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An Examination of Attitudes Toward The Olympic Games Among Athletes Involved in Winter Sports

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated how winter sports athletes perceive the Olympic Games and whether these perceptions vary according to gender, age, athletic experience, or sport type. The research included 148 athletes (82 men and 66 women), aged 17–25, representing various winter disciplines such as skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey, and curling. Attitudes were measured using the Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale (ATOGS), consisting of the Interest and Benefit subdimensions. Group comparisons were conducted using independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA. Findings showed no significant differences in attitude scores based on gender ($p = .320$), age ($p = .273$), or years of participation ($p = .095$). However, athletes competing in individual sports demonstrated significantly more positive overall attitudes than those in team sports ($t = 2.109$, $p = .038$). The ATOGS also exhibited satisfactory internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .813$). Overall, the results emphasize that sport type meaningfully shapes young winter athletes' views regarding Olympic values. Strengthening Olympic education initiatives particularly within team-sport environments may support deeper comprehension and internalization of Olympism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Olympic Games have long been recognized not only as a major sporting event but also as a global cultural platform that brings together diverse societies around shared ideals such as peace, friendship, and respect [1,2]. Contemporary discussions of Olympism emphasize values that extend beyond athletic performance, highlighting solidarity, tolerance, and intercultural understanding as central components of the Olympic philosophy [3,4,5]. Through these values, the Games contribute to the social and cultural fabric of sport, engaging both elite athletes and broader communities in a collective experience grounded in humanistic principles [6,7]. Recent scholarship has also emphasized the evolving role of the Olympic Movement in reinforcing these core values within youth sport environments and educational systems [8,9].

Winter sports, as an integral part of the Olympic program, provide distinct contexts in which these values can be experienced and internalized. The combination of individual disciplines such as skiing and snowboarding with team-oriented branches like ice hockey and curling creates diverse pathways for athletes to interact with the Olympic spirit. Beyond physical performance, participation in winter sports contributes to psychosocial development by fostering social connectedness, belonging, discipline, and emotional well-being [6,10]. Research in sport psychology also suggests that athletes in individual sports often rely more on personal goal structures and self-evaluative processes, which may influence how they perceive and adopt Olympic values in comparison with athletes in team sports, where collective responsibility and shared decision-making predominate.

Attitudes defined as the interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components offer a useful framework for examining athletes' perceptions of the Olympic Games [11]. For young

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athletes in particular, attitudes toward Olympism reflect their understanding of concepts such as fair play, excellence, national representation, and value-oriented competition [12,13]. Self-determination theory further suggests that intrinsic motivation and perceived competence play a critical role in shaping how individuals relate to both sport and Olympic values [14]. These perspectives highlight the multifaceted nature of athletes' value orientations and underscore the importance of examining the contextual factors that influence them.

Variables such as type of sport, duration of participation, socio-cultural environment, and personal interests have been shown to shape athletes' attitudes toward sport and the Olympic Games [15,16]. Although earlier studies have explored perceptions of the Olympics and evaluations of Olympic values, the majority of the literature has concentrated on the Games' economic, environmental, and reputational aspects [2,17]. Empirical studies specifically addressing winter athletes remain limited, highlighting the need for more focused investigations into this population [10].

Given the prominent role of winter sports within the broader Olympic tradition and the growing emphasis on value-oriented development in youth athletics, exploring winter athletes' views of the Olympic Games carries clear theoretical and practical value. For this reason, the present study investigates how athletes involved in winter disciplines perceive the Games and examines whether these perceptions differ across personal characteristics, including gender, age, length of participation, and sport category. The results are expected to contribute to educational initiatives and sport programs that aim to more effectively embed Olympic values within winter sport settings [6].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Researh Model

The study utilized a quantitative approach grounded in a survey based design. Survey based approaches are widely used in social sciences to describe individuals' opinions, attitudes, and interests under existing conditions [18]. Such designs allow researchers to systematically collect data from relatively large groups, identify trends, and examine relationships among variables [19]. In line with these methodological strengths, the survey model was deemed appropriate for assessing athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games.

2.2. Participants

The study included 148 athletes aged 17 to 25 who were actively engaged in winter sports disciplines such as skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey, and curling. Participation was voluntary, and the sample reflected a diverse range of ages and gender distributions. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' demographic characteristics. The selected age range aligns with prior research highlighting late adolescence and young adulthood as key developmental periods for the formation of sport-related attitudes and value orientations [20].

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

The primary instrument used in this study was the Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale (ATOGS), which consists of eight items grouped under two subdimensions: Interest and Benefit. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward the Olympic Games.

ATOGS was conceptually adapted from the Olympic Values Scale developed by Aktaş and Öktan (2022) [1], reflecting the core principles of excellence, friendship, and respect. Information regarding the development and psychometric validation of ATOGS was documented in the scale development study conducted by Turan (2024) [21] which reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.805 for Interest, 0.834 for Benefit, and 0.831 for the total scale.

In this study, the reliability assessment produced Cronbach's alpha values of .805 for the Interest dimension, .754 for the Benefit dimension, and .813 for the overall scale, demonstrating a satisfactory degree of internal consistency. Additionally, the structural reliability of the study is supported by the established validity of comparable instruments in the literature, including the Sport Attitude Scale [13] and the Exercise Motivation Attitude Scale [12], both widely utilized in sport psychology research.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 27.0. Normality assumptions were assessed based on skewness and kurtosis values, with scores between -1.5 and +1.5 accepted as indicating normal distribution, consistent with recommendations for social science research [22,23]. The analytical procedures followed the methodological guidelines of Field (2018) [24] and Pallant (2020) [25]. Descriptive statistics were reported using mean (M) and standard deviation (SD). Group differences in ATOGS scores were examined using independent samples t-tests for

gender and type of sport, while one-way ANOVA was employed to analyze differences by age and years of athletic participation. The internal consistency of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, and statistical significance was set at $\alpha < .05$.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the 148 winter sports athletes included in the study. The sample consisted of 82 male athletes (55.4%) and 66 female athletes (44.6%). With respect to age, athletes aged 17–19 years constituted the largest group, representing 45.9% of the participants, followed by those aged 20–22 years (31.1%) and 23–25 years (23.0%).

In terms of athletic experience, nearly half of the participants (47.3%) reported having between 1 and 4 years of experience, while 29.7% had participated in sport for 5–8 years and 23.0% had nine years or more of athletic involvement. Regarding sport type, the majority of the athletes were engaged in team-based winter sports (73.6%), such as ice hockey, curling, and bobsleigh, whereas 26.4% competed in individual winter sports disciplines, including skiing, snowboarding, and figure skating.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of winter athletes

		(n)	(%)
Gender	Male	82	55,4
	Female	66	44,6
Age	17-19 years	68	45,9
	20-22 years	46	31,1
	23-25 years	34	23,0
Duration of Athletic Participation	1-4 years	70	47,3
	5-8 years	44	29,7
	9 years and above	34	23,0
Type of Sport	Individual Sports	39	26,4
	Team Sports	109	73,6
Total		148	100

Table 2 displays the comparison of mean scores obtained from the Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale (ATOGS) and its sub-dimensions according to gender. The results of the independent samples *t*-test indicated that gender was not associated with statistically significant differences in athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games. Specifically, no significant differences were observed between male and female athletes in the Interest sub-dimension ($t = -0.374$, $p = 0.709$), the Benefit sub-dimension ($t = -1.553$, $p = 0.123$), or the overall ATOGS score ($t = -0.998$, $p = 0.320$).

Table 2. Gender-Based comparison of mean scores on the attitude toward the olympic games scale (ATOGS) and its sub-dimensions

Variable	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Interest	Male	82	3,77	0,92	-0,374	0,709
	Female	66	3,83	0,93		
Benefit	Male	82	3,84	1,08	-1,553	0,123
	Female	66	4,10	0,97		
ATOGS Total	Male	82	3,80	0,82	-0,998	0,320
	Female	66	3,93	0,81		

Note: M= Mean; SD= Standard deviation; ATOGS= Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale.

Table 3 summarizes the comparison of winter athletes' mean scores on the Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale (ATOGS) and its sub-dimensions across different age groups. The findings obtained from the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that age was not associated with statistically significant differences in athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games.

Specifically, no significant differences were identified among age groups with respect to the Interest sub-dimension (F(147, 2)= 0.661, p= 0.518), the Benefit sub-dimension (F(147, 2)= 2.398, p= 0.095), or the overall ATOGS score (F(147, 2)= 1.311, p= 0.273).

Table 3. Comparison of winter athletes' mean scores on the attitude toward the olympic games scale (ATOGS) according to age

Variable	Age Group	n	M	SD	$F_{(147,2)}$	p
Interest	17 – 19 years	68	3,71	1,10	0,661	0,518
	20 – 22 years	46	3,91	0,72		
	23 – 25 years	34	3,82	0,75		
Benefit	17 – 19 years	68	3,79	1,12	2,398	0,095
	20 – 22 years	46	3,98	0,99		
	23 – 25 years	34	4,26	0,86		
ATOGS Total	17 – 19 years	68	3,74	0,11	1,311	0,273
	20 – 22 years	46	3,94	0,10		
	23 – 25 years	34	3,99	0,11		

Table 4 presents the comparison of winter athletes' mean scores on the Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale (ATOGS) and its sub-dimensions according to the duration of athletic participation. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the length of athletic participation did not result in statistically significant differences in athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games.

Specifically, no significant differences were observed among the groups with respect to the Interest sub-dimension (F(147, 2)= 2.116, p= 0.124), the Benefit sub-dimension (F(147, 2) = 1.261, p = 0.286), or the overall ATOGS score (F(147, 2)= 2.387, p= 0.095).

Table 4. Comparison of winter athletes' mean scores on the attitude toward the olympic games scale (ATOGS) according to duration of athletic participation

Variable	Duration of Athletic Participation	n	M	SD	$F_{(147,2)}$	p
Interest	1 – 4 years	70	3,74	0,89	2,116	0,124
	5 – 8 years	44	4,03	0,63		
	9 years and above	34	3,63	1,22		
Benefit	1 – 4 years	70	3,87	1,02	1,261	0,286
	5 – 8 years	44	4,17	0,98		
	9 years and above	34	3,88	1,13		
ATOGS Total	1 – 4 years	70	3,79	0,10	2,387	0,095
	5 – 8 years	44	4,08	0,10		
	9 years and above	34	3,72	0,17		

Table 5 presents the comparison of winter athletes' mean scores on the Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale (ATOGS) and its sub-dimensions according to type of sport. The results of the independent samples *t*-test indicated that sport type was not associated with statistically

significant differences in the Interest or Benefit sub-dimensions.

Specifically, no significant differences were observed between athletes participating in individual and team sports with respect to the Interest sub-dimension (t= 1.39, p= 0.24) or the Benefit sub-dimension (t= 1.92, p= 0.084). In contrast, a statistically significant difference was identified for the total ATOGS score. Athletes involved in individual winter sports reported higher overall attitude scores (M= 4.07, SD= 0.681) compared to those participating in team-based winter sports (M= 3.78, SD= 0.851) (t= 2.109, p= 0.038).

Table 5. Comparison of winter athletes' mean scores on the attitude toward the olympic games scale (ATOGS) according to type of sport

Variable	Type of Sport	n	M	SD	t	p
Interest	Individual Sports	39	3,97	0,82	1,391	0,243
	Team Sports	109	3,74	0,95		
Benefit	Individual Sports	39	4,23	0,91	1,923	0,084
	Team Sports	109	3,86	1,06		
ATOGS Total	Individual Sports	39	4,07	0,68	2,109	0,038
	Team Sports	66	3,78	0,85		

Note: M= Mean; SD= Standard deviation; ATOGS= Attitude Toward the Olympic Games Scale

4. DISCUSSION

The present study examined winter sports athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games and investigated whether these attitudes differed across selected demographic variables. The findings showed that gender, age, and duration of athletic participation did not significantly influence athletes' attitudes. However, a meaningful distinction was observed between athletes competing in individual sports and those engaged in team sports, with the former demonstrating more positive overall attitudes.

The disparity between individual and team sports may reflect differences in performance structures and the ways athletes evaluate their achievements. Athletes in individual disciplines typically emphasize personal effort, self-regulation, and responsibility, which may facilitate stronger internalization of Olympic values such as excellence, respect, and friendship [1,12]. In contrast, team-based winter sports involve collective responsibility and coordinated roles, which may influence how individual athletes relate to Olympic ideals even when they share the same competitive context.

The absence of gender-related differences aligns with earlier findings indicating that attitudes toward sport and Olympic values are shaped more by motivational climate, participation characteristics, and experiential factors than by gender alone [13,20]. Similar conclusions were reported in studies examining public and athlete perceptions during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, where demographic variables such as gender played a limited role in shaping attitudes [15].

Likewise, the lack of differences based on age or years of athletic experience may be partly attributed to the homogeneous nature of the sample, as most participants were between 17 and 25 years old. This developmental stage is typically associated with active value formation and identity consolidation, which may lead to comparable patterns of Olympic attitudes among young athletes [10].

Taken together, the findings suggest that winter athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games are shaped more by their mode of sport participation than by demographic characteristics. This underscores the importance of fostering Olympic values through sport environments that encourage personal responsibility, ethical decision-making, and reflective engagement. As athletes deepen their involvement in sport, the opportunity to internalize the moral and cultural components of Olympism becomes more accessible [1,16,5].

Although the study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The narrow age range of the sample constrains the extent to which the results can be generalized. Moreover, the use of self-report instruments raises the possibility of social desirability effects influencing responses. Future studies could expand the demographic range, include athletes from different competitive levels, and incorporate a wider variety of winter sports disciplines. Mixed methods or qualitative approaches may also offer deeper insights into the socio-cultural and psychological processes

underlying athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the present study demonstrate that athletes participating in winter sports generally hold positive attitudes toward the Olympic Games. However, these attitudes did not differ significantly according to gender, age, or duration of athletic participation. The only variable that produced a meaningful difference was the type of sport, with athletes involved in individual disciplines showing more positive attitudes than those in team sports. This difference may reflect the self-focused, performance-based nature of individual sports, where athletes tend to engage in deeper personal evaluation and assume greater responsibility for their successes and failures. Such characteristics may facilitate a stronger connection to the core values of Olympism, including excellence, respect, and personal integrity.

The results underscore the importance of systematically integrating Olympic values into educational settings, sport programs, and youth development initiatives. Institutions such as sport faculties, sports clubs, and national federations can play a pivotal role in disseminating Olympism-based education. Emphasizing individual responsibility, ethical conduct, and personal growth within team sport environments may also help athletes cultivate a stronger value-based understanding of sport.

Promoting Olympic values within school sport curricula and structured youth programs may further strengthen awareness and internalization of these values among young athletes. In winter sports specifically, examining how the differing dynamics of individual and team disciplines influence athletes' perceptions of Olympism could contribute to the development of targeted educational strategies aimed at value formation.

Future research may benefit from relational studies utilizing complementary psychological constructs such as motivation, sport attitude, or perceived competence to better explain the factors influencing athletes' attitudes toward the Olympic Games. Mixed-methods designs that combine quantitative assessments with qualitative interviews could provide deeper insights into how media exposure, social interactions, and cultural narratives shape Olympic-related perceptions. Additionally, expanding the participant profile to include broader age groups, various winter sport disciplines, and both amateur and professional athletes would enhance the generalizability of future findings. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in Olympic attitudes over time may also offer valuable perspectives on how Olympism awareness develops and evolves within the context of winter sports participation.

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Availability of Data and Material

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is declared by the authors.

Ethics Committee

This study was approved by the Erzurum Technical University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Decision No: 2025-ETÜ-0036). This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their inclusion in the study. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Written consent forms were signed by all participants, and for participants under the age of 18, parental or guardian consent was also secured.

Author Contributions

Study Design, MT, BÇS, BE; Data Collection, MT, BÇS, BE; Statistical Analysis, MT, BÇS, BE; Data Interpretation, MT, BÇS, BE; Manuscript Preparation, MT, BÇS, BE; Literature Search, MT, BÇS, BE. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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