



Basketball Players' Sense of Belonging to their Sport Team and School Motivation

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Background

While much is known regarding the importance of players' sense of belonging in sport team cohesion and performance, little is known concerning its potential impact on school motivation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is twofold:

- 1) To investigate the factors contributing to the construction of a sense of belonging in high school athletes-students at risk of delinquency and school drop-out;
- 2) To explore the connection between their sense of belonging to their basketball team and their school.

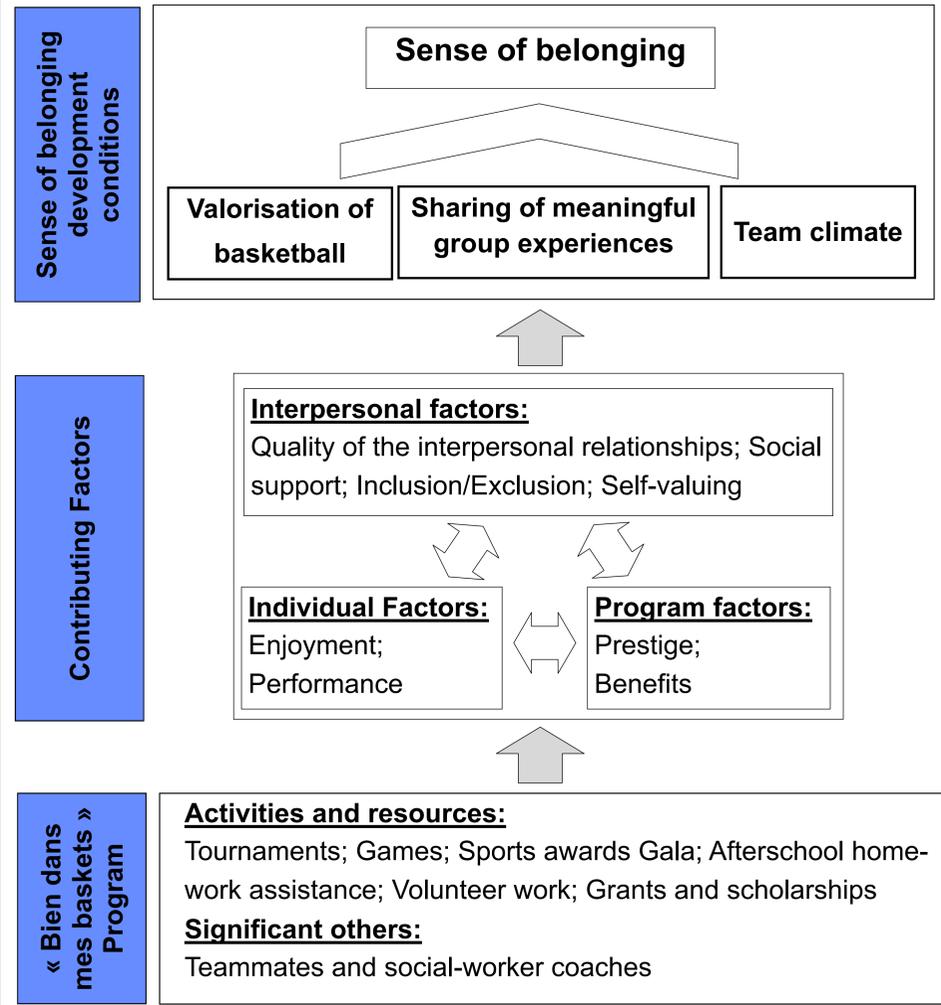
Method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 athletes-students involved in "Bien dans mes basket" (BdmB), an afterschool basketball program that offers psychosocial intervention to boys in an under-served milieu. To investigate the potential progression of the sense of belonging over time, seven participants were randomly chosen in each of the following Dragons teams:

1. Atome (12-13 year-old)
2. Cadet (14-15 year-old)
3. Juvenile (16-17 year-old)

A thematic content analysis of participants' accounts was performed to explore the sense of belonging to the team and the school, and the potential connection between sense of belonging and school motivation.

Conceptual Framework: Sense of Belonging Construction Process



Results

The connexion between basketball players' sense of belonging to their team and their school:

- 1) For some athletes-student, basketball seems to mediate school motivation. Their participation in BdmB makes more positive the perception of their experiences in school.

"If you want to go to college, you need to have good grades. If you fail a class, you can't play basketball. You have to go to school, you have to work as hard for your studies as you work for basketball" (J7)

- 2) For other athletes-student, basketball and school are indissociable. They are proud and enjoy going at this high school because they play basketball in a Dragons team and are in the BdmB program.

"I've been here for four years, I'm proud to represent my school. I'm proud to represent my team (...) I go to school with my Jeanne-Mance Dragons' vest and I'm proud to wear it" (J2)

Conclusion

- Three conditions seem to play a key role in the construction of the sense of belonging to the team.
- These conditions are the result of the interaction of various contributing factors.
- The sense of belonging seems to develop progressively over time through the combination of positive experiences that are shared collectively.
- The sense of belonging to an afterschool basketball team seems to work as a mediator of school persistency in high school athletes-students at risk of school drop-out.

