review is identification of previous and current scientific evidence

(articles, books and policy documents published between 1912 and 2023) treating these concepts.

Types of Literature used in this paper: 14 Official IOC Documents, 5 Books, 2 Review Articles, 25 Articles, 1 Conference, 1 Dissertation, 1 Master Thesis, 1 Symposium, 3 International Olympic Academy documents.

Platforms and key terms used to locate data: Olympic Library, Olympic Charter, Olympism, Olympic Values, and Olympic Games.

Literature Review

Olympism

Olympism is a social philosophy, which emphasizes the role of sport in world development, international understanding, peaceful co-existence, and social and moral education (Parry, 2012). A universal philosophy by definition applies to everyone, regardless of nation, race, gender, social class, religion or ideology, and so the Olympic Movement has worked for a coherent universal representation of itself - a concept of Olympism which identifies a range of values (Parry, 1998). Modern Olympism is rooted in the writings of the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founding father of the first modern Olympic Games (1896), in Athens (Gebauer, 2020). Olympism, the ancient philosophy behind the Olympic Games, has been looked to by various educators (Binder, 2005; Bronikowski, 2006; Culpan, 2007; Naul, 2008) to combat these challenges and reaffirm sport's connection with culture and education. Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), firmly believed that sport can help people to push beyond their limits, but also to transcend their differences, and draw closer together and better understand each other. In (1908), Coubertin established his concept of Olympism in a more schematic way when he considers it a fraternal doctrine between the body and the spirit (Durántez, 2001). The timeless character of Olympism is highlighted in the argument by de Coubertin (1918) in Hsu (2000), where he states that "Olympism is nor a system; it is a state of mind. At the same time, Olympism blends together sport, culture and education with the aim to create a way of life based on joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.

For Coubertin, the Games represented the consolidation of the concept of sports practice that transformed the physical demonstration into an educational, cultural and social enterprise, producing reflexes in individual, regional, national and international levels. In an effort to establish education as an important pillar in shaping modern citizens, de Coubertin idealized the Olympic athlete, set aside his imperfections and aimed at the internationalization of the values that express "Olympism" to the benefit of the concept of education. As an educator, de Coubertin recognized the holistic nature of the individual, as expressed in the idea of a perfect harmony between body, mind and spirit. He believed that sport education could effectively contribute to the betterment of society (Girginov & Parry, 2005). According to Coubertin (Müller, 2004), Olympic principles should engage all people no matter of religion, race, age, nationality, occupation. This can be seen during the Olympic Games where athletes from all around the world gather at one place sharing cultures, ideas, knowledge and differences which is the way how some principles of Olympism are respected and implemented. Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles (Coubertin, 1935).

According to (Loland, 1994) Olympism has four main goals:

- to educate and cultivate the individual through sport,
- to cultivate the relations of humans in society,
- to promote international understanding and peace, and
- to worship human greatness and possibility.

According to (Kidd, 1996) “Coubertin’s Olympism constituted a “broad educational movement that, through the activity of sport and culture, would enhance human development and generally make the world a better place”. Arnold (1997) supports the view that Olympism is a rightful and legitimate part of physical education, arguing the promotion of Olympism is best maximized through physical education and sport education in schools. Olympism is the entire collection of values which, over and above physical strength, are developed when we participate in sport. (Malter, 1996). In that respect, the values of achievement and performance, victory and psycho-physical perfection and character-building by strenuous training and sports, is a very important main factor like also the one on social encounters, no discrimination and the independence of the Olympic movement. (Gangas & Georgiadis, 2021). Yet, the narrative about the values of Olympism took a sharp turn with Juan Antonio Samaranch becoming IOC President (1980-2001) (Edwards, 2012). He modernized the IOC and further introduced a profit-oriented approach towards managing the Olympic Games (Gebauer, 2020). At the same time, Olympism blends together sport, culture and education with the aim to create a way of life based on joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. (Olympic Charter, IOC, 2007). More precisely, “the Olympic idea” and the idea of “taking part” are “the most important thing” (Coubertin 1908, quoting the Bishop of Pennsylvania). In that respect, the values of achievement and performance, victory and psycho-physical perfection and character-building by strenuous training and sports is a very important main factor like also the one on social encounters, no discrimination and the independence of the Olympic movement (Gangas & Georgiadis, 2021).

Sport and in particular the Olympic Games are an international media platform which can be used to highlight certain causes or become “alternative diplomatic tools”. This can lead to greater awareness by the public, draw attention to a conflict, serve as an example of peaceful combat, etc. Sport and Olympism are tools for civic education which help to develop important individual and social competences, and thus to know one another better and live together better (IOC, 2011). Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for internationally recognized human rights and universal fundamental ethical principles within the remit of the Olympic Movement (Olympic Charter, 2023).

Importance of Olympic Values

Since Olympism is what makes something “Olympic,” it is crucial that the Olympic Movement, is guided by its values. In this way, Olympism functions as a corporate philosophy that articulates the Movement’s values, guides its decisions, and serves as a standard for evaluating its actions. (Klein, 2020). Values are the principles and fundamental convictions that we each have and that guide each person’s behavior. Values provide the standards by which particular actions are judged to be good or desirable, (IOC, 2023). The educational aspect of Olympism as philosophy of life and the Olympic values are the foundation of the unique character of the Olympic Movement (Girard-Savoy, 2017). Coubertin used values as a basic to develop his sport philosophy known as Olympism which he describes as a ‘philosophy of life’. The relationship between sport and values is that the values are developed when we participate in sport (Müller, 2010).

The five Olympic educational values can be identified as follows:

- Joy of Effort.
- Fair Play.

- Practicing Respect.
- Pursuit of Excellence.
- Balance between Body Will and Mind.

The five-key educational themes are used by the Olympic movement with the intention of helping young people to practice and understand the principles of Olympism. Olympic sports have continued to be promoted and the significance of educational ideas and values are highlighted in the Fundamental Principles of the current Olympic Charter (IOC, 2017). Rather than giving a clear definition of those principles, the Olympic Movement puts forward three core values supporting these universal fundamental ethical principles: Excellence, Respect and Friendship (IOC, 2016). The Olympic Movement aspires also to spread these values beyond the realm of sport (Dziubiński, 2008).

The IOC (2013), defines ‘excellence’ as follows: Giving one’s best on the field of play or in life, without measuring oneself with others, but above all aiming at reaching one’s personal objectives with determination in the effort. It is not only about winning, but is mainly about participating, making progress against personal goals, striving to be and to do our best in our daily lives and benefiting from the combination of a strong body, will and mind. Friendship” is seen by a way of considering sport as a tool for mutual understanding among people from different cultures, religions, beliefs, races and gender. It is the joy of playing, overcoming these differences and bringing people together (IOC, 2018). Friendship played a key role in coexistence and competition, promoting equal access to opportunities despite in the face of social prejudice situation. The establishment of friendship also made sport an instrument of social integration, reflecting the quality of life (Chenyu, 2022). Respect is about following the rules not only because it is illegal to break them. It includes the respect for the fairness among competitors, for yours and your opponent’s health and for the environment (IOC, 2018). More specifically, Loland (2007) argued that practicing respect in sports is based on the respect for the rules of participation (beyond their application by a referee), respect for the rivals (beyond the field of play) and respect for oneself (beyond improving personal results). In sportsmanship, victory at all costs is rejected. Based on the “Inside-out Pattern” approach to Respect, the approach of the Olympic Movement to interpret Respect is through Olympic sports.

Participation as the Olympic Charter indicates: “to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (Gangas & Georgiadis, 2021). Implying recognition of virtues presented, respect is considered to be the core of sportsmanship and involves not only compliance with the rules, but essentially the incorporation of values that lift or reduce the necessity for mandatory regulations to be enforced (Pérez-Triviño, 2012).

IOC holds the Olympic values as the core values of the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement, which have always been indicators of a well- developed sports culture (Guzel & Ozbey, 2013). According to Todt, (2014), the three traditional values (excellence, friendship and respect) were interpreted as ‘Nuclear Values’ proclaimed by the International Olympic Committee, considering its universal meaning. Additionally, the Olympic values of honesty, equality, fairness, justice, virtue and a generally spiritual ethos, as well as competitiveness and respect for one’s opponent are what inspired Pierre de Coubertin to revive the Olympic Games.

Fair play is another theme centered in Olympic Values and is used as a synonym of good behavior on many occasions. Fair play is a sports concept, but it is applied worldwide today in many different ways (Valler et al., 1996). It is defined as a central concept which is multi-dimensional in nature and that involves: sports,

rules, social conventions, the opponent, and finally a positive way of understanding sports to avoid winning at all costs. Leo Hsu (2000) mentions the values included in the Olympic spirit, such as "truce, honor and honesty, beauty, healthy body towards healthy mind, fair play, pursuit of excellence, a concept that denoted the successful integration of moral, artistic, intellectual, and physical creativity". Balance of Body, Will and Mind Embracing Olympic values can help young people achieve a well-balanced approach to life, and an international revival of the Olympic Games would stimulate interest in sport and physical activity among young people (IOC, 2017).

Regardless of the form or the content, the concepts contained in the modern understanding of Olympism have evolved from Greek antiquity to become a dynamic framework of values and ethical rules that are applied through sporting activity and are extended to our contemporary daily lives (Gangas, 2021). In social science research, Olympic Values have mostly been conceptualized from philosophy, psychology and anthropology (Chenyu, 2022).

Excellence, friendship, respect, universality, sustainability and non-discrimination are all fundamental Olympic Values which everyone has to adhere (Guzel & Ozbey, 2013). Chatziefestathiou, (2005) suggests that Olympic values in a global world context should be: equity, excellence, fair play, amateurism, universalism, internationalism, multiculturalism and environmentalism.

Conclusion

This article examines the impact of Olympism, Olympic Movement, and the core of Olympic Values. The foundation of Olympism and the Olympic Movement has played a major role in the education and development of sports around the world. Every era discussed in this study is influenced by the previous era. IOC has a great deal of power – more than in the past – and consequently plays an important role in the new sport world order (Brookes, 2002; Tomlinson, 2006). Today, the Olympics is not simply a sporting event. Olympic Games are important sport festivals in the modern world. They are grandiose and brilliant feasts of a global magnitude where, irrespective of the tough competition and strong sporting rivalries, friendship and solidarity reign supreme.

Being an Olympian is an extraordinary achievement that involves rigorous dedication, hard work, and immense talent in a particular sport. Today, the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect are the heart and soul of the Olympic Movement. The sustainability of these values over time has not only elevated the discipline of sport on a world stage, but has also played a major role in the Olympic Movement's long-term success.

The educational aspects and Olympic values are the foundation of the unique character of the Olympic Movement. Thus, sport represents a powerful tool and has the potential to play a fundamental role within society in general, especially concerning younger generations. The overarching philosophy of Olympism challenges us to uphold the principles of peace and fair play to create a peaceful society. As we look to the future, the principles of Olympism will undoubtedly remain instrumental in shaping the evolution of sports and promoting greater understanding among nations.

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Conflicts of interest

This study does not contain any conflicts of interest.

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