

MORAL Content Judgment and Collective Efficacy As Determinants of Effective Communication In Team SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the significant influence of moral content judgment and collective efficacy on determinants of effective communication in team sports. The study employed a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive correlational method. Three adapted instruments were utilized to assess the levels of moral content judgment, collective efficacy, and effective communication in team sports. Data collected was analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated efficacy of players exhibited a high level of moral content judgment and collective efficacy, and a high level of effective communication in team sports. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant positive relationship between collective efficacy and effective communication in team sports. On the other hand, moral content judgment does not have a significant relationship to effective communication in team sports.

KEYWORDS: *Education, moral content judgment, collective efficacy, effective communication in team Sports, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication in team sports involves knowledge sharing, role clarity, goal setting, motivation, culture, and cohesion (Ishak, 2021). Additionally, Charlina et al. (2024) state that effective communication from coaches in team sports improves players'/athletes' understanding, motivation, physical activity, achievement, and team performance in sports. However, Davis et al. (2024) mention that poor communication, such as a lack of clarity,

misinterpretations, and cultural diversity, may be barriers to free, effective communication on the part of both athletes and coaches. Moreover, Choi et al. (2019) found that ineffective communication among young athletes has been a problem, particularly in accepting feedback and being open with one another within the team. This communication breakdown not only undermines team cohesion but also fosters an environment where deviant behaviors are more likely to occur, creating major obstacles to team dynamics, athlete well-being, and overall sportsmanship.

In Minneapolis, Hall (2023) revealed that team sports players have low effectiveness in communication due to a lack of clarity in objectives that create confusion and make it difficult for the team to align in their specific goals. In Pakistan, Memon et al. (2024) explained that players reported difficulties in conveying their thoughts and ideas within the team, and this issue often led to avoidance of crucial discussions and negatively affected their skill development and professionalism. In Korea, Kim and Park (2020) emphasize that if the team lacks clear and effective communication between coaches and athletes, it will greatly affect their performance.

Further, in the Philippines, Jimeno (2023) states that players showcasing inactive listening, such as being uninterested in listening, thinking about something else, and staring at their phones, were one of the frequent barriers to effective communication in team sports. In Davao City, Gelbolingphones (2024) explained that the sports community and athletes have struggled to promote effective communication within the team. These factors include negative feedback mechanisms, misunderstandings, and conflicts that affect the team's overall performance.

Additionally, some factors affect effective communication in team sports, such as moral content judgment and collective efficacy. First, moral content judgment defines the intuitive thinking or process by which individuals or athletes determine the results, whether right or wrong, about their personal beliefs, societal standards, and norms that will affect team chemistry, team unity, and the players (Krettenauer & Victor, 2017). For example, Kavussanu and Boardley (2020) found that athletes with higher moral competence were more likely to engage in prosocial behavior, particularly when team communication encouraged mutual respect and ethical reflection. Similarly, Shields et al. (2017) reported that effective communication, especially from coaches and team

leaders, helps reduce moral disengagement by promoting fairness and accountability during competition.

Further, Yaffe et al. (2021) expressed that players who have high morals and good judgment mostly affect team communication between coaches and athletes. Further, the growth of successful communication in sports is notably influenced by collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is defined as the shared ideas and goals of team members so that they cooperate to cross obstacles and be victorious (Huang et al., 2020). Moreover, Piasecki and Filho (2024) examined how collective efficacy, particularly task-related communication and social cohesion, enhances athletes' effective communication and strengthens mutual understanding and trust, which directly contributes to collective efficacy. Similarly, Fransen et al. (2020) explored the mediating role of team leaders, emphasizing that verbal encouragement and strategic instructions from leaders play a crucial role in promoting team efficacy by ensuring clarity and shared goals. To support this, Kim et al. (2021) discuss that a high level of collective efficacy can improve team strategy, decision-making, and team strength.

With the foregoing scenario, the researcher wanted to study how qualified basketball, baseball, and football players in the DAVRAA meet effectively communicate in sports to predetermine their moral content judgment and collective self-efficacy at the sports level. The results of this study will further enrich the Department of Education and Higher Education, giving them an idea of how moral content judgment and collective efficacy impact effective communication in team sports.

The result of the study is vital for coaches and sports administrators; thus, it will be disseminated to them and other groups by using different means, such as LAC sessions and meetings with the school sports coordinator. The researcher will share the results of this study with coaches and sports administrators in different schools by providing them with links to the study. Also, the information will be disseminated further through public research forums, which might be local, national, or international research forums. Furthermore, the researcher intends to publish the work in a refereed journal to aid subsequent researchers in validating the findings and extending the body of knowledge on moral content judgment and collective efficacy as determinants of effective communication in team sports.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the level of moral content judgment of the respondents in terms of: normative order; fairness; egoistic consequences; social consequences; and harmony-serving consequences?
2. What is the level of collective efficacy of the respondents in terms of effort; ability; preparation; persistence; and unity?
3. What is the level of effective communication in team sports of the respondents in terms of acceptance; negative conflict; positive conflict; and distinctiveness?
4. Is there a significant relationship between moral judgment and effective communication in team sports? collective efficacy and effective communication in team sports?
5. Do moral content judgment and collective self-efficacy significantly influence effective communication in team sports?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study used a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive correlational design. Creswell (2014) defined quantitative research design as a method that includes the procedures of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and writing. Additionally, Babbie (2016) added that this method is used to describe the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. The goal of this design is to determine if there is an association (or correlation) between variables. Hence, this method was appropriate because this study described moral content judgment and collective efficacy as determinants of effective communication in team sports. Furthermore, it looks into how moral content judgment and collective self-efficacy for sports influence effective communication in team sports.

Research Respondents. The respondents of this study were the qualified secondary basketball, baseball, and football men's categories in the DAVRAA meet, which has been held since at least 2007. Respondent teams were Davao City, Durians, Tagum City Premier, Davao Del Norte Pioneers, Davao Oriental Sunrisers, and the Division of Mati City Eagles, with a total of 215 respondents. The selected respondents were considered the most appropriate for this study since they are immersed in competitive team settings, where moral judgments, collective efficacy, and communication frequently play into training and actual competition.

Research Instruments. Three questionnaires were used to identify and measure the level and relationship of moral content judgment and collective efficacy as determinants of effective communication in team sports, which underwent validity and reliability tests. Moral Content Judgment in Sports Questionnaire (MCJSQ) by Proios (2010). It was made up of 24 items, which were divided into 5 subscales: 4 for normative order, 5 items for fairness, 5 items for egoistic consequences, 5 for social consequences, and 5 items for harmony-serving consequences. All scales had their alpha above or very close to the recommended criterion of .70.

Collective Efficacy Questionnaire for Sports (CEQS) developed by Öncü, et al. (2018) was also used to identify the level of collective self-efficacy for sports in terms of effort, ability, preparation, persistence, and unity. There were 4 items for effort, 4 items for ability, 4 items for preparation, 4 items for persistence, and 4 items for unity. Cronbach's alpha test was satisfactory for the five factors, correlating between 0.6 and 0.73 with the total score.

Lastly, the Scale for Effective Communication in Team Sports (SECTS). This questionnaire was developed by Sullivan & Feltz (2003). This questionnaire was about measuring the level of effective communication in team sports in terms of acceptance, negative conflict, positive conflict, and distinctiveness. There were eight items for acceptance, three items for negative conflict, three items for positive conflict, and three items for distinctiveness, with a total of 16 items tested. All scales had their alpha above or very close to the recommended criterion of .70. The questionnaire used underwent a reliability test.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researcher sent a letter to the University of Immaculate Conception (UIC) Dean of the Graduate School asking for permission to conduct the study. After the UIC-Research Ethics Committee approved the permission letter, the researcher formally requested ethical clearance before giving the study's target respondents the instruments. After ethical clearance was released by UIC REC and after asking permission from the dean, the researcher forwarded the letters and other documents to the DepEd Regional Director and then the school's division superintendent to formally ask permission to conduct the study. In the data collection process, informed consent forms (ICF) or assent forms were secured and signed by both the respondents and one of their parents before the questionnaire was distributed. This ensures that all respondents understand the study's objectives, their role in the research,

and their rights as participants. If data collection coincided with a competition, efforts were made to administer the questionnaire at the most convenient time for the respondents. If necessary, the questionnaire may be left with them to complete later, so as not to disrupt their schedule.

Ethical Considerations. This study adhered to ethical standards with approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at the University of the Immaculate Conception (UIC). It emphasizes informed consent, confidentiality, and participant welfare. Data were securely managed, and participants were respected through transparent communication and fair treatment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Moral Content Judgment

The students' level of moral content judgment, as reflected in Table 1, has an overall mean of 4.35, which is described as high, meaning that the students' moral content judgment is always evident. This suggests that student-athletes exhibit strong ethical conduct, fairness, and team-centered values. Moreover, the standard deviation ranged from 0.04 to 0.17, which indicates a high variability in the respondents' answers. This implies that these results underscore that high moral content judgment among athletes significantly contributes to upholding ethical standards, fairness, and developing team cohesion.

Table 1.
Level of Moral Content Judgment

INDICATORS	Mean	SD	Description
A. Normative Order	4.41	0.15	Very High
B. Fairness	4.53	0.10	Very High
C. Egoistic Consequences	3.88	0.04	High
D. Social Consequences	4.36	0.17	Very High
E. Harmony-serving Consequences	4.61	0.06	Very High
Overall Mean	4.35	0.28	Very High

This aligns with prior studies by Kriegel (2021), which assert that athletes who internalize moral principles are more likely to uphold ethical standards in competitive contexts, demonstrate respect for opponents, and abide by the norms of fair play. Also, Posbergh and Coubertin (2023) emphasized fairness, with players consistently ensuring that competition occurred on equal

terms. Additionally, Grim and Hardwood (2023) state that the athletes' high regard for harm-serving consequences illustrates a commitment to fostering team cohesion and positive intergroup relationships. Further, Lee and Kim (2020) established in their study that well-articulated moral and normative standards in youth sports teams promoted prosocial behavior and deterred antisocial behavior. Furthermore, Clack (2018) added that the high harmony-serving consequences can develop ethical behavior among team members, promote harmony, and minimize intragroup conflict.

Level of Collective Efficacy for Sports

The students' level of collective efficacy, as reflected in Table 2, has an overall mean of 4.49, which is described as very high, meaning that the students' collective efficacy is always manifested. This suggests that student-athletes display a high sense of team responsibility and confidence in group success. More so, it can be noted that the standard deviation ranged from 0.04 to 0.07, which was less than 1.0, indicating slightly greater variability in some areas of the respondents' responses. This implies that the extremely high collective efficacy of student-athletes emphasizes the need to develop team trust, cooperation, and goal setting, and this can greatly improve individual and group achievement in competitive sport settings.

Table 2
Level of Collective Efficacy for Sports

INDICATORS	Mean	SD	Description
A. Effort	4.48	0.06	Very High
B. Ability	4.46	0.04	Very High
C. Preparation	4.54	0.02	Very High
D. Persistence	4.45	0.05	Very High
E. Unity	4.52	0.07	Very High
Overall Mean	4.49	0.06	Very High

According to Garivani et al. (2016), collective efficacy refers to the perceived capacity of a team to execute coordinated actions required for successful performance. This definition is reinforced by the high scores across all dimensions in this study, suggesting that the athletes collectively believe in their capability to overcome challenges and achieve team goals. Similarly, Zumeta et al. (2016) emphasized that collective efficacy is a vital determinant of effective performance in sports, workgroups, and social interactions.

In contrast, Garcia-Angulo et al. (2020) found that low levels of collective efficacy could lead to diminished performance, particularly in unfavorable game situations. They noted that athletes with low collective belief may experience increased stress and reduced problem-solving capacity during high-pressure scenarios. Moreover, Krammer et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of collective belief in enhancing team motivation and behavior, and this evidence supports the notion that collective efficacy is not limited to physical readiness or skill but also encompasses emotional intelligence, team cohesion, and the capacity for positive interpersonal interactions.

Level of Effective Communication in Team Sports

The students' level of moral content judgment, as reflected in Table 3, has an overall mean of 4.50, which is described as very high, meaning that the students' collective efficacy is always observed. This finding indicates that DAVRAA athletes consistently and strongly demonstrate effective communication behaviors across different aspects of team interaction. More so, it can be noted that the standard deviation ranged from 0.02 to 0.09, which was less than 1.0, indicating slightly greater variability in some areas of the respondents' responses. The high overall mean implies that players actively demonstrate positive communication practices, maintaining respectful dialogue, managing conflicts constructively, and fostering a unique team identity.

Table 3
Level of Effective Communication in Team Sports

INDICATORS	Mean	SD	Description
A. Acceptance	4.55	0.07	Very High
B. Negative Conflict	4.52	0.09	Very High
C. Positive Conflict	4.38	0.06	Very High
D. Distinctiveness	4.48	0.02	Very High
Overall Mean	4.50	0.09	Very High

This result is consistent with Salas et al. (2020), who emphasized that effective communication fosters psychological safety and trust, encouraging team members to express thoughts and concerns freely, and supports the idea that a psychologically safe environment is fostered through inclusive and respectful communication. In addition, Eys et al. (2019) noted that communication enhances team morale and provides constructive direction, particularly when both coaches and teammates engage in positive feedback. Moreover, Braun et al. (2020) stated that effective communication helps reduce unproductive conflict while enhancing team cohesion and focus.

Further, Eccles and Tenenbaum’s (2019) assertion is that teams with effective communication are more adaptable to changes during gameplay, and high communication competence equips players to adjust strategies dynamically—an ability increasingly critical in competitive sports settings. Furthermore, Myers et al. (2017) noted that effective communication reduces stress and enhances psychological well-being. By maintaining a respectful, open, and expressive communication environment, athletes may experience lower psychological strain and improved emotional resilience during training and competition.

Significant Relationship between Moral Content Judgment, Collective Efficacy, and Effective Communication in Team Sports

Table 4 reflects the relationship between moral content judgment, collective efficacy, and effective communication in team sports among student-athletes, showing that moral content judgment and collective efficacy have a strong positive relationship ($r = .491$ and $.671$), and their p-value is $.000$. The relationship between moral content judgment, collective efficacy, and effective communication among student-athletes shows that both moral content judgment and collective efficacy have a strong positive relationship, which is less than the level of significance.

Table 4
Significant Relationship between Moral Content Judgment and Collective Efficacy, and Effective Communication

Variables	Effective Communication		
	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Moral Content Judgment	0.491	0.000	Significant
Collective Efficacy	0.671	0.000	Significant

The results of this study support the findings of Al-Yaaribi and Kavussanu (2017), who state that moral behaviors, like respect and fairness among team members, are positively associated with effective communication, which indicates that teams with higher moral standards communicate better, resulting in improved coordination and performance. In addition, Mulder et al. (2018) declare that a positive moral climate sets the tone for how communication occurs not only during competition but also in training, meetings, and social interactions, and coaches and team leaders who model and

reward ethical behavior further strengthen this climate, reinforcing a cycle in which morality and communication mutually enhance each other.

Further, Sage et al. (2019) explicitly state that effective communication helps bring team values together and frames the discussion of moral dilemmas, thus serving as an architect in creating a common commitment to moral action. Furthermore, Davis et al. (2024) imply that a functioning team that fosters high moral judgment, along with effective communication, will be more capable of resolving conflicts and sustaining friendly relationships, which helps sportsmen attain moral consciousness and effective communication in team sports in favor of teamwork and integrity.

**Significant Influence of the Predictors on
Effective Communication in Team Sports**

Table 5 shows the significance of the influence of the predictors on effective communication in team sports. Moral content judgment shows a p-value of .129; collective efficacy shows a p-value of .000. In terms of singular capacity, moral content judgment shows a p-value of .129, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed) with a positive standardized beta value of 0.14. It shows that moral content judgment is not a significant predictor of effective communication in team sports. It means that for every unit increase in the value of moral content judgment, there is a very small corresponding increase of 0.14 in the level of effective communication in team sports of student-athletes.

In another singular capacity of independent variable, collective efficacy reflects a positive standardized beta value of 0.63 and a p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed). It means that in a singular capacity, collective efficacy is a significant predictor of effective communication in team sports. This means that for every unit increase in the level of collective efficacy, there is a corresponding increase of 0.63 in the level of effective communication in team sports among student-athletes.

Table 5
Significance of the Influence of the Predictors on Effective Communication in Team Sports

Variables	Sports Engagement			
	T		p-value	Remarks
Moral Content Judgment	0.14	1.523	0.129	Not Significant
Collective Efficacy	0.63	9.138	0.000	Significant

This finding is further illuminated by the Team Mental Models (TMMs) framework, which underpins the explanation of why moral content judgment did not significantly influence team communication. According to Filho (2018), TMMs refer to the shared cognitive understandings among team members regarding task execution, role distribution, and interaction processes. However, moral content judgment is inherently an individual-level cognitive function, shaped by personal beliefs, values, and experiences. Unless a team explicitly integrates these moral principles into its collective cognitive framework, individual ethical reasoning may not translate into communication behaviors that facilitate team coordination. This suggests that while student-athletes may demonstrate high levels of moral reasoning, such personal judgments do not necessarily enhance communication within the team unless they are embedded in the shared mental models of the group (Filho, 2018).

This finding validates the transformational leadership theory (Burns & James, 1995), which underpins this study. According to the theory, effective communication within teams is heavily influenced by shared goals, team cohesion, and motivational leadership, all of which are strongly tied to collective efficacy. The significance of collective efficacy in predicting effective communication confirms that the belief in a team's collective capability is a critical driver of open, effective, and cohesive communication patterns among athletes. Transformational leaders, like sports coaches, are instrumental in fostering collective efficacy by building a shared vision and enhancing players' collective confidence, thus improving communication (Burns & James, 1995; Fransen et al., 2020).

Several other possible factors account for the remaining 54 percent of the unexplained variance in effective communication. According to Salas et al. (2020), team communication is also strongly influenced by psychological safety—players' sense of security to express themselves without fear of negative consequences. Braun et al. (2020) further point out that leadership behavior, including coaches' communication style and emotional intelligence, significantly affects athletes' communication. Additionally, Cotterill and Fransen (2021) state that they are recognized as important contributors to communication

dynamics. Moreover, Myers et al. (2017) claim that environmental and contextual factors such as training conditions, cultural diversity, and pressure from competitions could also impact how athletes interact and communicate effectively.

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