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Abstract

The purpose of this study has been the research of the relationship between goals performance and development on the one hand and the ethical climate prevailing in non-profit amateur teams. One hundred and seven subjects (N = 117 males and N = 25 females), all members of several sports teams, have answered whether the goal of their team is the performance or the development of the sport on a 5-point scale. Moreover, they have filled in the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ; Victor and Cullen, 1987, 1988). The five dimensions extracted by Agarwal and Malloy (1999) in the not-profit context were used for this study. The results have shown that a “caring climate” is predominant in the teams, while they aim at their development as well. A negative effect for performance goal on the dimensions individual caring and independence, and a positive effect of development goal on the dimension individual caring were also evident.

Key Words: *Sport management, moral atmosphere, goals, sport teams .*

Ethics is a philosophical term which derives from the Greek word “ethos” meaning character or custom. Moreover, ethics is a body of principles or standards of human conduct that govern the behavior of individuals and groups. Ethical principles continue, even nowadays, to have a profound influence on many modern management fields, such as human resource management.

Ethics is widely evident both in society and in sport, with games actually being a form of social function, where the presence of ethics is remarkable. Bredemeier and Shields (1994) maintained that sport constitutes a social reality, in which a great number of moral dilemmas is evident. For instance, in the case of sport as a moral dilemma one could mention the usage of one of the main players of a team in a very important game, who, however, is injured and his participation is possible only under painkiller treatment. Nevertheless, such an action could aggravate the player’s condition and even cause some permanent problem. The study of the decision makers’ ethics in sport facilitates us to apprehend who are those who – by means of the decisions they make - could lead the players to such actions. This enables us to anticipate similar situations, which are opposed to the sport spirit and the wider social rules.

Ethical climate is a concept that describes the stream of an organization concerning the norms, the values and the behaviour itself (Schneider, 1975). According to Agarwal and Malloy (1999), the concepts of climate have been widely accepted as a means for the explanation of both organizational behaviour generally and ethical behaviour more specifically (Morgan & Volkwein, 1992; Olson, 1995; Trevino, 1990). In addition, the climate refers to the members’ common notion concerning the way their organization is going to function (Butcher, 1994; Meudal & Gadd, 1994; Olson, 1995).

In sport, ethical climate or atmosphere refers to the characteristics of the sports environment that can play a decisive role in the performance of moral actions on part of the participants (Weiss & Smith, 2002). Research has shown that whenever a team accepts aggressive and deceptive behaviours, these kinds of behaviours are to be expected by the players (e.g., Stephens, 2000, 2001; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996; Stephens & Kavanagh, 2003). On the contrary, studies based on intervention programs for the moral development have maintained that when children were influenced by several perspectives of moral development (moral reasoning, sportpersonship, pro-social behavior), they presented improved moral reasoning, i.e. they made decisions in the case of moral dilemmas based on moral principles or values (e.g., Bredemeier et al., 1986; Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Gibbons et al., 1995; Wandzilak et al., 1988). Thus, whenever the members of a federation adopt a ethical climate, it is expected – for example – the players to have their behaviour based on the principles of sportpersonship, the referees to be impartial, consistent and polite while making their decisions, the administrators of the teams to create the conditions necessary for attracting young people to sport, to offer equal opportunities for participation, etc. Indeed, Malloy and Agarwal

(2001) maintained that ethical climate is determined by the team itself, which in turn identifies for the group and for individuals what is ethical or unethical behaviour and how ethical issues are managed. Thus, the apprehension of the factors that affect the perception of moral behavior in an organization would be extremely important for the leadership of this organization, as far as the exhortation of moral behavior and the avoidance of the organization's members' immoral behaviours are concerned.

The development of ethics was approached by means of two, mainly, theoretical models. The first model was that of "internalization", which approached moral development through the learning and acceptance of social rules and behaviours. The second model was the "constructive" one, which focused on the way people moralize on the values and behaviours, i.e. the way they perceive ethics. The theory that supported this model was the cognitive – developmental theory and it this is the one which was used both in sport and in society generally. According to the cognitive – developmental theory, the development is achieved via a series of different, qualitative stages, which are hierarchically organized, but which are not necessarily evident in all persons at the same period of time (Kohlberg, 1969).

The developmental course of ethics in the cognitive – developmental theory was studied through the variations of ethics in relation to several individual characteristics (e.g., age and education). This was the case because without such an experiential support an evolutionary theory is impossible to remain coherent (Rest et al., 1986). However, Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988) considering that individual characteristics are inadequate to explain the factors determining moral decision making within an organization and developed the notion of ethical climate in their task determined as: "the prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content" (p. 101).

Victor and Cullen (1987) believed that the ethical climate should be based on the three major types of ethical philosophical theories: egoism (hedonism), teleology and deontology. Ethical egoism is the theory according to which an individual should follow the greatest good for oneself. People who use an egoistic criterion to make ethical decisions are exclusively concerned with self-interest. Comparing deontology and teleology: deontology focuses on the correctness of the intentions of the decision maker as well as on the means chosen to accomplish a task, and teleology concentrates on the consequences of actions (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988). The most well known teleological theory, utilitarianism, suggests that the right action is the one that generates the greatest good for the greatest number of persons and minimizes the damage or harm to the others. These benevolent criteria emphasize the maximization of joint interests. Apart from utilitarian orientation within the teleological theory, there is the orientation to perfectionistic ethics, as well. In this latter orientation, the moral value of a deed lies in the achievement of an ideal, of harmony and perfection for both oneself and the social group. Contrary to the two above-mentioned teleological ori-

entations there is the deontological aspect or one which emphasizes mostly duty and moral obligation. These factors, apart from the outcome, determine the rightness or wrongness of actions and practices, as well.

Victor and Cullen (1988) have developed, put into effect and tested their framework of organizational work climates combining ethical (Fritzsche & Becker, 1984) and psychological (Kohlberg, 1984) theories with locus of analysis and other socio-cultural theories of organization. Locus of analysis, consisting of individual, local and cosmopolitan referents functions to “shape the behaviours and attitudes of role incumbents” (Victor & Cullen, 1988, p. 106). The individual locus of analysis is idiographically based and may reflect a hedonistic or an existentialistic ethical orientation. The local referent is the immediate work group or the firm generally, as well as the individual’s community of significant others. While, the cosmopolitan locus of analysis extends beyond the group and the firm. The authors developed and administered an Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) first to MBAs (Victor & Cullen, 1987) and then to over 800 subjects in four companies (Victor & Cullen, 1988). A principle components factor analysis of results yielded five factors of organizational climate. These factors include caring (a concern for the well-being of all company members), law and code (whether any laws are broken), rules (are the company’s policies and procedures being followed), instrumentality (furthering individual or company self-interest), and independence (it is important to abide by one’s personal ethical beliefs).

As far as sport is concerned, ethics in sports teams refers to the administrators’ behavior towards the participants in sport. Although the issue of ethical climate prevailing in sport organizations – teams – is of great importance, it does not seem to receive all the necessary attention (Donnelly, 2000; Malloy & Agarwal, 2001; Malloy et al., 2000). Malloy and Agarwal (2001) have claimed that more attention should be paid on the members’ behaviour as well as on the several factors that affect the organizations members’ decision making process. According to Malloy and Agarwal (2001) the research has shown that some of the determinants that affect the ethical climate in life organizations are individual-specific factors (e.g., gender, age and moral education), as well as organizational-specific factors (e.g., organizational size). However, as far as age, gender and moral decision making are concerned, researches conducted by Ford and Richardson (1994) and Loe et al., (2000) have shown that these relations are non-significant or inconsistent. Moreover, in a more recent study no personal factors were found to affect moral decision making (Paolillo & Vitell, 2002). Malloy and Agarwal (2001), furthermore, focused on another whole of important factors, such as the level of moral development, the organizational obligations and the nature and frequency of moral dilemmas. The outcome of an experiential study has shown that the education level, the style of the decisions and the officials’ and the volunteers’ style affect the ethical climate in a non-profit organization (Malloy & Agarwal, 2003). The

importance of the present study lays in the fact that it aims to the search of other factors that affect the ethical climate of the sport teams.

The ethical climate theory is heavily based on normative systems and thus it can be supposed that the ethical climate is affected by the form of organization. Kohlberg (1984) argued that the “social-moral” atmosphere of an organization was a significant factor in the ethical decision making of individuals within it. In fact, Kohlberg (1981) had stated earlier, “Individual moral action usually takes place in a social or group context and has a profound influence on the moral decision making of individuals” (pp. 37-38). Moreover, Higgins et al., (1984) argued that “the moral action usually takes place in a social or group context, and that context usually has a profound influence on the moral decision making of individuals” (p. 75).

Research has shown that the philosophy of a program, the goals of the team, and the teaching and modeling behaviors of adults can influence sportsmanlike behaviours (Gano-Overway, 1999). Kohlberg and Candee (1984), in their attempt to underline the importance of motivation in moral behaviour, have supported that before examining whether an action is moral or not, we should first examine the reasons or motives that have led to this very action. For instance, all people are not driven by the same incentives for their participation in sport organizations as members. A research has shown that there are several incentives as far as the participation in athletics professional associations as members (Chen, 2004). More specifically, the outcomes of the above mentioned research have revealed that the informative incentives are the ones which encourage individuals to participate in athletics professional associations as members; the solidarity incentives are useful in the case of individuals wishing to remain members; the purposive incentives are effective in the recruitment of normative members; and finally the utilitarian incentives can intervene in an appropriate way as supplements for the reward of those members that contribute to the unification or satisfaction of those materially oriented. Thus, the incentive which leads the individual to the participation in a sports organization as a member can determine the moral principles or values, which characterize a decision making. Additionally, the importance of the role of motivation in moral behaviour has been underlined both by Rest (1983) as well as by Shields and Bredemeier (1995).

As far as the socio-cognitive approach is concerned, with a view to the study of ethics, it has been maintained that, in order the behaviour in achievement context to become apprehensible, it is very crucial to take under consideration all the situations experienced by the athlete as well as the goals that the individual tries to achieve (Ames, 1984; Duda, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984, 1989; Roberts, 1992, 1993). Shields and Bredemeier (1995) have argued that situational influences such as competition and cooperation may have great influence both on athletes’ moral action as well as on the way they perceive the collective standards of moral action as reflected in the social–moral norms of

their team. Competitive structures may focus the individual's attention on the self and in the case of team sports on those of the in-group as well.

According to the theory of goal posing, the conscious goals and intentions direct the individual's actions (Locke & Latham, 1990). In sport and especially in competitive sport, the goal is to win. Lumpkin (1990) maintained that, when winning becomes the primary goal, then all other possible outcomes are lost. For instance, the players believe that immoral behaviours in favour of their team are supported by the officials (Gellerman, 1986). In addition, football players have mentioned that it is possible to be carried away in performing dishonest sport practices when they perceive that other members of the team do the same (Stephens, 1993).

Moral development theorists (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Rest, 1984) agree that moral behaviour is an intentional motivated behaviour. Thus, to predict social – moral perceptions and actions, we need to consider the motivational characteristics of the situation at hand. Trail and Chelladurai's study (as cited in Trail and Chelladurai, 2002) has identified 10 goals while they have estimated the importance that inter-college athletes attribute to these goals. Moreover, they conceptually distinguished the goals between performance goals and developmental goals. The former (performance goals) are winning and profit-oriented, while the later (developmental goals) are education and amateur athletic competition oriented.

In the present study, taking under consideration the above-mentioned division of goals, as a performance goal have been estimated the team members' intention for championship, while as a developmental goal the sport development has been estimated. The aim of this study was to research the relationship of the performance and development goals to the ethical climate which prevails in non-profit sports teams as a basic objective of the team's members concerning their own team. By accepting the claim of Victor and Gullen (1987, 1988) that a number of different types of ethical climate probably exist in organizations, it has been assumed that the ethical climate in sport teams would probably be different among the different types of goals. Moreover, we expected to find a significant relationship between the goals (performance or development) and the ethical climate scales.

Method

Participants

The participants were 142 subjects ($n = 117$ males and $n = 25$ females), all members of several sports teams. Their age ranged from 20 to 78 years ($M = 40.6$, $SD = 10.52$). Their participation period as members in sport teams range between 1 and 36 years ($M = 8.56$, $SD = 6.83$).

Procedure

Initially, the subjects were asked to determine their team's goal. They answered two questions, the first one being whether the aim of their team is "...championship" (performance goal) and the second one whether the aim of their team was "...the developing of the sport" (development goal). The answers in both questions were given on a 5-point scale. Then, the subjects' perception of ethical climate that prevailed in their teams was estimated by filling in the Ethical Climate Questionnaire. The ECQ developed by Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988), was used to discover shared normative values and beliefs within the organization as well as to assess the respondents' perceptions of how the members of their respective organizations typically make decisions requiring ethical judgments. In other words, we tried to understand what ethical norms influenced members of teams in their ethical decision-making process. To complete the questionnaire, the participants were asked to read and rate on a 5-point scale each of the 26 value statements (consistent with the procedure developed by Victor and Cullen and used to assess the reliability and validity of their five EWC types).

The five dimensions extracted by Agarwal and Malloy (1999, 2001) in the non-profit context were used for this study: Individual caring, Machiavellianism, independence, social caring and law and code. The modified scale of Agarwal and Malloy was adopted in Greek by means of the reverse translation method in order to be used by Greek subjects.

Statistical analyses

The procedures of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 10.0) were utilized for data analysis. A factor analysis with principal axis factoring extraction and oblique rotation was conducted to identify the dimensions of ethical work climate. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the association of the dimensions of ethical work climate with the goals of the members of sport teams. Standard multiple regression analyses were used in order to estimate the possibility to predict the dimensions of ethical work climate by means of goals (performance or development).

Results

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive statistics has shown that the ethical climate, which prevails in the case of non-profit sport teams in general, is more social caring ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .07$) and individual caring ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .07$) oriented. On the contrary, the other dimensions of ethical climate were estimated to be lower, law

and code ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .07$), independence ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .13$), and Machiavellianism ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .11$). In addition, there was found that the main goal of non-profit sports teams, mainly, is the development of the sport (developmental) they perform ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.19$) rather than championship (performance) ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.30$).

Exploratory factor analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring was conducted utilizing the oblique rotation method. The use of principal axis factoring instead of principal component analysis (see, Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988), was supported by Agarwal and Malloy (1999). Both Bartlett test of thoroughness ($\chi^2 = 632.07$, $p = .001$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy ($KMO = 0.717$) indicated that factor analysis was appropriate for the data (Stevens, 1995). Items loaded with more than .40 were considered as loaded with one factor (Hinkin, 1995). Then, variants multicollinearity was examined by means of communalities (Harman, 1976). Values that approached the unity were not considered as a threat for the existence of multicollinearity. Five factors derived from the analysis, which accounted for 58.42% of the total variance and having eigenvalues greater than unity (Catell, 1978). The internal factors' coherence of the questionnaire was examined by the test of Cronbach alpha. The results indicated a satisfactory validity of the questionnaire. More specifically the sub-scales reliabilities were: "individual caring", $\alpha = .65$, "independence", $\alpha = .64$, "Machiavellianism", $\alpha = .67$, "social caring", $\alpha = .68$, and "law and code", $\alpha = .70$. The five factors corresponded to the ethical work climate (Table 1).

Table 1. *Factor analysis with Principle axis factoring (using oblimin rotation)*

Factors	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	h^2
Individual caring	It is expected that each individual is cared for when making decisions here.	.67					.30
	Our major consideration is what is best for everyone in the organization.	.84					.41
	What is best for each individual is a primary concern in this organization.	.72					.37
	In this organization, our major concern is always what is best for the other person.	.50					.47

Factors	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	h ²
Independence	In this organization, decision makers are guided by their own personal ethics.		.89				.43
	In this organization, decision makers are expected so follow their own personal and moral beliefs.		.81				.40
Machiavellianism	Decision makers in this organization are very concerned about what is best for themselves.			.66			.38
	In this organization, decision makers protect their own interests above other considerations.			.79			.41
	In this organization, decision makers are mostly out for themselves.			.74			.41
	There is no room for one's own personal morals or ethics in this organization.			.40			.28
Social caring	Decision makers in this organization are actively concerned about the athletes' and the publics' interests.				.57		.33
	The effects of decisions on the athlete and the public are a primary concern in this organization.				.69		.24
	It is expected that you will always do what is right for the athlete and public.				.67		.30
	Decision makers in this organization have a strong sense of responsibility to the outside community.				.44		.43
Law and code	The first consideration is whether a decision violates any law.					.74	.30
	Decision makers are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above other considerations.					.75	.41
	In this organization, decision makers are expected to strictly follow legal or professional standards.					.45	.39
	In this organization, the law or ethical code is the major consideration.					.66	.26
	% of variance	20,28	13,95	9,92	7,89	6,34	
	Total Variability					58,42	
	Eigenvalues	3,65	2,51	1,79	1,42	1,15	

Differences between Goals and Types of ethical climate

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used in order to examine the influence of the goals the Ethical Climate scales (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). A two-way multivariate analysis of variance was performed with the use of 5 ECQ scales (individual caring, machiavellianism, independence, social caring, law and code) as dependent variables and the Goals (performance × development) as independent variables. The results revealed significant multivariate effects for the performance goal (Wilks' lambda = .662, $F(20, 395) = 3.04$, $p < .001$), and development goal (Wilks' lambda = .754, $F(20, 395) = 1.75$, $p < .05$).

Subsequent univariate analyses (Table 2) showed that the performance goal differentiated ethical climate from machiavellianism, independence, social caring and law and code. Furthermore, the univariate analyses showed that the developmental goal differentiated ethical climate from independence and individual caring.

Table 2. *Univariate analyses of Goals (performance and development) in 5 ECQ scales*

Goals	Ethical climate	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Performance</i>	Machiavellianism	2.85	(4,137)	.05
	Individual caring	2.52	(4,137)	.05
	Social caring	3.03	(4,137)	.05
	Law and code	2.68	(4,137)	.05
<i>Development</i>	Indipendence	3.27	(4,137)	.05
	Individual caring	2.74	(4,137)	.05

Relationship between Goals and Types of Ethical Climate

It was hypothesized that performance goal and developmental goal can effect the formation of ethical work climate. Standard multiple regression analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996) were conducted to examine the possible moderating role of goals' (performance or development) in predicting ethical climate in sport teams. In the regression analyses as predictor (independent) variables Goals Performance and Development were used for each of the five Ethical Climate Scales (dependent variables). The results indicated a significant relationship between goals (performance or development) and individual caring scale ($R^2 = .066$, $F(2, 134) = 4.74$, $p < .01$), accounting for 6.6% of the variance, and independence scale ($R^2 = .049$, $F(2, 134) = 3.47$, $p < .05$),

accounting for 4.9% of the variance. The standardized beta coefficient (Table 3), revealed a negative effect for performance goal on the dimensions individual caring ($\beta = -.281$) and independence ($\beta = -.275$). Moreover, a positive effect of development goal was found for dimension individual caring ($\beta = .288$).

Table 3. *Results of Standard Regression Analyses*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Performance goal			
Individual caring	-.153	.06	-.281*
Independence	-.196	.07	-.275*
Development goal			
Individual caring	.170	.06	.288*

* $p = .01$

Discussion

Initially, the results of this study supported the predominance of social caring climate and individual caring climate. This makes clear that the members of non-profit sports teams are interested in the social role of sports as well as in the well-being of those who serve it. The present results are reinforced by the claim that in non-profit contexts there is the prevalence of a "caring climate" (Agarwal & Malloy, 1999). The caring climate is one that indicates a concern for joint welfare for individuals or the organization as a whole.

Moreover, they have shown that among the members of a team there is confusion concerning the extend to which the ethical climate cultivated corresponds to a principled (or independence, rules and procedures, or law and professional code) work climate, based on universal ethical principles such as honesty, justice, and fairness, would support ethical actions by the participations in sport (Wimbush & Shepard, 1994). This can, partly, constitute a possible reason for the dispute as whether "sport builds character" or not. Brede-meier (1999) argued that competitive sport nurtures societal values such as hard work and cooperation, providing a context where virtues such as teamwork, team loyalty, and persevering over adversity flourish. On the other hand, evidence exists which indicates that competitive sport may have a negative influence on character development (Coakly, 1990). Competition may produce moral problems (Orlick, 1978), reduce pro-social behaviour (Kleiber & Roberts, 1981), while it is also likely to support antisocial behavior (Kohn, 1986). Fi-

nally, the teams' members have been proved to reject the ethical climate of work that relates to Machiavellianism behaviours, where goals are achieved through an aggressive, manipulative, exploitive and devious manner in dealing with other individuals (Calhoon, 1969).

The conclusions of this study have offered the necessary support for the assumption that the ethical climate in non-profit sports teams is affected by the type of goal they adopt. This result is further supported by the findings of the study which has revealed the relation among commitment, organization and ethical climate (Cullen et al., 2003). In the present study, it can be reckoned that the organization commitment relate to that commitment, which derive from the aims of each sport team.

Shields and Bredemeier (1995), as previously mentioned, have argued that situational influences such as competition and cooperation may have great influence on moral action and on the way in which this moral action is perceived in the framework of the social-moral norms of a team. In addition, they have maintained that competitive structures may focus the individual's attention on the self and in the case of team sports on those of the in-group, as well. The above-mentioned claims reinforce the outcome of this very study that the performance goal differentiates the dimensions of Machiavellianism, independence, social caring and law and code of the ethical climate, while the development goal differentiates the dimensions of independence and individual caring.

The examination of the relationship between the goals and the ethical climate has verified the assumption that the types of goals are related to the dimensions of the ethical climate. More specifically, the results have revealed a negative relationship between the performance goal and the dimensions of individual caring and independence, as well a positive relationship between the development goal and the dimension of individual caring. These findings concurs with Nicholls' (1989) theoretical supposition that the personal goals adopted by an individual meaningfully relate to their world view and wider values about justice and fairness. This becomes evident by the fact that the independence climate constitutes an element of the moral criterion "principled" (Victor & Cullen, 1987), which reveals a deontological moral orientation (Kohlberg, 1976). Study findings have revealed a negative relation between principled climate and unethical behaviour (Peterson, 2002). Thus, it is well understood that the criterion is contrary to those elements expressed by goal performance orientation (e.g., winning or profit pursuit by all means).

However, this is not the case as far as the individual caring climate is concerned, which –as aforementioned– shows an interest in others' well-being, a determination that refers to life organizations for profit context. This concern for the "other" is known as benevolent (social-utilitarianism) ethical criteria and according to Victor and Cullen (1988) "People who are benevolent tend to be less cognizant of laws or rules and may also be less amenable to argument employing rules or principles" (p. 105). Thus, those in a benevolent climate

will use a teleological consideration of the well being of others as a dominant form of reasoning when they identify and solve conflicts (Rasmussen et al., 2003).

In sports, however, the notion of "individual caring" is examined as a dimension of sportpersonship (respect and concern for the opponent). The respect and concern for the opponent was evident through lending one's equipment to the opponent, agreeing to play even if the opponent is late (rather than winning by default) and refusing to take advantage of an injured opponent (Vallerand et al., 1997).

Research has provided evidence of a theoretically consistent link between goals and sportpersonship (Duda, 2001; Roberts, 2001). When individuals are task-involved, athletes may also be more willing to help one another in order to achieve personal improvement and place more emphasis on respect and fairness when striving to achieve in the competitive setting (Gano-Overway et al., 2004). Although the relationship between task orientation and respect for the opponent has not yet been established, yet research evidence have revealed a negative relationship between respect for the opponent and ego orientation, which is not characterized by attributes of justice and fairness (Lemyre et al., 2002). An additional support for the deontological orientation of the individual caring climate comes from the social field. Gilligan (1982), after studying the sex differences concerning moral reasoning, has maintained that moral reasoning of females tends to reflect a caring orientation, while males usually adopt justice in order to approach moral dilemmas. The above-mentioned study of the dimension of individual caring seems to be somehow relevant to the present outcome.

However, this probably different apprehension of the notion of individual caring, according to the conclusions of the present study, concerning non-profit sport teams, as a deontological oriented moral criterion probably meets an additional examination of this very notion in a sport framework. This claim is supported by the outcome of a research which has revealed a more discrete presentation of the dimensions that are based on the benevolent ethical criteria of the individual and social caring (Agarwal & Malloy, 1999). The findings of another study have revealed a positive relation between benevolent climates and organizational commitment (Cullen et al., 2003). Moreover, the same is supported by the claim that the non-profit sector has a more discriminating perception of benevolent climates than its for-profit counterpart (Malloy & Agarwal, 2001).

Both these findings, the negative relationship between the performance goal and the individual caring climate on the one hand and the independence climate and the development goal with the independence climate on the other, are indirectly confirmed by other studies in sport situations (i.e. the motivation climate aiming to goal achievement). This is because until nowadays the relation of the goals to moral functioning have been studied, as limited as

they have, only in the framework of motivational climate (Gano-Overway et al., 2004; Guivernau, 1999; Ommunsden et al., 2003; Roberts, 2001). A performance climate leads to the assumption that competitiveness constitutes a process of striving against others. The options in decision making lack independence and they are often made under great psychological stress (e.g., by the coaches on players) (Newton & Duda, 1999). In addition, when a performance climate prevails in a team, then some of its members may resort to cheating, breaking of rules and functioning aggressively, in order to achieve their goal (Ommunsden et al., 2003). On the contrary, when a mastery climate prevails among the members of a team, there is an anxiety concerning progress, and – in this case – competitiveness is translated probably as a team effort. Moreover, all actions of amoral and unsportsmanlike behaviour, as well as making a higher priority moral motives or reasons that take into account the needs of all parties (more advanced moral motives) (Ommunsden et al., 2003) are considered unacceptable.

Conclusions, limitations and future research

The conclusions of this study initially lead to the assumption that in non-profit sport teams the “caring climate” prevails, while at the same time the development goal overbears the performance goal. The performance goal affects those dimensions of the ethical climate that have to do with either a deontological or a teleological orientation, while the development goal mainly affects the ethical climate of deontological moral orientation. Another conclusion that has emerged in this study is the possibility to predict the ethical climate that prevails in a sport team by means of the goals that this team has adopted.

As predictable, a research with very few similar researches concerning non-profit organizations, as well as in a sport framework, constitutes a limitation in itself. This lack of similar information does not assist the confirmation of the results. Another limitation is the small size of the sample, which does not assist the generalization of the results. Moreover, this generalization of the results is even more difficult since the sample used in this study came only from amateur sport.

For the better understanding of the ethical climate in sport teams, the conduct of similar studies on a greater sample is a prerequisite. Studies should also be conducted on non-profit teams, in order to establish any differences concerning the notions of ethical climate in profit and in non-profit sport teams. Sport, as well as society as a whole, is a place where people of different cultural characteristics participate. The search for differences in the work ethical climate among people of distinctive cultural characteristics would be a really interesting task. Additionally, the examination of other factors that probably affect the ethical climate is also purposeful.

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