Understanding contribution in youth sport contexts: a systematic review

Katelin Wadsworth¹ | Matthew Vierimaa, PhD, Assistant Professor¹ | Karl Erickson ²

¹ Utah State University, Department of Kinesiology and Health Science
² Michigan State University, Department of Kinesiology

I. Introduction

- Positive youth development (PYD) is a strength-based perspective on adolescence that views youth as resources to be developed, rather than problems to be solved (Damon, 2004).
- The 5 Cs represent indicators of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005).
- Growth in these areas leads to contribution, the ultimate outcome of PYD where thriving youth and young adults positively contribute to their families, communities, and society (Lerner, 2004).

Table 1. The 5 Cs and Contribution (Lerner, 2008; Roth & Brooks-Chaiklen, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Positive view of one's actions in domain specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; one's global self-regard, as opposed to domain specific beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bidirectional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring and compassion</td>
<td>A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Extra-curricular leisure activities such as organized sport are viewed as fertile contexts for facilitating PYD (e.g., Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005), and research on youth sport and PYD has steadily proliferated in recent years (Holt, 2016).
- Even though much of this growing body of research has adopted the 5 Cs model, sport psychology research specifically focused on fostering contribution through youth sport remains sparse.
- Purpose: this systematic review aims to synthesize the literature on contribution across disciplines to develop an integrative definition/model that reflects its unique aspects in sport contexts.

II. Methods

- Article Selection
  - Databases: Academic Search Premier, SPORTDiscus and PsycINFO.
  - Inclusion criteria: Full text available, English, peer-reviewed, specific to or includes sport, and examines or mentions some construct broadly related to contribution.
  - Keywords: Sport, youth, social capital, volunteerism, contribution, community engagement, etc.
  - Data extraction: This ongoing process will extract data regarding relevant constructs, how they are operationalized, cited, and applied, areas of research, study design, demographics, and methodology.

Table 2. Preliminary Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>n = 11 papers</td>
<td>Isolated citation in introduction or discussion (n = 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic engagement</td>
<td>n = 6 papers</td>
<td>Directly measured or examined in the article (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism</td>
<td>n = 6 papers</td>
<td>Isolated citation in introduction or discussion (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>n = 10 papers</td>
<td>Directly measured or examined in the article (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Full text screening of the 64 articles remaining. The preliminary analysis reflects 26 articles that have been screened thus far.

III. Preliminary Results

Figure 1. Systematic Review Flow Chart

5,261 articles found searching databases

152 articles after screening at title level

101 articles screened at abstract level

101 articles after removing duplicates

64 articles remaining after screening at abstract level

Full text screening is ongoing and relevant data are being extracted from each article.

IV. Discussion

- Contribution is often mentioned in sport PYD research, but rarely studied directly.
- Similar constructs (e.g., social capital, volunteerism, and civic engagement) have been studied in disciplines outside of sport psychology.
- Further research should adopt an inter-disciplinary focus to synthesize our understanding of how sport influences youth’s desire to positively contribute to their communities and society.

Katelin Wadsworth
Utah State University
Kinesiology and Health Science
wadskate1@gmail.com