

FACTORS AFFECTING THE JOB SATISFACTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SPORT COACHES

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ABSTRACT

Sport organisations today face heightened competition on a global basis resulting in their raising expectations regarding results. Sport coaches are thus experiencing increased pressures with regard to recognition for good work done, compensation and support, rapport with colleagues, and supervision that influence their job satisfaction. The aim of this study was to determine the nature and extent of job satisfaction of coaches. The sample consisted of 250 coaches to whom a validated coach satisfaction questionnaire was administered. The results suggest that coaches derive satisfaction from performing the coaching task itself, but experience dissatisfaction from the compensation, administrative work, media and community support and job security. There is thus a need to devise ways to improve the job satisfaction of coaches.

Key words: Job satisfaction; Sport coach; Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Sport organisations today face heightened competition on a global basis resulting in their raising expectations regarding results. This has an impact on the coaches who are among the primary employees (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003) in sport organisations. Sport coaches, whose careers are volatile, are thus experiencing increased pressures with regard to recognition for good work done, compensation and support, rapport with colleagues, and supervision that influence their job satisfaction (Akindutire, 1993).

Researchers have diverse views of job satisfaction. Chelladurai (1999) views job satisfaction as a pleasurable affective condition resulting from one's appraisal of the way in which the experienced job situation meets one's needs, values and expectations. Arnold & Feldman (1988), on the other hand, view job satisfaction as the amount of overall positive feelings that individuals have about their job experiences. Balzer *et al.* (1990) add that job satisfaction may be described as the feelings an individual has concerning his/her job experiences in relation to previous experiences, current expectations or available alternatives. For the purposes of this study the researchers view the job satisfaction of coaches as their attitude towards the various aspects of their job as well as their job in general.

Job satisfaction is significant at three levels (Chelladurai, 1999), namely the humanitarian level, the economic level and the theoretical level. At the humanitarian level, sport coaches are

concerned with the welfare, achievements and performances of their athletes, since there is evidence that job satisfaction is related to life satisfaction. Sport coaches are interested in job satisfaction at the economic level since increased satisfaction with the job may lead to increased enthusiasm, increased motivation and fewer work-related accidents. This supports Lu's (1985) assertion that the motivation that coaches obtain from their jobs is decisive for their job satisfaction.

There are many factors that can contribute to the job satisfaction of sport coaches. Among these factors are achievement, supervision, responsibility, the job itself, compensation, security and working conditions (Oshagbemi, 1997). Rogers *et al.* (1994) add that role conflict, lack of effective communication within the organisation and role clarity contribute to job tension which in turn leads to a decrease in job satisfaction. This may impact negatively on coach turnover, productivity and athlete/team success.

The instilling of job satisfaction is a crucial task of management, since job satisfaction creates confidence, loyalty, improved quality and increased production. Job satisfaction, however, does not result from just offering more incentives to employees. Research on job satisfaction conducted since the 1970's has revealed that job satisfaction is not a static state, but is subject to influence and modification from forces within and outside the individual (Lam, 1994).

The satisfaction of coaches is of considerable significance to the success of sport organisations (Li, 1993). This is because sport coaches are frequently in direct contact with the customers (athletes and spectators) of the sport organisation and if they are satisfied, a positive image of the sport organisation may be communicated to the customers. Furthermore, it is logical to assume that satisfied coaches would produce better athletes, thereby contributing to the success of the organisation.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today sport coaches demand more of their jobs and respond favourably to management activities that give them greater control of their lives (Ivancevich, 1998). Previous studies on the job of coaches by Li (1993), Chelladurai & Ogasawara (2003), Surujlal (2004) and Surujlal *et al.* (2004) indicate that sport coaches experience, on average, moderate levels of job satisfaction. This has become problematic in sport organisations in South Africa (SA) where the recognition and acceptance of the importance of sport coaching in the past was based on the notion of developing healthy participants (Singh & Moodley, 2001). However, South Africa's re-entry into the international sporting arena has resulted in an increased interest and growth of sport creating the need for more coaches (Singh & Moodley, 2001). Although research on job satisfaction dates back to 1935, relevant research data since have demonstrated the importance of job satisfaction to an organisation in terms of its efficiency, productivity, employee relations, absenteeism and turnover (Koustelios, 2001). Coach turnover in SA is high (Surujlal, 2004). Previous research by Meyer and Allen (1997) indicated that job satisfaction is negatively correlated with turnover. Therefore the need has arisen in sport organisations in SA to study the job satisfaction of sport coaches scientifically.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to determine the nature of job satisfaction and to assess the extent to which sport coaches were satisfied with their jobs.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample in this study comprised sports coaches who coached at regional, provincial and national level in SA. In the context of this study the sport coach is regarded as the individual who possesses a body of knowledge in a particular sport and derives his/her main income by imparting this knowledge. For purposes of this study the following team sports which employed both male and female coaches were selected – soccer, rugby, cricket and hockey. It is in these sports that the highest number of coaches in SA functions (Surujlal, 2004).

Of the 179 coaches that responded, 63% were male and 37% were female. The difference in the number of male and female respondents can be attributed to the fact that there are more male professional sports coaches than female coaches in sport federations in South Africa (Surujlal, 2004). Twelve percent of the coaches were in the 18-25 year age group, 48% in the 26-35 year age group, 28% in the 36-45 year age group and 12% older than 45 years of age. With regard to coaching experience, 25% had less than five years experience, 43% between five and nine years experience and 32% more than 10 years experience. The coaching experience ranged from one year to 33 years with a mean of 8.18 years and a standard deviation of 6.00. Of the coaches that responded, 40% coached soccer, 22% coached rugby, 24% coached cricket and 17% coached hockey. Three percent of the coaches coached more than one code of sport.

Instrument

In addition to a review of secondary data which comprised an appropriate literature study concerning job satisfaction, a validated 41-item coach satisfaction questionnaire (CSQ) that was used in previous research of this nature in the United States (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003) was used to measure the job satisfaction of coaches in South Africa. The items in the questionnaire were scored on a 9-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 9 (very satisfied). The questionnaire was mailed to 250 coaches in SA. The response rate for the questionnaires was 72% (n=179). The returned questionnaires were subjected to editing and coding for input into the statistical programme for the social sciences (SPSS-version 12).

Results and discussion

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the items. The factor analysis matrix was rotated orthogonally using varimax with Kaiser normalisation. The eigenvalue criterion with a cut-off of 1 was used since it is most reliable when the number of variables is between 20 and 50 (Hair *et al.*, 1998). In addition, the number of factors to be extracted was also established by sketching a scree plot. On examining the scree plot it was established that the scree levelled off after nine factors, indicating that further extraction of factors does not enable any meaningful interpretation of data. Thus, a total of nine first order factors were interpreted. Of these factors there were four major underlying dimensions and the balance were unique on the

first order. For reporting purposes the major underlying dimensions were used since the remaining dimensions had fewer than four items each. The Cronbach-alpha reliability coefficients for the major dimensions are illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1. CRONBACH ALPHA RELIABILITIES OF THE MAJOR DIMENSIONS PER NUMBER OF ITEMS

Factor	Cronbach Alpha	Number of items
The job itself	0.910	13
Supervision	0.877	5
Compensation and support	0.837	7
Administration and colleagues	0.848	7

According to Nunnally (1978), the recommended coefficient alpha to conclude that the proposed dimensions are reliable is 0.7. Therefore the dimensions in Table 1 are deemed reliable as the lowest Cronbach alpha value is 0.837. The majority of the respondents responded in the 5-9 category, resulting in a high positive skewness and kurtosis (2 & 7). Thus to form a more normal distribution the category 1-4 needed to be collapsed, resulting in a 6 point Likert-type scale.

DIMENSIONS OF SATISFACTION

In the tables that follow, the scales from 1–6 reflect the extent of job satisfaction experienced from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

The job itself

With reference to Table 2, most coaches expressed moderate to high levels of satisfaction - the mean exceeding 3.5 on a six-point scale. The lowest levels of satisfaction – a mean of below 4 – were expressed with regard to the scheduling of facilities, ie. the way facilities are made available to coaches for coaching sessions (item 30, \bar{x} =3.61) and the degree to which team members shared the same goals (item 23, \bar{x} =3.83). It appears that facilities are not always available to coaches when needed. It is a fact that during the apartheid era sport in SA was governed under a dichotomous system (Surujlal, 2004) consisting of a white, establishment side and a black under-resourced side. The establishment side had sporting links with the apartheid government and had access to modern sporting facilities and sophisticated training methods while the non- establishment side had to be content with make-shift facilities and virtually no training opportunities (Goslin, 1996). With restrictions being lifted on sport since the 1994 National Government elections, a backlog of facilities and services was expressed. This is perhaps the reason for the low satisfaction with regard to facilities. The labour laws in SA stipulate that organisations should be fully representative of the population of SA. As a result, individuals from diverse backgrounds are required to work with each other and they may not necessarily share the same views. This may perhaps be the reason for the low level of satisfaction with regard to item 23 (the degree to which members share the same goals), as there has been anything but a history of cooperative and collaborative functioning in SA sport.

TABLE 2. ITEMS, MEANS AND FREQUENCIES (PERCENTAGES (N)) WITH REGARD TO THE JOB ITSELF

Item	Item description	mean	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Being able to keep busy all the time	4.08	2.8(5)	8.4(15)	16.3(29)	32.0(57)	30.9(55)	9.6(17)
5	The pride I get from coaching	4.85	2.2(4)	2.8(5)	6.2(11)	19.1(34)	36.5(65)	33.1(59)
6	The chance to work independently of others	4.17	3.4(6)	1.7(3)	11.2(20)	29.1(52)	35.2(63)	19.6(35)
10	The chance to do things that don't harm other people	4.13	4.0(7)	7.3(13)	13.6(24)	36.7(65)	26.6(47)	11.9(21)
16	Being active most of the time	4.15	6.1(11)	6.1(11)	14.5(26)	31.3(56)	24.0(43)	17.9(32)
18	The enjoyment I get out of coaching	4.89	3.9(7)	1.7(3)	3.9(7)	18.4(33)	37.4(67)	34.6(62)
23	The degree to which my team members share the same goal	3.83	7.3(13)	7.8(14)	17.3(31)	36.9(66)	26.8(48)	3.9(7)
29	The feeling of accomplishment I get from coaching	4.65	2.8(5)	2.2(4)	12.8(23)	23.5(42)	30.2(54)	28.5(51)
30	The scheduling of facilities for my team	3.61	11.7(21)	10.6(19)	17.9(32)	33.0(59)	21.8(39)	5.0(9)
32	The freedom to use my own judgment in coaching	4.39	2.2(4)	3.9(7)	11.7(21)	34.6(62)	27.9(50)	19.6(35)
37	The meaningful-ness of the job I do	4.51	2.8(5)	2.8(5)	11.9(21)	28.4(50)	31.8(56)	22.2(39)
38	The chance to try my own methods in coaching	4.40	3.4(6)	2.2(4)	14.0(25)	30.2(54)	29.6(53)	20.7(37)
41	The significance of the job I do	4.72	1.7(3)	2.8(5)	8.9(16)	25.7(46)	32.4(58)	28.5(51)

On the other end of the scale, coaches indicated that the greatest satisfaction that they achieved were from the pride that they derived from coaching (item 5, $\bar{x}=4.85$), the enjoyment that coaching provided them (item 18, $\bar{x}=4.89$), the feeling of accomplishment that they derived from coaching (item 29, $\bar{x}=4.65$) and appreciation of the significance of the job they did (item 41, $\bar{x}=4.72$). These intrinsic variables were highly rated by the coaches. This implies that coaches derived most satisfaction from situations that they had most control over. These variables are explained by Herzberg's theory (1966) that suggests that job content-related factors like achievement and responsibility contribute to satisfaction. The implications of Herzberg's theory (1966) are that individuals need to be maintained in a relatively cozy environment in terms of safety, security and status, and be developed through achievement, recognition and advancement (Watt, 1998). Furthermore, empirical studies of job satisfaction (Locke, 1976; Lam, 1994) indicate that conditions that provide interesting work, reasonable workload and compensation, and minimises role conflict lead to job satisfaction. Furthermore, there is evidence that job content-related factors like responsibility and accomplishment enhances intrinsic satisfaction whereas extrinsic factors such as remuneration may lead to higher performance levels which lead to a feeling of accomplishment resulting in higher job satisfaction. The satisfaction that coaches experienced could also be due to the prominence that sport is beginning to gain in SA, the increase in sponsorship and funding that sport is attracting (Surujlal, 2004); and the increased opportunities that South African athletes are offered to compete internationally. These factors appear to work together in contributing to the feeling of coaches' satisfaction with their jobs.

Compensation and support

TABLE 3. ITEMS, MEANS AND FREQUENCIES (PERCENTAGES (N)) WITH REGARD TO COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Item	Item description	m	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	The media's coverage of my team	2.55	40.8(73)	17.9(32)	10.1(18)	13.4(24)	12.8(23)	5.0(9)
9	My pay compared to the amount of work I do	2.53	38.8(69)	16.3(29)	18.0(32)	10.1(180)	10.1(18)	6.7(12)
15	The way coaching provides for steady employment	2.91	27.4(49)	15.1(27)	22.9(41)	16.8(30)	8.9(16)	8.9(16)
21	The media's support for my team	2.42	44.3(77)	10.3(18)	18.4(32)	17.2(30)	8.6(15)	1.1(2)
22	How my pay compares with those for similar jobs in other colleges/univ	2.64	33.5(60)	20.1(36)	13.4(24)	19.6(35)	11.2(20)	2.2(4)
27	My job security	3.27	19.8(35)	15.8(28)	18.6(33)	21.5(38)	14.1(25)	10.2(18)
31	The local community's support for my team	3.56	15.3(27)	8.5(15)	19.2(34)	26.6(47)	27.1(48)	3.4(6)

Table 3 indicates that sport coaches generally experienced moderate to low (a mean of less than 3.5 on a six-point scale) levels of satisfaction with regard to compensation and support (from the media and the community). This is supported by Herzberg's theory (1966) which states that dissatisfaction with job-context related factors like pay, security and working conditions could lead to overall job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the findings of Koustelios (2001), Murphy *et al.* (2002), Chelladurai and Ogasawara (2003), Surujlal (2004) and Surujlal *et al.* (2004). Low satisfaction with pay is said to be a universal problem and not unique to sport coaches (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003). However, it is also universally conceded (Li, 1993) that until sport organisations find better approaches to improve the job satisfaction of coaches, the fiscal incentive system will still be used. It is therefore important that the allocation of financial rewards is based on the coach's efforts and effectiveness, or they could lead to job dissatisfaction. Sport coaches experienced a low level of satisfaction with job security (item 27, $\bar{x}=3.27$). One of the reasons for this situation can be attributed to the mobility of coaches. There is a high turnover of coaches, especially in the popular sports like soccer, rugby and cricket (Surujlal, 2004) although most coaches are contracted to sport organisations (Surujlal, 2004). This suggests that most coaches in SA, in contrast to their international counterparts, do enjoy tenure of employment through contractual obligations with their employers. However, it is disturbing that their employment contracts do not promise security or stability for coaches (Singh & Moodley, 2001), resulting in coaches becoming insecure in their jobs. Despite the fact that most coaches were consulted in the drawing up of their contracts, most contracts were to the advantage of one party, namely the employer (Surujlal *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, the absence of a coaches' association contributes to the job insecurity of the coaches resulting in low job satisfaction. This is reflected in the low mean for the way coaching provides for steady employment (item 15, $\bar{x}=2.91$). A low satisfaction with media support indicates the significant role that the media plays in sport. It implies that more support is expected of the media by coaches. A study by Singh & Moodley (2001) found that the majority of coaches felt pressured by the media,

resulting in their anxiety and stress. In addition, the media brought them under public scrutiny thereby increasing the pressure on them to deliver success. Consequently coaches experienced lower satisfaction in this regard.

Administration and colleagues

TABLE 4. ITEMS, MEANS AND FREQUENCIES (PERCENTAGES (N)) WITH REGARD TO ADMINISTRATION AND COLLEAGUES

Item	Item description	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	The amount of paper work I have to do	3.06	19.1(34)	14.6(26)	25.8(46)	25.3(45)	13.5(24)	1.7(3)
13	The level of cooperation among coaches in my university/college	3.19	15.9(28)	18.2(32)	19.3(34)	28.4(50)	13.6(24)	4.5(8)
19	The responsibility I have over my own work	4.46	5.6(10)	3.4(6)	8.4(15)	27.9(50)	33.0(59)	21.8(39)
24	The administrative duties I have to perform	3.48	10.1(18)	14.5(26)	21.8(39)	30.2(54)	19.6(35)	3.9(7)
25	The way coaches in my college/university get along with each other	3.55	11.7(21)	9.5(17)	21.8(39)	30.2(54)	19.6(35)	3.9(7)
34	The amount of work I have to do	3.93	6.7(12)	10.6(19)	15.1(27)	30.2(54)	24.6(44)	12.8(23)
35	The friendship with other coaches	3.93	8.9(16)	5.6(10)	20.1(36)	31.3(56)	19.0(34)	15.1(27)

As evidenced in Table 4, coaches generally experienced moderate to good satisfaction with administration and colleagues. Moderate satisfaction (mean <3.5) was expressed by coaches with regard to the paperwork and mundane administration that coaches had to do (item 12, $\bar{x}=3.06$ and item 24, $\bar{x}=3.48$). This implies that coaches were not comfortable with the amount of paperwork and administration duties that they had to perform. Sport and more so coaching sport is a very practical and hands-on activity therefore coaches perhaps do not perceive the importance of sound administration. Sport coaches also expressed moderate satisfaction with regard to the level of co-operation among themselves (item 13, $\bar{x}=3.19$). It is perhaps because of the insecurity that sport coaches experience with regard to their jobs that they compete with each other to retain their jobs. This could possibly contribute to the lack of co-operation between coaches. Research done on educators (Oshagbemi, 1997), whose profession is similar to that of coaches showed that co-workers' behaviours, pleasant working colleagues, congeniality with colleagues, friendship with colleagues and collaboration with colleagues played an important role in their job satisfaction. With regard to this factor, coaches were most satisfied with the responsibility that they have over their jobs (item 19, $\bar{x}=4.46$). Lu (1985) states that the sense of responsibility that employees obtain from their jobs is extremely decisive for their job satisfaction. This may imply that coaches welcome responsibility and autonomy in their jobs. Koontz (1980) supports this by stating that employees' job satisfaction may suffer if they do not have the autonomy that corresponds with the responsibility.

Supervision

TABLE 5. ITEMS, MEANS AND FREQUENCIES (PERCENTAGES (N)) WITH REGARD TO SUPERVISION

Item	Item description	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	The way my supervisor handles his/her employees	3.49	9.0(16)	14.1(2)	26.0(46)	24.3(43)	22.5(38)	5.1(9)
17	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	3.75	10.9(19)	6.9(12)	21.1(37)	26.3(46)	25.7(45)	9.1(16)
28	The personal relationship between my supervisor and his/her employees	3.73	8.6(16)	7.3(13)	22.3(40)	30.7(55)	22.3(40)	8.4(15)
36	The way my supervisor delegates work to others	3.62	12.3(22)	7.3(13)	20.1(36)	29.6(53)	24.6(44)	6.1(11)
40	The feedback I get from my superiors	3.70	12.3(22)	8.9(16)	16.8(30)	26.8(48)	26.8(48)	8.4(15)

Table 5 shows that coaches experienced moderate satisfaction with regard to the supervision that they received. This may imply that either the coaches want to be responsible for their tasks and do not welcome “interference” by their supervisors or that their supervisors are not competent enough to supervise them. According to the study done by Singh & Moodley (2001) most coaches indicated that management influences the selection of teams, thereby implying that coaches did not own the end product of the coaching process. This marginalised the coaches from the decision making process yet held them accountable when their team lost. Such a predicament is counter-productive and unacceptable. The lowest level of satisfaction was experienced with regard to the way coaches were treated by their supervisors (item 4, $\bar{x}=3.49$). According to Donnelly (in Li, 1993) proper supervision enhanced the satisfaction of coaches working under severe job pressures. In addition, supervisor behaviour also contributed to coaches’ job performance which has an impact on their job satisfaction. Therefore, if coaches were not treated well by their supervisors, their job satisfaction would suffer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Coaches experienced moderate levels of satisfaction with regard to the level of co-operation among themselves. It is important for coaches to have good interpersonal relationships as this will reduce internal conflict, improve co-operation and lead to improved job satisfaction. Regular interaction of coaches through workshops and meetings with the intention of bridging differences between coaches is encouraged.

The results indicate that coaches are not satisfied with their pay. This may perhaps be compensated by the satisfaction that they derive by doing the job. Therefore, to compensate for shortfalls in financial incentives it is crucial for sport organisations to concentrate on creating conditions that inspire high performance. This can be achieved by ensuring that coaches are given autonomy in their job functions (for example, a coach is given the latitude to draw up his/her own programmes and coaching rules), and are given meaningful assignments, allowing them to be involved in the decision making for their area of expertise (for example in the selection of players). Furthermore, pleasant working conditions (like

proper training facilities) can not only improve the job satisfaction of coaches but also inspire them to remain in their organisation. In addition, offering sport coaches training to keep them current on their job functions and allowing them to learn new skills can also be utilised to improve their satisfaction with the organisation (Sigler, 1999).

The low level of satisfaction experienced by coaches with regard to the scheduling of facilities could be overcome by coaches scheduling their coaching sessions according to the availability of the facility. Management should also liaise with coaches when implementing the booking of the facility. With regard to the media coaches have little control over what the media prints. Sport organisations should provide professional counseling to coaches to help them deal with the media and increase their immunity towards the negative aspects of media reports.

The low level of satisfaction experienced by coaches with regard to job security was, in most instances, linked to the contracts that coaches had with sport organisations. Sport organisations can enhance the job security of coaches by ensuring that the clauses in the sport contracts are equally binding on both the coach and the organisation.

The moderate level of satisfaction that coaches experienced with regard to supervision can be overcome by cultivating in both the coach and supervisor a sense of belonging to a team. Sport coaches need recognition and understanding from their supervisors for their efforts (Li, 1993). In addition, sport organisations should ensure that supervisors have the required competences and qualifications to perform their jobs.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study suggests that sport coaches derive satisfaction from performing the coaching task itself but experience dissatisfaction from their compensation, the administrative work that they have to do, lack of media support, lack of job security and lack of co-operation among coaches. It is not necessarily true that satisfied employees are automatically more productive, but dissatisfied employees do tend to leave the organisation more often, be absent more frequently and produce lower quality work than satisfied workers. Therefore, further research needs to be done to devise ways to reduce dissatisfying elements in the job of the coach.

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