INVESTIGATING THE COACHING BEHAVIOR AND BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AMONG JUNIOR BASKETBALL PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

Research in the field of competitive sports, argue that personality and behavior of coaches, plays an important role in personal and athletic progress of athletes. According to the self-determination theory, people tend to deal with more interest and energy to activities chosen by them and remain in them when the need for autonomy, competence and interaction is satisfied. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between the perceived coaching behaviour and the basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relations) in junior basketball athletes. The sample of the study consisted of 144 junior basketball athletes, from five clubs of Thrace, with an average age of 13 ± 1.98 years, and years in the same team 5 ± 1.21 years. To evaluate the perceived coaching behavior the Coaching Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ, Williams et al., 2003) adapted for the Greek population (Zourbanos, Hatzigeorgiadis, & Theodorakis, 2007) was used. It included 15 items in two factors: "supportive behavior" with 8 items and "negative behavior" with 7 items. In order to investigate the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, the Basic Psychological Needs in Sport Scale (Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006) with 12 items was used, grouped into three factors, autonomy, competence and social relationships with 4 items respectively. The anonymous questionnaires were completed voluntarily by athletes at the court in the absence of coach at the middle of the 2018 season. The levels of internal consistency of the scales in both questionnaires were at acceptable levels (Cronbach's alpha of .88 to .92 and .87 to .91 respectively). The results of correlation analysis showed that the perceived supportive coaching behaviour had a statistically significant positive correlation with autonomy, competence and relationships, while the negative is not related to any factor scale of basic psychological needs. The results of this study, is in accordance of similar studies which showed that the supportive attitude of the coach directly related to autonomy, competence and relationships. In conclusion, one of the objectives of coaches should be the satisfaction of basic psychological needs of young athletes, important for motivating them and remaining on this sport, especially during the early stages of their sporting career.

Key words: coaching behavior, autonomy-competence-relatedness, junior basketball athletes.

INTRODUCTION

Scientific research in the field of competitive sports, argue that the personality and behavior of coaches, plays an important role in personal and sporting development and progress of athletes. In the sport context, coach behavior is one factor expected to influence the level and quality of athletes' motivation (Duda & Balaguer, 2007). Coaches design practice sessions and interact with athletes in training and competition to provide instruction and feedback and to help "motivate" their players (Fenton, Duda, Quested, & Barrett, 2014). They create a psychological environment or climate (Alvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2012) that could have an important impact on the athletes' intrinsic interest, enjoyment, and continued engagement in the sport. According to Self Determination Theo-

ry, individuals tend to be more interested in and energized by the activities they choose and remain in if they themselves have chosen them, if they feel able to respond to them, when basic psychological needs are met: autonomy, competence and relatedness with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Perceived autonomy reflects having the possibility of choice, the opportunity to voice one's views, and to act according to personal volition. Perceived competence refers to feeling that one is efficacious and can meet the demands marking an achievement domain. Perceived relatedness refers to feeling that one is securely connected to, cared about, and understood by relevant others in the context at hand (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness is satisfied, then the athlete's internal satisfaction and interest increases

which results in high levels of intrinsic motivation and consequently higher performance (Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004). The coaches are the ones who usually decide on the method of training, they set the rules within the team and because their decisions are mainly about the athletes' actions, it is important that they are considered as supportive and accepted (Theodorakis, Goudas, & Papaioannou, 2003).

Aim of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between the perceived coaching behavior and the basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relations) among junior basketball athletes.

METHODS

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 144 junior male athletes of basketball academies, from five clubs in the city of Komotini. The athletes were on average age of 13 ± 1.98 years old and had been involved with the basketball training in the same team for 5 ± 1.21 years.

Instruments

In order to conduct the research, two instruments were used: The first one was the Coaching Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ, Williams, Jerome, Kenow, Rogers, Sartain, & Darland, 2003) which was modified for the Greek population by Zourbanos, Hatzigeorgiadis and Theodorakis (2007). It includes 15 items in two dimensions/factors: "supportiveness behavior" with 8 questions e.g. question: *my coach supports me even when I make a mistake* and "negative activation" with 7 questions e.g. *the behavior of my coach during training makes me feel tight or tense*. Answers, were given on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree very much). The second instrument that was used is the Basic Psychological Needs in Sport Scale (BPN, Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006) with 12 items grouped into three factors: "autonomy" e.g. question: *I feel that the way I train with expresses me perfectly*, "competence" e.g. question: *I feel that basketball is an activity in which I manage very well* and "relatedness" e.g. question: *My relationships with other athletes are very friendly*, with four items each factor respectively. Responses were given on a 5-grade scale from 1 = I do not agree at all to 5 = I agree very much.

Procedure

The data collection was carried out with the method of personally filled in anonymous questionnaires. The anonymous questionnaires were shared from the researchers after agreement and permission by the individual coach for the above procedure and were voluntarily completed by the athletes in the training areas. Participation was voluntary, anonymous and confidential; they were informed about the instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire. The researchers emphasized to the athletes that all the questionnaires were designed to measure athletes' own perceptions and there were no right or wrong answers and all questions about the questionnaire were allowed. The athletes completed the questionnaires after the end of a training session without the presence of a coach.

Statistical analysis

For the statistical analysis of the data, from the SPSS 21.0 statistical package, the methods used were the Descriptive statistics, the Reliability analysis to evaluate the internal cohesion of the factors and the Pearson Correlation analysis to investigate the relationship between the factors of the two questionnaires. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

RESULTS

The internal consistency of the scales that were used in this study was measured with Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Reliability analysis showed that the indicators of internal cohesion of the factors were at satisfactory levels (Cronbach's alpha from .87 to .91 and .84 to .92). Also, correlations analysis revealed that the supportiveness coaching behavior had a statistically significant relationship with perceived autonomy ($r = .459$, $p < .01$), competence ($r = .290$, $p < .01$) and relatedness ($r = .424$, $p < .01$), while the negative activation was not related by competence and had negative relationship with autonomy ($r = -.158$, $p < .05$) and relatedness ($r = -.167$, $p < .05$). In terms of perceived Coaching behavior, athletes found it supportiveness at satisfactory levels as they showed high averages (mean = 3.34) but also showed high average at negative ones (mean = 2.68). Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that athletes showed satisfactory averages of autonomy, competence and relationships. The results are presented in Table 1 in detail.

Table 1. *M=means - Reliability analysis- Correlation analysis among the factors of the two instruments*

Factors	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	M	alpha
1. Supportiveness	1.00					3.34	.91
2. Negative activation	-.159*	1.00				2.68	.87
3. Autonomy	.459**	-.158*	1.00			3.69	.89
4. Competence	.290*	.056	.463**	1.00		3.78	.84
5. Relatedness	.424**	-.167*	.145*	.244**	1.00	4.27	.92

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

DISCUSSION

The results of the survey showed that the “supportiveness behavior” is related statistically significant with autonomy, competence and relationships, while “negative activation” is only negative related. As far as the coaching behavior is concerned, junior basketball athletes consider it to be supportive to a satisfactory extent (mean= 3.34) and less negative (mean = 2.68) while in terms of satisfying basic psychological needs, athletes showed satisfactory averages with the highest in relationships (4.27) on the 5th degree scale of responses.

These results are in agreement with previous studies of athletes ‘perceptions of their coaches’ behaviors (Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012; Amorose, & Horn, 2000; Heuze, & Bosselut, 2007), who found a positive relationship between positive feedback and internal motivation. Even the Hollembeak and

Amorose (2005), argued that the basic psychological needs, competence and relationships with others are closely associated with the supportive behavior of the coaches. A supportive coaching style can support athletes’ basic psychological needs and facilitate optimal motivation and positive persistence in sport (Ntoumanis, 2012). Reinboth and Duda (2006) stated that satisfying the needs of autonomy, competence of college athletes was positively related to coach’s emphasis on positive feedback. In conclusion, the results of this study support that during early years of participation of young basketball athletes, the coaches should focus on satisfying of the basic psychological needs, motivation and pleasure of participation and their approach to be positive to achieving both the perceived autonomy and ability and the development of the relationship with other co-athletes in order to achieve their goals both in the process of performance and at the effectiveness.

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