



Analyzing Lived Experiences of Athlete and Coach Relationships in Sports

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Abstract

Objectives. The two main stressors affecting athletes' wellbeing are relationships between coaches and athletes and social support. This study aims to investigate the connections between athletes' psychological health, social support, and coach-athlete interactions. Relationships between coaches and athletes have a favorable impact on future coaching techniques and support systems, which in turn improves athlete wellbeing.

Materials and methods. This study employed a quantitative approach using survey methods. The study involved 323 respondents consisting of 231 males (71.52%) and 92 females (28.48%). The instrument used in this study was the Instructor–Student Rapport Scale, comprising 2 dimensions (pleasant interactions and personal relationships). The study results were analyzed using the t-test to determine the significance of differences in athletes' life experiences based on their relationship with the coach. The findings of the study explain that the experiences of athletes' gender have differences regarding the relationship with the coach.

Results. This result has also been proven by the results of the t test calculation of <0.001 . Meanwhile, the results of t test calculations related to the type of sport (individual and group) obtained results >0.001 , which states that there is no difference in life experience between athletes and coaches.

Conclusions. These findings lead to the conclusion that the most crucial factor in facilitating and enabling meaningful life experiences between coaches and athletes is the coach's proximity to the athletes.

Keywords: life experience, athlete, coach, relationships, sport.

Introduction

Around 70% of young athletes quit sports at the age of 13, which is due to the role of coaches influencing athletes' motivation and behavior to continue to be competent in sports activities (Wekesser et al., 2021). From an ecological point of view, it is expected that competent behavior in areas such as academics and sports performance will mold useful connections between people and their surroundings. Over time, everyday behavior, attitudes, and conventions (sociocultural practices) in sport organizations affect the strength of this functional relationship (Rothwell et al., 2022). The coach's unique considerations, the athletes' intellectual stimulation, and the presence of suitable role models all

influence the quality of the interaction between the coach and the athlete (López de Subijana et al., 2021). Coach leadership behavior predicts positive and negative affect for athletes, this is because coach social support significantly controls negative affect both pre-competitive and during competition (González-García et al., 2021; Sakalidis et al., 2023; Trninić et al., 2009). Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the relationship between coach and athlete is the main foundation in fostering the continuity of athlete performance. The coach's role is not only as a leader in a sports club, but more than that, the coach also plays a role as the main contributor for athletes to continue to show their best performance both in training and in competition.

Research indicates a strong positive correlation between players' mental health and their relationship with their coach (Powers et al., 2020). The coach's knowledge about the long-term effects of the coach-athlete relationship can help the athlete to understand himself to become an outstanding

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athlete (Kuhlin et al., 2020). Other results also show that the lack of attention given to athletes is the main topic that influences athletes' performance during competition and training (J. A. Graham & Smith, 2022). Relationships with coaches deteriorate for athletes whose coaches are untrained, building positive coach-athlete relationships as a tool to encourage athlete personal growth and development (Falcão et al., 2020). The role of the coach in supporting athletes who experience psychological distress is divided into three, namely, (1) the coach's role is to provide an environment that facilitates the expression of distress, (2) the coach has the responsibility to connect athletes with appropriate resources, (3) the coach's job is to support athletes in help-seeking behavior (a period where athletes experience difficulties) (Bissett & Tamminen, 2022). Discussions between athletes and coaches are a way to build a relationship that involves sharing experiences between coaches and athletes, where this activity functions as a way for coaches to evaluate athletes, especially with regard to their psychological well-being (Allan et al., 2018; MacDonald et al., 2020).

The setting in which athletes interact with their coaches is provided by strong coach-athlete interactions. Relationships are crucial to fostering an effective coaching environment since it is likely that athletes who have good relationships with their coaches would receive better coaching help (Sophia Jowett, Nicolas, et al., 2017). The more cooperative and effective interactions that result from alignment produce a level of connection to athlete success (Purnomo et al., 2021; SA et al., 2022). The relationship between athletes and their coaches has important implications for psychological health. Further research explains that identifying aspects of the coach-athlete relationship can suppress fatigue factors and improve athletes' mental well-being (McGee, 2016). Therefore, as a coach you are required to reflect on your own behavior and understand the motivation behind your athlete's behavior (Moen, 2014; Westfall et al., 2018). Considering the fact that coaches and athletes are 2 important components in the success of a sports club (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010).

The research results revealed that coaches have a strong and often excessive role in the lives of athletes, especially high-achieving female athletes, but a more democratic, personal and positive coach-athlete relationship has proven to play an important role in improving the athlete's experience. female athletes in sports competitions (Norman & French, 2013; Serpell et al., 2023). An athlete's growth as a player and a person is significantly influenced by the quality of their relationship with their coach. Programs for coach education offer knowledge to assist coaches in building strong bonds with their athletes (S. Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Mohammad Fazilah et al., 2023; Shuai et al., 2024). In terms of gender, female athletes typically train under male coaches, whereas male athletes place more value on coach expertise than gender. According to the study's findings, athletes are more perceptive in relationships with coaches of a different gender than they are in relationships with coaches of the same gender the same (Li et al., 2015). A description of the relationship between coaches and athletes by gender reports that the gender of the coach influences the success of athletes in achieving achievements. It is assumed that the gender of the coach is a guideline when leading a sports club and describes the relationship between the coach and the athletes.

Materials and Methods

Design

The study intends to investigate the life experiences of coaches and athletes in the realm of sports, with a focus on the dynamics of their relationships. Using a quantitative approach using survey methods will provide a structured and systematic way to collect data on this topic. This approach will enable the collection of large amounts of data from a diverse range of athletes and coaches, thereby enabling a comprehensive analysis of their perspectives and experiences in a sporting context. This will involve identifying specific aspects of the relationship between the athlete and coach that wish to be explored, such as communication dynamics, leadership styles, and the impact of the relationship on the athlete's performance. This survey was designed to collect quantitative data regarding various aspects of the relationship between athletes and coaches. Inquiries about communication styles, training techniques satisfaction, coach support perception, and the overall effect of the coach-athlete relationship on performance and well-being will all be covered.

Respondent

There were 323 participants in the study, 231 of whom (71.52%) were men and 92 of whom (28.48%) were women. Snowball sampling was the sample method utilized in this investigation, with the aim of collecting as many samples as possible to enhance the study's conclusions. The respondents' average age was 21.1 years. In specifics, the average age of female respondents was 20.6 years, compared to 21.4 years for male respondents. Athletes who had trained for at least two years in both team and individual sports made up the study's respondents. It was requested of each respondent to take part in this research.

Instrument

In this research, the instructor-student rapport scale instrument was used (Frisby & Myers, 2008). The aim of research using the instructor-student rapport scale instrument is to measure the level of positive relationships and interactions between instructors (coaches) and students (athletes) in a sports context. This instrument is specifically designed to evaluate the quality of interpersonal relationships between instructors and students in the context of education or training. This instrument has been reviewed and used several times. In the second study, it was found that each of the dimensions: pleasant interactions ($\alpha = 0.91$) and personal relationships ($\alpha = 0.90$) (Frisby & Martin, 2010). Later studies reported adequate reliability for dimensions: pleasant interactions ($\alpha = 0.93$) and personal connections ($\alpha = 0.93$) (Young et al., 2013; Graham & Mazer, 2020). Based on the 2 studies above, this means that the instrument has a very good level of validity and reliability and can be used in this research.

Data Analysis

The Sample t-Test will be used to test the research hypothesis. The results of the analysis using the t-test will

determine that the average level of satisfaction of athletes who receive high coach support is significantly different from athletes who receive low coach support. After applying the t-test, the results will be interpreted to determine the significance of differences in athletes' life experiences based on their relationship with the coach. This analysis will provide insight into the impact of the coach-athlete relationship on various aspects such as performance, motivation and overall well-being. Analysis with sample t-tests in the data analysis process will allow the identification of specific areas where the coach-athlete relationship has a significant influence.

Results

The athlete's life experience in relation to the coach in the sports context is an important aspect that can influence the athlete's achievement, psychology and personal development (Davis et al., 2019; Lisinskiene, 2018; Owiti & Hauw, 2021; Raunig & Coggins, 2018). Positive relationships between athletes and coaches have long been recognized as a key factor in creating a supportive environment for successful sports coaching (Davis et al., 2019; Zhao & Jowett, 2023). This research seeks to investigate and analyze the lived experiences of athletes in their relationships with coaches, with a focus on the dynamics, quality and implications of these interactions in sport.

Before carrying out the t-test, it would be good to carry out a prerequisite test consisting of normality and homogeneity tests. This is the main requirement so that it can be analyzed at the next stage. To ascertain if the data is regularly distributed or not, a normality test is utilized. According to the normalcy test, if the data's Sig. (significant) value is less than 0.05, it is deemed anomalous; on the other hand, if it is greater than 0.05, the distribution of the data is deemed normal. The analysis's findings are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

Indicator	W	p
ISRS	0.972	0.061

The results of the study demonstrate that the data can be regarded as regularly distributed since $p > 0.05$, which is consistent with the normality test findings shown in Table 1. In the meantime, Table 2 below displays the results of the research data's homogeneity test.

Table 2. Homogeneity of Variances Test (Levene's)

Indicator	F	df1	df2	p
ISRS	0.0155	1	321	0.901

A p value > 0.05 was found based on the homogeneity test findings shown in Table 2. These findings support the hypothesis that the data exhibit uniform variance.

Taking into account that the two prerequisite analyzes in this study are normally distributed and homogeneous, further analysis can be carried out. In this t-test analysis, researchers divided the results based on gender (men and women) and also the type of sport (individual and team).

Instructor–Student Rapport Scale in Terms of Gender

Based on the t-test relating the instructor–student rapport scale to gender, the following data was obtained:

Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test

Indicator	t	df	p
Instructor–Student Rapport Scale	3.35	321	0.001

Note. $H_a \mu_{Male} \neq \mu_{Female}$

Based on the test results in the table above using the independent samples t-test, the p value < 0.001 , the hypothesis H1 is accepted, which means there is a difference in the influence between gender and the Instructor-Student Rapport Scale. This proves that the responses between coaches and athletes are different from each other. Which also means that the treatment of relationships between men and women is different. Therefore, a trainer must also be able to explain in more detail the approach that will be taken.

It is important to acknowledge the unique dynamics that exist in the athlete-coach relationship, especially when comparing the experiences of male and female athletes (Aydinlar et al., 2024; Munikrishnan et al., 2024; Zhao & Jowett, 2023). Research shows that gender can play an important role in interactions between athletes and their coaches. For example, female athletes may face different expectations, communication styles, and support systems compared to male athletes (Mire et al., 2021; Swim et al., 2022; Zhao & Jowett, 2023). These differences can impact the overall coaching experience and can impact an athlete's performance, motivation, and well-being. When exploring differences in lived experiences regarding relationships between athletes and coaches, it is important to consider the broader social and cultural context. Gender norms, stereotypes, and power dynamics may all contribute to shaping these relationships in different ways for male and female athletes (Mire et al., 2021; Swim et al., 2022). Additionally, examining the impact of mentoring, feedback, and leadership in these relationships can provide valuable insight into how athletes navigate their sporting journey.

Instructor–Student Rapport Scale Viewed from the Sport Category

Based on the t-test relating to the instructor-student rapport scale with the sport category, the following data was obtained:

Table 4. Independent Samples T-Test

Indicator	t	df	p
Instructor–Student Rapport Scale	-1.15	321	0.251

Note. $H_a \mu_{Team} \neq \mu_{Individual}$

Based on the test results in the table above using the independent samples t-test, the p value (0.251) > 0.001 means the hypothesis is rejected, which means there is no difference in influence between the sport categories (individual and group) and instructor-student rapport scale. This proves that there is no difference between the sports categories

between coaches and athletes. Which means that individual and team sports have the same level of life experience. The results of the independent samples t-test with a p value of 0.251 showed that there was no significant difference in the Instructor-Student Rapport Scale scores between two groups of athletes from different sport categories (individual and group). A p value greater than the 0.001 significance level indicates that there is not enough statistical evidence to reject the hypothesis. In this context, a p value greater than 0.001 indicates that the observed difference in instructor-student rapport scores between the two groups of athletes cannot be considered a statistically significant result. This means that the relationship between athletes and coaches, as reflected in instructor-student rapport scores, does not appear to be significantly influenced by sport category. In other words, there is no significant difference in the quality of the relationship between athletes and coaches between different sports.

It appears that the athlete-coach relationship has a similar impact on individual and group sports. The bond between an athlete and their coach is critical to their success, no matter what type of sport they participate in (Lisinskiene, 2018; Munikrishnan et al., 2024). These findings suggest that the quality of the athlete-coach relationship is universally important in the world of sport. Research has shown that a positive athlete-coach relationship can result in better performance, increased motivation, and overall athlete satisfaction. In individual sports, coaches play a more personal role in guiding and supporting athletes, whereas in team sports, coaches foster teamwork and unity among athletes (Lisinskiene, 2018; Mire et al., 2021; Sandström et al., 2016). Despite differences in their specific roles, the impact of athlete-coach relationships on athletes' experiences and performance remains consistent in both individual and group sports. It is clear that the bond between an athlete and his or her coach has a significant impact on the athlete's overall experience and performance, regardless of whether they participate in an individual or group sport (Davis et al., 2018; Karapanos et al., 2016). This underlines the importance of fostering positive athlete-coach relationships in the world of sport. The role of the coach may vary in individual and team sports, with a focus on personalized guidance and support in individual sports and fostering teamwork and unity in team sports, but the overall impact on the athlete's experience and performance remains consistent (Jackson et al., 2009; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). This highlights the important role the athlete-coach relationship plays in the success and well-being of athletes across a wide range of sports.

Discussion

Athletes, coaches, managers, and sponsors are all involved in their performance and success. However, the relationship between coaches and athletes is thought to be a fundamental vector in the context of sport, with several factors contributing to it, including the coach's leadership and personality, motivational factors, communication, cohesion, and The setting of sports coaching introduces emotions as a psychosocial component (Bennie & O'Connor, 2012; Vigário et al., 2020). Athlete well-being is favorably connected with relationships between coaches and athletes as well as with social support among athletes (Miller et al.,

2007; Simons & Bird, 2022). The development of positive experiences in an effort to increase the strength, potential and competence of adolescents is described as the result of the social environment of adolescents including school, family and community which directs them to become useful individuals (MacDonald et al., 2020). The research results show that athlete performance sometimes depends on positive and negative interpersonal relationships between coaches, athletes and parents (Lisinskiene & Lochbaum, 2022; Roşca, 2010). The study results stated that the athlete's attachment to the coach was significantly related to the athlete's psychological development in facilitating the athlete's success in achieving peak performance (Cushion et al., 2012; Davis et al., 2021).

Athletes' self-esteem and level of life satisfaction might increase when positive relationships are developed between them and their coaches (Baker et al., 2000; Gencer, 2021). This shows that actions in sports coaching are oriented towards supporting athletes as one way of creating a healthy environment in shaping athlete behavior which functions to improve athlete perception. Some positive coaching behaviors aimed at increasing an athlete's perception of competence may include providing positive and informative feedback, using positive reinforcement, and creating opportunities for the athlete to increase success in athletic competition (Wekesser et al., 2021). Coach education programs and training can be utilized to increase awareness of the importance of coaching practices as techniques and strategies that help foster positive coach behavior (e.g., supporting competence) in their athletes.

The findings show a substantial correlation between the variables of trust and confidence as well as between confidence and commitment to maximize the ability of competent coaches to provide encouragement to athletes and foster feelings of self-confidence and trust (Fikri et al., 2024). Trainers must establish an environment that supports participants' autonomy and satisfies their three fundamental psychological requirements (Cronin et al., 2022). A study relating to the implications for the development and evaluation of mental skills training programs in the case of elite team sports athletes categorizes the psychological qualities of coaches, such as comfort in coaching, responsibility, adaptability, enthusiasm, self-aware learner, determination, self-confidence, performance conditions optimal performance, harmonious play, focused attention, and mental toughness (Erickson et al., 2011; Holland et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2023). A coach's training ability is an important foundation for the success of an athlete or a sports team. In this case, coaches are an important key in improving athlete competence in every training performance and match performance. In young athletes, the closeness of the athlete and coach has the effect of building the athlete's self-confidence in maximizing performance towards peak performance (Pandini & Widodo, 2021; Purnomo et al., 2020).

The close friendships and romantic relationships between coaches and athletes represent an area where mutual autonomy support is essential, where each party provides autonomy support to the other party, as well as receiving it from the other party (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Myer et al., 2016). According to research on career and talent development, which looks at young athletes' growth from an ecological

standpoint, future athletes' development can be understood as a slow, reciprocal adjustment that takes place between them and their surroundings, including the coach's role (Stambulova et al., 2021). The literature on the relationship between athletes and coaches states that the dimensions of communication, trust and mutuality are important parts in improving an athlete's performance (LaVoi, 2007; Santos et al., 2018). The closeness of athletes and coaches is an important part in developing athlete potential. Coach communication is the main door to evaluating athlete development, athletes feel safe if the coach cares and is able to motivate themselves. The feeling of belonging felt by athletes is often related to mental well-being for an athlete.

The results of semi-structured interviews conducted on international level coach-athlete relationships are the reason for increasing athletes' "efficacy beliefs" (Lent & Lopez, 2002). The findings are discussed in light of how successful relationships between coaches and athletes can be created and maintained at the highest level (Jackson et al., 2009). Additional analyses also discovered a significant correlation between players' self-esteem and their assessments of their connections with coaches, particularly for those athletes who had positive associations (Sophia Jowett, 2008). The study's findings expand our understanding of athletes' physical self-concept in the relational context of the coach-athlete relationship by demonstrating that an athlete's perceived quality of relationship with the coach is correlated with their level of fatigue, suggesting that athlete-coach similarity is an important mediator of the athlete-coach relationship (Isoard-Gauthier et al., 2016). The findings further bolster the self-determination theory's universal applicability and the importance of interpersonal ties in fostering well-being (Sophia Jowett, Adie, et al., 2017; McGee, 2016; Westfall et al., 2018). When competing against more seasoned athletes or older athletes who are superior to them, young athletes, or junior athletes, are more likely to develop stage fright or extreme anxiety, which can negatively impact their mental health (Marheni et al., 2019). Mental strengthening of athletes through the relationship between coaches and athletes strengthens social values which are used as a way to respect themselves and others around them (Sari et al., 2024).

Conclusions

An athlete is always faced with psychological problems that can interfere with his mental ability to train or compete. Coaches are required to understand the triggers of psychological problems faced by their athletes. A good relationship between coach-athlete has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of athletes. The coach's communication skills are the main key in building closeness between athletes and coaches. The coach's communication becomes a reflection that the athlete responds to which then becomes the athlete's reference in undergoing the training process. A coach's training ability is characterized by the ability to understand every aspect of an athlete. Coaches don't just provide training material, more than that, coaches act as main facilitators in assisting athletes in improving maximum performance. Maximum performance produced by athletes is a combination of training and the relationship with their coach. Athlete-coach harmony fosters a relational

context for the connection between the two, which lowers the amount of athlete tiredness during both the training and competition phases.

Conflict of interest

The authors state that no commercial or financial ties that might be considered a possible conflict of interest existed during the conduct of the study.

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Аналіз життєвого досвіду взаємовідносин між спортсменом і тренером у спорті

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Авторський вклад: А – дизайн дослідження; В – збір даних; С – статаналіз; D – підготовка рукопису; E – збір коштів

Реферат. Стаття: 9 с., 4 табл., 71 джерело.

Мета дослідження. Двома основними стресовими факторами, що впливають на благополуччя спортсменів, є відносини між тренерами і спортсменами та соціальна підтримка. Метою цього дослідження є вивчення зв'язку між психологічним здоров'ям спортсменів, соціальною підтримкою та взаємодією між тренером і спортсменом. Відносини між тренерами та спортсменами мають сприятливий вплив на майбутні тренерські методики та системи підтримки, що, в свою чергу, сприяє покращенню показників благополуччя спортсменів.

Матеріали та методи. У дослідженні застосовано кількісний підхід з використанням методів опитування. У дослідженні взяли участь 323 респонденти, серед яких 231 осіб чоловічої статі (71,52%) та 92 — жіночої (28,48%). У якості інструменту дослідження була використана Шкала оцінки взаємовідносин між викладачем і студентом, що складалася з 2 вимірів (сприятливі взаємодії та особисті відносини). Результати дослідження проаналізовано за допомогою t-критерію для визначення значущості відмінностей у життєвому досвіді спортсменів залежно від їхніх взаємовідносин з тренером. Результати дослідження свідчать про наявність відмінностей у життєвому досвіді спортсменів залежно від статі в контексті відносин з тренером.

Результати. Підтвердженням цього результату є також розрахунки t-критерію <0,001. Водночас, результати розрахунків t-критерію, пов'язані з видом спорту (індивідуальний та груповий), показали значення > 0,001, що свідчить про відсутність різниці в життєвому досвіді між спортсменами та тренерами.

Висновки. Отримані дані дозволяють зробити висновок, що найбільш важливим фактором, який сприяє та уможливає забезпечення значущого життєвого досвіду між тренерами та спортсменами, є близькість тренера до спортсменів.

Ключові слова: життєвий досвід, спортсмен, тренер, взаємовідносини, спорт.

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