



Coaching profiles in Youth Athletes: Associations with Motivation and Commitment in Sport

Oral Presentation

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Abstract

Introduction: Self-determination theory is limited by variable-centered studies focused on linear relationships between perceived needs-supportive/controlling coaching style. Therefore, latent profile analysis was used to determine if heterogenous profiles emerged from the interactive effects of coaching styles (autonomy-supportive, controlling) and the subsequent association with athlete motivation (autonomous, controlled), and sport commitment (enthusiastic, constrained) in competitive youth athletes.

Methods: A total of 301 young athletes (14-20 years) at the elite level from various sports types participated in this study and completed a battery of inventories assessing sport commitment, sport motivation, autonomy-supportive coaching style, and controlling coaching style. A series of latent profile analyses were performed to identify discrete profiles/subgroups of need-supportive and controlling coaching.

Results: A series of latent profile analyses pointed toward a three-cluster solution (e.g., low-low, high-low, and low-high), regardless of the pair of coaching dimensions used. Cluster 1 represents coaches who are perceived to be relatively low on autonomy-support and controlling coaching style (low-low). Cluster 2 and 3 yielded an opposite pattern, with cluster 2 representing coaches who are perceived to be low on controlling but high on being autonomy- support high-low) and cluster 3 involving coaches who are perceived to be low on autonomy-support and high on controlling (low-high). Individuals within Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 reported relatively higher autonomous motivation and enthusiastic commitment in sport than individuals in Cluster 3. Indirect path analyses found the coaching profiles were linked with commitment (enthusiastic, constrained) through athlete motivation (autonomous, controlled).

Conclusion: Overall, findings highlighted the crucial combined role of motivation and coaching style in understanding and explaining athletes' sport commitment, which may impact the development of sport commitment among young athletes. Coaches working with elite young performers should avoid controlling mechanisms and instead foster autonomous functioning.

Keywords

Coaching Style; Controlling Motivation; Sport Commitment; Latent profile