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Initial development of the Coach Motivation Scale: Qualitative perspectives?

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Introduction

The coach has a central role in the facilitation of adaptive forms of motivation aimed at enhancing the quality of athletic sport performance (Mallett & Hanrahan, 2004). Moreover, research suggests that the adoption of an autonomy-supportive coaching style fosters such adaptive motivation in both athletes and coaches (Mallett, 2005; Vallerand & Rousseau, 2001). Given the significance of the coaching role in athletic satisfaction and performance, an understanding of the coach's motivation is paramount. Knowledge in this area would benefit from the development of a reliable measure of coaching motivation, which could be used to examine the social and contextual factors that influence a coach's motivation and hence behaviour. Moreover, basing such an instrument on the principles of the self-determination paradigm is recommended (Fredrick & Morrison, 1999; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Mallett, 2005). This paper will argue for the importance of such a scale and present initial qualitative and quantitative findings from the development of the Coach Motivation Scale (CMS).

Main text

In the sport domain, the coach-athlete relationship is one of the most important influences on athletes' motivation and subsequent performance (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). However, while there is much research concentrating on the impact of coaching behaviours on athlete's perceptions and performance, little thought seems to have been given to the coaches needs themselves (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Vallerand (1997) proposed a motivational sequence in which social factors → psychological needs → motivation → consequences. To date, much of the research in the coaching literature has focused on the coach as a social factor, the actions of whom influence the motivation and adaptive consequences of the athlete. This research aims to look at the psychological needs and motivation of the coach, as theory would suggest that *why* coaches coach should influence *how* coaches coach.

Self-determination theory (SDT) describes the conditions under which social-contextual factors influence various forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). According to the theory, individuals seek certain goals, and these goals are fuelled by psychological needs. Specifically, three psychological needs are especially crucial in the stimulation of action; the needs for self-determination (autonomy), competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991). According to SDT, the perceptions of these three factors represent psychological mediators for the impact of social events on motivation (Losier & Vallerand, 2001). Thus, information that supports these perceptions will, in theory, have a positive impact on one's motivation, while events that have a seemingly negative influence are proposed to undermine adaptive forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

At its most basic level, motivation encompasses two distinct forms, intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable (e.g., coaches who coach for the pleasure they get from seeing young athletes grow and develop), and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (e.g., coaches who coach in order to obtain status in their sport) (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In addition, SDT distinguishes between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give impetus to action (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). That is, it details the different forms of extrinsic motivation and the contextual factors that either promote or hinder the internalization and integration of those behaviours.

Using this framework, this study aimed to develop a measure of coach motivation. Male and female coaches from a variety of sport (e.g., rugby, gymnastics, cycling, athletics) and from a range of levels (i.e., participation, developmental, high-performance/elite) were recruited to participate. The development of the questionnaire was separated into three phases—the first two of which will be discussed here. The initial phase of research involved the use of semi-structured interviews to obtain information that could guide the development of items for the questionnaire. Of particular interest in this phase were the major themes to emerge in relation to the six facets of motivation (i.e., amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation, intrinsic motivation) including issues related to the expression and conceptualisation of how and why these elements emerge. The second phase involved the conceptual analysis of relevant information. In addition, the themes uncovered during the interview process were utilised to develop a bank of items for potential use in the questionnaire. This preliminary questionnaire was then pilot tested using a sub-sample of the target population to ensure that participants found the questions clear in both their expression and purpose, and that items were internally consistent and possessed good inter-item reliability.

Conclusions

Given the influence coaching behaviour has on athlete motivation and performance outcomes, it is imperative to understand *why* coaches behave the way they do. Initial analysis of the data suggests that coaches possess motivational

incentives that align with those described in SDT. While this scale is still undergoing psychometric testing, results suggest that the CMS may be a useful measure of coach motivation within a variety of sports and levels of competition. Potentially, this measure will allow greater insight into coach behaviour and aid in the facilitation of healthy coach-athlete relationships in which the psychological needs of both parties may be met. Overall, promoting an understanding of coaches' motivations is key to the coaching process and therefore a more comprehensive examination is warranted.

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