

Group Level Effects for Satisfaction within the Athletic Context and the Implications for Management

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Keywords: group level effects, athlete satisfaction, team culture/climate

Abstract

Introduction

Chelladurai and Riemer (1997) have noted that amateur athletics (e.g., club sport in Europe) is one of the more significant sectors (socially and economically) sport managers are involved in. They argue that athletes involved with such organizations should be considered prime beneficiaries of organizational services and the prime producers of the products such organizations market (e.g., entertainment). In an enterprise where the athletes play such a vital role, an important outcome for management to evaluate is the athlete's reaction to his/her own experiences. Riemer and Chelladurai's (1998) measure, the Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ), was designed to serve as an instrument to this end. The scale has been widely used and translated into languages other than English. Historically, the data associated with the ASQ (15 subscales) has been evaluated exclusively at the individual level analysis. However, some of the subscales in the ASQ refer to constructs that will likely be responded to in a consistent manner across the team/group/organization (e.g., team performance).

Therefore, the presence of group level effects should be considered. It is also possible that group level effects may be present for 'individual' constructs (e.g., personal dedication) since the team/group/organizational culture (e.g. group norms) may encourage common perceptions or attitudes within a group (Levine & Moreland, 1990).

Studies that include group level constructs (e.g., cohesion) have evaluated the presence and magnitude of the group level effect (e.g. Carron et al., 2004). In contrast, studies with individual level constructs (e.g. athlete satisfaction) where a group level effect may be present have ignored the need to determine whether such an effect exists. Examining group level effects for individual concepts serves the purpose of exploring whether the construct should be analyzed with the individual or the group as the unit of analysis. The purpose of this study is to examine the potential presence, and the implications of, group effects for satisfaction within the athletic context.

Method

ASQ data was collected from Canadian Interuniversity Sport member organizations and included male and female ice hockey, volleyball, soccer, and basketball teams

(212 athletes, 16 teams). Individuals responded to eight subscales of the ASQ (31 items) using a 7- point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all satisfied, 7 = extremely satisfied). The presence of group level effects was examined using interrater agreements (IRA) (James, Demaree & Wolf, 1984) and intraclass correlations (ICC) (Kenny & La Voie, 1985). If a significant ICC-score is present, IRAs are calculated to examine the level of agreement for every participating team. The value of the IRA is an indication of the magnitude of a group level effect (scores between .50 - .80 are sufficient - Nunnally, 1978).

Results

All ICC scores were significant, but satisfaction with group level constructs (e.g., team performance) had higher ICC scores than individual level constructs (e.g., individual performance). While most teams had IRAs greater than .5 on all constructs, IRAs were higher for satisfaction with group level constructs than for individual level constructs. Discussion The results demonstrate the strong presence of a group level effect particularly for those constructs that should be consistently evaluated across the group (e.g., team integration). That is, subscales reflecting group constructs had far larger ICC and IRA scores than those reflecting individual constructs. Second, the results suggest that the group/organization appears to have an impact on how individuals respond since there was a significant group effect even on subscales that have a very individual focus (e.g., ability utilization).

This effect may be attributed to the influence of the team/organization's culture/climate. Researchers should consider evaluating such constructs at a group level. Moreover, the failure to employ a group level of analysis in the past may provide some explanation why strong relationships between constructs such as leadership and satisfaction, or satisfaction and performance, have not been found in team/group environments. For managers, the results indicate the appropriateness of using mean level data as an indication of the satisfaction of their prime beneficiaries and producers – particularly for those constructs that could be considered group level subscales.

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