

EVALUATING ATHLETIC COACHES: REFINING THE SCALE OF COACHING PERFORMANCE

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Context

Human resource strategies involve a variety of practices fundamental to hiring, motivating, and retaining the best employees. An essential step in the process is evaluating individual performance, known as performance appraisal. It involves developing a system to define, understand, compare, and communicate relative levels of employee activity. A fundamental task in performance evaluation is to define the elements or dimensions of performance that are to be measured. In this regard, MacLean and Chelladurai (1995) articulated a six-dimensional scheme of coaching performance. Conjointly, these authors also developed the Scale of Coaching Performance (SCP) to measure the performance of coaches on those six dimensions. Subsequently, Li Chen (2003) tested the SCP (developed with data from Canadian university coaches) in the context of NCAA coaches in the United States. He found that the six-dimensional scheme was not supported in the American context, and concluded that further investigation was required in order to improve the generalizability of the SCP. In 1998, Barber and Eckrich investigated the appraisal of coaching performance in the NCAA focusing in part on the criteria used for evaluation by Athletic Directors in the USA. The authors derived new sets of performance appraisal criteria and dimensions factor analytically for the types of sports coached in the NCAA. This is not surprising, given the existing literature identifying the importance of context, environment, and job-specificity for defining criteria of performance (MacLean, 2001; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Williams, 2002). Finally, Cunningham and Dixon (2003) offered a different conceptual framework of coaching performance dimensions, taking into account the multi-level nature of organizations and reciprocal interdependence of coaching staffs. Given the above literature on evaluating coaching performance, it is time to modify the Scale of Coaching Performance developed a decade ago.

Methods

Scale Modifications

The SCP was re-assessed using the following procedure:

- (1) Assessment of the original SCP items and addition of other possible criteria based on recent literature
- (2) Semi-structured interviews with two coaches and two administrators outside the frame of the study in order to identify missing criteria and ideas
- (3) Field testing of the updated questionnaire to establish face validity by 8 sport management graduate students, and revisions based on their criticisms and recommendations
- (4) Distribution of the revised questionnaire to the entire population of coaches (703), and administrators (185) in Canadian colleges and universities (150) resulting in a usable response rate of 413 (47%) questionnaires
- (5) The validity and reliability of the sub-scale structure was then assessed using confirmatory factor analysis.

Scale Purification Procedures

As the new items were distributed across the original six dimensions of the Scale of Coaching Performance, it was necessary to empirically verify whether the new items in each dimension were measuring the same or different constructs. Accordingly, the items in each dimensions was subjected to Principal Component Analyses with the data of 25% of the data set randomly selected. The results showed that there was more than one factor with an Eigen value greater than one in five of the six dimensions. Ten of those emergent factors were selected as they were conceptually meaningful, focusing on clear and most relevant dimensions of coaching performance.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The selected ten factors and the items therein were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis with the AMOS statistical program.

Results

The results of the measurement model showed that the ten dimensional description of coaching performance for evaluation with 40 items fit the data very well ($\chi^2/df = 1510.65/695 = 2.17$; $RMSEA = .053$ with confidence interval of .050 to .057). However the internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) for two dimensions were far below the acceptable .70. Hence these two dimensions were eliminated, resulting in the eight dimensions described in Table 1. The internal consistency estimates for those remaining eight dimensions ranged from .70 to .87, for a mean of .77.

Table 1: Dimensions of Coaching Performance for Evaluation

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>items</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Description</i>
Performance-Winning	4	.84	Winning in competitions
Performance -Development	5	.82	Developing athletic potential of team members
Planning and Strategy	4	.87	Planning and strategizing for practice and competitions
Recruiting	4	.72	Recruiting of prospective members
Fund Raising	3	.70	Helping with fund raising for the team and the institution
Academic Orientation	3	.71	Being concerned with the academic performance of the members
Image Projection	4	.83	Projecting the image of self and the institution.
Community Relations	3	.70	Building friendly relations with the community

Discussion/Implications

The results support the extension and further refinement of the SCP. Dimensions of coaching performance have been further delineated and re-labeled. Notably, this study resulted in removing outcomes-based criteria related to public recognition for the coach (receiving coaching awards, invited speaking engagements) from the SCP. The significance of the resulting dimensions, and future research directions were discussed.

References:

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