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Running Head: MORAL AND SOCIAL PREDICTORS OF EUDAIMONIA

SECOND REVISION

Moral Identity and Social Goals Predict Eudaimonia in Football

Second Revision submitted: 10 May, 2010

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine whether moral identity and social goals predict eudaimonia in youth footballers. Participants were 365 (227 males) youth football players (M age = 13.37 years, SD = 1.85), who completed questionnaires measuring moral identity, social goal orientations (i.e., social affiliation, social recognition, and social status), and eudaimonia. Eudaimonia was positively predicted by moral identity, social affiliation and social recognition. In addition, an interaction emerged whereby moral identity predicted eudaimonia when social affiliation was low. Explanations are offered for the findings and discussed in relation to theory and past research. Finally, directions for future work are provided.

Key words: moral identity, social goals, eudaimonia, happiness, well being

Moral Identity and Social Goals as Predictors of Eudaimonia in Football

“Go out there and enjoy yourself” has become a familiar cliché uttered prior to sporting contests; yet, the enormity of emphasis on normative success in modern-day sport can detract from the fundamental undertones of these poignant words. Defining success in terms of performance accomplishments relative to others is a popular standpoint in sport. However, with happiness - referred to by Aristotle as eudaimonia - being hailed as the ‘ultimate good’ (Aristotle, translated by Irwin, 1985), it may be time to pay attention to some more traditional values. The focus of this study is on eudaimonia in football.

References to eudaimonia can be traced to Aristotle (translated by Irwin, 1985), who viewed it as activity expressing virtue, where virtue is considered to be the best within us, or excellence (see Waterman, 1993). In the contemporary psychological literature - and in the present study - the term eudaimonia refers to one of two conceptions of happiness described by Waterman (1993). Eudaimonia is a highly positive affective condition experienced when one moves toward self-realization by developing one’s personal potentials such as skills and talents, advancing one’s purposes in living, or both (Waterman, 1993, 2008). A second conception of happiness is referred to as hedonic enjoyment and involves the pleasant affect that accompanies the satisfaction of physically, intellectually, or socially based needs (Waterman, 1990, 1993). Eudaimonia is considered a sufficient condition for hedonic enjoyment (Telfer, 1980, cited in Waterman, 1993), thus the individual who experiences eudaimonia will *also* experience hedonic enjoyment (Waterman, 1993). In empirical research, the two conceptions of happiness have been highly related (range of $r = .74 - .87$; Waterman, 1993; Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti, 2008).

In the psychological literature, the term happiness has been used interchangeably with the term well-being, and Waterman’s (1993) two conceptions of happiness have been referred to as eudaimonic and hedonic well being, respectively (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman,

1 2008). Happiness or well-being have been examined using various indices; three such indices
2 particularly relevant to this study are: subjective vitality, which is the experience of feeling
3 energized and fully alive and is closely aligned with eudaimonic well-being (Ryan & Deci,
4 2001); positive affect, an index of hedonic well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008); and subjective
5 well-being, indexed as the experience of high positive affect, low negative affect, and high
6 life satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Subjective well-being has been examined as an index
7 of hedonic well being, however Deci and Ryan (2008) have pointed out that life satisfaction
8 is not strictly a hedonic concept like positive affect. As eudaimonia is a sufficient condition
9 for hedonic enjoyment, individuals who report high levels of eudaimonia should also report
10 high subjective well being (see also Waterman, 2008).

11 Research has investigated the circumstances associated with eudaimonia in college
12 students (Waterman, 1993). Specifically, eudaimonia experienced when engaging in
13 personally important activities has been positively associated with students' perceptions that
14 these activities were providing them with the opportunities to share experiences with others
15 and develop their best potentials, as well as with positive affect, interest, and self-
16 determination that is engaging in the activities out of choice (Waterman, 1993; Waterman et
17 al., 2003, 2008). However, to our knowledge, eudaimonia has not been examined in the
18 context of football. This activity should elicit experiences of eudaimonia because it provides
19 opportunities for the actualization of the individual's athletic potential (see Waterman et al.,
20 2008) as well as the opportunity to share experiences with others (Waterman, 1993). In this
21 study, we focus on eudaimonia because this experience is considered essential for
22 individuals' optimal psychological functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

23 A variable that may have implications for eudaimonia in football, but has not been
24 examined in empirical research to date, is moral identity. Defined as "the cognitive schema a
25 person holds about his or her moral character" (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009,

1 p. 124), moral identity has two sub-dimensions: Internalization referring to the extent to
2 which the moral self-schema is experienced as being central to one's self-definition, and
3 symbolization, which is the extent to which the moral self-schema is projected outwardly
4 through one's actions in the world (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The construct of moral identity
5 originated from the work of Blasi (1984), who proposed that (a) a common set of moral traits
6 are likely to be central to most people's moral self-definitions and (b) being a moral person
7 may occupy different levels of importance to each person's self-concept. Aquino and Reed
8 (2002) identified nine traits (i.e., caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful,
9 hardworking, honest, and kind) as being characteristic of a moral person and found variation
10 in the degree to which these traits were central to one's self-concept.

11 Moral identity is a very strong source of moral motivation, which is the drive to
12 behave morally, because people have the desire to maintain self-consistency (Blasi, 1984).
13 Thus, a person whose self-definition is organized around moral traits should be more likely to
14 behave morally in order to maintain this self-conception. Indeed, participants with a strong
15 moral identity were more likely to donate food to the needy (Aquino & Reed, 2002) and give
16 money to a charity that benefits an out-group (Reed & Aquino, 2003), and less likely to
17 report the intention to lie in a salary negotiation (Aquino et al., 2009) and engage in antisocial
18 behaviours in football (Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006). Thus, individuals who consider
19 being a moral person as central to their self-concept are more likely to display prosocial and
20 less likely to engage in antisocial acts.

21 Moral identity may have implications for eudaimonia in football: As stated,
22 eudaimonia has been associated with self-determination, or reports that engaging in the
23 activities was respondents' *choice* (Waterman et al., 2003, 2008). In a recent study
24 (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), autonomous motivation to help, that is *choosing* to help someone
25 else or doing something for a good cause because the individual considered this important,

1 was positively associated with vitality and subjective well being. This link between
2 autonomous helping and well-being (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) coupled with the relationship
3 between self-determination and eudaimonia (Waterman et al., 2003, 2008) suggests that
4 moral identity may be associated with eudaimonia. This is because individuals with a strong
5 moral identity consider being helpful to others important (Aquino & Reed, 2002), and
6 therefore should be expected to behave prosocially *out of choice*, and experience the vitality
7 (i.e., eudaimonic well-being) and positive affect associated with such actions. However, to
8 date no study has investigated the link between moral identity and eudaimonia.

9 A second variable that may predict eudaimonia in football is the goal of social
10 affiliation, one of three social goal orientations described by Allen (2003). Individuals high in
11 social affiliation seek to develop and maintain mutually satisfying relationships in sport and
12 engage in sport for the opportunities to socialize with other like-minded people (Allen, 2003).
13 It has been suggested that, on average, individuals high in eudaimonic well being should have
14 better and more successful social relationships than the norm (Waterman, 2008). Eudaimonia
15 during participation in a range of activities has been positively associated with the perception
16 that these activities provide opportunities to share experiences with others (Waterman, 1993)
17 suggesting that positive social interaction should facilitate eudaimonia. Individuals motivated
18 by social affiliation should endeavour to engage in positive social interaction with others as
19 this is an integral part of mutually satisfying relationships which they seek when participating
20 in sport. These individuals report high interest/enjoyment in the activity (Allen, 2003, 2005;
21 Hodge, Allen, & Smellie, 2008), a variable linked to eudaimonia (Waterman et al., 2003,
22 2008).

23 The two other goals described by Allen (2003) are social recognition and social status,
24 known as social validation goals. Individuals high in social recognition are oriented toward
25 validating oneself through approval or recognition from others, while those high in social

1 status seek validation through achieving popularity among peers. Individuals pursuing social
2 validation goals focus on the benefits of sport involvement for them as individuals and for
3 their social relations (Allen, 2003). This orientation may not facilitate successful relationships
4 with others because the focus of the person is on the self which could be detrimental to
5 successful social relationships. In sport studies, these goals have been either positively related
6 or unrelated to interest/enjoyment (Allen, 2003, 2005; Hodge et al., 2008); thus, they have
7 evidenced mixed findings with well-being variables. However, these goals are also social
8 goals. Given that feelings of personal expressiveness during participation in important
9 activities have been positively associated with the view that these activities afford social
10 opportunities (Waterman, 1993), the two social validation goals were also examined in this
11 study as predictors of eudaimonia but with no specific hypotheses related to them.

12 Both moral identity and social goals are social-cognitive variables that have
13 implications for others as well as one's well being. Moral identity motivates behaviours (e.g.,
14 helping) that are beneficial to others and have been associated with vitality and positive affect
15 in past research (e.g., Weinstein & Ryan, 2010); the goal of social affiliation involves an
16 orientation toward developing mutually satisfying relationships with others and has been
17 linked to interest/enjoyment, an index well-being (Allen, 2003). Due to the implications these
18 two variables have for both other people and well-being variables, they may interact with
19 each other, such that one of them is sufficient for the experience of eudaimonia in football.
20 This pattern may be less likely in the case of social recognition and social status goals
21 because these goals have not been consistently associated with well-being in sport.

22 In this study, we investigated whether moral identity and social goal orientations
23 predict eudaimonia in footballers. Based on the aforementioned links between moral identity,
24 prosocial behaviour, self-determination, and eudaimonia (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Waterman,
25 1993; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), we hypothesized that moral identity would positively predict

1 eudaimonia. Based on theoretical and empirical links between social relationships and well
2 being (Waterman, 1993, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2001) we expected that social affiliation would
3 also be a positive predictor of this construct. Due to the mixed findings in the literature
4 regarding social recognition and social status goals (Allen, 2003, 2005; Hodge et al., 2008)
5 we did not propose specific hypotheses in relation to these two goals. Finally, we examined
6 whether social goals moderate the effects of moral identity on eudaimonia. We expected that
7 social affiliation would moderate the effects of moral identity on eudaimonia but made no
8 predictions for the other two social goals.

9 Method

10 *Participants*

11 Participants were 365 (male = 227 and female = 138) youth footballers from 30
12 school ($n = 8$) and club teams ($n = 22$) that were situated in the Midlands, UK. Players were
13 of mixed ability, ranging from beginner to elite, and their ages varied between 11 and 18
14 years ($M = 13.37$, $SD = 1.85$). The majority of participants were White European ($n = 292$);
15 the sample also included White non-European ($n = 6$), Black Caribbean ($n = 23$), Black
16 African ($n = 4$), Asian ($n = 10$), mixed ($n = 18$), and other races ($n = 7$), while five
17 participants did not report their ethnic background. Experience of competitive football ranged
18 from 1 to 13 years ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 2.44$), and time spent playing football ranged from 1 to 25
19 hours per week ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 2.79$).

20 *Procedure*

21 After gaining ethical approval from a University Ethics committee, contact
22 information for youth football clubs and school teams was obtained from a football
23 development officer and the internet. Next, invitation letters were sent out to clubs and
24 schools outlining the study's protocol, and subsequent phone calls established participation
25 interest. Of the 50 teams that were approached, 30 agreed to participate in the study.

1 Questionnaires were administered across the middle of the season. On agreement with the
2 respective team, one of the investigators or a trained research assistant attended the beginning
3 of a practice session to distribute and collect questionnaires from consenting participants.
4 Players under the age of 16 completed and returned parental consent forms prior to data
5 collection.

6 Participants were given questionnaires that included an information sheet
7 emphasizing the importance of honest responses and clarifying that there were no right or
8 wrong answers. They were encouraged to complete the questions on their own, and it was
9 explained that all answers would be kept confidential. The primary investigator or a research
10 assistant answered queries. Questionnaires were completed in approximately 15 minutes and
11 included sections on demographics, moral identity, social goal orientations and eudaimonic
12 happiness in football. Items on demographics were presented first, and to avoid any response
13 bias the order of the measures was counterbalanced.

14 *Measures*

15 *Eudaimonia.* We measured eudaimonia using the personal expressiveness subscale
16 from the Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ; Waterman, 1993). Rather
17 than asking the footballers to identify five personally important activities and complete the
18 questionnaire in relation to these activities, the questionnaire was adapted to be context
19 specific by asking participants to respond to six statements on their feelings in football.
20 Examples of adapted items are 'I feel more complete and fulfilled when playing football than
21 I do when engaged in other activities' and 'When I play football I feel more intensely
22 involved than I do when engaged in most other activities.' The item "I feel a special fit or
23 meshing when engaging in this activity" was replaced with "I feel a sense of belonging when
24 playing football" because in pilot testing this item was not fully understood by participants.
25 Analyses conducted with and without this item revealed very similar results. Participants

1 were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements, and
2 responses were made on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by *strongly disagree* (1) and
3 *strongly agree* (7). Mean scores on the six statements were used in the final analyses. In past
4 research, test-retest reliabilities of the personal expressiveness subscale have been reported as
5 .82 with an alpha coefficient of .90 (Waterman, 1993).

6 *Moral identity.* The internalised dimension of the Self-Importance of Moral Identity
7 Scale (Aquino & Reed, 2002) was used to measure moral identity. Participants were
8 presented with nine traits (i.e., caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful,
9 hardworking, honest, and kind) validated as necessary characteristics of a moral person and
10 were asked to indicate how these characteristics related to them by responding to five
11 statements. Examples of these statements are: ‘Being someone who has these characteristics
12 is an important part of who I am’ and ‘I strongly desire to have these characteristics.’
13 Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale anchored by *strongly disagree* (1) and
14 *strongly agree* (5). The mean scale score was calculated and used in all analyses. Reed and
15 Aquino (2003) have reported high internal consistency for this subscale ($\alpha = .85$). This
16 measure of moral identity has been used successfully in past sport research, in which it
17 predicted antisocial behaviour in football (Sage et al., 2006)

18 *Social goal orientations.* The 15-item Social Motivational Orientation Scale for Sport
19 (SMOSS; Allen, 2003, 2005) was used to assess participants’ goals of social affiliation (7
20 items), social recognition (4 items), and social status (4 items). Items were slightly amended
21 to be specific to the context of football. The stem for each item was “I feel things have gone
22 well in football when....” An example of a social affiliation item is “I make some good
23 friends in the team.” A social recognition item is “I receive recognition from others for my
24 accomplishments,” while a social status item is “I belong to the popular group in the team.”
25 Participants indicated their degree of agreement with each item on a five-point Likert scale

1 anchored by *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (5). The mean score for each subscale
2 was computed and used in all analyses. Allen (2003) reported good or very good alpha
3 coefficients for the three social goals (α range = .77 - .87).

4 Results

5 *Preliminary Analyses*

6 Prior to the main data analysis, some preliminary analyses were conducted. Missing
7 values (0.5%) for age were replaced by the series mean. Four outliers were removed based on
8 Mahalanobis distances and examination of box plots. Finally, residual scatter plots indicated
9 no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

10 *Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analyses*

11 Descriptive statistics for all variables, correlations, and internal reliability values are
12 presented in Table 1. Most participants reported moderately high levels of eudaimonia, moral
13 identity, social affiliation, and social recognition, and moderate levels of the social status
14 goal. Correlation analysis showed that eudaimonia was positively related with moral identity
15 and all social goal orientations. The strength of the relationships was moderate between
16 eudaimonia and the social affiliation and social recognition orientations but moderate-to-
17 weak with social status and moral identity (see Cohen, 1992). Moral identity was positively
18 related to social affiliation and social recognition, the relationship was moderate-to-weak. Of
19 the remaining variables, age had a negative weak-to-moderate relationship with eudaimonia
20 and hours playing football a week positively and weakly correlated with eudaimonia. Finally,
21 all internal reliability values were good or very good.

22 *Regression Analyses*

23 The main aim of the present study was to investigate whether moral identity and
24 social goal orientations predict eudaimonia in football and was examined using hierarchical
25 regression analyses. First, we computed the Durbin-Watson statistic, which revealed

1 independence of the residuals ($d = 1.63$). Then, we centred all predictors to avoid
2 nonessential multicollinearity when examining interaction effects (see Aiken & West, 1991).
3 Next, we formed three two-way interaction terms by multiplying moral identity with each of
4 the social goals, for example the product of (centred) moral identity and social affiliation
5 represented the interaction between these two variables. Finally, we performed regression
6 analysis in four steps.

7 In step 1, we entered age and hours playing football per week as control variables
8 because these were significantly related to eudaimonia (see Table 1); in steps 2 and 3, we
9 entered moral identity and social goals, respectively. These variables were entered in that
10 order because (a) our main interest was on moral identity and (b) moral identity is central to
11 the self and may be developed before social goals. Finally, in step 4 we included the three
12 interaction terms, which were tested using the step-down procedure of dropping each non-
13 significant interaction and testing the remaining interaction terms one at a time (Aiken &
14 West, 1991). We have presented results of this analysis in Table 2 and retained only the
15 interaction terms that reached significance (see Aiken & West, 1991).

16 Eudaimonia was predicted by age, hours per week playing football, moral identity,
17 social affiliation and social recognition. Specifically, in step 1, age was a negative predictor
18 and hours per week playing football was a positive predictor of eudaimonia explaining
19 together 5% of its variance, $F(2, 362) = 9.41, p = .001$. In step 2, moral identity emerged as a
20 significant positive predictor of eudaimonia and explained 5% of its variance, $F(1, 362) =$
21 $21.33, p < .001$. In step 3, social affiliation and social recognition orientations were positive
22 predictors of eudaimonia and together explained 23% of additional variance, $F(3, 358) =$
23 $38.72, p < .001$. Social status orientation did not predict eudaimonia. Step 4 revealed a
24 significant interaction between social affiliation and moral identity, explaining an additional
25 1% of unique variance, $F(1, 357) = 6.63, p < .001$. The presence of a significant interaction

1 effect represents evidence of moderation. The overall effect was $f^2 = .34$, which is considered
2 a large effect size (see Cohen, 1992).

3 The interaction effect indicated that the relationship between moral identity and
4 eudaimonia was moderated by social affiliation, that is, moral identity differentially predicted
5 eudaimonia depending on participants' level of social affiliation. In accordance with Aiken
6 and West (1991), we further explored the significant interaction by plotting three regression
7 lines (of moral identity predicting eudaimonia) at high (+ 1 *SD*), mean (0), and low (− 1 *SD*)
8 values of social affiliation (see Figure 1) and testing whether the slopes of these regression
9 lines were significantly different from 0. This analysis showed that moral identity positively
10 predicted eudaimonia when social affiliation was low, $b = 0.45, SE = 0.15, t = 3.10, p < .01$,
11 but not when it was average, $b = 0.21, SE = 0.14, t = 1.50, p > .05$, or high, $b = -0.03, SE =$
12 $0.12, t = 0.25, p > .25$. Thus, either social affiliation or moral identity, but not necessarily
13 both, needs to be high for football players to experience eudaimonia when playing football.

14 Discussion

15 To date, eudaimonia has largely been investigated from a hedonic perspective (see
16 Ryan & Deci, 2001 for review). Although social goals, particularly social affiliation, have
17 been linked to hedonic well-being such as enjoyment (Allen, 2003; Hodge et al., 2008), no
18 such links have been identified with eudaimonia. In addition, moral variables have yet to be
19 empirically linked to eudaimonia in sport. The purpose of this research was to investigate
20 whether moral identity and three social goal orientations predict eudaimonia in youth football
21 players.

22 In line with our hypothesis, moral identity was a significant positive predictor of
23 eudaimonia explaining 5% of its variance. Our findings suggest that individuals whose moral
24 self is central to their identity are more likely to feel complete and fulfilled when playing
25 football and to feel intensely involved in the activity. For these individuals being caring,

1 helpful, kind, hardworking, friendly, and honest is an important part of who they are. Our
2 findings indicate that such individuals are more likely to be absorbed in the activity and
3 experience a sense of eudaimonia while playing football. However, it is important to note that
4 the effect of moral identity on eudaimonia was small-to-moderate suggesting that other
5 factors play a more important role in predicting this construct.

6 This is the first study to examine moral identity in relation to eudaimonia in football,
7 thus it is difficult to make comparisons with other research. One other relevant study, also in
8 football, found that moral identity was associated positively with prosocial and negatively
9 with antisocial behaviours (Sage et al., 2006). Our findings extend this work and suggest that
10 moral identity also has implications for the quality of one's football experience. The results
11 are also consistent with suggestions that morality is linked to happiness (e.g., Annas, 1993;
12 Haidt, 2006; Waterman, 1990). Although we examined moral identity rather than moral
13 behaviour (which would be a better indicator of morality), moral identity has been
14 consistently linked to moral behaviour in past research (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Reed &
15 Aquino, 2003). Our findings extend this work and suggest that moral identity may also have
16 implications for eudaimonia in football.

17 The hypothesis that social affiliation would predict eudaimonia was supported. Those
18 footballers who felt things went well in football when they made new friends and socialized
19 with others were more likely to report high eudaimonia. This finding extends past research
20 that has identified a link between social affiliation and hedonic indices of well-being such as
21 enjoyment (Allen, 2003, 2005; Hodge et al., 2008) and adds credence to other lines of work
22 that have linked successful social relationships with eudaimonia (e.g., Ryff & Singer, 2000).
23 This finding is also consistent with a tenet of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000),
24 that fulfilment of relatedness, a basic psychological need, is essential for eudaimonia and

1 psychological growth (*ibid.*). Thus, an orientation towards developing friendships with fellow
2 players may contribute to a more fulfilling football experience.

3 Social recognition was also a positive predictor of eudaimonia suggesting that those
4 footballers who were motivated by the recognition they receive from others for their football
5 achievements were also more likely to feel authentic, alive, fully engaged, and challenged
6 enough to exert effort while playing football. These individuals feel successful when they are
7 told that they perform well, are really good at football, and impress others with their
8 accomplishments and football ability. Such an orientation toward receiving recognition from
9 others for one's accomplishments may lead those athletes to devote a considerable amount of
10 time and effort in practice with subsequent positive consequences for their skill level and
11 perceptions of competence; these in turn may lead to the experience of eudaimonia in
12 football. Indeed, Waterman (2008) suggests that perceptions of competence are an important
13 feature of eudaimonic experiences. Whilst the precise role of perceived competence remains
14 speculative, on this evidence a social recognition orientation is linked to personal expression
15 and self-realisation through the fulfilment of individual potentials such as skills and talents
16 within football.

17 The social status goal did not predict eudaimonia suggesting that an orientation
18 towards being the centre of attention and being a popular player has neither a positive nor a
19 negative effect on eudaimonia beyond the positive effects of the other two social goals.
20 Gaining popularity within the group infers competition with peers and this is unrelated to
21 actions that afford personal growth and development. In past research, the social status goal
22 has been either positively related or unrelated to enjoyment, which represents hedonic well
23 being (Allen, 2003, 2005; Hodge et al., 2008). Our findings suggest that this goal is not as
24 important as the social affiliation and social recognition goals in promoting the experience of
25 eudaimonia in football.

1 An important finding of our study was the interaction between moral identity and
2 social affiliation in predicting eudaimonia in youth footballers. Specifically, moral identity
3 positively predicted eudaimonia when footballers' social affiliation was low, but not when it
4 was **at mean or** high levels. These findings suggest that when players are oriented toward
5 making friends and developing relationships in the football context, placing high importance
6 on morality does not make any further contribution to their eudaimonia. This reflects the
7 importance of social affiliation over moral matters on footballers' eudaimonic happiness and
8 suggests the social orientation can compensate for lower levels of moral identity in
9 experiencing high levels of eudaimonia. It is worth noting that eudaimonia was very high at
10 **mean to** high levels of social affiliation. Perhaps eudaimonia of players was at such high
11 levels when social affiliation was **above its mean** that moral identity could have had very
12 little additional influence. In other words, a potential ceiling effect was created in eudaimonia
13 **at mean to** high levels of social affiliation. Further research is needed to confirm the nature of
14 the relationship between moral identity and social affiliation and their contribution to well-
15 being in youth football.

16 *Implications of the Findings*

17 The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. From a
18 theoretical perspective, moral identity and social goal orientations were identified as
19 predictors of eudaimonia in sport, thus our findings contribute to a better understanding of
20 eudaimonia in this context. Identifying predictors of eudaimonia is of great significance for
21 promoting optimal psychological functioning of sports participants, thus, our findings also
22 have practical implications. For example, coaches can promote the importance of
23 characteristics of a moral person such as being hardworking, caring, compassionate, generous
24 etc. Coaches can also create opportunities for the development of team friendships, before
25 and after training and matches or even outside the context of football. Our findings suggest

1 that significant others in football (i.e., coaches, parents, support staff, and the players
2 themselves) should be reminded of the importance of providing supportive and encouraging
3 feedback to ensure those players who are motivated by social recognition are optimising the
4 eudaimonia they experience in football.

5 *Directions for Future Research*

6 The present study revealed some interesting findings regarding the link between
7 moral identity, social goals, and eudaimonia in football. Future research could extend this
8 work in several ways. First, researchers could expand on the measures used herein to include
9 multidimensional approaches to eudaimonic well being (e.g., Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Second,
10 the moral identity measure could be adapted to the context of football. Third, researchers
11 could explore predictors of eudaimonic well being using other constructs, for example
12 competence, autonomy or relatedness. Lastly, identifying predictors of eudaimonic well
13 being in sport from a social-cognitive perspective should lead to vital clues on how to
14 facilitate the experience of eudaimonia in young athletes.

15 *Conclusion*

16 The findings of the present investigation highlight the significance of moral identity,
17 social affiliation, and social recognition orientations in youth footballers' eudaimonia in.
18 Placing high importance on being a moral person, and being motivated to make friends,
19 develop relationships, and be recognised by one's football accomplishments may play an
20 important role on the quality of footballers' experience. Finally, social affiliation
21 compensated for low moral identity in the prediction of well being highlighting the
22 importance of this social goal for youth football players.

23

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