

INFLUENCE OF INTERPERSONAL AND WORK ENVIRONMENT FACTORS IN COACHING

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PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

TO create understanding and awareness of the importance of the CAREER COACHES' WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR:

- MANAGING COACHES
- CONTENT WITHIN COACH EDUCATION AND
- A TOPIC FOR COACHING RESEARCH

WORK ENVIRONMENT IS UNDERVALUED IN ITS IMPACT ON THE SPORT SYSTEM AND COACH AND ATHLETE PERFORMANCE.

SSHRC FUNDED RESEARCH

The coaches that are the focus of our research are coaches that depend on coaching for their livelihoods.

- Research draws from coaching stress, work-environment, and role-conflict literature.
- Two qualitative descriptive studies were conducted to examine the work-environment factors that influence coach transitions.

The work environment of an employee has been found to be linked to job satisfaction, and job satisfaction is linked to retention.

Four major themes were identified:

- 1) interpersonal considerations (support from supervisors and athletes),
- 2) work demands,
- 3) career concerns (opportunities for career progression), and
- 4) success and enjoyment (winning, athlete development).

APPLICATION TO PRACTICE

- WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SUGGEST MUST BE MANAGED IN THE COACHES' WORK ENVIRONMENT TO IMPROVE JOB SATISFACTION AND COACH RETENTION?

- interpersonal considerations
 - **supportive colleagues and supervisors**
- work demands
 - **attention to amount of admin**
- career concerns
 - **contracts, compensation, benefits**
- success and enjoyment
 - **interactions with athletes**
- *opportunities for career progression*
 - **provide an obvious pathway**

Key learning

- While we are confident that our research findings reinforced the critical importance of the work environment in job satisfaction for coaches, we have yet to identify **which factors are the most important**.

However, employers and coach educators should be aware that:

- Opportunities for career progression are important to coaches and the employer can certainly build that into their management system.
- Workload does not seem to be a major influence on job satisfaction, but the type of work does matter. Coaches like to coach.
- Supportive interpersonal relationships are very important to coaches. However, strain in personal relationships is probably a larger factor for coaches than for many professions due to the long hours, the weekend work, and the emphasis on winning.

Key stakeholders and benefits

- Coaches Association of Canada would benefit from incorporating into their advanced coach education a course to assist coaches in understanding and managing their work environment.
- All employers of coaches, such as national and provincial sport organizations, and clubs could ensure their employees have the skills to manage coaches effectively.
- Universities and colleges with coach education programs should ensure they incorporate management content in their coach education courses.
- Three peer-reviewed journal articles and one textbook chapter are now in print as an outcome of this research program.