

The Inter-relationship of Coaching Profiles and Levels of Mental Toughness: Preliminary Results of A Pilot Study.

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ABSTRACT

Mental toughness (MT) is a personal, state-like capacity that facilitates the initiation and continuation of goal-directed activities in several domains, including sports. Sport coaches are key agents in positions of authority. Coaching philosophy has been identified as one of the key parts in the development of environments that promote MT. The Coach Orientation Questionnaire (COQ) groups coaches in six profiles (Traditional, Technological, Innovative, Collaborative, Communicator, and Confrontational) mostly based on their professional training, personality, and experience. Coaches' levels of MT and coaching COQ profiles have not been investigated together. **PURPOSE:** To explore the relationship between the COQ coaching profiles with MT. **METHODS:** The study followed a cross-sectional design. Data from 37 male and eight female coaches ($n = 45$), with an age of 35.1 ± 11.7 years, were collected. The COQ and the Mental Toughness Index (MTI) were administered. MTI consists of eight items. Each item represents one MT key dimension (i.e., generalized self-efficacy, buoyancy, success mindset, optimistic style, context knowledge, emotion regulation, attention regulation, overcoming adversity). All analyses were conducted in SPSS. **RESULTS:** Based on the COQ scores, coaches fell into the following categories: Confrontational (19%), Traditional (19%), Communicator (18%), Innovative (17%), Technological (16%), and Collaborator (11%). The correlation analysis showed significant relationships between MT scores and the Technological (They like to use technology to study the sport. Assistants need to be competent to assist in that. Players must be predisposed to collaborate.) ($r = .377$; $p = .011$), Collaborator (They prefer delegation of tasks, while maintaining a climate of trust with players and the assistants) ($r = .420$; $p = .005$), and Confrontational (They criticize the training process, which creates a tense atmosphere) coach profiles ($r = .474$; $p = .002$). **CONCLUSION:** Our findings offer preliminary evidence for the relationship between coaches' COQ profiles and levels of MT and support the continuation of data collection. Larger-scale studies should explore this relationship further (e.g., different settings). Future studies should also investigate the etiology behind those inter-relationships (e.g., COQ profiles with each MT key dimension score) and their effect on environment development. Limitations may include cross-sectional design and convenience sample.