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ORIGINAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS ASSESSMENT INVOLVED IN YOUTH SPORTS MANAGERS' PERFORMANCE

EVALUACIÓN DE CARACTERÍSTICAS PSICOLÓGICAS IMPLICADAS EN EL DESEMPEÑO DE JÓVENES GESTORES DEPORTIVOS

Gimeno, F.1, Garzo, C.2, Velasco, I.3, Sáenz, A.4 & Gutiérrez, H.5

Spanish-English translator: Fabio Castro Fernández; f-fabio@hotmail.es, Idiomas León

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¹ Professor of Sport Psychology – Psychology, Sports and Sociology Department, University of Zaragoza (Spain), fergimen@unizar.es

² Sports Manager, Secretaría General de l'Esport i Consell Català de l'Esport (Spain), cgarzo@gencat.cat

³ Sports Manager, l'Associació de Joves Dirigents - la Jo – DiC, (Spain), coordinadoresdeveniments@jodic.cat

⁴ Post-doctorate Researcher, Psychology and Sociology Department, University of Zaragoza (Spain), <u>alfredo.saenz@ehu.es</u>

⁵ Post-doctorate Researcher, Psychology and Sociology Department, University of Zaragoza (Spain), h.gutierrez.pablo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the psychological characteristics involved in the performance of a group of young sport managers. To identify the psychological variables, an analytical procedure of an inductive nature was used, where young participants reported their experience as sport managers in a discussion group context. The information gathered served as basis for the development of the questionnaire of "personal competence of young sport managers". This instrument has got a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.72$) and comprises 14 items distributed in three factors: commitment to the role of "dynamicers"; controlled interest; and persistence toward a goal. Eventually, we discussed the implications of the results of this study on lifelong learning and training of this group of young sport managers.

KEYWORDS: psychological assessment, young, sports management, self-efficacy.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio ha sido evaluar las características psicológicas implicadas en el desempeño del colectivo de jóvenes gestores deportivos. Para la identificación de las variables psicológicas fue utilizado un procedimiento analítico de naturaleza inductiva donde los jóvenes participantes informaron de su experiencia como gestores deportivos en un formato de grupos de discusión. La información recogida sirvió como base para la elaboración del Cuestionario de Competencia Personal de Jóvenes Gestores Deportivos (CPJGD). Este instrumento presenta una alta consistencia interna (α = 0,72) y está compuesto por 14 items distribuidos en tres factores: compromiso con el rol de gestor deportivo; interés controlado; y persistencia hacia un objetivo. Finalmente se argumentan las implicaciones de los resultados de este estudio en la formación permanente y capacitación profesional de este colectivo de jóvenes gestores deportivos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: evaluación psicológica, jóvenes, gestión deportiva, autoeficacia

INTRODUCTION

The rise of sports lately these decades is well associated to the increase in the promotion, organisation and management of sports and those devoted to it. Within this group, an emerging group, i.e.: the young sports managers, have combined both academic (from high school onwards) and professional lives, carrying out extracurricular, federative and popular sports activities (Gómez-Tafalla, 2013).

On the other hand, these activities are not often supervised as they should, by the organizations and individuals in charge of the jobs of the former (Sheptak, y Menaker, 2016). When it is the case, the "master" adult sports manager prototype, well trained and experienced, is not the only nor the best option to be seen as a guide when young are learning for developing their own business, especially because of the differences existing between the tasks and the individual characteristics of both (Peiró, Ramos y González, 1993). As an alternative, the analysis and description of the role carried out by a young sport manager, is the technique for managing human resources that can provide a specification of the personal characteristics and requirements for that particular performance. A classification, commonly accepted of the analytic techniques and job description is that proposed by Ash (1988) between job-oriented techniques and employee-oriented ones. The former, focusing on the activities and tasks carried out by the employees, pretend to analyse what he or she does when working. The latter, on the contrary, focus on the requirements that employees should accomplish for developing their jobs in an appropriate manner, as well as their abilities and the knowledge involved. This second group of techniques is the one followed for constructing the methodology framework of this very study.

Getting to know the inner psychological characteristics of adolescence and post-adolescence periods (Balaguer, Castillo y Pastor, 2002) which involve commitment and efficient performance of the activities related to sport activities, can contribute to the enhancement of tuition and overall competence of young managers, empowering two positive consequences to happen: better results in sport activities; and a progression in young managers' as this being their first or second professional itinerary.

The auto-efficacy theory by Bandura (1977) establish an excellent theoretical framework for identifying and evaluating the psychological variables implied in adeptness awareness while developing their jobs and associated activities (De Quijano y Navarro, 2000). After the materialization of this theory, it is argued that beliefs (thoughts) that people have apropos themselves are seen as products and producers of their own atmosphere and social system. Bandura (1977) defines auto-efficacy as "those beliefs in the own capacities to organise and execute the required actions for managing future situations" (p. 2). The judgements that each individual does on his or her auto-efficacy are specificly related to the tasks and situations in which they involve, and people do use them to allude to whatever kind of objective to be achieved.

Moreover, in the organisational field, different studies have brought to light the relation between auto-efficacy and each task performance (Parker, 1998; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998; Wood and Bandura, 1989a,b), among others. Notwithstanding, we have not found any other study related to young sport managers, whatsoever.

Considering, on the one side, late theories on auto-efficacy, and on the other side, the necessity of getting to know the psychological characteristics involved in a new professional accomplishment —that of a young sport manager—, whether for the objectives, duties and tasks required, and/or for the assimilation of people with newish profiles for this accomplishment (e.g.: in our case, younger people); an appropriated alternative would be to approach that professional performance reality and eventually evaluate the beliefs those people have created according to their own performance. This is precisely the chosen approach in this study, in which a group of young sport managers (experienced in the Catalan institutional plan for invigorating sports at school) has participated.

METHOLOGY

Participants

Two of the groups of the so called "dynamicers" group, participated in the study. The first group was compounded of 57 young dynamicers aged from 16 to 20 (mean = 16.4; TD = 0.8), being 25 (44%) men and 32 (56%) women; all of them living in Catalonia's four provinces, respectively, and experienced as dynamicers between 6 months and 3 years (mean = 18.5 months; TD = 9.2 months). The second group was compounded of 129 young dynamicers aged 13-22 Years (mean = 16.5; TD = 1.2), being 72 (55%) men and 57 (44%) women; all of them living in Catalonia's four provinces, so is to say within its borders, and experienced as dynamicers in between 6 months and 4 years (mean = 21.5 months; TD = 10.3 months).

Procedure

This study was carried out in two phases. The purpose of the first one was to identify the attitudes and behaviours associated to efficient performance of the dynamicer role. For doing so, the young managers in the first group were part of a discussion group, in between 8 and 10 people randomly distributed (Gil, 1993). All the cases were carried out and controlled by a specialist in sports psychology, who proposed the answer to the following question: "think of a dynamicer of a similar age to yours to whom you will evaluate between 9 and 10 —being 0 the minimum (carries out his role as dynamicer in a deficient manner) and 10 the maximum score (carries out his role in a very efficient way)—, then, mention one characteristic of his way of acting or thinking". Each participant answered the question individually and over a paper. After that, they put things in common for discussing about it, in front of the supervisor who was aiming to helping the individuals of each group in identifying "unities of signification", it is to say: "the segments of the text being understood per se containing an idea,

episode or piece of information —in our very case attitudes and behaviours at the dinamicer's role development" (Tesch, 1990).

Thanks to the information gathered from the first phase, in the second phase the elaboration of a questionnaire was carries out for evaluation the attitudes and behaviours entailed when speaking about dynamicers' role. For doing so, an analysis on the contents of the so called unities of signification of the first phase was developed. That very content analysis was held independently by three judges: two responsible for the Catalan Plan of Sports at School, who held a degree in Physical Activity and Sports, and a psychologist specialised in sport psychology. For elaborating a definitive list, the *inter-judges* method was used (Hindes, Thorne, Schwean y McKeough, 2008).

Instrument

The preliminary version of the CPJGD is, indeed, the result obtained in the process mentioned hereinabove. It is compounded of 14 items, distributed in three factors, respectively: dynamicer's role commitment, controlled interest and resilience towards an objective. The response to each of the items was given according to a Likert scale after the question: "At what extent do you consider yourself efficient in each of the following attitudes and behaviours as dynamicer?" Eventually, on the bottom of the questionnaire, this question was posed: "If you had to evaluate my role as dynamicer in a 0-10 scale, which would it be? (0 = very defective dynamicer; 10 = very good, excellent dynamicer)".

When elaborating the CPJGD, the criteria posed herein have been supervised aiming to warrantee its validity as a way of measuring auto-efficacy in young sports managers:

- Firstly, and taking into consideration that efficacy is related to the judgments that one makes according to one's capacities and abilities to develop certain tasks and activities, in our case, the CPJGD measures up the judgment of the dynamicers according to their capacity for developing promotional and organisational sports tasks and activities.
- Secondly, the overall beliefs of one's self-efficacy, are well related to different contexts and fields; e.g.: self-efficacy for practising a sport is different to that apropos of learning a language. Consequently, the efficacy beliefs system is not a global trait but a group of self-beliefs related to differentiated fields, which determines instruments of selfefficacy evaluation to be adequate to the particular domain. In this case, dynamicers' beliefs on their activities as young sports managers have been evaluated.
- A third property of self-efficacy measurements is precisely its dependence from an own criterion. In the case of this study, self-efficacy evaluation of a dynamicer is more related to self-confidence and never in comparison to his/her mates.

 Following Bandura's statements on how to differentiate perceived selfefficacy (on performance), and results expectations (on results), the third item is set to be an index measuring results expectative of a given dynamicer, yet different from self-efficacy which is assessed by using the rest of the items.

Participants from the second group, accomplished voluntarily the preliminary version of the CPJGD, with 17 items. For minimizing the bias in the different responses, the following measures were adopted:

- Questionnaire's filling was carried out in a hall where privacy was respected, being able to pose individual questions to be solved collectively.
- There was no name in the papers so a code was given to each of them so as to identify the questionnaire and make it private.
- For stimulating responses truthfulness, each participant was explained the value they have got for the study aiming to increase general understanding and readiness to cope with different kinds of situations.

Data Analysis

For the statistical evaluation of the retrieved data, SPSS (v. 22.0) was used. Taking a matrix with the responses of the 129 individuals to the 17 proposed items, aiming to obtaining an instrument with excellent performance at psychometrics, were then developed: (1) an item discrimination analysis with the objective of assessing each item's integration in the questionnaire as a whole; the criteria for the inclusion of the item was justified by the use of an item-total correlation index of at least 0.25 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1995); (2) a questionnaire reliability study through the internal consistency analysis using the Alpha coefficient by Cronbach, as it is pointed out in Bandura's guide to the establishment of self-efficacy scales (Bandura, 1990); and (3) an explorative, factorial analysis of main components with varimax rotation (Carretero and Pérez, 2005) for checking out the factorial structure of the instrument, taking only an item within the model only if the obtained value is < 0.3.

For studying the relation between age, experience time as a dynamicer, scales or questionnaire factors, on the one side, and competence global perception, on the other side, correlation coefficient of Pearson has been calculated.

For studying the differences of age, experience time as a dynamicer, scales of the questionnaire and competence global perception according to genders, Mann-Whitney's "U" test was used.

RESULTS

Items discrimination and questionnaire reliability analysis

Item-total correlation test were carried out so as to evaluate each item's integration in the whole questionnaire. Three out of 17 items, were excluded for not having reached a minimum value of 0.25. These were namely:

- I do not come to terms with what I have learnt or achieved so far.
- I am interested in practising sports.
- I am just another colleague, we are all the same and I do not do things for making myself relevant over the rest.

Reliability of CPJGD was calculated by Cronbach's "alpha" coefficient. The obtained value was 0.72.

Factorial analysis of the questionnaire

In Table number 1, after having declined the values minor to 0.3, it can be appreciated that personal competence conception in the dynamicer's role, is recognised in three dimensions: factor 1, commitment as a dynamicer; factor 2, controlled interest; and factor 3, resilience towards an objective. These three factors can broadly explain the value of the variance: 42.04%,

Table 1. Structural matrix for solving the three factors

	Factor1		Factor 3
<i>Items</i>	Commitment	Factor 2	Resilience
	as a	Controlled	towards an
	dynamicer	interest	objective
I am determined in the actions I carry out, I haven't got any doubt.	0.584		
I am very realistic: not everything is negative, nor positive.	0.582		
I have got a deep commitment to increase the number of children and young people practising sports.	0.543		
I get involved in the things I carry out.	0.532		
I accomplish with my duties: I do everything I have to do and what I have promised.	0.526		
I do what I say.	0.456		
I am enough educated regarding the contents of my role (sports characteristics, laws, games, organisation, etc.)	0.452		
I have things prepared before starting an activity	0.377		
I am passionate and interested in my job.		0.638	
I make the decisions I have to, when planning or carrying out an activity.		0.576	
I have got a very positive approach: I find positive things in given situations and people.		0.569	
I look after the material I use in the activities.		0.539	
When I Project an objective or a challenge, I am quite determined and I never give up.			0.638
I persevere in searching one solution for each problem.			0.623

Relation between age an experience time as dynamicer, scales or factor of the questionnaire and competence overall perception

Relations statistically relevant were observed in these two cases: between age and factor 2 —controlled factor— (r = 0.20; p < 0.05); and between competence

global perception (self-efficacy of the result) and factor 1 —commitment as a dynamicer (r = 0.19; p < 0.05).

Differences of age, experience time as dynamicer, scales of the questionnaire and competence overall perception according to the gender.

This hypothesis contrast, made under the Mann-Whitney test, did not lead to any statistical significant differences in any of the cases.

DISCUSSION

Aiming to get to a better evaluation of competence global perception in the group (young sport managers), within this very study the CPJGD questionnaire has been elaborated. This instrument presents an adequate internal consistency (reliability), and the content's validity has been based on the identification and analysis (of the variables contents, according to the opinions gathered by the experts —in our case, the dynamicers) process. All of their experience allows us to access the knowledge on the determinants of their activity as such, as well as to specify the aspects of self-efficacy that must be considered. This methodological strategy, in respect to the proposed classification mentioned hereinabove by Ash (1988), can be framed within the employee-oriented techniques and contributes to identify and define the requirements of the dynamicers for developing their role in a correct way. Furthermore, this methodological approach has been used in different studies aiming to elaborate the specific evaluation tools in the sports field (García-Mas, et al., 2006).

Apropos of the factorial structure, Bandura (1986) posed the hypothesis under which self-efficacy affects the election of the activities, the required effort to carry them, and the resilience of each individual to execute them. All of them three factors of the study for evaluating the perceived self-efficacy in dynamicers role's development, reflect these psychological dimensions: commitment as a dynamicer, controlled interest and resilience towards a given objective

The first factor refers to the commitment that each dynamicer establishes for developing his/her role, and it entails such aspects like perceived capacity for: promising to develop the main objective of the organisation they belong to, i.e.: increase in the number of children and young people practising sports; showing big interest towards the quality levels in which they work, accomplishing with the organisation and execution of the tasks and activities; and acquiring enough tuition for managing and organising the different sports activities (sports characteristics, laws, games, planning and organisation, etc.).

The second factor gathers the items measuring the perceived capacity of the dynamicers towards their controlled, realistic interest when carrying out their duties, including the following aspects: perception of a positive style motivated by the achievement of a given task, putting into evidence the decision making

process concerns and the care for the material used in the organisation of the activities.

Finally, the third factor refers to resilience when it comes to complete the inherent roles of a dynamicer and, in which, two relevant behavioural abilities should be considered: resilience and never give up when facing an objective; and resilience when looking for solutions to fulfil an objective.

The CPJGD test has got a good internal consistency (α = 0.72), as well as an adequate discriminative capacity of all the 14 items (item-total values > 0.25). This underwrites the consistency of the latent variable measured by the CPJGD, and the adequate integration of each item in the questionnaire as a whole.

The criteria validity has shown coherent results, even if they are incomplete, in relation to age and efficacy overall perception. In the case of age, a significant, positive relations in factor 2 is observed —controlled interest—, it is to say: being older within this group is associated to a bigger and more adequate engagement in their roles. In the very last case of the CPJGD, thanks to whom we can estimate the overall efficacy perception levels, a significant, positive relation is observed as well, with factor 1 —commitment as a dynamicer—, it means: dynamicers who consider themselves more efficient, tend to be more committed in their role.

On the other hand, in adults, it is very common to find relations between experience —in time— and perceived competences in different facets of the role (Pérez y Rodrigo, 1998) this is not the case with the data obtained in this study. The high individual differences in adolescence and post-adolescence periods, compared with those of adults, can explain this very result. It means, some personal abilities can compensate or have more influence when it comes to be compared to experience; in this study, the majority of the participants had at least half a year of working experience in sports activities.

Differences established by gender did show that there are not significant statistical differences for age, working experience as dynamicers, scales of the questionnaire and competence global perception. Even though we do not know whether does there exist similar previous studies having studied self-efficacy in sports activities, we do appreciate, according to the conclusions that one can get to after reading other Works on gender differences in self-efficacy, there is not uniformity in the results: in Graziano, Jensen-Campbell and Finch's (1997) work, an increase in men's athletic self-efficacy perception, but the same in both males and females in academically, socially and physically domains; notwithstanding women have shown a better self-efficacy academically and a lower one in the social facet (Pastorelli et al., 2001); and in other Works there have not been any differences in gender for the studied self-efficacy factors under this study (Bandura, et al., 2001).

The CPJGD has got a much reduced number of items and adequate psychometric properties that transforms it into a very useful instrument for its

use in a reduced time framework for both individual and group evaluations. In the first case the CPJGD can be a support instrument in the behavioural evaluation for concretizing the needs and resources of the dynamicers, posing hypothesis within a functional analysis frame, as well as for the psychological intervention effect evaluation. In the case of numerous group of dynamicers (e.g.: in the frame of the annual sessions of updating), fulfilling the CPJGD can allow the elaboration of individual reports where personal abilities to improve can be identified (i.e.: low score items), being a complement to the scales (e.g.: calculating percentile scores) and allowing each dynamicer to compare their direct scores of the three scales, and even for the 14 items, to the group as a whole, being the latter the study *per se*. For designing the permanent tuition activities for the dynamicers, the CPJGD can be an useful instrument since the way its results are presented relevant individual abilities can be concluded and, in turn, can influence the objectives and contents of tuition activities.

Conceptual, methodological and applied implications of this study, will be, without any doubt, useful for other groups of young sport managers, such as regional groups, like the one from Catalonia: Plan Catalán del Deporte en la Escuela. Reciproc benefits are more than evident for both the one in charge of the organisation of the events and the participants.

Study Limitations

Even though the simple is representative, they represent an isolated minority within Spain. Generalising by using this study as an example, should be done with caution. Notwithstanding, comparing this study to other groups' needs would be very convenient.

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