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A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF COACHING MENTAL MODEL OF EXPERT ROWING COACHES IN JAPAN

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Introduction The exceptional levels of coaching require certain types of environmental support, special experiences, and appropriate motivational encouragement (Salmela, 1994). In this context, Salmela suggested that the most important role of the coach is to make the athletes center their efforts upon deliberate practice and to minimize the resource, effort and motivational constraints which impede the skill development of the athletes (Salmela, 1994). The purpose of this study was to explore the coaching mental model of expert rowing coaches in Japan. **Methods** Participant selection was limited to expert coaches who had the coaching experience of Japanese national rowing team. Six coaches served as participants for this study. Their average age was 36.3 years old, and they had an average of 9.7 years of coaching. In-depth, open-ended interviews were conducted with each coach. Interviews ranged between 60 to 90 minutes, were recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviews were systematically transcribed verbatim immediately after the completion of each interview, and total of 473 meaning units were extracted from the data set. The data was decontextualized using an inductive procedure for analyzing unstructured qualitative data (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993). **Results** The inductive analysis process resulted in regrouping these interview transcripts into three categories (continuous self-change through a reflection, focus on a learning process, and orientation toward self-growth), and eight sub-categories (attaching meaning to awareness, self-accept, vision, rationalization, feedback, communication, self-determination, and self-coaching). **Discussion** All of the participants faced a lot of problems and built up their unsuccessful experiences throughout their coaching career. Consequently they realized the needs of continuous self-change to develop their coaching expertise. Evidence of the coaches' mental conflicts to the coaching activities with athletes also surfaced throughout the training and race. This study found significant agreement between the perceptions of the concepts on how coaches evaluated their coaching activities in relation to performance enhancement of athletes and how this support affected their development of coaching excellence. The strong relationship between three categories indicates that coaches construct the practice environment in a manner that maximizes athletes' commitment to daily effortful practice. **References** Côté, J., Salmela, J.H., Abderrahim, B., & Russell, S.J. (1993). Organizing and interpreting unstructured qualitative data, *The Sport Psychologist*, 7, 127-137. Salmela, J.H. (1994). Phases and transitions among sport careers. In D. Hackfort (Ed.), *Psycho-social issues and interventions in elite sport*. Frankfurt: Lang, 11-28. Contact kats@m.tohoku.ac.jp

PERCEIVED MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE RELATED TO TYPE OF MOTIVATION IN MEXICAN ATHLETES

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Introduction Motivation is considered one of the main factors for enhancing sports performance (Gillet et al., 2010). As a consequence, creating a positive motivational climate during training and sports events should be a primary aim for coaches, in order to provide favourable conditions for athletes to perform at their best (Smith et al., 2007). The aim of this study is to assess and compare perceived sports climate among several teams at Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL), Monterrey (Mexico). **Methods** 131 athletes (64 men, 67 women) belonging to representative teams of UANL from seven sports disciplines filled in the Spanish version of Sport Climate Questionnaire (Balaguer et al., 2009) with Likert scale 1-to-7. ANOVAs and Tamhane tests were carried out in order to assess differences by sports discipline and gender. **Results** Average perceived sports climate was medium-high for all disciplines. The lowest score was obtained by volleyball male players (4.04), whereas fencing male athletes reached the highest (5.76). No significant differences were found comparing by gender, discipline, or by the combination of both. **Discussion** All athletes obtained medium-to-high values of perceived sport climate, which could indicate that they enjoy training and competing for their respective teams. According to literature, positive climate in sports could lead to enhanced performance and reduced anxiety and stress during trainings and competitions (Smith et al., 2007). Our outcomes could partially explain the positive results these athletes obtained in the past competing season, culminating with UANL reaching the highest number of medals in 2013 Mexican University Olympics (36 golden, 12 silver and 40 bronze), with a difference of more than 50 medals compared to the second placed institution. Coaching training and style at UANL could represent a quality model for other Mexican sports clubs and institutions aiming to improve athletes' psychological condition and performance in training and competition. **References** Balaguer I, Castillo I, Duda J, Tomás I. (2009). *Rev Psicol Deporte*, 18(1), 73-83. Gillet N, Vallerand R, Amoura S, Baldes B. (2010). *Psychol Sport Exerc*, 11(2), 155-161. Smith R, Smoll F, Cumming S. (2007). *J Sport Exerc Psychol*, 29(1), 39-59.

DELIBERATE PRACTICE AND SPORT EXCELLENCE: A DIARY STUDY WITH PORTUGUESE ELITE ATHLETES

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Introduction The engagement in intensive and extended deliberate practice is a major assumption of the expert-performance approach in studying elite athletes. The purpose of this study was to examine the quantity and quality of practice activities in a sample of Portuguese elite athletes. The main aims were to explore how a "typical work week" of these athletes is organized, how their daily activities are perceived in terms of the qualities demanded by the "10-year rule" of necessary preparation in order to attain expertise, testing for the association between retrospectively estimated amounts of practice and "actual" practice and assessing their perceptions and characteristics of deliberate practice. **Methods** 9 purposefully selected Portuguese top athletes, ranging from 18 to 35 years old ($M=24.7 \pm 5.4$), of both genders, competing at the highest international level, who excelled in several sports (individual vs. team) completed biographic data and maintained diaries over a 7-day period. **Results** The analysis of the time spent by athletes in different types of daily activities (in or out of sport context), indicated that, in average, athletes spend more time in sport-specific practice activities. Such activities are highly evaluated in terms of enjoyment, required physical effort, mental effort, relevance to performance, and general satisfaction. Additionally, data seem to support, for the most of participants, the so-called "10-year rule" of necessary preparation and also the consistency between athletes retrospectively estimated amounts of practice (biographic data) and "actual" practice (diary). These results were independent of gender, type of sport (individual vs team) or even international experience of the athletes. **Discussion** The findings of this investigation provides some support for previous assumptions of deliberate practice and expert performance research (Ericsson, et al., 1993; Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996; Hodges et al., 2004), confirming the importance of the intensity and characteristics of sport-specific practice activities as a crucial factor in the qualitative difference between levels of expertise (e.g., Baker et al., 2005; Ward et al., 2007). Limitations and implications arising from this study are discussed. **References** Ericsson, K. A., & Lehmann, A. C. (1996). *Annual Review of Psychology*, 47, 273-305. Hodges, N. J., Kerr, T., Starkes, J. L., Weir, P., & Nananidou, A. (2004). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 10, 219-237. Baker, J., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). *Journal*