

SPORT TO FORMING THE CHARACTERS: FACT OR MYTH

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Abstract

Sports does not forming the character of those who participate in it by itself. Moreover, if the sport is reduced to a thing of win-lose, then the realization is the behavior of brutality, violence, dishonesty, and the behavior of other a-moral. As a set of moral values, it must be organized, constructed, and transformed into the basic structure of the reasoning of individuals who participate in it. Without it, it's hard to expect our sport as an instrument to forming the characters.

Key word: Sport, Characters

Introduction

It feels familiar to see Indonesian football is often marred by fights between players, beating the referee, and fans riot. A number of incidents occurred in the second round of the League of Djarum Indonesia, referee beating that occurred when the PSPS Pekanbaru have a match with PSIS Semarang at the Stadium Rumbai. The fighting between the players of Persipura Jayapura with Persijap Jepara happened at the Stadium Mandala Jayapura. Fist fights between players of Persija Jakarta and Persela Lamongan in Lebak Bulus Stadium in Jakarta. Moreover, still fresh in our memory how Deltamania which incidentally is Deltras Sidoarjo supporters showing a mass brawl with Sakeramania who are supporters Pasuruhan teams.

The train of Matamarja to Jakarta-Malang which carry about 600 jackmania (the supporters of Persija Jakarta) throwing by stones so that 56 glass windows in nine carriages were destroyed. The ejection occurred after the Cikampek railway station to Cirebon, Tuesday (9/6/2010) evening. Its happened when the Matamarja train that carrying Jackmania parallel with Pasundan train that carrying Bobotoh (Persib Bandung supporters). Pasundan train was depart from Bandung to Surabaya. Previously, the ejection who include Jackmania was also occur in a match of Persija with Persitara North Jakarta, Saturday (6/6). At that time, two small

group of supporters of both teams involve stone-throwing brawl each other in around Semeru street and Tangkuban perahu street in the south and west side of stadium Gajayana Malang.

On the other hand, the act of falsification of age and certificate nearly occurred in all branches such as tennis, swimming, athletics, football, badminton, volleyball, and etc. Furthermore, the act of bribery and illicit drugs use are also coloring the atmosphere of sport in Indonesia. Observing these condition, the fundamental question that need to be asking is: Is the claim that sport to forming the characters still relevant?

It is not easy to answer that question. The clam that "Sport builds characters" has become a deep conviction history for coachers, educators, politicians, and clergyman since ancient Greece era. Because of the strong belief, the phrase "Sport builds characters" has a place as a adage culture community from time to time, including Indonesia. It seems to be an eternal credo. Is that claim supported by empirical facts? This will discussed in this paper.

Review of Psychological Perspectives

Character is a term that often used synonymously with the term of personality. The psychologists from Europe prefer to use the term character, while the psychologists from America prefer to use the term of personality. For example, Freud often used the term character in many of his writings and rarely to use the term personality. The term of character logy is also commonly used in Europe but rarely used in America. Likewise, many American psychologists write a book with title personality but they rare to use the term character in writing a book. From those facts, it sees that the use of both terminologies associated with preference of territorial.

Character is the third concept of morality, which is more directed at the positive traits that can be developed through sport. Character development that includes the ability to overcome all difficulties, in collaboration with friend, develop self-control and stand against efforts opponent. According to Shields and

Bredemeier (1995, in Gould, 2003: 527), character is a broader concept that includes fair play, sport person ship, along with two others, namely *tepo-seliro* (feel to concern for suffering other) and integrity. *Tepo-seliro* associated with empathy and the ability to act and appreciate the feeling to others. *Tepo-seliro* happens when we feel the opponents' feeling play and try to understand it in perspective and sense of the person himself/herself. Integrity is the ability to maintain or preserve someone's morality and fair to believe that the person has a certain moral intentions. In other words, it is a belief that someone will do right when faced with moral dilemmas.

Furthermore, etymologically the term character comes from Latin, while the term personality comes from Greek. Both terms contain the term of engraving. According to the dictionary, character is the qualities that make somebody different from others (Oxford, 1991). Moreover, in Indonesia dictionary, it states that character implies the psychological traits, morals, or manners that distinguish one person to another (Balai Pustaka, 1995: 445). Etymologically or the definitions from dictionaries are not enough because both terms not described the concept perfectly. Therefore, It still needs a description and justification based on scientific discipline.

In psychology, the concept of "characters" basically refers to the structure of personality but in its development the meaning of it has changes. *The term was subsequently modified to reflect culturally valued attributes that reflect morality as defined by society* (Allport, 1961). Furthermore, Allport preferred to define the character as a personality that is assessed (evaluated personality). It means the high or low and good or worst of a personality will depends on the assessment of a particular society. For example, the characteristics of personality that is "dominant" for eastern society is a "greedy" behavior that has to be avoided. However, for western society, that personality is considered positive especially when associated with a success. Further information about the definition of characters, see below definition.

"Character is the degree of ethically effective organization of all the forces of the individual (Taylor, 1926)."

“Character is an enduring psychophysical disposition to inhibit impulses in accordance with a regulative principle (Roback, 1927).”

“Character primarily in terms of interpersonal qualities such as cooperation, self-control, and sociability (Blanchard, 1946).”

From the definitions above, there is something that could hold in our understanding of character. Principally, the core character on the social moral values prevailing in society such as honesty, sportsmanship, teamwork, knight and etc.

Sports and Character

In the history of its development, sport has a different meaning in every age, culture and even to everyone. In the history of the ancient Olympic Games, sport is used as an instrument of ritual worship of the god Zeus in the foothills of Olympus. At the beginning of the Olympic modern, sport is a media to promote the spirit of peace and friendship. Today, sport is no longer as a ritual activity or the promoting of peace but sport is an agent to looking for money, name and popularity. While at the individual level, could be interpreted as satisfying exercise human desires of pleasure, joy, and identity when their basic needs for food, housing, and health have been met.

Coles and Jones (1997) defines sport as a physical activity in the form of a game that contains elements of struggle against nature, other, or yourself and have the complexity of the organization. From that definition, there are three important elements in sport which are interlinked and inseparable. These three elements are physical activity, games, and the complexity of the organization. Physical activity in the context of the exercise is intended as a physical activity that requires physical prowess rather than an ordinary physical activity. With these criteria, the game like chess and bridge that does not requires physical prowess is not considered as a sport, although both games have a high level of competition and organization. With such understandings, the exercises are intended as a kind of sports that are competed and contested in official event such as in Olympics, SEA Games, PON and etc.

Socio-psychologically, the exercise can be considered as a part of the social institutions that exist in a society. This is reflected in the systems, norms, and rules of the game which have been agreed. Beside the norm system around it, sport activity is also involving the emotions of people who participate in it intensively and represent the relationship between skills, cognitions, attitudes and values. Huizinga, sport anthropologist, describing the game (as an essence of sport) as a real-life situation that placed in temporary activity with all of the characteristics that exist in it. Related to the importance of game, Vaughan also stated:

Play is generally perceived as an important component of the socialization and developmental process of children with spontaneity, creativity, and informal structure forming some of its essential elements. (Vaughan, 1984:144)

With such understanding, game in sports can provide individual experience in the context of interpersonal relationships. Sport is not only a physical activity, but also an agent of character formation. In short, in many respects of the character of sport, it has potential to affect the formation of individuals who participate in it.

Peter Singer, the professor of bioethics at Princeton University and Laureate Professor At the University of Melbourne (<http://bataviase.co.id/node/279962>) explains that just before second round World Cup qualifying match between Germany and Britain on June 27 2010, English midfielder, Frank Lampard, was kicking the ball toward the goal that touch the crossbar and bounce down, clear past the goal line. The goalkeeper Manuel Neuer grabbed the ball and kicked it back into the field. Both of the referee and linesman, who are still rushing toward the goal and therefore in a poor position to make a decision does not state the goal and the game was forwarded.

After the match, Neuer told what he had done “ I tried to showing no reaction to the referee and instead concentrate on the game. I realized the ball was over the goal line, and I think I quickly return the ball had been deceiving the referee, so that he thought that the ball did not cross that line. Roughly, Neuer has deceived the referee and proud of what he has done. According to the normal ethical standards,

what he did was not justified. However, Neuer was playing in football so that it means “winning the game in every way”.

In football, this is apparently the prevailing ethics. The most famous event is the goal scored by Diego Maradona in Argentina 1986 in World Cup match against England, then it known as the goal by “ a bit with a header from Diego Maradona and a little with a touch of the hand of God”. The playback video footage of this game show clearly that the hand of Maradona, who netted the ball into the goal. Twenty years later, Maradona admitted in an interview with BBC that he had deliberately acted as if the goal was legitimate and deceive the referee.

Something similar happen in November 2009 in a match between France and Ireland, which determines the teams that will be go to the World Cup. French striket, Thierry Henry, used his hand to control the ball and pass the ball to his friend who drove scored a decisive game. After the game, he said, “Honesly, it was a handball, but I’m not a referee. I continue to play the ball and the referee let it. You should ask this question to him.”

However, is that right? Are the players free to cheat the referee, and they not blame anymore? From ethical criticism, the players are not free for what they do on the field, similar as they are not free from criticism ethics for cheating off in the field, for example by using a doping energy enhancer.

Nowadays, Sports are very competitive with very large amounts of money at stake. However, this does not mean that sport cannot be held honestly. In cricket, if a batsman hit the ball and one player on the field to catch the ball, he batsman is declared out. Sometimes, when the ball was caught, the referee could not tell whether the ball had touched the tip of a ball bat. Batsman usually knows and in accordance with the regulations must "walk" to leave the field if they knew that he was out.

There is someone who did it so. Australian batsman, Adam Gilchrist walked out of the field at the 2003 World Cup semi-final against Sri Lanka, although the referee had declare Gilchrist not out. The decision was taken because Gilchrist was surprised her friends but he got much applause from the supporters.

Another similar case of a football player also did by a batsman who walked out of the field. In 1996, the Liverpool striker, Robbie Fowler, awarded a penalty kick for Arsenal goalkeeper. Fowler told the referee that he did not kick but the referee insisted on a penalty kick done by him. Fowler kicked it, but in such a way that can push over the goalkeeper.

Why are not many examples of those kinds of behavior provided by a professional football player? Perhaps, the culture excesses of the team that had defeated defending ethical values. The supporters did not care if their favorite team players who cheat, they only care when the opponent did the cheat to their favorite players. This attitude is not an ethical attitude (even many French football supporters, including the president Nicolas Sarkozy expressed sympathy to the Irish after the event of handball Thierry Henry made it).

How would the reaction of the supporters if Neuer did not kick the ball back to the pitch of the game and honestly say to the referee that the ball was already into the net? Given the existence of such behavior is rare in football, the first reaction of surprise surely arise. There may be some disappointed from the supporters of the German teams, but the world as a whole, and also the Germans who respect honesty must admit that the Neuer had done the right thing.

Neuer did not use the rare opportunity to do something in front of millions of supporters. Actually, he could show a positive example of ethics to the people who watch the game throughout the world, including the millions of young generation who can easily influence. Who knows that the good behavior that showed by Neuer can bring a good influence to the people who watched the game. Neuer could be a hero, standing firmly uphold the truth. Unfortunately, he is just like any other football player who is very skill at deception.

Although sport can be used as an agent of moral formation, it does not mean that a person who participates in it has a level of moral development is higher than someone else. In a sport, it is not automatically attached to the meaning of values. Marten (1978 in Gould & Weinberg, 1995) argues that participation in activities and sports organizations are not automatically beneficial to the formation

of children's personalities. Character development, leadership, sportmanship, and achievement orientation did not happen by itself through its participation. What has been presented at the beginning of this paper, may be an illustration of this statement.

According to the theory in a number of studies conducted in the relation of sports-characters. Study on the characters in the context of sport largely divided into two views. First, those who understand the character as the concept of pro-social behavior (pro-social behavior) and those who understand the character as a moral concept (Shields & Bredemeier, 1994). According to the first view, a character seen as a process of learning behavior through the transmission of values which are socially acceptable. Character development occurred along with the development of children in the internalized rules and social norms. In addition, in the internalization process is also necessary as a social agent of transmission of cultural norms. Thus according to the first view, individual who participates in sports activities will internalize the values that are transmitted through sports activities. Sport is considered as an agent of character formation. Thus, by participating in sports activities will form its character.

Meanwhile, constructivists' theories have different views. According to Kohlberg and Haan, moral development is the result of interaction between the tendency of individual self-organize experience into meaningful patterns of interpretation and environmental experience in providing information about social reality. Moral development is seen as a process of reorganization and transformation of the basic structure of individual reasoning. Moral development is not a process to find a variety of regulations and good qualities, but a process that requires structural changes cognitive and stimuli from the social environment. Thus, participating in sporting activities did not by itself establish a character or moral views of individuals as the internalization theory, but what counts as moral values must be organized, constructed, and transformed into the basic structure of the reasoning of individuals who participate in it.

The research on sport association with the character showed inconsistent conclusion. As the example, Kleiber and Robert (1981) conducted a study on the

influence of sport, especially competitive sport toward the pro-social behavior. The study proved that children who participate in competitive sport activities showed a decrease in their pro-social behavior. Moreover, the same study conducted by Hall (1981), Bredemier and Shields (1986) suggest that maturity of moral reasoning of athlete is lower than the maturity of moral reasoning of non athletes in the same age. Meanwhile, other study shows different things, as a study that had been done by Orlick (1981). He stated that sport activities provide a positive impact on cooperative behavior of a person who participates in it.

Not only the physical education teacher who stated that participating in physical activity increase the character development and positive behavior but also the sport administrators, coaches and sport figures in a society. They claim that participating in sport activities is important for youngster. It prevents them from social problem, and *gang* behavior (as *gang motor*). Eric Larson (2000, in Gould, 2003:553) is an expert in teenagers' development, giving an example, sport extracurricular activities are potential to steer children to have a positive attitude in a number of reasons. First, sport is intrinsically motivating teenagers. Second, involve the constant effort to participate in the direction of desired destination. Third, sport requires a set of experiences, making adjustment, and learns to solve the problem.

Research has shown that the participation of youngster in sport activities is reducing crime behavior rather than those who are not participate (Seefeldt and Eing, 1977: Shields and Bredemeier, 1995: in Gould, 2003:534). Furthermore, the negative relationship between exercise participation with minor crime appears to be stronger in the teenagers who are in poor communities. However, the thing that not obvious is that why this relationship can appear? For this purpose, a little things needed to get the explanation is the social gap, social cohesion, social labeling and the economic distinctions.

The negative relationship between the participation in sport activities with the social gap happens when the athletes are not frequent, intense and does not interact with the social deviation. In other words, participate in sport activities to keep the teenagers away from street activities and away from social problem.

Social cohesion characterized when teenagers who participate in sports activities develop a sense of recognition for others, especially in people who have dominant and pro-social values. A young athlete identifies himself with his coach and his team and they learn the values of cooperation, hard work and achievement.

Social labeling is characterized by the growth of the recognition of sport values along with the increase of youth participation in the social activities. Teenager athletes are often gain social recognition so that at the same time they get social pride. Therefore, participation in sport activities for teenagers make a social recognition which it will characterize the label name of social and the social values that exist in the structure of society.

Economic distinction is characterized by many athletes who come from low-middle-economic status who wish to improve the level of economic life by participating in sports activities for enjoyment and improvement of economic status. Participating in sports activities for teenagers to improve the prestige and status, so that in turn, it will reduce the gap of economic differentiation, and deliver a better life athlete as well as provide confidence to be able to achieve the desired goals.

Although this explanation may help to provide a better understanding of why participation in sports activities cannot fully suppress the social deviations in giving a clear conclusion. But, at least in relation to participate in sporting activities with social deviation can be explained by the views as above, although in some cases required further research.

Gang and negative behaviors related to one to another (crime, fighting, or homicide). In big cities and urban areas as well as various areas of contemporary *gang* behavior, it often appears. Participating in sports is directed as an alternative to suppress *gang* behavior in a number of reasons. First, some reasons why teenagers form a gang is as a form of the "alliance" a rival family, low self-esteem, and lack of positive role models. Second, the children teen is maintained into gangs because they feel fulfilled all his needs in a variety of ways. As if the gang provides identity and recognition as function within a family.

However, it has been widely suggested, that participate in sport activities can serve as a substitute for services provided in an alley. Especially, when the teenagers participate in sport activities (because of weak supervision of parents, or economic pressures) were facilitated to develop their self-esteem, provide a sense of identity, providing social support, and provide positive role models. It has been frequently proven that participating in sport activities is an alternative to suppress the formation of the aisle among the young generation.

It is important to understand that exercise will provide an alternative way of negative behavior when the exercise program is properly ran, organized and earnestly implemented. Sports will not be profitable by itself, but needs to be managed and directed to provide physiological benefit as often suggested in the literature of sociology or psychology of sport.

A study conducted by Trulson (1986, in Gould, 2003:535), which divides into three groups of teens naughty different groups. The first group, doing sports taekwondo with an emphasis on combat and defense techniques. The second group, exercising traditional taekwondo, which emphasizes the philosophical reflection, meditation and physical exercises. And the third group, as a control group given preferential treatment to play football and basketball. After six months, teens in the first group of less well in the adjustment and get the highest score on the measurement of aggression and social deviation from the same score at the beginning of treatment. Teenagers in both groups, showing the attitude of aggression under normal and showed low anxiety attitude, more social skills, and improve self-esteem. Group of teenagers who play football and basketball shows little change in personality and diversion, but increased in terms of self-esteem and social skills.

Whatever the debate that emerged, as the sports personality of course we very much hope that the sport can become an instrument of formation of character. How sport can be an instrument (agent) formation of values and character that eventually led to the behavior? Answer this question; it helps us refer to the following conceptual model.

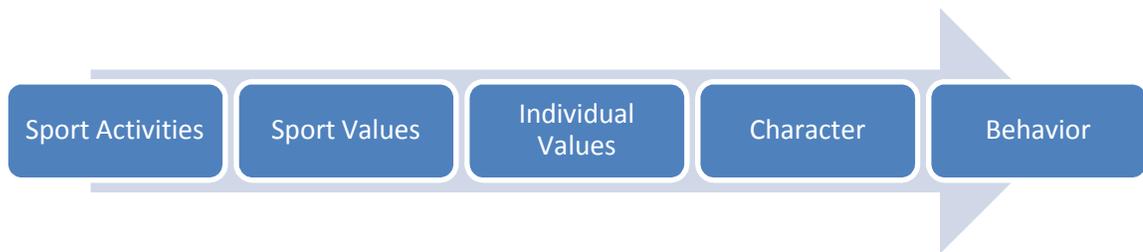


Figure 1: Conceptual model of sports-relationship-character value

From the picture above, it is clearly show how the sport activities in terms with the values affect the value system of the individual. The value system of the individual affects the characters, and the next character affect behavior. The picture above is not exhaustive, but the picture is at least to explain why the sport into something important in influencing the formation of values and character. If hope the above can happen, then this will be in line with the thinking at the *Bung Karno* give mandate to the athletes who will participate Ganefo on November 8, 1963, that the price of one's self instead of descent, caste or the other but from the character or characters the lofty and noble.

As a final note of this writing, I would like to quote one of the articles of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (UNESCO): "Physical education and sports programs must be Designed to suit requirements and personal characteristics of those practicing Them, as well as the institutional , cultural, socioeconomic and climatic conditions of EACH country. "In conclusion, if the sport is used as an instrument formation of character, then the sport should be created an environment that allows individual characters who participate in it are formed. Whether in sports that we've wrestled already created these conditions? This is perhaps a need to be thinking of all of us. .

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