



Mini Review

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Coaching & Emotional Intelligence



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TEAM, together everyone achieves more. This is a commonly used acronym in the sporting world and carries with it a noble message. To orchestrate this sort of mindset within and among a team, the coach must first lead by example. In order to lead a team to success, a coach must ensure each member has a role, and his or her needs are met. These needs are often not clearly communicated from athlete to coach, but rather vaguely transferred through emotions. Effective leaders understand that assessing others' emotions, as well as their own, is a necessary task for the betterment of the team. Moreover, great leaders have the ability to identify others' emotions, and modulate their own, to meet the specific demands of a situation. Thankfully, a few investigations have focused specifically on this skill, otherwise known as emotional intelligence, in relation to coaching. The first study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and coaching efficacy, otherwise known as the extent to which the coach believes that they have the capacity to affect learning and performance in their athletes [1].

Ninety-nine coaches of various sports including: soccer, gymnastics, basketball, and cricket completed questionnaires to measure emotional intelligence and coaching efficacy. The main finding from the analysis was that both the coach appraisals of their own emotions and regulation of emotions were significantly correlated with coaching efficacy. In other words, coaches who perceived themselves as better at evaluating and adjusting their own emotions, had greater perceived ability to affect learning and performance in their athletes. A similar study Sport Science & Coach Education MS [2]. Utilized similar procedures and questionnaires and found a meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and coaching efficacy in Iranian University coaches. The authors also concluded coaches with high emotional intelligence will outperform coaches with low emotional intelligence in critical situations by choosing better solutions and facing contest stress.

Yet another study examined the relationships among emotional intelligence and coaching efficacy, but also sought to understand their influence on leadership style [3]. A questionnaire was administered to a total of 323 head coaches of

high school basketball teams from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. Conclusions from this study support previous findings that a coaches' perceived ability to regulate and be aware of their own and athlete's emotions predicts their ability to affect learning and performance in their athletes. Findings also reveal that emotional intelligence significantly predicted leadership style. Collectively, these findings suggest emotional intelligence is a good predictor of coaching efficacy and leadership style.

Further, the current evidence suggests emotional intelligence is a positive trait for coaches and leaders. Believed to be a byproduct of earlier studies, [4]. Examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Fifty-six coaches from 14 teams in a premier Under-20 football (soccer) league were investigated using questionnaires for emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Findings report significant positive relationships between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among the coaches in the present study. Furthermore, the more emotional intelligence a coach had the more satisfied they were. These results are in agreement with other investigations studying physical education teachers and employees. Evidence seems to suggest, the more emotional intelligent a person is, they more satisfied they will be.

Emotional intelligence can also be used as a moderator of other characteristics or behaviors, similar to studies referenced earlier where emotional intelligence predicted coaching efficacy and leadership style. The last study found investigating emotional intelligence in coaches, assessed the relationship among affectivity, emotional labor, and emotional exhaustion. More specifically, authors aimed to identify the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on these other behaviors [5]. 430 NCAA Division I coaches from 21 different sports completed modified questionnaires measuring affectivity, emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and emotional intelligence. Results from this investigation suggest higher levels of emotional intelligence aid coaches in their ability to prevent emotional exhaustion. In other words, the ability to assess and regulate one's own emotions, will allow a coach to cope with the emotional demands of a given situation.

Summary

Emotional intelligence can be useful when working with others to achieve a common goal. Coaches with higher emotional intelligence scores were found to: be more confident in their ability to affect their athletes, have greater job satisfaction, and were better suited to prevent emotional exhaustion in the work place. Evidence from a study on young adults suggests emotional intelligence can be improved in as little as four sessions, of two and a half hours, over a four-week period [6]. In light of these findings, coaches are urged to devote time to improve awareness of their own emotions, the emotions of others, and the regulation of those emotions with the environment. Coach educators may help the situation by integrating sessions within educational programs with the purpose of improving and informing coaches of the importance of emotional intelligence.

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