

THE INFLUENCE OF MAC PROGRAM ON COACH'S COMMUNICATION DISCOURSE AND TEAM'S MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE

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- verbal communication,
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- ego climate,
- mastery climate,
- football.

Abstract:

Current tendency in sport area in Slovakia indicates decreasing interest of youth about sports activities as well as high fluctuation of young athletes among various sports or their drop out of sport as such. One of the reasons is bad motivational climate in team as well as inadequate level of communication and communication discourse of coach during training units or matches in football. The aim of study was to find out the influence of MAC intervention program on changes in coach's communication and perception of motivational climate in team. The research was applied on experimental group (n=1 coach; n=16 players). Data about the level of communication were gained using coding scheme CBAS. Diagnosing of motivational climate perception was realized by MCSYS questionnaire. Coach during intervention significantly increase the frequency of instructions. The frequency of encouragement remains on high level and frequency of criticism increased minimally regarding percentage amount of criticism in total coach's communication discourse. Results' analysis showed high level of mastery climate perception and lower level of ego climate in team within input and output measures. After finishing the intervention program, the level of mastery climate remains on high level.

INTRODUCTION

Complexity and complicated character of communication's interaction within communication dyad (coach-player) and triad (coach-player-parent), put a strain on positive determination of communication interaction not only in individual, but also in collective sports. Therefore, it is important to direct the coaches as well as scientists' attention on development and application of sports programs with complex positive influence on all subjects within training and competition process. Educational programs positively influence coaches' communication competencies, abilities of players to listen and learn and they also influence team's cohesion [Pensgaard-Roberts, 2002]. Players who were coached by coaches who participated in educational programs indicated higher self-esteem, self-worth, and ability to cooperate with others [Smoll et al., 1993]. In sport studies, there were identified ideal ways of behaviors for coaches that help them to create positive environment full of fun, skill development and self-esteem's increase of young athletes. Research studies that focused on social interaction between coach and players show on abysmal difference between real behavior and preferred coaches behavior [Wang et al., 2004]. Furthermore, research showed on difference between how players perceived communication and behavior of their coach and how coaches perceived their own behavior [Holstein, 2010]. Coaching effectivity directly depends on its perception by players [Smith-Smoll, 1989]. Each of player perceives and gives significance to particular coach's behaviors that resulted in creation of player's attitude to

coach as well as to sport experience as such [Holstein, 2010]. The absence of sport educational programs for coaches in Slovakia sport context points to the need of development and implementation of these programs within complex system of coaches' personality development. New space can be opened for structural and content development of educational conception focused on coaches' development especially in youth sport. The essence of change is to create conditions for effective coaching using updated knowledge within the area of development and implementation of educational programs [Kačúr, 2014].

THE MATERIAL AND THE METHODOLOGY

The aim of the paper was to evaluate the influence of intervention program MAC on changes in coach's communication discourse in interaction with players and changes in team's mastery climate perception. Based on random selection we applied the research on football coach and 16 players (two players were 12 years old, eight players were 13 years old, six players were 14 years old). Coach is 38 years old and has got qualification license EURO B. Research was divided into three stages. Before and after implementation of intervention program audio and video recordings was done [Slančová-Slančová, 2014]. Moreover; we diagnosed perception of mastery and ego motivational climate using questionnaire MCSYS (The Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports) [Smith-Smoll, 2009] as well as coding scheme CBAS [Smith et al., 1977] was used to find out changes in coach communication discourse. Questionnaire MCYS consisting of 12 items that focus on mastery and ego climate. Mastery climate consisting of three subscales (cooperative learning, effort and improvement, role importance) and ego climate also consists of three subscales (punishment and mistakes, intra team rivalry, unequal recognition). After transcription of verbal communication discourse of coach, we applied coding method. Using CBAS coding scheme [Holstein, 2010] we were able to analyse the frequency of verbal and nonverbal categories in coach communication during training units and matches (audio-video recordings – direct observation). Verbal and nonverbal communication categories of coach were divided in 12 categories of two main groups: a) reactive behavior – encouragement after good performance, absence of encouragement, encouragement after mistake, technical or tactical instruction after mistake, verbal or nonverbal negative statement, negative technical or tactical instruction, ignoring mistakes, maintain behavior control; b) spontaneous behavior – general technical or tactical instruction, general encouragement, organization and administration, general communication out of context [Trudel et al., 2010]. Intervention was applied during 18 weeks. As an intervention, instruction program MAC (Mastery Approach to Coaching) consisting of DVD and manual was used [Smith-Smoll, 2009]. Coach who was part of experimental group was acquainted with the procedure how to learn to use effective communication principles according to MAC program. Video recordings enabled the coach to understand how those learnt principles adequately apply to praxis through situation models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Changes` analysis in coach`s communication discourse

Results of CBAS frequency analysis in three main areas: encouragement, instruction and punishment point to the following findings (*see Table 1*):

Encouragement – results of input measures showed that coach encouraged players on high level before MAC intervention. After intervention program period, results indicate that coach communicated the same number of encouragement statements (206) as before intervention. Coach maintain the level of encouragement on adequate level in spite of fluctuating matches` results and performance of players during matches and training units.

Punishment – results indicate that coach postulated 5 communication statements in input and 11 communication statements in output measures. There is an increase of 6

communication statements that is increased of 54.55%. However, this finding is not alarming considering the total number of verbal statements in this category.

Instruction – monitoring values of CBAS categories, we found out in input measures the difference in instruction`s frequency of 37 verbal statements (20.56). In input measures coach communicated 143 verbal statements of this category and output values indicate up to 180 verbal statements. After implementation of intervention program, there was the increase of instruction frequency.

Table 1. Frequency of CBAS categories in three main behavior areas.

CBAS	ENCOURAGEMENT		INSTRUCTION		PUNISHMENT	
	Input	Output	Input	Output	Input	Output
	TU+M	TU+M	TU+M	TU+M	TU+M	TU+M
Freqv.	206	206	143	180	5	11

Note: TU – training unit, M - match

Intervention program not only positively influenced monitored changes of coaches` communication, but also showed protective effect because coaches in experimental group radically decreased punishment and criticism even though they were under the pressure of emotively intensive situations [Kačúr, 2014]. Despite the fact that coach in our research moderately increased frequency of criticism, we can say that it is negligible change if we take into consideration the frequency of this communication in coach discourse. Improvement was found in other research [Sousa et al., 2009] in which coaches of experimental group decreased the frequency of punishment of 5% and increased the frequency of encouragement of 20% [Duda, 2001]. In behavioural studies were found results where coaches of experimental groups increased the frequency of encouragement and instructions in a range from 3% to 25% and decreased the frequency of punishment and criticism in a range from 1% to 17% after intervention implementation [Boixadós-Cruz, 1999] coaches` communication style showed increase of encouragement and instruction`s frequency of coaches and reduction of punishment and criticism`s frequency communicated to players [Cruz et al., 2010; Sousa et al., 2007]. Our findings can be compared with research applied on coaches of collective sports [Kačúr, 2014], which found out that coaches of experimental group showed higher frequency of encouragement and instructions and lower level of punishment and criticism to compare with coaches of control group. Time period of intervention as well as intervention itself influenced the range of difference. In conclusion, program MAC showed its foundation because coach increased the frequency of instructions that is inevitable for effective transfer of important information to players in training unit as well as in match. Input values pointed out on good level of coach`s communication discourse. To sustain or to improve this communication level during main season requires significant effort. From this point of view, we can speculate about protective effect of intervention program because 97% of verbal statements postulated by coach in output measure were instructions and encouragement and remaining 3% was represented by criticism.

Analysis of perception`s changes in motivational climate

Regarding the data of input and output measurements (*see Table 2*) we can confirm increased players` perception of ego climate (7.78%) in experimental group. Even though we expected reverse result, it should be pointed out that coach communicated high frequency of encouragement and instructions in input and output measurements that was reflected in mastery climate perception. Mastery climate perception was on high level while ego one

remained at low level. To compare results with another study, players of control and experimental group perceived mastery climate in their teams on high level within input and output measurements [Kačúr, 2014]. These results also correspond with findings of more authors [Smoll et al., 2007; Quinlan, 2010; Pensgaard-Roberts, 2002]. One of the causes that could influence intervention results is high level of mastery climate's perception in experimental group ($x = 3.97$) within input measures (beginning competition period). Maintaining of high level of positive motivational climate during season place high requirements on coach [Kačúr, 2014]. Results of other researches show lower level of mastery climate's perception represented by following average values: ($x = 4.00$) [Leo et al., 2009], ($x = 4.19$) [Marcos et al., 2013] and ($x = 4.24$) [Russel, 2008]. To increase such adequately high level of positive climate is more or less hardly reachable. In future research, it would be necessary to focus on comparison between sustainability of high mastery climate level in teams where coaches' communication will be determined by program MAC with coaches without any determination of their communication discourse. Results of research study [Kačúr, 2014] indicate that besides the fact that there was evident worsening in both monitored areas of motivational climate it can be claimed that players who were coached by coaches of experimental group showed significantly higher level of mastery climate perception ($p=0.000$) and significantly lower level of ego climate perception ($p=0.001$) in output measures in comparison with players of control group.

Table 2. Perception's level of mastery and ego motivational climate in coach's team.

PLAYERS	MASTERY				EGO	
	x	s	x	s		
Pre-test		n=18	3.97	1.111	2.37	1.473
Post-test		n=18	3.92	1.167	2.57	1.338

Note: n – number of players; Mastery – positive climate; EGO – negative climate; x - mean; s – standard deviation; scale – 1↔5

Mastery climate environment that is created by coaches through their communication discourse and behavior is characterized by focusing on cooperative learning, players are encouraged to learn and develop skills and to mutual cooperation with the target to reach team aims [Quinlan, 2010; Vosloo, 2007]. Similarly, we found out low level of ego climate that means that players were less frequently confronted with inadequate criticism during training units and matches, the attention of coach was not focused only on the best players in team and coach did not support rivalry and inadequate competitiveness among players [Pensgaard-Roberts, 2002]. Coach applied within feedback encouragement and instructions in various ways to whole team and largely with individual approach. Players do not perceive in larger range the way how coach communicates with other players in team, but they limit the evaluation of motivational climate on individual feedback provided to them by coach [Cumming et al., 2007]. Therefore, individual perception of coach's communication (mainly individual feedback) is important factor relating to the level of players' perception of motivational climate [Duda, 2001].

CONCLUSIONS

Research aim was to evaluate the influence of intervention program MAC on coach's communication discourse changes and changes in team's motivational climate. Coach significantly increased the frequency of instruction, frequency of encouragement remained on high level and frequency of punishment increased minimally regarding percentage amount in total coach's communication discourse. Results of analysis showed high level of mastery

climate perception in team and lower level of ego climate considering input and output measures. After the implementation of intervention program, the level of mastery climate remained on high level. Taking into consideration results of intervention, program MAC should have had protective influence on team's motivational climate. Moreover; as results indicated, program MAC proved its importance in effective interconnection of theory and praxis. Results also provide information about the level and changes of team's motivational climate that was influenced by determined coach's communication style. Furthermore; results confirmed theoretical rudiments of the issue and feature new research possibilities in the study of longitudinal influences of program on psychical and social variables in training and competition process.

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