

Evaluation of Communication in The Relationship Between Football Coach And Player in The Tunisian Sahel Area.

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Abstract : *In sport, the transmission of messages between the coach and the player is paramount. Very few studies focus on the communications process between the coach and the player, and very few analyses the impact of this communication on athletes. This research seek to capture what is good coach-athlete communication in the eyes of coaches and players, to understand the communication process itself and to understand the impact of communication on the athletic and personnel development of players.*

Keywords: *coach- athlete relationship- communication- development- sport.*

I. Introduction

For the last thirty years, sport has known tremendous expansion in the four fields of training: technical, physical, tactic, and moral. There have been so many works dealing with these different aspects. Training programs have become more and more precise and documented. Nevertheless, the Tunisian football goes through moments of doubt: what should be done to ameliorate our results? Although football experts have different answers to this question, we think that successful coaching always depends not only on the human relationship between the coach and the trainee but also on the ability to communicate with the latter. The football coach has to take into consideration two important aspects: to know how to transmit his ideas and to make the others understand them. Consequently, the coach has to be good at expressing himself orally, at being coherent, convincing and precise.

Several coaches would be surprised to see the impact of their verbal and non-verbal communication on the players. A message which is misunderstood can impact a player for many years ahead. Therefore, it is important that the coach think deeply before saying anything and pay attention to his words, tone, and gestures. The basis of a good coach/players relationship depends on an effective communication which can create a productive training atmosphere. The player's role in this process is important as well. Nonetheless the coach is responsible for this effective communication and so helps his players enjoy more autonomy.

This study is to answer the following questions:

*What skills characterize a good communication?

*How can you make your players and colleagues know these skills?

Coach-player relationship:

Several researches have been done such as the works of Philippe and Seiler (2006) which concluded that a close relationship between the national athletes and their coaches is important to the personal and competitive development of the athletes. This can help the athletes to speak overtly about any subject with their trainer. Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medbery and Peteson (1999) also studied the factors that affect the Olympic athletes and they noticed that the team members who had relationships with their coaches based on confidence and an effective communication outperformed.

Communication process Previous findings revealed that the nature and relation between the coach and the athlete impact the development, the degree of satisfaction, self-esteem, and the athletic performances of the athlete. According to Schinke, Bloon and Salmela (1997), communication is the key factor that contributes to the effectiveness of coaching. As explained by Vealey (2005), communication is not only what someone says to another person. It is a complex process consisting in transforming an idea into a message and transmitting it to someone. The process continues with the reception of this message, its interpretation and the answer from the receiver.

The coaches have to express their ideas clearly to be understood. As far as the athletes are concerned, they have to understand these messages to be able to retransmit them to the coaches. This is what was proved right by Culver (1999), Jowett (2003) as well as Jowett and Ntoumanes (2004) who said that a positive communication favor the degree of satisfaction as well as the athletic performance. Cote and his colleagues also indicate that the athletes aged 16 and plus need much retrospective effect to improve their competitive skills and consequently the coach has to know the competences and the strengths of each athlete and to adapt to them. Vanden Auwele, Van Mele and Wylleman (1994) approved of the conclusions. According to their study of

coaches aged between 20 and 60, and athletes aged between 12 and 35, the athletes prefer a thoughtful yet severe coach. Both players and coaches stressed the fact that different contexts generally bring about different types of communication. But the studies by Salmela et his collaborators (1993) as well as Trulel and his collaborators (1996) show that the instructions and interactions are fewer during the matches where the situation does not lend itself to the training.

Transmitter and receiver

Both transmitter and receiver play the role of communicator since the latter must let the former that the message has been understood, through his/her feedback. Thus, both parties are supposed to encode and decode messages. The coach-player relationship brings to mind the dyadic and the two-way nature of communication.

Such relationship would make the players feel more comfortable at giving feedback to teachers-coaches. Comiré, Trudel and Lemyre (2011) demonstrated that the coaches – teachers show greater attachment to players compared to other parties as they see them more often, either in sports and school contexts. Coaches – teachers are usually very interested in the academic success of their players. The study of Comiré and his colleagues (2011) states that athletes engaged in such relationships have pointed out that such relationships helped them to perform better and to enjoy their sporting experience as well. This confirms Camiré (2012), which states that athletes would like that their coaches adopt a supportive attitude and recommends more and more opportunities for players and their coaches to interact and to spend time together.

The level of familiarity:

We have already explained that one cannot effectively communicate with someone he/she does not know or understand. The quality and the extent of familiarity with the trainee affect the transmission of the message. It is the same for the receiver. If he/she is sufficiently familiar, it will be easier for him to understand the message. This confirms the findings of Morency and Martineau (2012) which mention that the sort of intervention adopted by coach might not please all players. Accordingly, the coach is supposed to adapt his/her interventions depending on the different types of learners in order to facilitate knowledge transfer. Morency and Bordeleau (2012) argue precisely that players assimilate better when their coaches call them to ponder by questioning them and asking them to analyze things to be developed and to reflect.

Equipment and methods

The objective of this research is to evaluate a specific phenomenon which is the football coach/player communication and the kind of message and its repercussions to achieve victory that our Tunisian football needs urgently.

The study should answer the following questions:

*What are the key elements of a good communication according to the coach and the player?

*What is, according to the players, the kind of interaction that can help them progress on the personal and competitive level?

*What types of interaction can help their development?

*How do the coaches perceive the impacts of communication on the personal and competitive development of the players?

These questions lead to the formulation of hypotheses.

Hypotheses put forward:

Principal hypothesis: the coach and player would be confronted with reshaping in the process of communication that helped them build their respective histories and so reaching the desirable performances would be the result. This hypothesis leads to two major sub hypotheses.

*hypothesis 1: The coaches would give more importance to their speeches and overlook the retrospective effect on the players; they would prefer a good relationship based on confidence without being too close.

*Hypothesis 2: The players would find it difficult to get along with the coaches and prefer a friendly, supportive and peaceable relation.

The presentation of the questionnaire:

We used interviews, but we preferred the metric questionnaire – the attitude scale.

The questionnaire goes as follows:

*A set of propositions concerning an object or a situation.

*The interviewees are asked to express their approval or disapproval of each proposition.

*The attitude of the subject is defined by his replies.

Perspectives:

Future studies should focus on the richness of this relation, and on confirming this model to a larger population. Besides, they should be put into general use so that they can be a reference to all the coaches evolving in the Tunisian football.

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