

PERCEPTION OF COACHES' BEHAVIOR IN MALE ADOLESCENCE ATHLETES

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SUMMARY

The aim of our study was to examine perception of coaches' behavior of male adolescence athletes. The final sample of respondents (67 athletes, mean age 20.28±.92) is selected from the initial sample of 130 subjects, students at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in Nis which were active in sport. They completed the two questionnaires: Leadership scale for sport (LSS) and Negative coaches' behavior questionnaire (NCBQ). The results showed significant relationship between dimensions of both questionnaires from -.50 to .60. The coach is the most important person in determining the quality and success of an athlete's sport experience, yet surprisingly, little research exists that identifies optimal coaching behaviors and factors that influence the effectiveness of particular behaviors. Future researches should deal with examining other athlete and coach individual difference variables that might influence coaching behaviors and athletes' perceptions and evaluative reactions to them.

Keywords: team sports, democratic behavior, positive feedback

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between coach and athlete is a very complex phenomenon which is affected by many variables. Also, this relationship influences the development of athletes and their sports career. The atmosphere and the general relationship between athletes in the team are associated with leadership of the coaches. They depend on whether the coach is focused on improving the performance of athletes in a variety of physical training segments, or focused solely on the result, that is, to win the contest. If the coach is focused on performance, he or she gives positive feedback to athletes thereby rewarding their efforts, progress and good teamwork (Aleksic-Veljkovic, A., Djurovic, D., Dimic, I., Mujanovic, R. & Zivcic-Markovic, 2016).

The previous study revealed significant differences between athletes' perception of coaching behaviors in individual and team sports. Individual athletes in this study gave higher ratings to training and instruction, social support and positive feedback leader behavior from their coaches. Also, athletes from individual sports had smaller scores on two dimensions and total score of negative coaching

behavior questionnaire (Aleksic-Veljkovic, A., Djurovic, D., Dimic, I., Mujanovic, R. & Zivcic-Markovic, 2016).

Siekanska, Blecharz, & Wojtowicz (2013) examined how active and former athletes (n=80, 44 males and 36 females; 21.89 ±1.48 years of age; 8.35 ± 3.65 years of competitive experience) across a different sports level perceived coaching behavior. The participants responded to a demographic survey and the Coaches' Behaviors Survey. It was confirmed that coaches who perceived their athletes as more skilled, also treated them differently. Female athletes as compared with male athletes, more frequently pointed at the leniency in coach's behavior towards highly skilled athletes, and perceived it as a factor inhibiting athletic development. Additionally, women often found individualization of the training process as a behavior which reinforces development. Less accomplished athletes more often pointed out to "a post-training session interest in the athlete" as directed only towards more accomplished counterparts; however, they indicated "leniency and favouring" less often than the athletes with international achievements. They also listed "excessive criticism" as a type of behavior hindering

development, but they indicated coaches' "authoritarianism and distance" less frequently than the more accomplished counterparts.

Considering the importance of the coach in determining the quality and success of an athlete's sport experience, surprisingly little research exists that identifies optimal coaching behaviors and factors that influence the effectiveness of particular behaviors (Kenow & Williams, 1999). The way athletes notice their coaches' behaviors affects all included, as well as the sports achievement, and it is influenced by many psychological variables (attitudes, emotions, goals). The aim of this study was to determine relationship between perceptions of coaches' behavior measured by two

questionnaires: Leadership scale for sport (LSS) and Negative coaches behavior questionnaire (NCBQ).

METHODS

Subjects

The population of this study included 67 college athletes engaged in different team sports (basketball, football, and volleyball). Participants were asked to fill Competitive Perfectionism Scale (CPS; Besharat, 2009) and Leadership scale for sport (LSS). Total mean score for the athletes' ages was $20.28 \pm .92$ ranging from 19 to 25).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for general data of athletes

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Age	19.00	25.00	20.28	.92
Sports experience	2.00	15.00	8.82	3.69
Beginning of sports activity	5.00	17.00	9.22	2.88
Time with coach (per week)	1.00	12.00	3.97	3.39
Hours of training (per week)	1.00	35.00	9.43	6.15

Procedure

Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) – The LSS is commonly used questionnaire to examine sport specific coaching behaviors (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Loughhead & Hardy, 2005). The LSS is one of the most commonly used questionnaires for assessing sport leadership, which comprises five subscales representing different features of coaching behavior: (1) training and instruction behavior, which describes the sport skill and tactical instructional style of the coach, which are aimed at improving athletes' performance; (2) democratic and (3) autocratic behaviors, which refer to the decision-making style of the coach; and (4) social support and (5) positive feedback, which characterize the motivational style of the coach (Cruz & Kim, 2017).

Negative Coaches Behavior questionnaire (NCBQ) - The NCBQ is a 13-item inventory that assesses undesirable coach's behavior on three subscales, i.e. Insensitivity to Athletes' Wellbeing, Negative Feedback, and Results Orientation. Psychometric characteristics of NCBQ (factor structure, reliability, sensitivity, convergent and divergent validity) were tested on a sample of 181 kinesiology students. The results showed that NCBQ

is valid and reliable measure useful for the assessment of negative coaching behaviors in various sport-related research (Jurakić Greblo, 2017).

Statistical analysis

For data analyses, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were used. The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 20 and the level of significance was set at .05.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows the minimum and maximal results, means and standard deviations of dimensions of LSS and NCBQ. Mean and standard deviation scores for all variables were between 3.1 and 4.0. Results of Pearson's correlation test are shown in table 3. The results showed significant relationship between dimensions of LSS and NCBQ dimensions: Insensitivity to Athletes' Wellbeing showed negative relationship with Training and instruction (-.47), Democratic behavior (-.26), Social support (-.50) and Positive feedback (-.36). There is small negative relationship between Negative and Positive feedback (-.27).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the dimensions of LSS and NCBQ

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
TRAINS	2.77	4.85	3.94	.50
DEMBEH	2.67	4.56	3.53	.52
AUTOOCR	1.80	4.80	3.10	.73
SOCSUPP	2.25	4.63	3.48	.58
POFEED	2.60	5.00	4.03	.54
NOD	1.00	3.75	1.97	.58
NPI	1.00	4.60	1.98	.58
UNR	1.50	16.50	3.54	1.78

Table 3. Correlations between dimensions of LSS and NCBQ

	TRAINS	DEMBEH	AUTOOCR	SOCSUPP	POFEED
NOD	-.47*	-.26*	-.05	-.50*	-.36*
NPI	-.13	.16	.19	.09	-.27*
UNR	.03	.06	.09	-.07	-.18

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to determine relationship between perceptions of coaches' behavior measured by two questionnaires: Leadership scale for sport (LSS) and Negative coaches' behavior questionnaire (NCBQ). The atmosphere and the general relationship between the athletes in the team are associated with leadership by the coaches. They depend on whether the coach is focused on improving the performance of athletes in a variety of physical training segments, or focused solely on the result, that is, to win the contest (Jurko, Tomljanović, & Čular, 2013). We wanted to examine perception of coaches' behavior of male adolescent athletes from different team sports. Siekanska et al. (2013) reported that males, more often than females, indicated control and error correction as the coach's behavior was favouring more talented athletes. At the same time, individualization of training sessions was for male athletes the factor, which improved their athletic development.

The values of mean and standard deviations of examined dimensions of NCBQ are similar to results of study of Jurakić Greblo (2017), and only Results orientations was higher value in our study. They also reported that athletes from team sports reported a higher frequency of negative and a lower frequency of positive coaching behaviors.

Effective leadership behavior in sport can be explained according to interaction between athletes' characteristics and situational constraints, an approach called the multidimensional model of sport leadership. This model was developed by Chelladurai (2012) and claims that athletes' satisfaction and performance are predicated on three states of leader behaviors: required, actual, and preferred. All three

states are directly influenced by various antecedent conditions such as the characteristics of the situation, leader, and member, as well as their interactions (Cruz & Kim, 2017).

Authors Cruz & Kim (2017) identified and compared young athletes' coaching leadership preferences based on gender, task dependency, playing experience, level of competition, and coach's gender, and determined any relationships between these selected variables and coaching behavior preferences of athletes. The findings indicated that athletes in this sample population prefer their coaches to demonstrate leadership behaviors of training and instruction "almost always", positive feedback "often", democratic behavior and social support "frequently", and autocratic "occasionally". Interestingly, while each independent variable did not show any significant differences between groups, an interaction was observed for athlete gender and coach gender on autocratic, democratic, and social support leadership preferences. This result provide valuable information on the dynamics of the sport leadership environment in young players and how crucial the role of coach's gender is for the athlete-coach dyad interaction and leadership style preference.

Many factors could affect the athlete's understanding of the coach's behaviors. It could result, for example, from the athletes' self-assessment, which in turn influenced their interpretation of messages, which the coach sent about him or her as a person. If self-assessment was low, even an error correction message could be interpreted by an athlete as an attack on their ego, and could automatically activate the defence mechanisms. In that case, even feedback, which was meant to be constructive, might be rejected and

interpreted as groundless criticism (Siekanska et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

Researches on the coach-athlete interactions from the perspective of an athlete needs to be continued. The measures designed to assess behaviors in the coach-athlete interactions used in the present study might become a useful tool in future research.

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