

VIEWS HELD BY SLOVENE COACHES ON SOME CONTENTS-RELATED ISSUES OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL WORK

Bojan Jošt
Maja Dolenc
Janez Pustovrh
Bojan Leskošek
Aleks Leo Vest

STALIŠČA SLOVENSКИH TRENERJEV DO NEKATERIH VSEBINSКИH VPRAŠANJ NJIHOVEGA POKLICNEGA DELOVANJA

Abstract

The objective of the research was to establish the structure of views on some contents-related issues concerning professional work of coaches in Slovene competition sports on a representative sample of Slovene coaches ($n = 1418$) from 64 sports. On the basis of the structure of the answers to individual survey questions, the following findings could be revealed. In the opinion of the major proportion of the coaches, the salaries of coaches are still too low in comparison to the high demands and scope of their work and should be regulated systemically and in the same way for all sports on the level of the state. The majority of the coaches were of the opinion that the work of coaches should even to a greater extent be based on material rewarding. The satisfaction of the coaches with their work is high; only 3% of the coaches expressed pronounced discontent with their work. The coaches still positively evaluate the relationship of the employers to their work and have the feeling that the employers esteem and respect them. The coaches were less satisfied with the material conditions in which they worked: only every fifth coach was of the opinion that material conditions for their work were good. The coaches pronounced themselves mostly in favour of the legislative regulation of their work and voiced the opinion that there should be a corresponding professional association of coaches on the state level. They also supported the project of the employment of coaches by the Ministry of Education and Sport in the future. The coaches mainly agree with the statement that their work is primarily managerial and that in the period of adolescence they perform an extremely important educational function. The majority of the coaches were of the opinion that their work is more difficult than that of the teachers of physical education in schools and at the same time socially less respected. The licensing system should include payment of the licence, suitable education, and permanent extended professional training. Only every fifth coach agreed with the statement that in his or her professional work he or she had good possibilities for research work, innovations, creativity, and own studies.

Key words: sociology of sport, coaches, self-evaluation, working conditions

Contact address

Bojan Jošt
 University of Ljubljana – Faculty of Sport
 Gortanova 22, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
 Phone: +386 1 540-10-77, Fax: +386 1 540-22-33
 E-mail: Bojan.Jost@sp.uni-lj.si

Izvleček

Namen raziskave je bil, na reprezentativnem vzorcu slovenskih trenerjev ($n=1418$) iz 64 športnih panog, ugotoviti strukturo stališč do nekaterih vsebinskih vprašanj, ki zadevajo poklicno delovanje trenerjev v slovenskem tekmovalnem športu. Na osnovi strukture odgovorov na posamezna anketna vprašanja bi lahko izpostavili naslednje ugotovitve. Plače trenerjev so po mnenju največjega dela trenerjev še vedno prenizke glede na zahtevnost in obseg njihovega dela in bi morale biti urejeno sistemsko na ravni države za vse športne panoge enako. Večina trenerjev je menila, da bi moralo delo trenerjev še bolj temeljiti na materialnem nagrajevanju. Zadovoljstvo trenerjev z njihovim delom je visoko saj je samo 3% trenerjev izrazilo izrazito nezadovoljstvo s svojim delom. Trenerji še vedno pozitivno ocenjujejo odnos delodajalcev do njihovega dela in imajo občutek, da jih delodajalci cenijo in spoštujejo. Bolj nezadovoljni so bili trenerji z materialnimi razmerami, v katerih so delovali, saj je samo vsak peti trener bil mnenja, da so materialne razmere za njihovo delo dobre. Trenerji so se večinoma opredelili za zakonsko ureditev njihovega delovanja in so menili, da bi morali imeti na ravni države ustrezno stanovsko združenje trenerjev. Prav tako so podprli projekt zaposlovanja trenerjev preko Ministrstva za šolstvo, znanost in šport tudi v prihodnje. Trenerji se večinoma strinjajo s trditvijo, da njihovo delo predvsem managersko in da v obdobju adolescence opravljajo izjemno pomembno vzgojno funkcijo. Večina trenerjev je menila, da je njihovo delo težje kot delo profesorja telesne vzgoje v šoli in hkrati slabše družbeno vrednoteno. Sistem licenciranja bi moral vključevati plačilo licence, ustrezno izobrazbo in stalno dopolnilno izobraževanje. Le vsak peti trener se je strinjal s trditvijo, da je imel pri svojem strokovnem delu dobre možnosti za razvojno delo, inovacije, ustvarjalnost in lasten študij.

Ključne besede: sociologija športa, trenerji, samo-ovrednotenje, pogoji za delo

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the research was to study the views held by Slovene coaches on some issues which are of importance for the development of professional work of coaches. Coaches, who are perceived in the role of sports pedagogues and managers as the agents of development of sport culture, have special ethical, moral, social, pedagogical, and health-related responsibilities and concern for the young, who strive for the best possible sports achievements (Curry, & Jiobu, 1984; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Snyder, & Spreitzer, 1983). In this sense, society must define the meaning and the structure of the professional role of the coach, who will, by way of his profession, develop the sport culture inside sport organisations (Doherty, & Chelladurai, 1999; Moorhead, & Griffin, 1995; Schein, 1990). The professional role of the coach includes all those activities, patterns of behaviour and acts, which society has established in defining the professional work of the coach. The coach's work is highly professional and ethically responsible and requires that an individual has suitable professional qualifications. The foundation of this qualification represents the basic professional training of coaches. However, by attaining the prescribed level of education, the coach is still not adequately professionally qualified to take over the most responsible professional roles. In order to become masters in their profession, coaches must, through their own activity, develop to a high professional level, which will enable them to work successfully in practice (Derkatsch, & Isajew, 1986).

Approximately 3000 individuals of various educational profiles, professional qualification, and practical experience are active in the role of coach in Slovenia. In taking care of suitable social profiling of the coaches, the highest socio-political organisations and professional bodies are of particular importance. Their task and duty is to raise the educational level and professional qualification of the coaches and to ensure suitable conditions for their work, irrespective of the fact whether the coaches are employed full-time or only part-time. Here, the most can be done by the coaches themselves with their self-criticism and professional orientation towards the future. The coaches are the greatest professionals and agents of the development of professional work in practice, and the customers and users of the theoretical and scientific research work. They are by all means entitled in their work to the right to associate professionally, to establish professional bodies, to associate with related professional associations, to develop own development strategy of work, to set up suitable social standards of work and to participate in the administration of their

professional and social activity and in their professional development and training.

The subject and the problem of the current research has thus been directed towards the identification of the structure of the selected views of Slovene coaches that touch the following issues: the social role of the coaching profession; education and professional qualification of coaches; self-evaluation of the satisfaction with work in the coaching profession; evaluation of the essential issues present in the work of coaches; systemic social regulation of the work of coaches, the system of licensing, and the system of education of coaches.

RESEARCH METHODS

The sample covered the coaches actively engaged in Slovene competitive sports in one of the 64 sports selected. The coaches had to fulfil two basic conditions. The first condition was that during the surveying, i.e. from October 1st, 1997 to February 15th, 1998, they were active coaches at least for half a year and the second condition was that it was possible to establish contact with them. Thus, 3032 personal addresses of the coaches were obtained with the help of the republic branch associations, the Olympic Committee of Slovenia - Federation of Sports Associations, and individual sport clubs. From the total number of the survey questionnaires sent, the addressed subjects returned 1418 questionnaires, which represents 46.4%. It could be said that the sample of the coaches is a representative indicator of the widest population of Slovene coaches.

The majority of the coaches (89.7%) were males and had Slovene citizenship (97.3%). The average age of the coaches was 38 years. The prevalence of men in the sample was large and corresponds to the finding by Hart and Hasbrook (1986) who say that women in principle do not appear in the role of coaches as the work of coaches is not a desirable social role for women. 22.2% of the coaches received adequate professional university education. The largest number of the coaches (45.2%) received secondary education. The large majority (79.3%) of the coaches worked in the role of a coach without university education; 6% were teachers of physical education; and 73.3% of the coaches acquired one of the professional amateur titles.

The span of amateur work was on average slightly longer (10.7 years) than that of professional work (7.83 years). Only 15% of the coaches worked more than twenty years as amateurs, and only 7% of the coaches worked more than twenty years as professional coaches. Two thirds of the professionally active coaches worked in their profession only 10 years. The ma-

majority of the coaches attained their highest professional title in the nineties, especially in the period from 1995 to 1997. More than 90% of the coaches were employed or were active on amateur basis in sports clubs. Additionally, the coaches were most often (71.6%) active in the republic sports associations. The survey questionnaire consisted of 22 mostly closed questions.

The processing was carried out by means of a PC with the statistical package SPSS 10.0 for Windows at the Department for Computer Science and Informatics at the Faculty of Sport in Ljubljana. Extent of agreement in individual opinions and attitudes was evaluated by absolute (n) and relative (in %) frequencies.

RESULTS

The results of the research are shown according to the goals and hypotheses set up in the research and are given in separate tables.

Table 1: Structure of the answers to the questions concerning the views held by the coaches on the systemic regulation of payment of their work

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that salaries correspond to the high demands and scope of the work?	<p>I don't know. 16,2% Yes, completely 9,6% Yes, only partly. 34,7% No. 39,5%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that salaries should be systemically regulated on the level of the state government and that they should be uniform for all sports?	<p>I don't know. 4,7% Yes, completely 50,4% Yes, only partly. 37,3% No. 7,6%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the system of rewarding should be based more on material rewarding?	<p>I don't know. 14,2% Yes, completely 41,1% Yes, only partly. 34,6% No. 10,1%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the employment relationship and salaries of coaches depend on the agreement reached by each individual and that no systemic regulation is necessary?	<p>I don't know. 9,6% Yes, completely 26,1% Yes, only partly. 31,1% No. 33,2%</p>

Table 2: Structure of the answers to the questions concerning the satisfaction of the coaches with their previous and current work in sport

Question	Answer
How satisfied are you with your previous work in sport?	<p>Satisfied. 46,6% Partly satisfied. 42,1% Not satisfied. 8,3% Definitely not satisfied. 3,1%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the relationship of the employers to you as a coach is good; that they respect you and your work?	<p>I don't know. 9,4% Yes, completely 37,0% Yes, only partly. 37,6% No. 16,0%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that material conditions (equipment, training means, transport means, equipment of competitors, etc.) in which you work at present are good?	<p>Yes, completely 17,4% Yes, only partly. 44,7% I don't know. 1,1% No. 36,8%</p>

Table 3: Structure of the answers in defining the importance of problems encountered by the coaches in their work

Problem	Numer of occurrences on places 1-3
Poor possibilities for extended professional training on one's own	933
Poor salaries	519
Irregular payment of salaries	515
Poor material conditions	463
Bad relationship of sports organisations	452
Poor competitive system	370
Poor co-operation with schools	291
Small potential which makes it more difficult to attain good results, as a result of which some sports become unattractive to managers	219

Table 4: Structure of the answers to the questions concerning the views of the coaches on the systemic regulation of their work

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that the work of coaches in sport should be regulated by the Law on Sport?	<p>I don't know. 7,0% Yes, completely 66,6% Yes, only partly. 22,5% No. 3,9%</p>

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that an association of coaches on the level of the state is required in the coaching profession?	<p>I don't know. 10,5% No. 4,3% Yes, only partly. 18,6%</p> <p>Yes, completely 66,6%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that employment of coaches by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport deserves further support?	<p>I don't know. 8,9% No. 6,3% Yes, only partly. 20,6%</p> <p>Yes, completely 64,2%</p>

Table 5: Structure of the answers associated with the doctrinaire professional issues of the coaching profession

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that the coach is the main professional manager in the field of sport, who is regularly engaged in planning, programing, organising, supervising and decision-making?	<p>I don't know. 1,9% No. 7,7%</p> <p>Yes, completely 55,6%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 34,8%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that during adolescence the coach performs an extremely important educational function?	<p>Yes, only partly. 5,8% No. 0,6% I don't know. 2,9%</p> <p>Yes, completely 90,7%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the work of coaches is more demanding than that of teachers of sport education in schools?	<p>I don't know. 6,7% No. 11,2%</p> <p>Yes, completely 54,8%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 27,3%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the coaching profession is socially less respected than the work of teachers of sport education in schools?	<p>I don't know. 12,2% No. 14,4%</p> <p>Yes, completely 48,5%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 24,9%</p>

Table 6: Structure of the answers to the questions concerning the views on the system of licensing the coaches

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that the system of licensing should include payment of the licence?	<p>I don't know. 8,8% No. 18,4%</p> <p>Yes, completely 50,0%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 22,8%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the system of licensing should include the completion of adequate education?	<p>I don't know. 5,3% No. 5,0%</p> <p>Yes, completely 65,6%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 24,1%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that the system of licensing should include the completion of permanent training?	<p>I don't know. 6,8% No. 2,1%</p> <p>Yes, completely 74,5%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 16,6%</p>
Do you agree with the statement that in professional work you have good possibilities for developmental work, innovations, creativity, and own studies?	<p>I don't know. 5,2%</p> <p>Yes, completely 22,2%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 40,4%</p> <p>No. 32,2%</p>

Table 7: Structure of the answers to the questions concerning the views on the system of professional qualification of coaches

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that the present studies at the Faculty of Sport enable the acquisition of basic knowledge on the work of a coach?	<p>I don't know. 15,1% No. 4,4%</p> <p>Yes, completely 54,0%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 26,5%</p>
Are you satisfied with the present forms of professional training?	<p>I don't know. 5,2%</p> <p>Yes, completely 23,6%</p> <p>Yes, only partly. 48,4%</p> <p>No. 22,7%</p>

Question	Answer
Do you agree with the statement that a coach of younger age categories needs professional qualification in his work?	<p>A 3D pie chart with four segments: 'Yes, completely' (36.8%, green), 'Yes, only partly' (36.6%, purple), 'I don't know' (1.9%, light blue), and 'No' (24.7%, dark blue).</p>
Do you agree with the statement that for coaches of top-level athletes no restrictions should be imposed regarding their professional qualification?	<p>A 3D pie chart with four segments: 'Yes, completely' (35.2%, green), 'Yes, only partly' (32.2%, purple), 'I don't know' (3.7%, light blue), and 'No' (28.9%, dark blue).</p>

DISCUSSION

The research, which included more than 46% of the Slovene coaches (n= 1418) actively engaged in competition and top-level sports, gave a rough picture of their views and opinions concerning the selected components of the organisational culture in sport. The majority of the coaches (see Table 1) disagreed (39.5%) or agreed partly (34.7%) with the statement that their salaries correspond to the high demands and scope of their work. This represents, without doubt, a large problem in the work of coaches. The nature of their work is often such that they are exposed to whole-day physical and mental pressures. This means that coaches do not have a fixed workday. We could say that the profession of a coach does not involve only professional activity, but the entire way of life. Poor rewarding of coaches certainly contributes to the relatively short span of professional activity (on average approximately 10 years). In the opinion of the majority of the coaches (50.4%), the solution of salary problems should take place systemically on the level of the state and for all sports. The rewarding of the work of coaches should be based to a greater extent on material rewarding. Coaches should also individually negotiate the level of their salary and their conditions of employment. The opinions concerning this issue differ among the coaches. There prevailed those coaches (33.2%) in whose opinion systemic approach was more important one. On the basis of the distribution of the answers it could be established that coaches in general wish both higher salaries for their work and that their salaries should be systemically regulated on the level of the state.

Approximately 46.5% of the surveyed subjects (see Table 2) were satisfied or partly satisfied with their previous work in sport (42.1%). The results show an encouraging picture. The degree of satisfaction is by all means one of the essential components of successful work of coaches. It is a generator of the coach's will

and motivation for work (Duda, Chi, Newton, Walling, & Catley, 1995). The majority of the coaches agreed completely (37%) or partly (37.6%) with the statement that the relationship of their employers to them is good; that their employers respect them and appreciate their work. The opposite negative opinion was expressed only by 16% of the coaches. Only 17.4% of the coaches agreed with the statement that material conditions (equipment, training means, transport means, equipment of competitors, etc.) are good for the work of a coach. Many more were such coaches who disagreed with this statement (36.8%). This could mean that more than one third of the coaches in Slovenia worked in bad material conditions. On the other hand, only every fifth coach had good material conditions for his work.

Among the most acute problems with which the Slovene coaches were faced were ranked in the order of importance (see Table 3): poor possibilities for extended professional training on one's own, poor salaries, irregular payment of salaries, poor material conditions, bad relationship of sport organisations, bad competition system, poor co-operation with schools, small potential which makes it impossible to achieve good results, as a result of which some sports become unattractive to managers. The coaches placed first poor possibilities for extended professional training on one's own. The coaches are very self-critical to their professional qualifications and knowledge. Unfortunately, it is precisely in the top-level sport that the demand for new knowledge and the acquaintance with the latest methodologies and technologies is the largest. It is exactly the ignorance of the coach that can be the cause of low successfulness of athletes and hence also of the unsuccessfulness of the coach's work.

The majority of the coaches (66.6%) were of the opinion (see Table 4) that their work should be regulated by the Law on Sport. Only 3.9% of the coaches were against the legislative regulation of the field of sport. The coaches believe into the power of legislative regulation of their professional activity. They probably expect that by means of legislative regulation, the minimal social, professional, material, and financial conditions for normal practising of their profession will be provided. The majority of the coaches (66.6%) were of the opinion that they should have an independent association of coaches on the level of the state and also agreed that their employment over the Ministry of Education and Sport deserves future support.

The majority, i.e. 55.6% of the coaches, agreed with the statement that the coach is the main professional manager in the field of sport, who is regularly engaged in planning, programming, organising and deci-

sion-making (see Table 5). As Hagedorn (1991) says, »the coach guides and not only informs the athlete«. More than 95% of the surveyed subjects agreed completely or partly with the statement that in the period of adolescence the coach carries out an extremely important educational function. A similar finding is stated by Capel, Sisley and Desertrain (1987): »The coach has a double function: he is both an educator-teacher and a coach«. The majority, i.e. 54.7% of the respondents, agreed with the statement that the work of coaches is more demanding than the work of teachers of sport education at schools. 48.5% of the surveyed coaches agreed with the statement that the coaching profession is socially less respected than the work of teachers of sport education at schools. A comparison between a coach and a teacher of sport (physical) education shows that the coaches are to the largest extent convinced that their profession is more difficult. In their work, coaches are more exposed to the public; their contact with athletes is more personal and requires more time; the coach is constantly under the pressure of achievement, expectations of the public; the coach continues to live with his or her work also when his or her formal workday is over; the coach usually has no free weekends, summer holidays. The coach most often works during the holidays. The work of the coach has still not been sufficiently systemically regulated or regulated by law. If we compare the work of teachers of physical education and coaches we see that the teaching profession is regulated by law or the collective agreement for education, so that this profession can only be pursued professionally. In the opinion of Caccese and Mayerberg (1984), the work of a coach is very stressful (constant emotional relations with the protégés; pressures of sport achievement; long hours of planning, organising, consulting; hours spent on travelling; problems with schools; confrontation with parents, media, spectators; financial problems).

As shown by the answers concerning the licensing system (see Table 6), the coaches mostly agree that this system is necessary. Half of the surveyed coaches agreed with the statement that the system of granting licences to the coaches should also include payment of the licence. Only 5% of the surveyed coaches did not agree with the statement that the system of licensing should also include the completion of adequate education. A large majority of the coaches agreed with the statement that the system of licensing should also include a permanent form of extended training. Approximately one third of the surveyed subjects (32.2%) disagreed with the statement that in their professional work they have good possibilities for developmental professional work, innovations, creativity and own studies.

The majority of the coaches agreed completely (36.8%) or partly (36.6%) with the statement (see Table 7) that coaches of younger age categories require professional qualification for their work. The surveyed coaches agreed completely (35.2%) or partly (32.2%) with the statement that for the coaches of top-level athletes no restrictions should be imposed regarding their professional qualification. The coaches are thus of the opinion that in work with young athletes, adequate academic professional education is required. This field has already been regulated in Slovenia by the Law on Sport which provides for that for the professional work with young athletes the coach must have university education. As found by Buxton, Lankford and Noda (1992), coaches with suitable education have greater possibility for promotion, higher capacities for creative work, better possibilities for material rewards, salary, and larger job security. Coaches without professional qualification are more motivated for their work with inner motives (personal satisfaction), while those with a certificate ascribe greater import to material stimulation.

54% of the respondents agreed with the statement (see Table 7) that the present studies at the Faculty of Sport enable to acquire basic knowledge on the coach's work. Approximately the same proportion of the coaches agreed with (23.6%) and disagreed (22.7%) with the statement that they can be content with the present forms of professional qualification. Too little attention is being paid to professional qualification of coaches. Encouraging is, however, a relatively self-critical evaluation of own work and position of the coaches, which clearly suggests to those involved in the management of sport in Slovenia that in the transition into the new millennium it is necessary to pay much greater social attention and to provide systemic support to the most fundamental field for the development of the culture of sport.

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