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PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COACHES AND THEIR AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSION OF THEIR ACTIONS

Abstract:

It is necessary that a coach improves his/her knowledge continuously aiming to strenghten the pedagogical competence, and a very important role in the pedagogical development has the management of the education of a sports organisation. The idea that acts as a cohesive force between the manager and the employees is that learning, as a man's innate need, is a way of developing all the potentials and reaching personal success as well as the success of a sports organisation. That is the only way in which she could secure the survival in the economy of knowledge but a healthy development and hig professional achievements of young athletes as well. Earlier studies of this problem have shown the correlation between the conditions for the pedagogical development of the coach that a sports organisation offers and the awareness of the importance of the pedogogical competence in the coach profession. The aim of this research is to establish the existance (or lack of) the differences in the given variables in relation to the personal and professional characteristics of a coach in order to show the nature and origin of the researched phenomenon.

The results of the survey carried out on the group of 84 coaches from the region of south Backa show that their perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development that the organisation secures for the coaches and their awareness of the importance of the pedagogical competence in their work is independent of their personal and professional characteristics with regard to their sex, age, years spent coaching and the type of sport, while there are significant differences in the awareness of the coaches of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their work, in relation to the age group of the people they are coaching. The results could serve during the analysis and identification of the educational need of the coach for a pedagogical improvement and the chance of recruiting coaches for the programmes of professional improvement. Furthermore, we believe that the results would add to the building of a teorethical basis for the development of the education management in sports organisations.

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Introduction

In the modern society, where only change is constant, men is presented with a request for the permanent active adjustment and lifelong learning. In such an environment, continuous and constant development of competence in all areas of professional life there is a condition of survival as well as a precondition of man's selfrealisation. The concept of competence (lat. *competere* - strive) is explained as an area of which certain person has knowledge and experience, that is, in which it is authorised or taught to judge or work in that area (Bezinović, 1988). Competent is the one who is "capable of using natural and personal resources to achieve a good developmental result" ((Waters&Sroufe), 1983: 81; according to Ljubetić i Kostović-Vranješ, 2008).

Having in mind that competences have a sense of development, for strenghtening them education, a process in which learnig has an important role, is necessary. Learnig is a wide and complex problem. Learning, as a hiperinclusive term, is usually defined from the aspect of one of three mutually opposing main principles: behavioral, cognitive and social/constructive. In the scientific theory, for now, there is not a unified and all encompasing theory upon which professional development of a coach is based. Despite the creation hypotheses concerning learning with regard to the way people learn, the approaches to educating coaches are usually not observed as specific within certain learning theories. On he other hand, the evidence of their use, implementation and influence on the practice of some of these approaches is not available yet. The reason for that probably lies in the relatively small number of empirical researches in the education of coaches domain/area, that is there is not a developed theoretical basis for this area of study, because, education of coaches is observed through the prism of teacher education, even though obvious and not easily overlooked differences between these two types of the educational process (pedagogical and educational).

The education of coaches is under the influence of a complex mixing of formal and informal education and the experience acquired through independent learning andstudying. However, this developmental mixture for coaches is largely individualised and ad hoc. While literature suggests the existence of a tendency in the education of coaches towards informal education, an optimal balance of the possible methods of learning and training coaches should be set. In that sense, the approaches to researching education of sport coaches are limited by their tendency to focus on the superb coaches. This group of coaches has shown that it favourises individual learning. In researches, the educational preferences in the education of sport coaches and their needs during that process are rarely discussed. Furthermore, the devolopmental directions in the area of the coach profession have not been examined (specific and more concrete ways and directions, as well as the nature of the development of sport coaches through education and specialisation).

Regardless of the state of theory, from a practical aspect, in order to affect positively the development and professional success of an athlete, the coach must expand and perfect his/her pedagogical competencies through continuous pedagogical education. Researches have shown that pedagogical competence can be observed as a continuum from competence to incompetence, and the selfevaluation (metaanalysis) of one's own actions has a significant role in the development of pedagogical competence (Ljubetić, 2006). Because of that, it is necessary to train coaches for a quality selfevaluation of the training practice and their actions. Even though a man strives towards selfrealisation and education is a process of personal growth and achieveing inner potentials the role of the environment upon which, depending on the conditions, a man's growth and development depends, must not be overlooked. A sports club and its management is expected to, according to the politics of the organisation that is providing the education, offer specialisation for coaches in order to enhace a quality reflection of one's own coaching practice through their pedagogical development.

On the other hand, a sports organisation's management, which expects that education supports the aims of that sports organisation, sees the benefit of education in the qualification of their workers and it is advisable to be in close relation to the aims of coworkers and those of the organisation. It could be concluded that, during the pedagogical education of coaches that includes education along with work, interests of children, coaches and management intersect.

Professional development, as the task of education in an organisation, includes a set of measures for education through which coworkers could accomodate their qualifications to the changes, answer the needs, their own abilities and interests (Andevski, 2007). This is especially important because a successful management of education in organisations today are more important than ever, which is equally true for a sports club as well as a profit organisation. The role of the manager in the educational work in an organisation is seen in foreseeing the aims as parts of responsible aims, and the role of the participator, that is the coach, is achieved through interactive learning, gathering knowledge and experience (Andevski, 2007). However, the pedagogical education of coaches as an aim of the education management would imply a previous analysis of the educational needs of the coach which he/she would have to be a part of because coaches know the educational needs of their own qualifications the best. In the same vein, there are limitations because the need for education is usually not even observed. By the nature of things, it is very difficult for one's lack of knowledge to be noticed precisely because knowledge is not measurable in an exact and quantitative manner, but in a more hidden and fluid one. Jef Steas ((Pieler), 2001: 57; prema Andevski, 2007) makes a difference between four states in which one could find himself/herself, or even a whole organisation under certain circumstances. By an analysis of those states in the context of the pedagogical competencies of coaches the following types could be observed:

- unconsciously pedagogically imcompentent,
- consciously pedagogically incompetent,
- consciously pedagogically competent

inconsciously pedagogically competent coaches

Unconsciously pedagogically incompetent coach does not realise that, with a better pedagogical education he/she would work/perform/teach better.

Consciously pedagogically incompetent coach realises that he/she would teach better with a greater pedagogical education but does not expand his/her range of possibilities yet.

Consciously pedagogically competent coach strives towards pedagogical education in his/her work, when there is a need for it.

Unconsciously pedagogically competent coach is the coach for whom pedagogically education is a given.

The usual analyses of the educational needs start with the second step — conscious incompetence. It must be taken into account that only under specific/certain circumstances is it possible to get and insight into the missing competencies. Therefore, a coach should not be targeted as the most responsible one for his/her incommpetence, but a greater attention should be paid to defining the educational needs and the competencies in the dialogue between a coach, management and specialists. When planning (the type of) education one should focus on the participative form, that is, having coachas participate in the realisation of their own educational needs for the effect of motivation could be expected which could lead to humanisation of work and a greater integration of the employees.

The fact that education with work and permanent education are virtually nonexistant in our environment is paradoxal (even though the majority of conferences on a world wide scale in the recent years have, as introductory reports have the contents concerning education alongside work and not a permanent one). What are the causes for that if such a form of education would bring to everyone, in this instance the youth (development and professional success) the coach (selfrealisation and selfrespect) and the club (a permanent place on the market and profit) only progress? The answer lies in the numerous obstacles in enabling learning and changes in the organisation. Obstacles are, as a rule, not solitary but they are intersected and even mutually strengtening, which is aggravation. We will give a number of such disturbing instances (Andevski, 2007: 220):

- 1. Following the already tested as long as there are no serious problems there are no stimuli to abandon the already tested paths.
- 2. Paradigms razmišljanje u vidu određenih šema, which limits the capability of perception and creative processes are neglected
- 3. Following wrong decisions accepting wrong decisions even though they have already proved to be wrong.
- 4. Cognitive dissonance avoiding the cognitive dissonance for accepting that there is a difference between the way one thinks and acts poses discomfort. In order to avoid it, many coaches tend to interpret the given information according to their already formed beliefs or to ignore all the opposing information.
- 5. Selfproving positive occurences are treated as a success while all the negative ones are ascribed to the others.
- 6. Self-overestimation too great selfconfideence wich poses an obstacle to a further growth.
- 7. Perfectionism setting goals that are too high and unachiavable yet expecting changes.

8. Concentrating on the irrelevant – dedication to the small things that are not difficult to do instead of deciding on the thins truly relevant for the future.

As previously stated, one's selfrealisation and the development of identity are partly conditioned by the conditions of the environment, but at the same time one reacts to the external conditions through the prism of one's own personal and professional characteristics. The following has been gathered during the research of this problem:

- the existing natural *differences between sexes*, through his physiological and emotional characteristicsm affect a man's reactions towards the external conditions and influences as well as his own perception.
- coach's age, through his psychological characteristics (set by the life phases that one goes through in certain periods of life (Levinson (1986); according to Dimec and Kajtna, 2009)) also has effect on the awareness of the existing educational needs;
- coach's working years (as a factor of differences acquired during working experience, implying the formative role of one's experience in the development of a man) determine greatly his pedagogical capabilities and tendencies;
- the age of the group the coach is training represents an important factor of pedagogical approach (having in mind the developmental characteristics of children of certain age and the necessity of an adequate approach on any age level) as well as the level of explicitly shown pedagogical educational needs; also,
- the level of coach's education (the role of education in the development of one's awarness as well as pedagocial knowledge acquired during schooling and the characteristics of educational needs as the only needs that shoul be developed) determines the awareness of the importance of pedagogical competencies including the need for pedagogical professional development; and finally,
- the type of sport (individual and group one) demands from the coach a different approach to the athlete in general, including a specific pedagogical one. The existence of differences in the level of the manifestation of the educational needs of a coach in relation to the previously mentioned variables that have been defined as personal and professional characteristics of a coach.

The relationship of the coach towards pedagogical education is of utmost importance for strenghtening his pedagogical competencies (Čokorilo and Grk, 2010), as well as the personal and professional development of an athlete and the outcomes of the training process (Dimec and Kajtna, 2009). Pedagogical development becomes an important tast for the sports organisation, since it has positive reflexions for the coach (selfrealisation), the athlete (correct development and professional success) and for the sports organisation (achieving the goals of the said organisation, rank and profit, according to the ethic codexes) (Grk, 2010). In order to give the best results, it is necessary to awaken in a coach the need to strengthen their pedagogical competencies, that is, the existence of the educational need. Therefore, this research

could point to the necessary guidelines in that process, having in mind the importance of the identification of the educational needs for the direction, quality and the outcome of the educational process. The specificity of the educational needs lies in the fact that they possess the quality of development, that is, that contrary to other needs that disappear once they have been satisfied, fulfilling this need creates and even greater one for education.

Material and method

The main goal of this research was to look at the relations between the awareness of the coach of the importance of the pedagogical diension of their actions and their personal and professional characteristics. The goal is realised through: a) examination of the coach's attitude towards the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions; b) determining personal and professional characteristics of the coach. The main hypothesis of the research is that there are differences in the coach's awareness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their action in relation to their personal and professional characteristics. The sample was 84 coaches of 17 sports and sport disciplines, 42 men and 42 women from the South Backa district. 41 respondets have finished faculties and 43 of the have finished high schools. Furthermore, the structure of the sample in relation to the group and individual sport is 49 and 25 coaches. The age span of the coaches is from 24 to 63 years, the mean value being 40.86 years, and the standard deviation is 8.93 years. The athlete's age span is from 5 to 18 years with the mean value of 14.07 and the standard deviation of 3.5 years. Finally, the coach's number of years of working experience is from 1 to 35 years with the mean value of 10.56 years and the standard deviation of 8.55 years. In this paper a descriptive method has been used which involves gathering, processing, presentation and interpretation of data. In the phase of gathering of data the research techniques of survey and scaling, and for the needs of this research two measuring instruments have been used 1) Scale of pedagogical development of coaches (SPUT) which has been constructed for this opportunity. The instrumet contains 5 items formed in the manner of statements and the respondent circles one of the five given answers on the agreement scale – from completely agree (number 5) to don't agree at all (number 1). Considering the small number of items on this scale, the reliability test has not been done; 2) Scale of the coach's attitude to the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions (SOPT) has been constructed for this occasion. The scale consists of 8 items formed in the manner of statements and the respondent circles one of the five given answers on the agreement scale - from completely agree (number 5) to don't agree at all (number 1). The scale has a good inner coincidence and the Cronbach's coefficient alfa of 0,819. The date is processed in the programme package for the statistical processing of data SPSS.18, and apart from the preliminary analyses Mann -Whitney U test for testing the differences between two independent groups on an neprekidnoj scale for the variable gender and type of sportand the Kruskal-Wallis's H test for testing the differences between middle ranges of different groups for other independent variables.

Results and discussion

In Table 1. Relative frequencies of the answers on the SPUT scale are given and in Table 2. Relative frequencies of the answers on the SOPT scale.

Table 1. Relative frequencies of the answers on the SPUT

	Name of the variable	X	σ	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Not sure	Usually do not agree	Do not agree
1	My club is concerned with the pedagogical development of the coach	3,63	1,143	27,5	31,4	19,6	19,6	2,0
2	I often attend seminars through my sports organisation	3,31	1,177	14,7	39,2	14,7	25,5	5,9
3	I am satisfied with the existing number of seminars and courses for coaches	2,65	1,021	2,9	17,6	34,3	31,4	13,7
4	In my club, not enough attention is given to the pedagogical development of the coaches	3,42	,927	10,8	37,3	38,2	10,8	2,9
5	In my club, attention is not given to the pedagogical development of the coaches, at all	2,97	1,238	9,8	28,4	27,5	17,6	16,7

Table 2. Relative frequencies of the answers on the SOPT

	Name of the variable	X	Σ	Completly agree	Mostly agree	Not sure	Usually do not agree	Do not agree
1	Pedagogical-psychological sadržaji are neccessary in this line of work and I consult them regularly	4,12	,988	42,2	38,2	11,8	4,9	2,9
2	Seminars on pedagogical education are unnecessary waste of time	1,72	1,18 1	3,9	9,8	3,9	14,7	65,7
3	I need more pedagogical knowledge but I don't have the time for it	3,20	1,12 6	11,8	33,3	23,5	25,5	5,9
4	Without a constant pedagogical development there is no advancement in work	3,93	1,02 7	33,3	41,2	11,8	12,7	1,0
5	When I do not know how to react with the athletes I always find a way to learn about it	3,75	1,04 8	22,5	49,0	13,7	10,8	3,9
6	I do not think that pedagogical education would result in better results in work	2,16	1,06 9	1,0	13,7	18,6	33,3	33,3
7	I would like to have a better pedagogical education but I do not know where I could get it	2,16	1,13 6	2,9	28,4	28,4	22,5	17,6

8	I am working on my pedagogical education whenever I realise/come across a problem in the team	3,76	,956	20,6	49,0	18,6	9,8	2,0	
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For determining *intergender differences* in the consciousness of the coach of the importance of a pedagogical dimension of his actions the Mann-Whitney's has been used. Having in mind that there is not a significant difference between the mean values of two different groups (men: Md=35,50, women: Md=35,50) that is the value U=860,000; z = -.198, and the level of significance is lesser than 0,01 (p=.843), we can conclude that *there are no statistically important intergender differences in the coach's consciousness of the importance of the pedagogical dimensions of their actions*. The same stands true for their perception of the conditions for pedagogical development that a sport's organisation given that the mean value for the subsample of men is Md= 16 and the same value for the subsample of women, that is, that U= 325,000, z=-.187, and that the level of importance does not achieve the statistic importance (p=.902).

Also, for testing the differences in the awareness of the coaches of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions in relation to the *level of education* the Mann-Whitney's test has been used. Given that there is not a significant difference between the mean values of two different groups (SSS: Md=30, VSS: Md=31) that is the value U=834,500; z = -.422, and the level of importance is lesser than 0,01 (p=.673) we can conclude *that there are no statistically important differences in the awareness of the coaches of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions in relation to their level of education.* The same stands for their perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development that their sport organisation is offering to them since the mean value for the subsample of the coaches with a finished high school is Md= 16 and Md=17 for the subsample of the coaches with a finished faculty, that is, that U= 688,500, z=-1.741, and that the level of importance does not arrive at statistical importance (p=..082).

With the Kruskal-Wallis's H test the influence of the coach's age on the coach's awareness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions, measured by the SOPT scale. The subjects have been divided into three groups (group 1: 37 and younger (Md=31); group 2: 38-46 years (Md=31); group 3: 47 and older (Md=31). Having in mind that the value X^2 = (2, N= 84)= 1.046, and that the level of importance is greater than 0.01 (p=.593) we can conclude that the test has not shown any significant differences in the coaches' awareness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions in relation to their age. The same stands for the differences in perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development offered by the sports organisaton where the following values were obtained: 1: 37 younger-Md=31; group 2: 38-46 years -Md=31-; group 3: 47 and older - Md=31, X^2 (2, N=84)= 3.718, p= .156.

Also, for determining the inflluence of the athlete's age on the awareness of the coaches of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions the Kruskal-Wallis's test has been used. In relation to the athlete's age that are training three groups have been formed (group 1: 12 and younger (Md= 32); group 2: 13-16 years (Md=30); group 3: 17-18 years (Md=29). It has been noticed that there is a statistically significant difference between the different athletes' age groups: $X^2(2, N=84)=10,002$, and the level of importance is lesser than 0.05 (p=.007) so we could conclude that the athletes' age affects significantly the coach's awarness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions. The coaches that are training the younger groups have greater mean values, that is a greater awareness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions, and it is noticable that awareness is reversly proportional to the athletes' age. It is not true for the perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development of the coaches offered by the sports organisation since there is not a statistically significant differences between the mean values, that is $X^2(2, N=84)=.650$, and the level of importance is greater than 0.05 (p=.722)

The influence of the coach's working experience on the awarness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension in their actions has been tested by the Kruskal-Wallis's H test. The subjects are, based on the working years of the coaches, divided into three groups: (group 1: 4 and younger, Md= 30; group 2: 5-12 years, Md=29,5; group 3: 13 And older, Md= 31). A statistically significant difference has not been noticed on the level p<0.05 in the SOPT results of the three groups in relation to the working years of the coaches: $X^2(2, N=84)=1.756$, and the level of importance is greater than 0.05 (p=.416) so that it can be concluded *that the years of experience do not affect significantly the subjective awareness of the coach of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions*. However, when observing the mean values of the groups it could be noticed that the beginner coaches and those with 13 or more years of working experience achieve greater "jumps" in the values. The same stads for the differences in the perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development offered by the sports organisation since $X^2(2, N=84)=1.898$, p= .387.

The influence of the type of sport on the awareness of the coach of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions has been examined by the Mann-Whitney's test and no significant difference in the values of the mean values between coaches of individual sports (Md=31) and the coaches of group sports (Md=31); U=600,500, z=-.138, p=.890 has been observed. The same goes for the differences in their perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development offerend by the sports organisation: (group sport: Md=16; individual sport: Md=15), U=592,000, z=-.236, p=.814

Conclusion

The relations between the personal and professional characteristics of coaches and their awareness of the importance of the pedagogical competence in their profession and their perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development offered by the sports organisation have been examined in this research. Even thogh

coaches are usually satisfied with the care on the part the sports organisation for their pedagogical development and they attend seminars through their sports organisation they are not completely satisfied with the existing number of courses for coaches. They express the need for a greater number of opportunities for pedagogical development. Generally, coaches are subconsciously pedagogically competent meaning that they are aware of the pedagogical dimension of their actions and that the pedagogical development is a given for them.

Examining the existence of differences between coaches in the awareness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions we arrived to the conclusion that the awareness depends only on the age group of the people the coaches are training, of all the coach's personal and professional characteristics, while sex, education level, coach's age and his/her working experience have no significant influence. Such a result is understandable since the awareness of the importance of the pedagogical dimension of their actions is most prominent at the earliest age and that over the years it is gradually decreasing having in mind that the pedagogical influences are most functional at the earliest age. One should have this fact in mind during the recruitment of coaches for the needs of professional and pedagogical development as well as when influencing the development of the coaches' awareness of the importance of the pedagogical development since, according to our results, it is of greatest importance to influence older coaches. When the perception of the conditions for the pedagogical development offered by the sports organisation are in quiestion, there are no statistically significant differences between the mean values of any of the variables. The cohesive force of the development of a sports organisation based on the educational management is certainly pedagogical as well as a permanent professional coach development as the central part of a sports organisation. The development of a sports organisation based on the education management has positive reflections on all levels: the coach is enabled to gather all the necessary competencies, and along with that selfrespect, (as a consequence of the perception of the personal competence) and the sense of satisfaction in the role of a coach which as a consequence has adequate pedagogical influences on the development of the athlete and the creation of conditions for his/her selfrealisation, as well as his professional success, which is reflected back on the sports organisation in the form of profit and its further prosperity.

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