

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**PROSOCIAL AND ANTISOCIAL
BEHAVIOR IN SPORT: THE ROLES
OF COACH'S BEHAVIOR AND
MORAL IDENTITY AMONG YOUTH
ATHLETES**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
(Sports Science and Recreation)

Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation

January 2024

ABSTRACT

Prosocial and antisocial behaviors in sports are important topics to consider, as they can have a significant impact on both the individual athlete and the team. Studies have shown that coaches' behavior and moral identity can influence athletes' prosocial and antisocial behaviors, potentially affecting their preparation for competition. Coaches who provide autonomy support by allowing players more freedom of choice during practice or providing positive feedback may foster prosocial behavior among their athletes. Additionally, those with stronger moral identities tend to be more likely to engage in prosocial behavior than those without such identities. The study was an important yet understudied area. As such, it is critical to understand how coach behavior impacts athlete moral identity and performance. To fill the gap, the relationship, and differences of prosocial and antisocial behaviors in gender (male and female) and sport categories (team and individual sports) among youth athletes was conducted. This study used Pearson Correlation to investigate the relationship and Independent t-Test to measure the differences among the variables. The respondents in this study included 240 athletes in the youth category that consists of gender with males and females and sport categories with individual and team sports. The results showed that when coaches provided autonomy support or positive feedback it increased the likelihood of engaging in prosocial behavior while decreasing instances of antisocial behaviors overall across all participants regardless of gender differences or other demographic factors studied. The findings from this study suggest that if coaches strive to create environments where there is greater emphasis placed on developing strong morals through providing meaningful activities which allow for autonomy then we will see an increase in the number of individuals engaging pro social behavior within a sport context for both youth athletes and adults alike. Besides the immediate benefits for athletes and coaches, this form of study would provide advantages and potential to assist sports organizations such as the National Sports Council (MSN) and the National Sports Institute (ISN) in sports development. Sports psychology can provide insight into how best practices are being implemented within a team or organization, which could lead to more successful outcomes in training programs or competitions.

Keywords: *Prosocial and antisocial behavior, coach's behavior, moral identity, youth athletes.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Merciful. Alhamdulillah, I am grateful to Almighty Allah, who gave us the opportunity to complete this thesis. This study was completed with hard work, despite a few problems that occurred during the completion of this case study. Besides, with understanding and patience, all these problems had been settled down and could be adapted properly and prudently. Without his numerous blessings, it would not have been possible to complete this thesis.

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude deepest appreciation go to my supervisor, Dr. Ahmad Fikri Mohd Kassim, for giving a lot of guidance and enthusiastic efforts. Besides his support, the advice that he always gave made me earnestly do the best. His patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge imparted to my research. His guidance was greatly appreciated and has helped me in the research and writing of this thesis. Without his persistent assistance, this research would not have been possible. It is unlikely that I will be able to complete this research properly and at the right time. I would also like to thank to second supervisor, Miss Jamilah Ahmad Radzi, for her support and motivation during this process.

My personal acknowledgements go to my mother (), my father (Mohammad Fazilah bin Abdul Majid), and all my family members for their prayers, constant love, motivation, and support throughout my entire education. Owing to their support, I was able to complete this research successfully.

Special thanks to my colleagues who generously helped me directly or indirectly and encouraged me physically and mentally to complete this research successfully. Your kindness means a lot. Next, I would like to thank all the participants involved in my study for their willingness and excitement in providing valuable help in the process. I am forever grateful.

Only Allah can repay all your kindness.

Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	6
1.3 Research Objective	9
1.4 Research Question	10
1.5 Research Hypothesis	11
1.6 Significance of Study	12
1.7 Limitations of the Study	14
1.8 Delimitations of the Study	15
1.9 Operational of Terms	16
1.9.1 Prosocial Behavior	16
1.9.2 Antisocial Behavior	16
1.9.3 Behavioral Coaching	16
1.9.4 Moral Identity	17
1.9.5 Team sports	17
1.9.6 Individual sports	17

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The words prosocial and antisocial behavior have been used in sports studies to refer to proactive and inhibitory morality; with low levels of antisocial behavior reflecting inhibitory morality (Kavussanu, 2006). According to Li and Shao (2022), prosocial attitudes begin at the adolescent growth stage, when they influence interpersonal relationships. Prosocial behavior, which includes voluntary actions, such as helping, sharing, consideration, concern, and defending, has important health and social implications for adolescents. For example, sports include offering help off the court and applauding teammates. Evidence points to links between prosocial behavior and better physical health, greater happiness, and less aggression. Notably, the development of prosocial behavior during adolescence is essential for fostering positive social interactions, thus improving interpersonal understanding among individuals in society. Given the importance of prosocial behavior, it is critical to understand how adolescents develop prosocial actions (Li, Hu, Chen and Wu, 2023). Antisocial behavior defined as behavior intended to harm or disadvantage another is commonplace in sport, for instance, trying to injure and fake an injury on an opponent (Ring, Kavussanu, Al-Yaaribi, Tenenbaum and Stranger, 2019). Attitudes and values are strongly associated with adolescent prosocial behavior, and most worryingly, to a higher degree with antisocial behavior (Danioni & Barni, 2019). The extent to which one will act prosocial towards other players in sports largely depends on their orientation towards their goal of achievement. For example, during the opening match of the 2017 International Cricket Council's Champions Trophy, England's bowler Ben Stokes sledged Bangladesh's batsman Tamim Iqbal, causing the batsman to complain to umpires. The debate over the morality of such conduct in sports has produced polarized views: some think it is acceptable, whereas others consider it cheating and/or gamesmanship. Surprisingly few studies have examined the impact of verbal antisocial behavior on others. For instance, recent evidence has shown that verbal antisocial behavior by teammates may influence the recipients' feelings, thoughts, and actions (Ring et al., 2019).