

Intrapersonal and social-environmental antecedents of prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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Review Stage at time of this submission - The review has not yet started.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 2 January 2026 and was last updated on 2 January 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective Review question - What intrapersonal and social-environmental factors are associated with prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport?

Objective - This review aims to summarise and quantitatively integrate existing evidence on intrapersonal and social-environmental antecedents of prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport.

Rationale Prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport have been studied in relation to a range of intrapersonal and social-environmental factors. Many studies have examined specific antecedents within particular sport settings, often using different measures and samples. As a result, the evidence is dispersed across the literature, making

it difficult to draw comparisons across antecedents. Previous reviews in this area have largely relied on narrative approaches, and existing meta-analytic work has tended to focus on single predictors rather than providing an integrated synthesis across intrapersonal and social-environmental domains. A systematic review and meta-analysis is therefore warranted to bring together the available evidence and to clarify how strongly different antecedents are associated with prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport.

Condition being studied Prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport are intentional behaviours that have positive or negative consequences for others' rights and psychological or physical well-being. In sport contexts, these behaviours are commonly regarded as indicators of moral behaviour and may be directed toward teammates or opponents during sport participation.

METHODS

Search strategy A search strategy will be developed to identify studies examining prosocial and antisocial behaviours in sport. Searches will focus on terms related to moral behaviour, sport participation, and athletes, and will be adapted as needed for each electronic database. In addition, the reference lists of included studies will be checked to identify any further relevant articles.

Participant or population Athletes participating in organised sport settings, regardless of age, gender, competitive level, or type of sport (team or individual sports).

Intervention Not applicable.

Comparator Not applicable.

Study designs to be included Quantitative observational studies, including cross-sectional and longitudinal designs.

Eligibility criteria

Inclusion criteria

1. Empirical quantitative studies examining associations between intrapersonal and/or social-environmental antecedents and prosocial and/or antisocial behaviours in sport.
2. Studies involving athletes and conducted in sport contexts.
3. Observational study designs, including cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.
4. Studies employing validated or conceptually equivalent measures of prosocial and/or antisocial behaviours in sport.
5. Studies reporting sufficient statistical information to calculate effect sizes (e.g., correlation coefficients, regression coefficients, or other convertible statistics).
6. Peer-reviewed journal articles.
7. Studies published in English or Chinese.

Exclusion criteria

1. Qualitative studies.
2. Reviews, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, editorials, commentaries, or theoretical papers.
3. Case studies.
4. Conference abstracts, dissertations, theses, and other non-peer-reviewed literature.
5. Studies not conducted in sport settings.
6. Studies that do not provide sufficient data to compute effect sizes.

Information sources 1. Electronic databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, PsycINFO, SPORTDiscus, China National Knowledge

Infrastructure (CNKI), and Wanfang Data, will be systematically searched.

2. Reference lists of all included studies and relevant reviews will be manually screened to identify additional eligible studies.

3. When necessary, corresponding authors of included studies may be contacted to obtain missing or unclear data.

Main outcome(s) 1. Prosocial behaviours in sport, as measured by validated or conceptually equivalent instruments, including behaviours directed toward teammates and/or opponents.

2. Antisocial behaviours in sport, as measured by validated or conceptually equivalent instruments, including behaviours directed toward teammates and/or opponents.

3. Effect sizes representing associations between intrapersonal and/or social-environmental antecedents and prosocial or antisocial behaviours (e.g., correlation coefficients or other convertible effect measures).

Data management 1. All records identified through database searches will be imported into reference management software, and duplicates will be removed prior to screening.

2. Study selection, data extraction, and quality assessment data will be recorded and managed using structured data extraction forms.

3. Extracted data will be stored in secure electronic files and backed up regularly to ensure data integrity.

4. Any changes to extracted data will be documented to maintain transparency and traceability throughout the review process.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis 1. The methodological quality and risk of bias of included studies will be assessed using a standardized quality assessment tool appropriate for observational studies.

2. Quality assessment will be conducted independently by two reviewers.

3. Any discrepancies between reviewers will be resolved through discussion or consultation with a third reviewer if necessary.

4. The results of the quality assessment will be used to inform the interpretation of findings and, where appropriate, sensitivity analyses.

Strategy of data synthesis 1. Where sufficient data are available, meta-analyses will be conducted to synthesise effect sizes representing associations between antecedents and prosocial or antisocial behaviours in sport.

2. Effect sizes reported in primary studies will be converted to a common metric (e.g., correlation

coefficients) where necessary to allow for quantitative synthesis.

3. Random-effects models will be used to account for expected heterogeneity across studies.

4. Statistical heterogeneity will be assessed using the Q statistic and the I^2 index.

5. Separate meta-analyses will be conducted for prosocial and antisocial behaviours.=

6. Where meta-analysis is not feasible due to insufficient or highly heterogeneous data, findings will be synthesised narratively.

Subgroup analysis

1. Where sufficient data are available, subgroup analyses will be conducted to explore potential sources of heterogeneity.

2. Planned subgroup analyses may include age group (e.g., youth vs. adult athletes), sport type (team vs. individual sports), competitive level, and type of measurement instrument used to assess prosocial and antisocial behaviours.

3. Subgroup analyses will be performed separately for prosocial and antisocial behaviours.

4. Subgroup analyses will only be conducted when an adequate number of studies are available within each subgroup.

Sensitivity analysis

1. Sensitivity analyses will be conducted, where appropriate, to examine the robustness of the meta-analytic findings.

2. These analyses may include repeating the meta-analyses after excluding studies with lower methodological quality or high risk of bias.

3. Sensitivity analyses may also be performed by excluding studies with extreme effect sizes to assess their influence on the overall results.

4. The results of sensitivity analyses will be used to evaluate the stability of the findings and to inform their interpretation.

Language restriction Studies published in English and Chinese will be included.

Country(ies) involved China.

Keywords Prosocial behaviour; Antisocial behaviour; Moral behaviour; Sport; Athletes; Antecedents; Meta-analysis.

Dissemination plans The findings of this systematic review and meta-analysis will be disseminated through publication in peer-reviewed academic journals and presentation at relevant academic conferences in the fields of sport psychology and sport sciences.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Dong Wang - Author 1 conceived the study, designed the protocol, and drafted the manuscript.

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