

Journal of Athletic Training

Home For Journal For Authors For Reviewers For Readers For Subscribers For Students Help

Home > [Journal of Athletic Training](#) > [March/April 2008](#) > Individual Moral Philosophies and Ethical Decision Making of Undergrad...

[Advanced Search](#)

National Athletic Trainers' Association Links

- [NATA Home](#)
- [Online Manuscript Submission and Review](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Facts & Figures](#)
- [Editor-in-Chief](#)
- [Journal Editors](#)
- [Editorial Board](#)
- [NATA Position Statements](#)
- [PubMed Central](#)
- [Search PubMed](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

[◀ Previous Article](#) [Volume 43, Issue 2 \(March/April 2008\)](#) [Next Article ▶](#)

 [Add to Favorites](#)  [Share Article](#)  [Export Citations](#)

 [Track Citations](#)  [Permissions](#)

[Full-text](#)

[PDF](#)

Article Citation:

Shane V. Caswell, Trenton E. Gould (2008) Individual Moral Philosophies and Ethical Decision Making of Undergraduate Athletic Training Students and Educators. *Journal of Athletic Training*: March/April 2008, Vol. 43, No. 2, pp. 205-214.

doi: 10.4085/1062-6050-43.2.205

Original Research

Individual Moral Philosophies and Ethical Decision Making of Undergraduate Athletic Training Students and Educators

Shane V. Caswell, PhD, ATC* and Trenton E. Gould, PhD, ATC[†]

*George Mason University, Manassas, VA;

[†]The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Abstract

Context: Ethics research in athletic training is lacking. Teaching students technical skills is important, but teaching them how to reason and to behave in a manner that befits responsible health care professionals is equally important.

Objective: To expand ethics research in athletic training by (1) describing undergraduate athletic training students' and educators' individual moral philosophies and ethical decision-making abilities and (2) investigating the effects of sex and level of education on mean composite individual moral philosophies and ethical decision-making scores.

Design: Stratified, multistage, cluster-sample correlational study.

Setting: Mailed survey instruments were distributed in classroom settings at 30 institutions having Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)-accredited athletic training programs.

Patients or Other Participants: Undergraduate students and educators (n = 598: 373 women, 225 men; mean age = 23.5 ± 6.3 years) from 25 CAAHEP-accredited athletic training programs.

Main Outcome Measure(s): We used the Ethics Position Questionnaire and the Dilemmas in Athletic Training Questionnaire to compute participants' mean composite individual moral philosophies (idealism and relativism) and ethical decision-making scores, respectively. Three separate 2 (sex: male, female) × 3 (education level: underclass, upper class, educator) between-subjects factorial analyses of variance using idealism, relativism, and ethical decision-making scores as dependent measures were performed.

Results: Respondents reported higher idealism scores (37.57 ± 4.91) than relativism scores (31.70 ± 4.80) (response rate = 83%). The mean ethical decision-making score for all respondents was 80.76 ± 7.88. No significant interactions were revealed. The main effect for sex illustrated that men reported

Volume 43, Issue 2
(March/April 2008)

[< Previous](#) [Next >](#)

Journal of
Athletic Training



[Current Issue](#)
[Available Issues](#)

Journal Information

Print ISSN 1062-6050

eISSN 1938-162X

Frequency Bimonthly:

January/February
March/April
May/June
July/August
September/October
November/December

Register for a Profile

Not Yet [Registered?](#)

Benefits of Registration Include:

- A Unique User Profile that will allow you to manage your current subscriptions (including online access)
- The ability to create favorites lists down to the article level
- The ability to customize email alerts to receive specific notifications about the topics you care most about and special offers

[Register Now!](#)

Related Articles

Articles Citing this Article


[Google Scholar](#)

Search for Other Articles By Author

☞ Shane V. Caswell

☞ Trenton E. Gould

Search in:

 Athletic Training

significantly higher relativism scores ($P = .0014$, $\eta^2 = .015$) than did women. The main effect for education level revealed significant differences between students' and educators' idealism ($P = .0190$, $\eta^2 = .013$), relativism ($P < .001$, $\eta^2 = .050$), and ethical decision-making scores ($P < .001$, $\eta^2 = .027$). Tukey honestly significant difference post hoc analysis indicated that educators possessed lower idealism scores (36.90 ± 5.70) and relativism scores (29.92 ± 4.86) and higher ethical decision-making scores (82.98 ± 7.62) than did students.

Conclusions: Our findings do not support changes in athletic training ethics education practices to address sex-specific needs. However, when opportunities occur for students to reason using different ethical perspectives, educators should be aware of their students' and their own moral philosophies in order to optimally facilitate professional growth.

Keywords: [ethical ideology](#), [moral psychology](#), [ethical judgment](#)

Shane V. Caswell, PhD, ATC, contributed to conception and design; acquisition and analysis and interpretation of the data; and drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the article. Trenton E. Gould, PhD, ATC, contributed to analysis and interpretation of the data and drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the article.

Address correspondence to Shane V. Caswell, PhD, ATC, School of Recreation, Health and Tourism, George Mason University, 10900 University Boulevard, MS 4E5, Manassas, VA 20110. Address e-mail to scaswell@gmu.edu

top ▲