

Aristotle's virtue ethics perspective on individual existence in sports: Eudaimonia and practical wisdom

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effects of sports on individual existence from the perspective of Aristotle's virtue ethics. By focusing on the concepts of *eudaimonia*, *mesotes*, and *phronesis*, the study examines how sports contribute to the moral and ethical development of individuals. Adopting a qualitative research approach, the analysis categorized information derived from relevant sources under thematic headings. Each theme was interpreted to provide an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Aristotle's virtue ethics and sports. The findings reveal that sports are not merely physical activities but also platforms that foster individuals' ethical, intellectual, and existential development. Particularly, the experiences gained through sports by young athletes can enhance both their individuality and social responsibilities. Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* can serve as a guiding principle for ethical decision-making processes among athletes and coaches. The societal dimensions of sports become more evident in platforms like the Olympic Games, which promote international collaboration. Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic movement illustrates that sports facilitate the dissemination of ethical values and contribute to the development of socially responsible individuals. This understanding aligns with Aristotle's virtue ethics, encouraging an ethical life for both individuals and society. Aristotle's *phronesis* is critical for interpreting ethical decision-making processes within the context of sports. While emphasizing the impact of sports on mental development, the study highlights how ethical decision-making processes strengthen individuals' mental resilience and moral maturity. Sports, as a field often marked by ethical dilemmas, provide fertile ground for such analyses. Despite differences between professional and amateur sports, the study identifies a common ground in the ethical issues present in both domains. Aristotle's virtue ethics offers a robust framework for addressing these issues. By advocating for the avoidance of extremes and the pursuit of the mean, the Aristotelian approach can guide individuals and communities in addressing ethical challenges.

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Introduction

Aristotle's ethical framework is founded on the concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness or the good life), which he considers the ultimate purpose of human life. According to him, a good life is achievable through the realization of human virtues. Within this framework, Aristotle distinguishes moral virtues into two categories: intellectual virtues and ethical virtues. While intellectual virtues are cultivated through education, ethical virtues are acquired through habitual practice. In this context, living a good life necessitates acting virtuously (Aristotle 2009). Aristotle's conception of virtue emphasizes the "mean" rather than excess or deficiency. This idea, known as *mesotes*, posits that every virtue represents a point of balance. For instance, the virtue of courage lies between the extremes of cowardice and recklessness. This ethical approach supports a meaningful life, not only for the individual but also by contributing to society (Zingano 2007).

Aristotle's perspective on individual existence is rooted in the actualization of inherent human potentials, guided by virtues. For him, an individual's existence gains meaning only by living in alignment with their nature (Jaeger, 1957). In this sense, the existential significance of an individual is realized through intellectual activities and ethical behaviors (Doris, 1998). Individual existence is in constant interaction with society, offering opportunities for self-improvement and societal development. Aristotle explains this dynamic with the idea that "man is by nature a political animal" (*zoon politikon*) (MacIntyre 2007).

Ethical values are fundamental elements that shape an individual's existential meaning. In Aristotle's philosophy, these values require individuals to act in ways that enhance not only their happiness but also the happiness of those around them (Rabbås, 2015). The virtues possessed by an individual facilitate coping with moral challenges encountered in daily life and help fulfill responsibilities towards oneself and society (Baeva, 2014).

Aristotle elucidates the impact of ethical values on individual existence through the balance between moral responsibility and personal happiness. This balance enables individuals to lead meaningful lives. Specifically, ethical values encourage individuals not

only to be virtuous persons but also to act as good citizens within a societal context (Hursthouse 1999).

The intersection of virtue ethics and sports

Virtue ethics, as developed by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*, is an ethical theory that emphasizes the pursuit of virtue in individuals' actions. Aristotle's virtue ethics highlights the concept of finding the "mean" and identifies it as the cornerstone of a good life (Aristotle 2009). This approach provides a strong theoretical foundation for individuals to develop moral virtues and dedicate themselves to becoming better people in the context of sports. Sports serve as a practical domain for the application of virtue ethics, enabling individuals to grow physically, emotionally, and morally (Weiss & Bredemeier 1990).

Values such as fair play, resilience, self-discipline, and responsibility are fundamental elements of sports and strongly align with the principles of virtue ethics (Morgan 2024). Aristotle's moral philosophy views sports not merely as a physical activity but as a medium for leading a virtuous life (McNamee 2018). In this regard, Reid (2022) argues that sports, within the framework of virtue ethics, contribute to the development of individuals' moral character and influence ethical decision-making processes. Additionally, Simon (2018) asserts that sports reinforce values such as justice, honesty, and respect in individuals.

The applicability of Aristotle's virtue ethics in the context of sports

Aristotle's virtue ethics provides a robust framework for analyzing the impact of sports on individuals. According to Aristotle, virtues are acquired through the consistent repetition of correct actions (Trianosky 1990). In this context, sports serve as an excellent discipline for developing virtues such as courage, justice, self-discipline, and patience (Bäck 2009). For example, an athlete's adherence to rules and fair competition during an event can be seen as an expression of the virtue of justice. Similarly, demonstrating self-discipline to achieve goals is considered one of the fundamental aspects of Aristotle's virtue ethics (Brodie 2006).

The Principle of the Golden Mean: Aristotle's principle of the "golden mean" helps athletes find balance on their path to success. For instance, it promotes courage over overconfidence and teamwork over destructive competitiveness (MacIntyre 2007).

Aristotle's virtue ethics evaluates not only individual actions but also their societal implications. Considering sports from an ethical perspective contributes to both individual development and societal morality (McNamee 2018). Hardman et al. (2010) discuss how Aristotle's virtues can guide training and competition and how sports can be used as a tool for ethical development.

Character development and virtues in sports

Sports serve as a significant tool for shaping an individual's character (Oddner 2010). According to Aristotle, virtue becomes a habit through the repetition of right actions (Aristotle 2009). In this context, sports provide a practical domain where individuals can develop and reinforce their moral virtues. For instance, in team sports, players cultivate virtues such as cooperation, solidarity, and humility (Arnold 1997).

Character development through sports also enhances an individual's sense of responsibility towards society. Aligning with Aristotle's concept of *zoon politikon*, individuals learn to act as ethical beings not only for themselves but also within a societal framework. This supports the idea that sports function not only as a physical activity but also as a tool for moral education (Morgan 2007).

Reflections of individual existence in sports

Individual existence can be defined as the process through which individuals recognize, interpret, and construct their lives in alignment with their values. Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (the good life) serves as a guide for individuals to lead their lives virtuously in this context (Krein 2015). Sports provide a platform where individuals can make sense of their existence while fostering physical, mental, and moral development (Watson 2011). In Aristotle's philosophy, individual existence is linked to the cultivation of virtues and living in accordance with one's nature, where every virtuous act imbues the individual's existence with meaning. Sports enable individuals to discover their unique identities, develop moral values, and understand their physical abilities (Arnold 1997).

Sports serve as a stage for expressing not only physical activities but also emotional and mental processes. This dynamic supports the transfer of ethical decisions made in sports to other areas of individuals' lives (Mareš 2022).

The effects of sports on individual identity and existence

Sports play a significant role in the process of identity formation. Through sports activities, participants can better understand themselves, set personal goals, and shape their identities (Arnold 1999). According to Aristotle, individuals derive meaning from their actions, and this meaning is often embodied through sports. For instance, an athlete can express themselves through virtues such as courage, resilience, and justice (Kidd 2016).

Construction of identity and existence: Sports are instrumental in constructing an individual's social, cultural, and personal identity. Within the framework of Aristotle's virtue philosophy, sports offer individuals opportunities to lead a virtuous life. Sports activities also provide a platform for individuals to test and develop their moral values (MacIntyre 2007).

Authenticity and self-awareness: The experiences of competition, achievement, failure, and endurance in sports shape individuals' unique identities. This process contributes to their journey of self-discovery and finding meaning in their lives (Hursthouse 1999).

Social identity and sports: The impact of sports on individual existence is not confined to personal experiences but also extends to shaping societal identities. Values such as fair play, solidarity, and responsibility help individuals become more ethical members of society (Morgan 2024).

The influence of sports on individual identity becomes particularly evident during adolescence. Sports provide young individuals with opportunities to expand their social networks and discover themselves (Reid 2014). Moreover, achievements gained through sports boost self-confidence and reinforce existential meaning (Shoxrux 2023).

Self-realization and sports practices

Self-realization is defined as the process through which an individual maximizes their potential and leads a meaningful life (Maslow 1954). According to Aristotle, this process is achievable by practicing virtues aligned with one's nature and following a balanced path in life. Sports play a direct role in facilitating self-realization, enabling individuals to discover their physical and mental capacities while helping them push their limits (Zowisło 2010).

Self-realization and the role of sports: Aristotle's concept of self-realization refers to the attainment of a complete existence by maximizing one's potential. Sports can serve as a means for

individuals to explore and develop their physical and mental capacities (Nesti 2004).

Sports practices and individual development: Sports practices allow individuals to grow not only physically but also mentally and morally. This process enhances their quality of life and supports their journey toward *eudaimonia* (Bowman & West 2021).

Application of virtues: Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) can be used to understand the role of sports in ethical development. For example, an athlete's disciplined training routines and decisions during competitions contribute to their self-realization through practical wisdom (Carr 2017).

Sports practices foster not only physical skills but also mental resilience and moral integrity (Bissell & Kolhatkar 2023). For instance, the endurance and determination exhibited by a marathon runner reflect the process of self-realization. In this context, sports provide opportunities for individuals to achieve not only personal goals but also contribute to broader societal contexts (McNamee 2008).

Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and sports

Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) is a virtue that enables individuals to determine the most appropriate course of action based on their experiences in ethical decision-making processes (Duvenage 2015). *Phronesis* plays a decisive role in equipping individuals not only with theoretical knowledge but also with wisdom derived from practical applications (Stichter 2016).

Sports provide a platform for individuals to develop their ethical decision-making processes and enhance their practical wisdom. Athletes benefit from sports by improving not only their physical skills but also their strategic thinking and moral decision-making abilities (Tsai 2020). Specifically, adherence to ethical principles in the actions of athletes and coaches contributes to the realization of this virtue in practice. According to Aristotle, such decisions facilitate the application of virtues in practice, thereby contributing to an individual's moral development (Kristjánsson 2024).

Ethics and practical wisdom in decision-making processes

Ethical decision-making is intrinsically tied to the challenges and competitive dynamics inherent in sports, requiring individuals to discern and choose the right course of action. This is a frequent concern for athletes, coaches, and sports managers (McLean & Yoder

2005). Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* enables individuals to make appropriate and virtuous decisions in such contexts. For instance, a coach deciding on a game strategy without jeopardizing a player's health exemplifies *phronesis* in the context of sports (McNamee 2018).

Practical wisdom requires consideration of not only individual interests but also the welfare of the team and society at large (Duvenage 2015). Sports facilitate the integration of virtues such as justice, courage, and self-discipline into decision-making processes. This integration supports the development of not only the individual's identity as an athlete but also their moral character (Carr 2017).

The contribution of sports to mental and moral development

Sports are a discipline that not only enhances individuals' physical capacities but also fosters their mental abilities. Developing game strategies, solving problems, and making quick decisions are some of the ways sports contribute to mental development (Nesti 2004). For example, the necessity of cooperation in team sports encourages individuals to learn values such as empathy and social responsibility (Arnold 1997).

In terms of moral development, sports provide a significant platform that strengthens ethical values while promoting moral growth through consistent practice. Values such as team spirit, self-discipline, and solidarity contribute to individuals' moral maturation (Morgan 2024).

Moreover, sports improve individuals' mental resilience by enhancing their ability to cope with stress and solve problems. In the context of Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), sports guide individuals in addressing challenges with an ethical perspective. This highlights the role of sports as a vital tool for fostering mental and moral development (Jones & McNamee 2000).

Ethics and the concept of fair play in sports

Ethics is a fundamental element that guides the shaping of individual and social values in sports. The ethical dimension of sports is closely associated with the concept of fair play (Loland & McNamee 2000). Fair play encompasses not only adherence to rules but also the practical embodiment of core virtues such as honesty, justice, and respect (Butcher & Schneider 1998). This understanding is critical for promoting ethical behavior in sports and fostering the development of athletes as virtuous individuals (McIntosh 1979).

The concept of fair play serves as a framework that integrates both the competitive and educational aspects of sports. Aristotle's notions of *eudaimonia* (the good life) and virtue align closely with the values underlying fair play (Arnold 1997).

Sports and ethics from a historical perspective

The ethical dimension of sports began to be discussed with the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece. In Ancient Greece, sports were regarded as a means to promote both physical and moral development. During the early years of the Ancient Olympic Games, athletes were expected not only to display physical strength but also to embody moral virtues (Young 2008).

In the Middle Ages, the ethical dimension of sports was shaped by religious and social norms. However, the modern understanding of sports ethics was reinterpreted in the 19th century through the "Muscular Christianity" movement led by American Protestants. This movement emphasized the need for sports to balance physical health with moral values (Putney 2009).

The modern ethical understanding of sports was further reshaped by the Olympic movement initiated by Pierre de Coubertin (Snyder & Spretzer 1974). Coubertin viewed sports as not only a pursuit of physical excellence but also as a moral and cultural tool. His 1896 Olympic Manifesto laid the foundation for ethical values in modern sports. According to Coubertin, sports were not merely arenas for competition but also schools for teaching moral values (Müller 2000). The manifesto emphasized that sports should serve values such as peace, brotherhood, and fair competition. Coubertin's vision aligns closely with Aristotle's virtue ethics (Brown, 2001). Furthermore, Aristotle's *mesotes* (the golden mean) principle, which suggests finding balance in physical and mental aspects, reflects the ethical understanding of that era (MacIntyre 2007).

Coubertin's ideas significantly contributed to the institutionalization of ethical values in modern sports. The principle of fair play has become an integral part of the Olympic movement (Müller 2000). This framework provides athletes with an ethical guide for fulfilling their individual and societal responsibilities (Snyder & Spretzer 1974).

Ethical dilemmas in sports

Ethical dilemmas are situations where individuals face challenges in deciding between right and wrong due to conflicting moral and ethical

values (Kvalnes 2019). In sports, such dilemmas often arise from efforts to balance the desire to win with fairness, honesty, and other ethical principles (Morgan 2024). Examples include doping, unsportsmanlike conduct, or disputes over referee decisions, which frequently occur at various levels of competition (McNamee 2008). More specific scenarios include choosing whether to ignore an opponent's mistake for personal advantage or deciding between supporting a teammate and adhering to team rules (Simon 2018).

Aristotle's virtue ethics advocates for avoiding extremes and finding a balanced middle ground in decision-making processes (Athanassoulis & Ross 2010). This approach encourages athletes and coaches to use virtues as guiding principles for ethical decision-making. For instance, courage is defined as striking a balance between recklessness and excessive caution (Corlett 1996).

Today, ethical dilemmas manifest differently in professional and amateur sports due to their distinct structures (Whysall 2014). In professional sports, financial pressures and media scrutiny further complicate ethical issues (Andreff 2000). For example, doping is often driven by the pressure to win, leading athletes to compromise ethical standards. Similarly, commercial sponsorship agreements may require athletes to prioritize business demands over ethical rules, a concern frequently reported in recent years (Iorwerth et al. 2018). Cases of match-fixing influenced by betting companies, involving sports managers and athletes, exemplify such dilemmas (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths 2018). In amateur sports, ethical dilemmas often stem from the tension between societal expectations and personal goals. Young athletes, for example, may experience emotional or physical harm in highly competitive environments, representing another form of ethical conflict (Andreff 2000).

In both cases, the Aristotelian approach emphasizes virtues as the foundation for decision-making. Justice, honesty, and self-discipline are pivotal virtues that serve as crucial guides in resolving these ethical dilemmas (Carr 2017).

The relationship between individual existence and social responsibility

Aristotle's concept of *zoon politikon* (political animal) highlights the balance between individual existence and social responsibilities (Ober 2013). An individual's existential pursuit becomes more meaningful when integrated with social responsibility. Aristotle's notion of

phronesis (practical wisdom) serves as a guiding principle for individuals to maintain a balance between their ethical values and social responsibilities (Grant 2011). Sports play a significant role in fostering this balance, particularly by shaping social norms through values such as fair play, justice, and honesty (Loland 2013). Athletes contribute to this balance by combining individual achievements with social responsibilities, engaging in ethical conduct, and participating in social responsibility projects, thereby contextualizing their individual existence within a societal framework (Wilson 1994).

The relationship between individual existence and social responsibility can be further reinforced through the educational and cultural dimensions of sports. Sports promote values such as justice, honesty, and equality, facilitating their dissemination within society and reflecting moral development (Hellison 2010). From Aristotle's virtue ethics perspective, the role of sports in achieving the common good for individuals and society can be clearly understood (McNamee 2008).

The Olympic Games, for instance, serve as a platform to promote international cooperation and peace (Ubaidulloev 2018). Similarly, local sporting events have the potential to enhance justice and inclusivity within communities (Skinner et al. 2008). Examining the ethical role of sports in shaping social norms reveals the following:

Sports and social change: Values like fair play and teamwork assist individuals in understanding their roles and responsibilities within society. Sports have a significant potential to act as a catalyst for positive societal change, particularly in advancing social justice and inclusivity (Serrano-Durá et al. 2021).

Virtue ethics perspective: According to Aristotle, virtue is shaped through ethical actions in a social context. Sports provide a platform where these virtues are practiced and individuals' social responsibilities are enhanced. For example, sporting events promote values such as solidarity and social collaboration (Hardman et al. 2010).

Finally, the Olympic Games have played a crucial role in disseminating ethical values such as peace and friendship on a global scale. Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic movement can be seen as an effort to universalize these values through sports (Weiler 2004).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method to analyze the impact of sports on individual existence from the perspective of Aristotle's virtue ethics. The research is structured within a theoretical and conceptual analysis framework, systematically evaluating the existing literature. The study follows a basic qualitative research design, focusing on a theoretical analysis of the influence of Aristotle's ethical theory in the context of sports. Such a design aims to generate knowledge by examining existing literature to understand specific phenomena or concepts (Creswell 2013). The relationship between Aristotle's virtue ethics and sports was evaluated through a review of the existing literature, followed by an interpretation using the content analysis method.

The research data were obtained from secondary sources. In this process, academic journals, books, conference proceedings, and articles accessed through international databases were reviewed. The databases used include Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, and Springer. The following keywords were utilized for the literature review: "Aristotle's ethical philosophy," "sports ethics," "virtue ethics," "practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and sports," and "the impact of sports on individual development." The collected data were analyzed using the content analysis method, a qualitative analysis approach that categorizes meaningful themes from textual data for interpretation (Krippendorff 2018). During the analysis, information from relevant sources was classified into the following thematic categories: fundamental concepts of Aristotle's ethical theory (*eudaimonia*, *mesotes*, *phronesis*), the relationship between these concepts and values in sports (fair play, self-discipline, justice), the effects of sports on individual identity and existence, and ethical decision-making processes in the context of practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Each theme was interpreted to deeply analyze the connection between Aristotle's virtue ethics and sports.

To ensure validity and reliability in theoretical studies, attention was given to selecting literature from peer-reviewed and academically recognized publications. The diversity of sources used and the systematic analysis method employed increased the accuracy of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell 2015). Methodological transparency was clearly articulated to ensure the reliability of the study. The study has the following limitations: it does not include empirical data collection and is conducted solely based on theoretical analysis methods. It

focuses exclusively on Aristotle's virtue ethics theory, excluding other ethical theories. The impacts of sports on individual existence are examined in a general theoretical context without specific evaluations of individual sports disciplines.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of MehmetAkif Ersoy University with the decision dated 08 January 2025 and numbered GO 2025/977.

Conclusion

This study has evaluated the impact of sports on individual existence from the perspective of Aristotle's virtue ethics. Aristotle's concepts of *eudaimonia* and *phronesis* (practical wisdom) demonstrate that sports serve not only as a physical activity but also as a tool for moral and intellectual development. The themes explored throughout this study have provided a comprehensive analysis of how sports contribute to the cultivation of virtues and the realization of meaningful existence in a societal context. Furthermore, the individual and societal dimensions of sports have been examined through Aristotle's concepts of *eudaimonia* (the good life), *mesotes* (the golden mean), and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). The findings reveal that sports offer a platform that fosters ethical, intellectual, and existential growth, emphasizing its multidimensional role in human development.

Aristotle's ethical philosophy highlights the realization of inherent human potential through virtues as a guiding principle. Within this framework, sports emerge as a domain that integrates physical, intellectual, and moral growth. For instance, virtues such as self-discipline, patience, courage, and justice, which are inherent to sports, contribute to both individual development and the promotion of an ethical life in a societal context. This aligns with Aristotle's notion of *zoon politikon* (political animal), wherein sports encourage individuals to fulfill their responsibilities as part of a community.

The principle of *mesotes*, or the golden mean, advocated by Aristotle, encourages a balanced approach to ethical decision-making in sports. For example, embracing the spirit of fair play rather than excessive competitiveness or exhibiting realistic courage over destructive overconfidence reflects this balance. This approach allows individuals to develop ethical values applicable to other aspects of life, profoundly contributing to the processes of individual existence. Sports serve as an environment where individuals not only enhance their physical performance but also cultivate moral character. In this

context, sports provide opportunities for individuals to experience and practice moral values, aiding their pursuit of *eudaimonia*.

Within the realm of virtue ethics, sports represent a reflection of individual existence. According to Aristotle's view of the good life, individuals must act in accordance with their nature to lead meaningful lives. Sports facilitate this exploration, allowing individuals to discover themselves. For instance, an athlete who competes fairly and justly with opponents exemplifies ethical virtues in practice. Values such as fair play, solidarity, honesty, and responsibility demonstrate that sports are not merely tools for individual development but mechanisms that shape societal norms. Issues explored in this study, such as doping, unsportsmanlike conduct, and ethical dilemmas, highlight significant elements shaping the moral stances of individuals and communities. In addressing these ethical issues, Aristotle's virtue ethics provides a balanced approach that avoids extremes.

Sports also serve as a vital tool in the processes of self-recognition, meaning-making, and self-realization. Self-realization, defined as living a meaningful life by fully actualizing one's potential, is supported uniquely by sports. According to Aristotle, this process is achieved through the consistent practice of virtues and the pursuit of a balanced path in life. Sports offer an unparalleled domain for individuals to explore and develop their physical and intellectual capacities. This study shows that individuals discover their identities, reinforce their values, and strengthen their existential meaning through sports activities. For example, an athlete's demonstration of endurance and determination shapes both individual and social identity. Sporting practices shape not only physical endurance but also mental resilience and moral stance. The endurance of a marathon runner or the cooperation and responsibility of a team player exemplify this process. Particularly for young athletes, experiences gained through sports reinforce both individual authenticity and social responsibility. Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* serves as a guide for ethical decision-making processes for athletes and coaches.

Aristotle's ethical philosophy also encompasses the capacity of individuals to fulfill their societal responsibilities. Sports assist individuals in understanding and fulfilling these responsibilities by developing ethical values. The concept of fair play holds critical importance in this context. Values such as justice, honesty, and respect enable individuals to maintain an ethical stance within a societal framework. As highlighted in Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic

movement, sports can serve as a vehicle for promoting universal values such as peace and friendship. For young individuals in particular, sports function as a powerful educational tool for learning and applying ethical values.

The societal dimensions of sports become more apparent on platforms such as the Olympic Games, which promote international cooperation. Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic movement demonstrates how sports facilitate the dissemination of ethical values and contribute to shaping individuals into more responsible members of society. This understanding aligns with Aristotle's virtue ethics, encouraging individuals to lead ethical lives both for themselves and their communities. As discussed throughout the study, the role of sports in balancing individual existence and societal values contributes to the development of both individual and collective virtues.

Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* holds critical importance in understanding the ethical decision-making processes in sports. This study emphasizes the impact of sports on mental development, showing how ethical decision-making processes strengthen individuals' mental resilience and moral maturity. For instance, the necessity of teamwork in sports fosters empathy and societal responsibility. Moreover, the study concludes that sports enhance mental resilience by improving individuals' abilities to cope with stress and solve problems. These findings demonstrate that sports serve as an important tool for physical and mental development in both individual and societal contexts.

Sports frequently present ethical dilemmas, making them a field of significant interest. This study reveals that despite the structural differences between professional and amateur sports, ethical issues create common ground in both domains. Aristotle's virtue ethics provides a robust framework for addressing such issues. By avoiding extremes and finding a balanced approach, Aristotle's perspective guides individuals and communities in dealing with ethical challenges. Specific examples include doping, unsportsmanlike behavior, efforts by betting companies to influence match outcomes, and commercial pressures. For addressing these ethical challenges, the study suggests decision-making processes grounded in the values of virtue ethics. It highlights the critical role of *phronesis* in resolving such ethical dilemmas.

In conclusion, Aristotle's virtue ethics offers a strong framework for understanding the impact of sports on individual existence. The role of

sports in developing ethical values extends beyond individual lives to elevate ethical standards within a societal context. In this sense, sports can be evaluated as a multidimensional tool that supports individuals' ethical, physical, and mental development. The ethical dimension of sports, as a tool for strengthening the relationship between individual existence and societal responsibility, can be better understood through an Aristotelian perspective. Future studies could explore how virtue ethics is applied in specific sports disciplines and conduct broader empirical research in this area. Additionally, studies evaluating the perception and application of the ethical dimension of sports in different cultural contexts are needed. Educational institutions could develop virtue ethics-based programs to promote sports as a tool for fostering individual and societal values.

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