

Job Stress among Sport Coaches in Rivers State, Nigeria

Dr. J.B. Vipene
Department of Educational Foundations
Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Dr. (Mrs.) V.C. Emeribe
Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education
University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study examined nine sources of stress that affect sport coaches in Rivers State. Some of the nine stressors studied are, training schedule, facilities, equipment, organizational set up, job security, welfare package, health, the athlete and working environment. The instrument for the study was coaches job stress questionnaire. A total of 30 coaches made up of 20 males and 10 females from various sports were involved in the study. The age ranged from 40 – 55 years with a mean age of 47.5 years. They had varying experiences from 5 – 28 years on the job. Result of the study show that most of the factors studied constituted sources of stress among coaches in Rivers State, Nigeria. Except organizational set up and health that constituted the least sources of stress for coaches. The hypothesis for the study was analysed with the t-test statistical techniques and significant differences were found between males and females on two factors. These were health and the working environment. The study concluded that coaches stressors stem from these factors studied. The study recommended that coaches should be monitored and counseled to reduce their stress in order to improve on their performances.

Keywords: Welfare Package, Health, Job Stress Stressors

Introduction

Stress can be said to be as old as the human race. For as long as human beings interact with their environment, there is bound to be stress. The stress experienced by coaches on the job may not be different altogether from stress experienced by workers in other fields of endeavour. However, according to Ekwe (1989) stress is said not to be a new phenomenon as our ancestors said to have experienced it because of what the harsh environment provided them with.

Ivancevich and Maltson (1980) reported that the word stress and its usage have been existing for centuries.

Melgosa (2001) in trying to trace the origin of stress said it comes from the middle English word *stresse* which has a short form of *distresse* or *distress*.

Stress has been variously defined by several authors in various ways. However because of its connotation and variety in the usage of the term stress, it is difficult to have an accepted straight forward definition. Some scholars portray stress as a state of the physical body which has been exposed to pressure for forces close to or beyond tolerance. Others see it as pressure on the human being.

Selye (1974) sees stress as the rate of tear and wear in the human system. Stress is not necessarily a bad thing as Selye differentiates it into two categories, as “eustres good stress and distress” bad stress.

However, an amount of stress must be present for a human being to function maximally in an endeavour. But it's the level of stress that makes the difference in performance interruption in the task at hand.

Davies (1981) said stress may affect an employee, whether the employee is a manager, line staff young or old. According to him studies have shown that most job conditions can cause stress depending on the employee's reaction to stress.

Lazarus (1976) observes that stress arises when there are demands on the person which tax or exceed his adaptive resources.

Shoaf (1989) argued that not all stress is bad, to be alive is to be under certain amount of stress, and the body functions well, even excels, under the right kind and amount of stress. However, when the body is constantly forced to draw on inner reserves to respond to negative stressors, health seems to suffer.

However, there are differences in individuals in their various responses to stress. According to Sarason and Sarason (1987) a situation that is stressful to one person might not be stressful to another individual.

Morgan, King, Weisz and Schopler (1986) define stress as an internal state which can be caused by physical demand of the body or the environment and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful, uncontrollable or exceeding our resources for coping.

Organizational stress which also affects coaches according to Fletcher, Hanton & Mellalieu (2006) is an ongoing transaction between an individual and the environmental demands associated primarily and in a way directly with the organization within which the individual operates.

Fletcher & Scott (2010) commented that sports coaches operate within a complex and ever-changing environment that exerts a lot of pressure on them. They further commented that the rapid rate of change in contemporary sport and the changing nature of stress signifies that stress in coaches is an ongoing problem that needs to be monitored and solution sought for it.

Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees & Hutchings (2008) in a study found that coaches experience a variety of stressors that adds weight to previous arguments that they should be regarded as performer in their own right.

In study of Olympic coaches, Olusoga, Maynard, Hays and Butt (2012) found that psychological attributes (e.g. emotion control) preparation (e.g. strategic approach), and coping at event (e.g. team support) were factors that coaches perceived as important for successful coaching at the Olympic Games.

Coaches job stress is the stress that arises in the course of one discharging one's duties and responsibilities on his job.

Coaches the World over however experience so much stress on the job because of the nature of the coaching job. The slogan which is "hire and fire" makes the job one of the most difficult jobs because of high expectations from the public.

Purpose of Study

There are a lot of factors which have been identified in studies that are responsible for coaches job stress in other parts of the world which have not been clearly identified among coaches of various sports in Rivers State. The study therefore was carried out to identify these factors so as to resolved them to improve the job output of coaches in Rivers State.

Some of the factors include as Jaja (2003) puts it uncertainty surrounding the need for one's own job in the new system or possible restructuring with consequent changes in pay etc. however, sources of stress examined in this study are, training schedule, facilities, equipment, organizational set up, job security, welfare package, health, the athlete and working environment.

It was hypothesized that there will be no significant differences between male and female coaches on the sources of stress.

Method

Subject

A total of 30 samples subject who are coaches of various sports were randomly selected from the State Sports Council and Private Sports Clubs in Rivers State. 20 males and 10 females coaches who are currently preparing athletes for various competitions.

The age range of the coaches is between 40 – 55 years with a mean age of 47.5 years. The coaches are of varied experiences on the job ranging from 5 – 20 years.

Instrument

Coaches Job Stress questionnaire was used for the study. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of .85. It was therefore considered suitable for use in the study. The instrument was administered on the subjects by the researcher with the aid of an assistant.

The instrument was constructed as a modified Likert scale with four scales of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed.

Scoring

The scoring was on a range of 4 – 1 points Strongly Agreed (SA) 4 points, Agreed (A) 3 points, Strongly Disagreed (SD) 2 points, and Disagreed (D) 1 point.

2.5 points and above on any one factor was accepted as making that factor a stressor that affects coaches.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using the mean standard deviation and the t-test statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The sources of stress measured were: training schedule, facilities, equipment, organizational set up, job security, welfare package, health, the athletes, environmental factors.

Table 1: Showing mean and standard deviation scores sources of stress/stressors measured for all coaches

Sources of Stress	N	Mean	SD
Training schedule	30	3.40	1.89
Facilities	30	3.16	.85
Equipment	30	3.18	.71
Organizational set up	30	2.42	1.95
Job security	30	3.02	.76
Welfare package	30	2.81	1.79
Health	30	2.11	.82
The athlete	30	3.21	1.03
Working Environment	30	3.28	1.87

Table 1

Results in table 1 shows all coaches on training schedule scored a mean of 3.40 and SD.189. On facilities they scored a mean of 3.16 and SD.85. Equipment mean score is 3.18 and SD.71. On organizational set up, they had a mean score of 2.42 and SD1.95. Job security shows a mean of 3.02 and SD.76. On welfare package they had a mean score of 2.81 and SD1.79. On health the score obtained is a mean of 3.21 and SD.82. On the athlete a mean score of 3.21 and SD 1.03. While on working environment they obtained a mean of 3.28 and SD1.87.

Table 2: Showing mean and standard deviation scores of sources of stress/stressors for male coaches

Sources of Stress	N	Mean	SD
Training schedule	20	3.05	1.20
Facilities	20	3.17	.87
Equipment	20	3.02	1.04
Organizational set up	20	3.08	1.96
Job security	20	3.16	.88
Welfare package	20	3.10	.79
Health	20	2.16	.89
The athlete	20	3.20	1.03
Working Environment	20	3.96	.89

Table 2

Results in table 2 shows mean and standard deviation of male coaches on the sources of stress studied as follows, training schedule mean of 3.05 and SD 1.20. On facilities 3.17 and SD.87. On equipment 3.02 and SD 1.04. On organizational set up the scored a mean of 3.08 and SD1.96. Job security, they obtained a mean of 3.16 and SD.88. On welfare package they obtained a mean of 3.10 and SD.79. Health a mean of 2.16 and SD of .89 was obtained on the athletes 3.20 and SD 1.03. While on working environment a mean of 3.96 and SD of .89 was obtained.

Table 3: Showing mean and standard deviation scores of sources stress/stressors for female coaches

Sources of Stress	N	Mean	SD
Training schedule	10	2.90	.96
Facilities	10	2.96	1.89
Equipment	10	3.10	1.92
Organizational set up	10	2.01	1.01
Job security	10	2.60	1.02
Welfare package	10	3.10	.97
Health	10	2.39	.89
The athlete	10	2.01	.87
Working Environment	10	2.81	.95

Table 3

Results in table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of female coaches on the various sources of stress studied. On training schedule the mean score is 2.90 and SD.96. On facilities mean score is 2.96 and SD1.89. Equipment mean score is 3.10 and SD1.92. On organizational set up mean of 2.01 and SD 1.01. On job security a mean score of 2.60 and SD 1.02. On welfare package mean score of 3.10 and SD.97. Health package of 2.39 and SD.89. The mean scores on the athlete is 2.01 and SD.87. While on working environment the mean score obtained is 2.81 and SD.95.

Table 4: Showing summary of t-test comparing mean scores of males and female coaches

	Males		Female		t
	n = 20		n = 10		
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	
Training schedule	3.05	1.20	2.90	.96	0.36
Facilities	3.17	.87	2.96	1.89	0.32
Equipment	3.02	1.04	3.10	.92	0.21
Organizational set up	3.08	1.96	2.01	1.01	1.91
Job security	3.16	.88	2.60	1.02	1.42
Welfare package	3.10	1.79	3.09	.97	0.03
Health	2.16	.89	3.21	.98	2.86*
The athlete	3.20	1.03	2.01	.87	1.46
Working Environment	3.96	.89	2.81	.95	3.05*

Significant at $P < 0.05$, $df = 28$. t-critical 2.05

Table 4

Results in table 4 show that training schedule had a t-test value of 0.36, facilities had 0.32, equipment 0.21, organizational set up 1.91, job security 1.42, welfare package 0.03 and the athlete 1.46 indicating that no significant differences were found between male and female coaches on these stressors. While on the other hand, health shows a t-test value of 2.86 and working environment 3.05 indicative of the fact that significant differences occurred between male and female coaches on these two stressors.

Discussion

Results in table 1 show that training schedule which has a mean of 3.40 and SD1.89 indicates that training schedule is a source of stress for coaches. This may probably be due to that fact that at the time of the research they were involved in the preparation of athletes for the national sports festival and other championships which must have made the schedule tight. Facilities based on the mean score of 3.16 and SD.85 was also found to be another source of stress as most facilities used in training were dilapidated. This probably may be responsible for the result obtained. Equipment with a mean score of 3.18 and SD.71 is also another stressor for coaches probably because most of the equipment that were used in training were obsolete.

Organizational set up with 2.42 as mean and SD 1.95 was as a source of stress.

Job security with a mean scores of 3.02 and SD.76 was found as a source of stress for coaches. This may probably be because the coaching job is a job of "hire and fire" depending on the performance of the coach.

Welfare package was found to constitute a source of stress for coaches with a mean of 2.81 and SD1.79. Welfare seems to be important in the life of every worker and when this is not properly attended to it may be

stressful for the worker. This may be a probable reason for this result.

Health did not constitute a source of stress for coaches with a mean score of 2.11 and SD.82. The athlete constituted a source of stress for coaches with a mean score of 3.21 and SD 1.03.

The working environment with a mean score of 3.28 and SD1.87 was found as source of stress for coaches. This may probably be due to the working environment available to coaches in the state.

Results in table 2 indicate stress factors for male coaches. On training schedule they scored a mean of 3.05 and SD 1.20 making training schedule as a stressor. Facilities also is found as a source of stress with a mean score of 3.17 and SD of .87. Equipment with a mean score of 3.02 and SD 1.04 is also identified by this study as a stressor probable reasons has also been adduced earlier in this discussion. Organizational set constituted a source of stress to them with a mean score of 3.08 and SD1.96. However job security and welfare package were identified as sources of stress for male coaches with a mean scores of 3.16 and SD.88 and mean of 3.10 and SD.79 respectively. On the other hand, Health was not found as a stressor to them as the factor had a mean score of below 2.16 and SD.89. The athlete was found to be a stressor to male coaches with a mean score of 3.20 and SD1.03. This may probably due to the fact that sometimes athletes may refuse to implement instructions given by the coach to them. The working environment with a mean score of 3.96 and SD.89 was identified as a source of stress. This is probably because of the complex nature of the environment in which a coach operates. Pressure from employers, fans, family, parents, etc.

Results in table 3 show the stress factors or sources of stress for female coaches. Training schedule with a mean of 2.90 and SD.96 is identified as a source of stress. Facilities with a mean score of 2.96 and SD1.89 constitute a source of stress. Equipment with a mean score of 3.10 and SD.92 is also found as a source of stress. Organizational set up did not constitute a stressor for female coaches with a mean score of 2.01 and SD1.01. Job security was found to be a source of stress for them with a mean score of 2.60 and SD 1.02.

Welfare package with a mean score of 3.09 and Sd.97 and Health with mean score of 3.21 and SD.98 constituted sources of stress for them.

The athlete with a mean of 2.01 and SD .87 was not found to be a stressor. While the working environment was found to be a source of stress for female coaches with a mean score of 2.81 and SD.95.

The result of the study show that significant difference occurred between male and female coaches on health. Male coaches been the most stressed with a high mean score of 3.21, SD of .98 as observed in table 3.

Environment also showed significant difference between male and female coaches which means the environment is probably a major source of stress. This finding, however is in agreement with Fletcher and Scott (2010) that sports coaches operate within a complex environment that exerts a lot of pressure on them.

Conclusion

The study there concludes that coaches stress stem from various sources as identified in the study training schedule, training facilities, job security and the environment etc.

The factors examined in this study are not exhaustive. There are several other factors, example the fan, journalist parents, etc. which may constitute sources of stress for coaches which can be examined in other studies.

It is therefore recommended that coaches should be monitored and counseled when signs of stress are observed. Since stress cannot be totally removed from human life coaches should be assisted and taught techniques that will enable them cope with the stress associated with their jobs. It is also recommended that since training facilities is a stressor especially the poor facilities available to them, this should be improved upon to reduce the effects of these particular stressor and in order to improve their performance on the job.

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