

The Level of Coaching Competencies towards Athletics Performance in Malaysian Sports Schools

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Abstract

The training scenario in the field of sports has become increasingly complex and challenging due to the development and advancement of science and technology in the present time (Hamze & Keshkar, 2020). From time to time, sports coaches need to enhance their mastery of knowledge and skills to be more capable and competent in carrying out their responsibilities. In the ecosystem of coaching at the Malaysian Sports School (MSS), there are several issues that receive primary attention in the selection of coaches. Similar issues exist within the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) system, especially regarding coach performance and the development of student-athlete achievements. Up to now, the selection system for sports coaches at MSS is based on minimum qualifications. This fact is stated through the announcement of vacancies for sports coach positions ranging from grades 29 to 44 at Malaysian Sports Schools (MOE, 2018). Some coaches have high certification qualifications but lack experience, while others have extensive experience but minimal certification qualifications. It is proposed to implement a sports coaching mentorship program using a mentorship program approach. Mentorship programs have been introduced in academic systems, for example, under counseling programs. The mentorship program structure is usually implemented face-to-face between senior coaches and mentored coaches. Senior coaches are among coaches who have achieved national and international recognition. They have previously produced high-performing athletes and have experience in leading and managing athletes in prestigious competitions both domestically and internationally. Meanwhile, mentored coaches consist of new coaches who are in the process of gaining knowledge but still lack experience. Being a mentor to junior coaches provides several advantages are achieving the highest level in the coaching profession, practicing educational values and leadership in coaching, experimenting with new coaching techniques and strategies and mastering new knowledge and technology to enhance coaching curriculum. All coaches aspire to advance their coaching careers to higher levels. From a junior coach, they become a senior coach and then a mentor coach. Experience in mentoring junior coaches provides confidence to take on coaching responsibilities at higher levels, namely national and international levels.

Keywords: Coaching, Competencies, towards Athletics Performance

Introduction

The training scenario in the field of sports has become increasingly complex and challenging due to the development and advancement of science and technology in the present time (Hamze & Keshkar, 2020). From time to time, sports coaches need to enhance their mastery of knowledge and skills to be more capable and competent in carrying out their responsibilities. In the ecosystem of coaching at the Malaysian Sports School (MSS), there are several issues that receive primary attention in the selection of coaches. Similar issues exist within the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) system, especially regarding coach performance and the development of student-athlete achievements.

The Malaysian Sports School is a school that provides education for potential athlete-students in sports. Their academic learning and sports talent are nurtured and enhanced by teachers and coaches. Through structured and efficient supervision, the improvement of sports performance can be balanced and integrated. From a management and administrative aspect, MSS follows the concept of a full boarding school complete with sports and academic facilities. MSS focuses on world-class athlete-students, the use of professional personnel, and specialization in Sports Science across the curriculum (MOE, 1996).

Sports coaches today must equip themselves with relevant skills, knowledge, and levels of competency to face the challenges of coaching and guiding student-athletes. Quality and experienced coaches are needed to ensure that their athletes receive the best guidance during training. Coaches need to keep up with the latest techniques and coaching approaches, including team management, which can contribute to the development and success of student-athletes. Coaches will face difficulties in achieving the expected performance if they do not possess a high level of competency in sports coaching (Tripolitsioti, Stavropoulos, & Papadomanolaki, 2016; Murugeesan et al., 2016; Kao et al., 2017).

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Problem Statement

The level of coaching competence of athletics coaches is crucial in determining performance and proficiency in athletics sports. According to Tripolitsioti, Stavropoulos, & Papadomanolaki (2016), dependence on external references and failure to adapt to changes in line with technological advancements result in athletics coaches being unable to achieve the set performance indices (KPIs). Therefore, this study needs to be conducted to examine the perspectives among athletics coaches in Malaysian Sports Schools (MSS). The lack of research related to athletics sports, especially in Malaysia, makes this study necessary to explore coaching competence aspects. Consistent with previous research findings that emphasize the importance of coaching competence in determining performance and proficiency in sports (Seweryniak, Muracka, & Stosik, 2016), González et al (2018), state in their study titled "Athletes' perceptions of coaching competency and team conflict in sport teams: A multilevel analysis" that mastery of coaching competence is the foundation of building a strong team. Competent coaches are recognized as those who demonstrate excellence in knowledge about

the sport they are involved in (Kuga, 1993). It is clear and evident that mastering coaching competence is a key aspect in ensuring the excellence of a coach.

This study is conducted to address the shortcomings of previous studies conducted by Lim, Ahmad Marzuki, & Mahat (2015), who comprehensively examined coaching competence levels in public universities across various sports, and Myers (2006), on his study concerning high school student-athletes. Therefore, based on the findings of these two studies, the researcher sees fit to extend the study of coaching competence towards athletics sports in Malaysia.

Hence, this research will focus on coaching competence levels, assess and compare coaching competence dimensions, and propose guidelines as an implication of the study on athletic coaching competence in Malaysia.

Research Objectives

Literature Review

This research employs a quantitative method with the support of library research. As stated by Watson (2015), quantitative research encompasses various methods related to systematically investigating phenomena using statistical or numerical data obtained through experimental studies, and numerical data are analyzed using statistical tests, with research problems stated in hypotheses.

Coaching competency is crucial for enhancing the quality of coaching education in sports (Nathanson, 1979).

According to Gupta (1999), competency refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, motivation, and confidence needed for success in a job.

Pestano (2021), conducted a study on coaches and athlete-students to determine how both parties influence coaching competency. Among the most frequently listed competency features are technical skills and knowledge (Hattlestad, 1984).

The Iceberg Model by Hay McBer, as described by Saedah Siraj & Sani Ibrahim (2012), explains that the components of competency are skills and knowledge that can be acquired through courses or organized training and can be associated with academic qualifications.

Marzuki & Mahat (2014), found that coaches with a high level of competency can contribute to the success of athlete performance.

A literature review is conducted both before and during the research process, and this process is carried out until completion (Othman Lebar, 2017). The researcher will conduct a review of previous studies on coaching competence to identify gaps in research in the field of coaching competence.

Method

This study uses a quantitative method, collecting data through a survey of student-athletes from Malaysian Sports Schools. The goal is to assess the coaching competence of athletics coaches. The population includes 1609 student-athletes (ages 13-17) from five Malaysian Sports Schools in athletics sports. Purposive sampling is used to select respondents based on specific characteristics that align with the study's objectives. The Coaching Competency Scale (CCS), a 24-item questionnaire on a 10-point Likert scale, assesses five dimensions of coaching

competence: Motivational, Game Strategy, Technical, Character Building, and Overall Competence. The Athletics Competencies Scale (21 items) measures factors like field management, sports science, and injury prevention using a 5-point Likert scale.

Data is collected via a Google Form or hard copies, with questionnaires administered in school computer labs. The survey is in Malay and English, and permission is obtained from relevant authorities.

Using SPSS Version 26, data is analyzed through descriptive analysis for demographic comparisons. Factor analysis to identify coaching competence dimensions. Pearson correlation to explore relationships between competence dimensions.

Findings

Coaching competence levels are categorized into three categories: high, moderate, and low. Coaching competence levels are also based on mean and standard deviation. The competence level is based on a minimum score on a 5-point Likert scale (Neuman, 2014). The second part will explain the minimum and standard deviation of each item according to dimensions. Meanwhile, the third part will analyze the competency scale of each coaching competency dimension according to its items in more detail.

Table 1

Overall Coaching Competence Mean and Standard Deviation Sports Coaches

	N	Min	S. P
Coaching Competence Mean and Standard Deviation Sports Coaches	309	3.67	0.95
N valid (according to the list)	309		

Table 2

Minimum and Standard Deviation of Each Coaching Competency for Sports Coaches

Coaching Competency	N	Min	S.P
Sports Management	309	3.70	1.05
Sports Science Knowledge	309	3.67	0.98
Biological Knowledge	309	3.60	1.03
Injury Prevention Skills	309	3.73	1.05
Work Attitude Quality	309	3.66	1.02

Discussion

Coaching Competency Levels Coaches in Malaysian Sports Schools exhibit both high and moderate competency levels. High competency is found in injury prevention and sports management, while sports science biology, and work attitude are at moderate levels. No coaches were rated as having low competency.

Areas for Improvement: Coaches excel in athlete organization but need improvement in event management and public relations. Additionally, coaches need better mastery of sports science application and anatomy within biology. Guidelines for Coaching Competency is a sports

coaching competency framework should include five key dimensions: sports management, sports science, biology knowledge, injury risk management, and work attitude quality.

Coaching Development Programs also annual programs focusing on soft skills and technical mastery should be mandatory. Soft skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving are critical for coaching success. Enrichment Programs can tailored programs should be introduced for coaches at different competency levels. High-performing coaches need advanced training, while moderately skilled coaches should receive reinforcement programs. Mentorship Program is a coaching mentorship program pairing senior coaches with new or less experienced coaches is recommended for skill and knowledge transfer. National Coaching Panel is a national advisory panel should be established to define clear visions and missions for sports coaching, ensuring the continuous improvement of coaching standards.

Implications

Theoretical Implications is the findings align with several coaching theories, such as the Coaching Competency Scale and Horn's Coaching Effectiveness Model, which emphasize that coaches' abilities influence athletes' performance. Practical Implications is the study provides a framework for assessing and improving coaching competency in Malaysian Sports Schools, which will help ensure better athlete performance and more efficient coaching programs. The focus should be on continuous professional development and leadership through example to enhance the overall coaching standards in Malaysian Sports Schools.

Conclusion

The level of coaching competency is divided into high, moderate, and low levels. The findings indicate that two (2) levels of coaching competency among sports coaches in Malaysian Sports Schools are at a high level, while three (3) are at a moderate level. The two (2) dimensions of competency at the high level are injury prevention skills and sports management. The three (3) dimensions at the moderate level are sports science knowledge, biology knowledge, and work attitude quality. There are no competencies at the low level among sports coaches. There still seems to be room for improvement in the level of competency among coaches in Malaysian Sports Schools towards achieving the desired coaching performance. According to (Murugeesan et al., 2016; Kao et al., 2017; Tripolitsioti et al., 2016), enrichment programs are suitable for coaches at a high level of competency, such as learning soft skills. Meanwhile, coaches at a moderate level are advised to participate in reinforcement intervention programs. Only an efficient coaching system can produce efficient coaches, and in this way, we can enhance the dignity of the coaching profession. To assess the coaching competencies of sports coaches in Malaysian Sports Schools, providing valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. The major findings from the study can be summarized as Coaching Competency Levels: Coaches demonstrated a high level of competency in two key areas: injury prevention skills and sports management. In contrast, three dimensions sports science knowledge, biology knowledge, and work attitude quality were found to be at a moderate level. Notably, there were no competencies assessed at a low level, indicating a solid foundation among the coaches. Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance coaching competencies among sports coaches in Malaysian Sports Schools are targeted Training Programs: Implement targeted enrichment programs focusing on soft skills and specific areas of weakness, such as event management and public relations. This can help coaches become more well-rounded in their roles. And also make an advanced

Education in Sports Science to Facilitate workshops and courses that emphasize the application of sports science knowledge, ensuring coaches can effectively translate theory into practice for athlete development. Enhancement of. By addressing these areas, Malaysian Sports Schools can enhance the competencies of their coaches, ultimately leading to improved performance and safety for student-athletes

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