



**Anti-Doping Regulations and the
Significance of Public Opinion:
an Analysis of Public Opinion in Japan and
the UK on Issues of Fairness and Integrity
in Sport**



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Executive summary

- In general, law-making and rule-making follows public opinion although there are occasions when the introduction of laws or rules can alert the public to a problem and the sanctions proposed can also indicate the seriousness of a problem.
- Perceptions of morality are culture-specific usually to a state although this can be mediated by other identities such as gender, religion, political views and age.
- There is little evidence of the existence of universal moral principles. Significant differences exist between countries and between-country differences are more pronounced than within-country differences.
- It is suggested that the necessary conditions for the successful introduction of new laws/rules are: timing (when there is evidence of public awareness/sympathy/concern); media support or at least neutrality; supportive domestic lobby/campaigning organisations; and enthusiastic implementation/enforcement.
- Japan and the UK share many similar opinions in relation to sport and ethics although in Japan the reference point for moral judgments on sporting issues tends to be broader social values based on social obligations, trust and respect whereas in the UK the reference point for sporting issues is intrinsic to sport and sporting practice and the importance of respect for formal rules.
- In both countries there were differences in the assessments of the morality of sport issues with women being more concerned with the impact of actions on others and men more influenced by impact on the athlete and the relationship of the action to the rules and values of sport.
- Research into public attitudes towards doping in sport is limited, but does suggest that across a range of countries (mainly rich and with a strong Olympic sporting history) there is strong support for anti-doping rules and sanctions.
- It is not clear precisely which factors influence changes in individual and collective judgments of behaviour as either acceptable or unacceptable, but cultural reference points such as religion (or similar ideologies) and existing laws are considered to be important.
- Sanctions are more important than incentives in conveying moral obligations.
- Severity of sanctions convey to the public the seriousness of the breach of moral norms.
- From the limited data available there is strong public opposition to doping, but there is a lack of support for criminalization of PEDS use and a preference for other sanctions such as withdrawal of public and commercial sponsorship and public 'naming and shaming'.
- Existing data indicates more significant differences in opinion regarding doping between males and females that ages although opposition to doping tends to increase with age.
- There is a high level of consistency within the two countries whether compared by gender, age or the level of participation in sport.

- There is a high level of consistency of opinion within the two countries whether compared by gender, age or the level of participation in sport.
- In both Japan and the UK the most common bases for opposition to doping were the values of sport or the spirit of fair play rather than other possibilities such as potential damage to an athlete's health.
- When the data from the two countries were analysed by the extent of participation in sport the most striking observation was the lack of substantial variation in the assessments of fairness of the various actions between those who participated frequently (once or more a week or one to three times a month) and those who rarely if ever took part in sport or sport-related physical activities.
- In assessing the qualities needed by elite athletes Japanese females tended to give greater weight than Japanese men to affective qualities (including self-analysis, enjoyment, projection of joy, sincerity and confidence) whereas Japanese men tended to give greater weight to the personal (instrumental) qualities required for success (including, strong body, performance ability, competition success, strong personality and decision-making ability). There is a similar pattern among UK males and females but the contrast is not so pronounced.

'Taking illegal substance as opponent had done the same'

- There was little difference in the opinions expressed by Japanese males and females with 86.1% and 82.5% respectively considering the action 'unfair'¹.
- A wider gap was evident between UK males and females with almost a quarter (23.3%) of UK males considering the action 'fair' by comparison to only 13.9% of UK females.
- While the proportion of Japanese males (86.1%) who considered the action to be 'unfair' was almost 10 percentage points higher than UK males (76.7%) the pattern was reversed for Japanese (82.5%) and UK females (85.1%) with the latter being slightly more inclined to consider the action 'unfair'.
- With regard to changes in opinion with age the pattern in both countries was the same insofar as the proportion of respondents that considered the action 'unfair' increased with age. However, there were interesting differences between the countries with there being a wide gap in the 15-19 age group between the Japanese respondents who considered the action 'unfair' (78.4%) and the UK respondents (64.3%). However, the gap narrowed steadily with age and was similar for the 60-79 age group (Japan 89.3%, UK 90.3%)

'Taking same PEDS but receiving longer ban than an athlete in another sport'

- A higher proportion of female respondents than male in both countries considered the action 'unfair' although the differences were not great. Differences by age were modest except among

¹ In order to avoid extensive repetition in the text the terms 'fair' and 'unfair' incorporate the survey responses 'very fair' or 'very unfair'.

the 15-19 age group where the Japan cohort was ten percentage points less likely to consider the action 'unfair'.

'Unable to sleep so take energy drink next morning before competition'.

- UK and Japanese females had similar opinions, but UK males (77.3%) were more likely to assess the action as 'fair' than Japanese males (66.5%)
- UK respondents were consistently more likely than Japanese respondents to assess the action as 'fair' across the four age groups. The gap in opinion between the two countries regarding the action as 'fair' was widest for the 15-19 age group (UK-88.5% and J-76.9%).

'Access to latest technology and now winning'.

- Overall opinion is similar with just over one-third of the respondents in both countries (Japan 38.9% and UK 35.8%) considering the action 'unfair'.
- However, Japanese males were almost 10 percentage points more likely to consider the action 'unfair' than UK males. The responses from females were reversed but the gap between the countries was much narrower.
- The proportion considering the action 'unfair' generally declined with age although the change was not dramatic.

'Had laser eye surgery and now winning'.

- There was a strong opinion in both countries that the action was 'fair' (86.8% in Japan and 95% in UK).
- A larger proportion of both UK men and women and UK respondents from all age groups than Japanese respondents considered the action to be 'fair'.
- In both Japan and the UK the proportion assessing the action as 'fair' increased with age.

'Lose preliminary round intentionally to avoid tough opponent'.

- A significantly higher proportion of Japanese respondents (41.6% - UK-29.6%) considered this action to be 'fair'.
- The gap was widest among females with 37% of Japanese females considering the action to be 'fair' in contrast with 21.1% of UK females.
- Males in both countries were much more likely than females to assess this action as 'fair'.
- The gap in opinion between the two countries, which was widest for the 20-39 age group, closed slightly across the older age groups.

'Intentionally put opponent at a disadvantage'.

- The UK respondents are much more likely than the Japanese respondents to assess this action as 'fair'.
- The highest proportion assessing the action as 'fair' was from UK males (65%)

- There was a more complex pattern of opinion from the different age groups with the 15-19 year old Japanese age group much more likely to assess the action as 'fair' (55.6%) than the same UK age group (40%).

'Make fun of rival during competition'

- Overall, a very similar set of responses in both countries.
- Male respondents in both Japan and the UK were more likely than female respondents to assess the action as 'fair'