

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS' OLYMPIC VALUES: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES

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**Abstract.** *Objective: The aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of 5th grade pupils regarding Olympic values. Methods: A qualitative study using the survey method was conducted from January until March, 2019. The participants of this study were 416 fifth grade pupils (49.0 % girls), ranging from 11 to 12 years old, from seven randomly selected general education schools in Klaipėda County (Lithuania). The questionnaire design was considered suitable for discovering the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes about Olympic values. The survey was created and pilot tested internally. The final version contained 35 questions, including five demographic questions and 30 questions related to the Olympic values. Results: The Olympic value, which was found to be the most developed, is Friendship: which is at a high level. The Olympic values of Excellence and Respect both were at an average level. The worst results were with the Olympic value of Fair Play. Conclusion: Pupils have a high level of knowledge of Olympic values (Excellence, Respect, Friendship, Joy of Effort, and Fair Play), but have poorer results regarding their skills and attitudes. The level of attitudes towards the Olympic value of Fair play is low.*

**Keywords:** *Fair Play, Olympic values, pupils.*

### Introduction

Our society is changing dramatically. In everyday life, traditional societal, cultural, and ethical norms are no longer viewed as universal and necessary codes of conduct. According to Čiužas et al. (2005), there is a noticeable decline in the sense of responsibility and the concepts of decency and decadence have been obscured. Schiller and Bryant (2004) note that the younger generation's awareness of values is considered to be the most important prerequisite for successful personality development. Values, as a special code of human spiritual life, reflect what is most valuable to humanity in cultural, psychological, moral and beauty terms. One of the tools that help to educate young people as active citizens and thoughtful, creative members of the public, ready for lifelong learning and contributing to the development of society, may be the implementation of Olympic education programs that foster the interiorization of values (Naul, 2008). Olympic education promotes the cultivation of lifestyles based on Olympic values: the pursuit of excellence, fair play, joy of effort, balance between body, will and mind, and respect for others (Karoblis, Neseckienė, & Gudīškis, 2015).

According to Binder (2005), upholding Olympic values is essential to break through the barriers of tradition and superstition, especially in today's world when we are surrounded by despair, violence and deceit.

International Olympic Committee (2017) produced the Olympic values education program. Using the context of Olympic sports and the core principles of Olympism, participants are encouraged to experience value-based learning and to assume responsibilities of good citizenship. It communicates the benefits of sports and physical activity through an understanding of Olympism and its impact on individual health, enjoyment, and social interaction. The National Olympic Committees (New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada) promote Olympic education for children and young people by developing websites, preparing teaching materials for teachers prior to each Olympics and developing special Olympic education programs for schools. Most National Olympic Committees organize an "Olympic Day" during which young people participate in sports, art competitions and attend youth leadership seminars (Binder, 2007). Effective programs for developing Olympic values have been and are being implemented in Algeria (Binder, 2007), Ukraine (Bulatova, 2011), Greece (Filis, 2014). Lithuania also devotes considerable attention to the development of children's Olympic values. For more than ten years, the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee has been implementing the Children and Youth Olympic Education Project through non-formal physical education of children, one of the aims of which is to educate Lithuanian children and youth on the importance of Olympic values of respect, fair play and friendship and to ensure that they make these values the foundation for their activities not only in sports but also in life.

This paper raises the following issues:

- 1) Do pupils have sufficient knowledge of Olympic values, are able to base their activities on them, and what attitudes do they have that will influence their behavior in certain situations?
- 2) Does participation in youth sports affect the Olympic values of 5th grade pupils?

The aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of 5th grade pupils regarding Olympic values.

## **Methods**

The study was conducted from January until March 2019 in seven general education schools from Klaipeda county. One school from each Klaipeda county municipality was selected by random sampling. The research sample consisted of 204 respondents. Prior to conducting the questionnaire, permits were obtained from the school directors. The survey was conducted during physical education

classes. The study involved 416 5th grade pupils, 49.0% of whom were girls. 58.2% of respondents participated in youth sports. 96.4% of respondents were ethnically Lithuanian, 2.2% were Russian and 0.7% of respondents said they belong to the Italian and German ethnic groups.

The education of Olympic values was assessed using an original questionnaire prepared by Iveta Kaškevičiūtė. The questionnaire design was considered suitable for discovering the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes about Olympic values. The survey was created and pilot tested internally. The final version contained 35 questions, including 5 demographic questions and 30 questions related to the five Olympic values (Excellence, Respect, Friendship, Joy of effort, and Fair play). There were six questions for each value, the first two questions representing the pupils' knowledge, the next two - skills and the remaining two - attitudes. The coefficient of scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.839.

### ***Statistical analysis***

While analyzing the demographic data and the Olympic values knowledge, skills and attitudes of young teenagers, percentages were calculated to measure performance and the results were separated into 3 levels: low (up to 33%), average (33-66%), high (66-100%). The Mann-Whitney U criterion was used to compare the results of pupils in and out of youth sports. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . All statistical analyses were performed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 20.0 for Windows).

### ***Research ethics***

The study was approved by Klaipeda University Department of Physical Education. All participants were informed that participation in the research study is voluntary, and they may freely withdraw at any time without any type of penalty. After being informed about the nature and steps of the study, verbal consent was obtained from all participants. Written voluntary consent was provided by all their parents and/or guardian.

## **Results**

The 5th grade pupils' levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes towards Olympic values is presented in Table 1. The best developed is the Olympic value of *Friendship*, where the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes vary from average to high. The participants' responses to the Olympic Value of *Fair Play* is notable: the pupils have a high level of knowledge of this value, a average/high level of ability, but low level attitudes that will influence their behavior in certain situations.

*Table 1 Knowledge, skills and attitudes of 5th grade pupils towards Olympic values*

Olympic values	Level		
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude
<i>Excellence</i>	Average/High	Average/High	Average/High
<i>Respect</i>	Average/High	Average/High	Average/High
<i>Friendship</i>	High	High	Average/High
<i>Joy of effort</i>	Average	Average	High
<i>Fair play</i>	High	Average/High	Low

*Comparative analysis of the results of pupils participating and not participating in youth sports.*

Olympic Value of *Excellence*. While examining the pupils' knowledge, it was discovered that pupils participating in youth sports are more aware of the definition of the Olympic value of *Excellence* ( $p < 0.05$ ). For them, the Ancient Greek concept of *Kalokagathia* is also clearer ( $p > 0.05$ ). While examining the respondents' abilities and attitudes, the Mann - Whitney U criterion revealed that pupils participating in youth sports (mean rank = 222.52,  $n = 416$ ) are more likely to set goals and pursue them consistently in sporting activities,  $U = 17662.00$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , and are determined to achieve their goals and the best results in sports and/or life, (mean rank = 230.98,  $n = 416$ ),  $U = 15615.00$ ,  $p = 0.000$ .

The Olympic Value of *Respect*. The levels of knowledge and skills regarding the Olympic value of *Respect* were higher among the pupils participating in youth sports than those of pupils who do not,  $p < 0.05$ . There was no statistically significant difference in the answers to the question „If your friend won a sports competition through fraud and deception, would they win your respect?“, which reflects the pupils' attitudes,  $p > 0.05$ .

The Olympic Value of *Friendship*. The Mann - Whitney U criterion revealed that pupils participating in youth sports (mean rank = 219.56,  $n = 416$ ) are able to define the meaning of this value with statistical significance,  $U = 18378.00$ ,  $p = 0.006$ . Those attending youth sports (mean rank = 218.94;  $n = 416$ ) were also more likely to be friendly with people of another race or religion,  $U = 18527.00$ ,  $p = 0.008$ . While studying the attitudes, the pupils were given a situation to “imagine that [their] relative ranked 68th in the Olympic biathlon and [the respondent] had the opportunity to talk to him right after the finish for 5 minutes. Would [they] be able to congratulate him joyfully?” Respondents participating in youth sports (mean rank = 221.52,  $n = 416$ ) had more positive responses,  $U = 17902.50$ ,  $p = 0.001$ .

The Olympic value of the *Joy of effort*. Responses reflecting the knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding this Olympic value were higher in pupils

participating in youth sports than in those who do not,  $p < 0.05$ . The results of the Olympic Value of *Fair Play* are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2 The Knowledge, skills and attitudes of 5th grade pupils (who do and do not participate in youth sports) towards the Olympic value of Fair play*

No.	Questions	Participate in youth sports	Mean rank	Mann-Whitney U test	p
1.	Do you know what "Fair play" means in sport?	Do not	203.41	20168.500	0.054
		Participate	212.16		
2.	Which of the following statements do you consider an example of respectable combat and "Fair play" in sporting competitions?	Do not	193.65	18470.000	0.001*
		Participate	219.18		
3.	Do you strive to achieve victory by behaving honestly and without fraud?	Do not	186.78	17275.500	0.000*
		Participate	224.11		
4.	Do you compete to win at any cost?	Do not	204.55	20366.000	0.556
		Participate	211.34		
5.	Imagine that your opponent has a torn sneaker. You have spare shoes you can lend. Would you help your opponent?	Do not	214.20	20063.000	0.383
		Participate	204.40		
6.	If your teammate was cheating, would you report it because it is the right thing to do?	Do not	194.43	18606.000	0.022*
		Participate	218.62		

\* $p < 0.05$

## Discussion

In this study, we aimed to investigate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of 5th grade pupils regarding the Olympic values (OV). The study also compared the results of pupils who do or do not participate in youth sports. The aim was to determine whether participation in youth sports has an impact on the development of Olympic values in 5<sup>th</sup> grade pupils.

Varfolomeeva (2014) provides brief theoretical analysis of the concept of "Olympic education", which generally has two main approaches. The first views Olympic education in a very broad sense, which includes physical education. The second viewpoint is a very narrow understanding of Olympic education as the knowledge about the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement. Olympic education, as notes Varfolomeeva, is a factor of personal development and a kind of education, which includes certain knowledge, skills, and moral values of the Olympic culture.

Hatipoğlu (2017) has explored whether value education at school is necessary and useful and what values need to be developed. The vast majority of the principals who took part in the study considered it important and useful to develop them. In most cases, the informants highlighted the value of *Respect*.

Georgiadis (2008) has conducted a study on the implementation of the Olympic curricula and found that the Olympic curricula, which include the development of Olympic values, are best implemented through physical education (45.5%), with only 29.9% implemented through other general education programs; 27.3% acquire knowledge through informal activities and 40.3% of respondents are interested in self-education. A study by Majauskienė, Šukys, and Lisinskienė (2011) revealed that in schools, the focus is on teaching the history of the Olympics, practically no time is spent on teaching *Fair play* and other values. Hatipoğlu (2017) explored whether value education at school is necessary and useful and what values need to be developed. Thus, it was revealed that the vast majority of school leaders in the study considered it important and useful to develop them.

Pupils' knowledge of the Olympic value of *Excellence* was found to be average/high. When asked if the respondents knew what the word *Kalokagathia* means, more than half of the pupils answered correctly (61.5%). A significant proportion (30.5%) of the respondents said that it meant "Biology and Physics". Studying the pupils' abilities, we found that they are also average/high. 64.7% of the pupils claimed they set themselves goals and pursue them consistently in sporting activities or in other areas of interest. Two thirds (66.6%) of the respondents claimed they do the best they can for certain jobs. The results regarding pupils' attitudes were worse. Only 21.9% of the respondents said "yes" when asked if they were "determined to achieve [their] goals and the best results in sports and/or life without comparing [themselves] to others" while 33.7% of them responded "sometimes". Šarkauskienė and Kaškevičiūtė (2018), when examining the knowledge, skills and attitudes of 5th–6th grade pupils regarding the Olympic values, found that knowledge about *Excellence* is at an average level while skills and attitudes are high. Answers found that those who participated in non-formal physical education classes on the Olympic value of *Excellence* responded better, with higher scores on all questions.

While comparing the scores of pupils participating in youth sports with those who did not attend sports after school the Mann-Whitney criterion revealed that the results were statistically significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) better among those participating in youth sports (except regarding the answers to "How do you understand the Ancient Greek concept of *Kalokagathia* - the Harmonious Man?").

A study by Vaičekauskienė (2015) has revealed that the most frequently mentioned (23.3%) value among younger adolescents is *Respect*. From the respondents answers to the questions pertaining to the Olympic value of *Respect*,

it was found that their knowledge, skills and attitudes are average/high. Answering the question „What do you think is the meaning of *Respect* in sports?“ more than half (60.1%) of pupils answered correctly - it is honesty and the fight against doping and other unethical behavior. 75.0% of pupils know that *Respect* entails respect for yourself and your body, other people, rules, religions, sports and the environment. 76.0% of respondents claimed they are respectful of other people (coaches, referees) while being engaged in their sport, 56.7% of pupils responded that they consider the wishes, opinions and needs of their teammates. 46.9% of pupils said they could not respect their rivals, fellow players and referees. Asking if they would congratulate the first place winner who comes to congratulate them after they lost the race by one point and took the second place, 88.0% indicated that “yes, [they, the respondent] would appreciate their prowess and congratulate them on their victory.”

Varfolomeeva (2014) has studied the ability of pupils to be tolerant, which is highly related to respect and skills. 432 secondary school 5th–6th grade pupils participated in the study. The vast majority of pupils showed average results. The number of pupils with a level of tolerance above average was not significant. The level of ethnic tolerance was found to be particularly low.

Comparing the responses of pupils participating in youth sports and those who do not, the pupils who participate in youth sports were found to have developed a higher level of *OV Excellence* and *Respect*,  $p < 0.05$ . Only the answers to the question “If Your Friend Won A Sports Fight Through Deception, Would They Win Your Respect?“ did not differ significantly,  $p > 0.05$ .

Friendship has been defined by philosophers as a form of relationship that exhibits mutual concern and willingness to act for the good of the other for the other's sake, is based on the mutual positive regard two people have for one another, and involves time spent together in shared activities (Helm, 2013). Friendship are widely regarded as important to children's wellbeing and adjustment (Adams, Santo, & Bukowski, 2011; Berndt, 2002).

Pupils answering questions about the Olympic value of *Friendship* were found to have a high level of knowledge: 72.4% said that the Olympic value of *Friendship* is the basis of all sports, which creates understanding between different people and builds friendships and 70.9% noted that it encourages everyone to become interested in sports because through them people have the opportunity to make friends around the world. The skills were also found to be high level: 71.9% of pupils considered themselves friendly with people of another race and 69.0% of pupils said they talk and behave cordially with their opponents during sports competitions.

The results regarding attitudes were slightly worse: the pupils were offered to imagine that “[their] relative ranked 68th in the Olympic biathlon and [they, the respondent] had the opportunity to talk to him right after the finish for 5

minutes. Would [they] be able to congratulate him joyfully?" 68.5% pupils said they agree or strongly agree. 52.6% thought they could make friends with their rivals. For pupils who participate in youth sports, all OV *Friendship* scores were statistically significantly  $p < 0.05$  better than of those who do not participate in youth sports after school.

The respondents' answers to the questions regarding the Olympic value *Joy of effort* revealed that their knowledge and skills were at an intermediate level: in response to the question "What do you think is the meaning of *joy of effort*?" 61.3% answered correctly - it means the challenges in sports and in life that we are happy to overcome. Answering the question „Are you happy with your personal performance even if you don't win the competition?" 56.7% said they agreed. The results regarding the attitudes were high: the pupils were told to „Imagine that [they] ran a distance of 60 meters and took [their] personal record. Would it bring [them] joy?" 84.1% of respondents said "Yes, because [they] would feel happy to have reached a personal record". The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding the OV *Joy of effort* were higher among the pupils participating in youth sports ( $p < 0.05$ ) than among those who did not.

From the pupils answers to the questions about the Olympic value of *Fair Play* we have learned that they have a high level of knowledge regarding that value. 95.0% indicated the correct definition of the concept, and 84.1% indicated the correct example of *fair play* when presented with multiple options. Similar results were reported by Adaškevičienė and Budreikaitė (2007). The researchers found that the greater part (78.5%) of pupils aged 12 to 14 are aware of the characteristics that reflect this value. According to the opinion of the study subjects, the Olympic value of *Fair Play* is: compassion, honesty, self-sacrifice, observance of the rules of the game, kindness and compassion. While researching the skills regarding the OV of *Fair play* they were also found to be at a high level: 71.4% of respondents answered positively to the question "Do you strive to achieve victory by behaving honestly and without fraud?" The respondents were found to have a high level of knowledge and skills regarding the OV *Fair play* but low level attitudes towards it. The majority of respondents claimed they want to always (30.8%) or sometimes (40.6%) win in competitions at any cost. The results of Karoblis, Majauskienė, and Paulauskienė (2009) are very similar. After analyzing the attitudes of 11-17-year-old pupils (Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary) towards the Olympic Movement and the Olympic values, the researchers noted that adolescents were familiar with *Fair play* in sports, but 11.4% of respondents would use forbidden substances to win an Olympic medal, while 25.0% of girls and 32.3% of boys would cheat if their opponents were cheating.

Luquin and Olliden (2012) analyzed the subjective perception of the importance of five dimensions related to *Fair play* (having fun, following the

rules, being committed, winning and fair play) in a large sample of young sports people (children and youth players) ( $n = 762$ ). The least valued dimension was related to winning the game. The most important dimension differed for boys and girls: girls considered it more important to play fair, whereas for boys the priority was to have fun. No differences were found between commitment and respect for the rules in the male group, although the difference between these dimensions was more pronounced among girls.

Comparing the responses of athletic and non-athletic pupils, only a few cases showed significant differences. Athletic pupils were found to know better what the Olympic value of *Fair play* means. Šukys and Majauskienė (2014) conducted a study with 747 adolescents. The researchers compared the results of Olympic values for athletes and non-athletes. Sports experience was a significant predictor ( $p < 0.05$ ) of prosocial behavior, which is characterized by unselfish actions towards other people, with teammates and opponents. There was no statistically significant difference between the other values that the researchers also studied.

### Conclusion

Pupils have a high level of knowledge of Olympic values (*Excellence, Respect, Friendship, Joy of Effort, and Fair Play*), but have poorer results regarding their skills and attitudes. The level of attitudes towards the Olympic value of *Fair play* is low.

### Conflicts of interests

The author declares that she has no competing interests.

### Acknowledgement

We are thankful for the administration of the general education schools, where the research was performed, and for the physical education teachers who constituted the conditions necessary to fulfil the research. We are thankful for all the pupils who took part in this research.

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