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MOTIVATION: IMPACTS ON SPORTS COACHES'
PERFORMANCE AND WELL-BEING**Chen YuXin¹, Junainor Hassan^{2*}¹ Faculty of Applied and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia chenyuxin@studentmail.unimap.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4956-1396>² Faculty of Applied and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia junainor@unimap.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9399-4240>

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

Sports coaches operate in demanding environments where stress, communication, and motivation significantly influence coaching effectiveness and well-being. This review aims to examine the interrelationships among these factors and their impact on coaching performance and coach-athlete relationships. A thematic literature review was conducted by synthesizing empirical and conceptual studies related to stress, communication, and motivation in sports coaching. The literature was analysed using thematic synthesis, resulting in three key themes: stress, communication, and motivation. The findings indicate that excessive workload, performance expectations, and external pressures contribute to elevated stress levels, negatively affecting coaches' psychological well-being, decision-making, communication quality, and coaching effectiveness. Stress also weakens coach-athlete relationships by reducing trust, psychological safety, and the ability to discuss sensitive issues. Furthermore, stress frequently mediates the relationship between communication and motivation, diminishing intrinsic motivation and coaching engagement. Conversely, effective communication, autonomy-supportive coaching practices, and emotional intelligence were identified as important factors in enhancing motivation, resilience, and coaching performance. The review also identifies gaps in the literature, including limited longitudinal research, insufficient examination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation under stress, and the underrepresentation of diverse coaching contexts. Overall, the review highlights the need for integrated coaching frameworks that address stress, communication, and motivation to enhance coach well-being, athlete performance, and coaching effectiveness.

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Introduction

Sports coaching greatly influences athletes' performance, general growth, and well-being (Razzaq Nema, 2022; Vitale et al., 2021; Wakefield et al., 2021). In addition to providing direction for tactical and physical training, coaches are essential in building team cohesiveness and mental resilience (Falcão et al., 2015; Hook et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2021). Examining the intersections of stress, communication, and motivation in the context of sports coaching is crucial given their impact.

Stress is an inevitable part of coaching, often triggered by factors such as athlete expectations, performance pressure, and administrative requirements. According to Langdown (2023), external stresses like the COVID-19 pandemic's interruptions caused athletes and coaches to have higher stress levels and sleep problems. Similar findings were made by Shrivastava et al., (2023), who discovered that a heavy workload and a lack of acceptability in social situations increased stress levels and necessitated the use of strong coping strategies. For sports coaches, stress can compromise not only their decision-making abilities but also their capacity to maintain effective communication and motivation within teams (Collins et al., 2016; Niederer et al., 2018).

Communication, as a fundamental aspect of coaching, significantly impacts team dynamics and individual athlete performance (Choi et al., 2020; Malete et al., 2013; Rong, 2024). Effective communication promotes trust and clarity, as demonstrated by Laske et al., (2024), who found that open discussions regarding sensitive topics, such as menstrual health, improve coach-athlete relationships. Leibovitz et al., (2022) noted that insufficient communication can reduce coaching effectiveness, especially in managing post-traumatic stress and other psychological issues in athletes. Grijalbo et al., (2022) reported that coaches with high emotional intelligence manage stress and communication better, and hence, importance should be attached to improving these skills.

Motivation is the key predictor of current performance and engagement of both coaches and athletes (Chiu et al., 2014; De Muynck et al., 2021; Reynders et al., 2019). Berengüí et al., (2022) established the relationship between personal values and their effects on task orientation and team cohesion, and that coaches have a significant role in developing intrinsic motivation in athletes. Raya-Castellano et al., (2024) found that pre-game motivation aligned with athletes' psychological needs positively affects athletes' readiness and performance. Callary et al.,

(2022) identified psychosocial skills for coaching as the ability to motivate people and keep them motivated in various environments.

Looking at stress, communication, and motivation together is useful as they are all related to the effectiveness of coaching (Hurren et al., 2017; Mohamad et al., 2024; Osman Köksal et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2019). Stress frequently disrupts effective communication, subsequently impacting team cohesion and individual motivation (Hill et al., 2019). In contrast, strong communication and motivational strategies can reduce stress and make coaching more efficient (DeRue et al., 2010; Herd, 2015; Widianoro et al., 2020). González-García et al., (2022) found that democratic leadership, although not always positively related to group cohesion, promotes the growth and emotional well-being of athletes.

This paper aims to synthesize existing research on stress, communication, and motivation in sports coaching to better understand their interconnectedness. By identifying patterns, gaps, and actionable strategies, this study seeks to offer practical recommendations for improving coaching practices and, ultimately, athlete performance and well-being.

Methodology

Review Design

This study adopted a narrative literature review using a thematic synthesis approach to examine the relationships among stress, communication, and motivation in sports coaching. The review aimed to identify recurring themes, compare findings across studies, and synthesise evidence on factors influencing coaches' effectiveness and well-being.

Search Strategy

Relevant literature was identified through electronic database searches of Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Searches were conducted using combinations of keywords including sports coaching, coach stress, communication, motivation, coach well-being, leadership, and emotional intelligence. Peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were considered.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they examined stress, communication, motivation, or their interrelationships within sports coaching or closely related leadership contexts. Research investigating psychological interventions, leadership styles, or communication strategies relevant to coaching effectiveness was prioritised. Studies from related professions, such as healthcare and education, were included when their findings offered transferable insights for sports coaching. Studies focusing solely on athletes without reference to coaches, non-peer-reviewed publications, conference abstracts, editorials, and research unrelated to coaching or psychological factors were excluded.

Data Synthesis

The selected studies were analysed using thematic synthesis to identify recurring concepts and relationships across the literature (Al-Hijazeen, 2022; Cruzes et al., 2011; Devira et al., 2020;

Erbe et al., 2020; Hati Puji Lestari et al., 2019; Isbell et al., 2023). Findings were coded into three primary themes: stress, communication, and motivation, while examining their interconnections. Qualitative and quantitative evidence was compared to identify consistent patterns and contrasting findings. The synthesis also integrated evidence on emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and communication strategies to explain their contributions to coach well-being and coaching effectiveness. Finally, the findings were summarised narratively to provide an integrated understanding of how these factors influence sports coaching practice.

Stress in Sports Coaching

Workloads, Athlete Expectations, and External Pressure as Source of Stress

Coaching in sports is inherently demanding, and the workload is a primary source of stress (Butterworth et al., 2013; Didymus et al., 2021; Hardman et al., 2010). Coaches are often involved in long and tiring training sessions, administrative work and strategic thinking, which can cause mental fatigue (García-Calvo et al., 2021; Kósa et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2018). Stress levels rise when there are disruptions to training schedules, such as lockdowns, as Langdown (2023) pointed out. Gonzales et al., (2024) found that managing and adapting to diverse leadership styles and their dynamics of the team is negatively related to the stress of coaches. In addition, several studies have identified athlete expectations and external pressures as significant sources of stress in sports coaching (Light, 2017; Nuryadi et al., 2019; Putukian, 2020; Vysochina et al., 2021; Wicker et al., 2023). The presence of high-performance demands on athletes, together with pressures from stakeholders and the media, creates a stressful environment for coaches and this situation leads to increased stress and the possibility of burnout (Altfeld et al., 2018; Hassmén et al., 2019; Teatro et al., 2017).

Athlete expectations add another layer of complexity (Galluzzi et al., 2015; Gonzalez-Villalobos, 2024; Polirstok, 2015). Coaches are tasked with meeting the often-unrealistic demands of athletes and their stakeholders, including parents and management teams (Gleddie et al., 2019; Teatro et al., 2017). This pressure is particularly apparent during high-stakes competitions as found by Raya-Castellano et al., (2024) who found that motivational strategies used in pre-match talks are designed to mitigate stress-inducing situations for both coaches and players. Clarke et al., (2021) identified a knowledge gap among male coaches regarding the physiological and psychological needs of female athletes, especially concerning menstrual health, which adds to the stress of meeting athlete-specific requirements.

External pressures also significantly affect coaches (Korotov, 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2023). The need to comply with organisational mandates, maintain team performance, and handle public scrutiny creates a high-pressure environment (Cobb, 2012; Nawaz et al., 2018; Xie et al., 2021). Laske et al., (2024) underscored the challenges faced by German sports coaches in initiating conversations on sensitive topics like menstrual health, indicating how cultural and organisational norms amplify stress. For instance, negative events such as injuries or personal setbacks that occur to athletes, which are trauma related events increase the stress levels of coaches, especially those who are not trained to deal with trauma (Leibovitz & Martin, 2022).

Effects of Stress on Physical and Mental Health

Physical and mental health is greatly affected by the cumulative stress of workload, athlete expectations, and other pressures (Edwards et al., 2021; Edwards et al., 2023; Jewett et al., 2019). Coaches are often burned out, a state that results from long exposure to high levels of stress (Gencay et al., 2011; Malinauskas et al., 2010). Insufficient social support at work increases burnout, and in turn, decreases occupational commitment (Liao et al., 2022). Fatigue and hypertension are chronic physical conditions that may result from burnout, as found by Gomez et al., (2024), who also identified poor sleep-related stress in high pressure occupations and declining performance.

Stress in coaching also has negative implications for mental health including anxiety, depression and decreased emotional resilience (Abualruz et al., 2024; Mitchell et al., 2011; Urbański et al., 2024). Grijalbo et al., (2022) found that higher emotional intelligence is associated with better coping mechanisms; thus, stress management techniques might help alleviate the consequences. However, if left untreated, stress can lead to emotional numbing, which can severely limit one's ability to perform their coaching functions (Velázquez-Vega et al., 2021; Wagstaff et al., 2013). The findings of Yan et al., (2024) further support this, indicating that readiness to change can mediate the impact of stress on overall well-being, emphasising the need for proactive stress management strategies in coaching environments.

Communication in Coaching Contexts

Role of Communication in improving the Coach-Athlete Relationships

Effective communication is fundamental in establishing and maintaining strong coach-athlete relationships (Ferrar et al., 2018; Li, 2021). Effective communication is important for building up trust, enhancing motivation and facilitating performance enhancement (Choi et al., 2014; Fukuyama, 2018; Miniotaite et al., 2013). Sensitive and positive communication was emphasized by González-García et al. (2022) as significant, and among the leadership styles, democratic leadership, although does not directly contribute to cohesion, has a significant role in establishing an environment of open communication and emotional support. Similarly, Laske et al., (2024) also stressed the importance of communication on sensitive issues such as menstrual health and argued that athlete-centred communication is crucial in creating a safe psychological environment.

Psychosocial competencies are most closely related to effective communication capacity (Cox et al., 2014; Fukuyama, 2018; Jadotte et al., 2021). Callary et al., (2022) identified that pedagogical, psychological and sociocultural communication skills are necessary to create positive and significant coach-athlete interactions, particularly in strength and conditioning coaching. These skills allow the coach to be able to come up with strategies that are tailored to the needs of the individual athlete, which in the end enhances team cohesion and performance, or at least this is what Berengüi et al., (2022) found out in their study on value-driven motivation and cohesion.

Challenges in Communication Under Stress

Stressful environments often hinder the effectiveness of communication between coaches and athletes (Cosh et al., 2015; Gerdin et al., 2020; Lebrun et al., 2020). High-pressure scenarios,

such as competitions or organisational demands, can lead to communication breakdowns (Bunjak et al., 2023; Geukes et al., 2013; Ghezzi et al., 2020). Leibovitz et al., (2022) highlighted that stress compounded by trauma-related incidents, such as injuries, reduces coaches' ability to convey empathy and maintain composure. Similarly, Barden et al., (2022) found that the stress of adapting complex programs like Activate can compromise communication clarity, leading to unintended deviations from intended strategies.

External pressures, including cultural and organisational expectations, further exacerbate communication challenges (Dubey et al., 2017; Hoppes et al., 2014; Schiff et al., 2019). Clarke et al., (2021) noted that male coaches, for instance, often lack the tools and confidence to address health-specific topics with female athletes, leading to gaps in support and understanding. These findings align with Atinga et al., (2024), who identified that attitudinal and organisational factors often result in communication gaps, impeding diagnostic accuracy and effective treatment strategies in health contexts, which parallels sports coaching dynamics.

Insights from Relevant Studies on Improving Communication

Enhancing communication requires targeted interventions and the development of key competencies (Almeida et al., 2016; Mohd Hussain et al., 2023; Owoeye, 2018). Labrie et al., (2024) demonstrated that high communication competence significantly reduces burnout and improves job satisfaction, suggesting that training coaches in communication skills can yield substantial benefits. Interventions such as virtual reality simulations have also shown promise; Chou et al., (2024) reported that VR-based training significantly improves communication confidence and reduces stress, indicating potential applications in sports coaching.

Additionally, fostering emotional intelligence has been identified as a pathway to improving communication under stress (Duică et al., 2024; Nisa & Susandi, 2021; Rezvani & Khosravi, 2019). Grijalbo et al., (2022) emphasised that emotional intelligence correlates strongly with effective verbal coping strategies, enabling coaches to maintain positive interactions even in high-pressure situations. This aligns with Endrejat et al., (2021) findings that autonomy-supportive communication strategies enhance readiness and adaptability in organisational settings, offering parallels for sports coaching contexts.

Work Motivation Among Sports Coaches

Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivators in Coaching

Motivation in sports coaching arises from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Chen et al., 2024; Kovács et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2024). Intrinsic motivators include personal fulfilment and the job satisfaction that come with mentoring athletes, which are usually associated with higher levels of engagement and effectiveness (Hameed et al., 2019; ÖZSARI et al., 2023; Paradniké et al., 2015). Berengüi et al., (2022) emphasised that personal values strongly predict task orientation, highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation in fostering cohesion and performance within teams. Conversely, extrinsic motivators like financial incentives, recognition, or performance-based rewards play a significant role, particularly in high-stakes competitive environments (Ashraf et al., 2014; Burgess et al., 2021; Esteve & Schuster, 2019). Górska et al., (2024) found that extrinsic motivation partially mediates gender confidence disparities in hackathon settings, indicating its broader application in enhancing performance across fields, including coaching.

Nguyen et al., (2023) also looked at the relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and found that intrinsic goals and the need for competence are primary drivers of engagement. Similarly, Raya-Castellano et al., (2024) found that autonomy-supportive messages in pre-match talks enhance athletes' intrinsic motivation, which is also important for coaching because autonomy support increases competence and improves motivation.

Impact of Stress on Motivational Levels

Stress has a significant impact on motivation and, in most cases, disrupts the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic drivers (Hamdani et al., 2020; Mirza et al., 2021; Zohar et al., 2015). High levels of stress can decrease intrinsic motivation by exhausting physical and psychological resources (Hess et al., 2018; Queen et al., 2018; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2011). For example, Langdown (2023) found that stress during lockdowns led to increased sleep disturbances and reduced overall motivation among athletes, a phenomenon likely mirrored in coaches managing similar stressors.

Shrivastava et al., (2023) noted that peer and family support mitigate the adverse effects of stress, suggesting that external support systems are critical for maintaining motivation under pressure. Moreover, Yan et al., (2024) identified readiness to change as a mediator that reduces stress impacts on flourishing, offering insights into how adaptability can preserve motivation in high stress.

Walker et al., (2024) provided a sports-specific perspective, emphasising that autonomy, relatedness, and competency fulfilment improve motivation and well-being among pharmacists, which parallels coaching environments. These findings are similar to those of Liu et al., (2025), who found that stress negatively affects work engagement and motivation and that interventions to mitigate stressors in coaching roles are necessary.

Strategies to Enhance Motivation in Stressful Coaching Environments

To sustain motivation in stressful coaching environments, targeted strategies are needed (Powley et al., 2021; Renshaw, 2012; Teatro et al., 2017). Emotional intelligence is an important factor that enables coaches to cope with stress without compromising their motivational levels (Lee et al., 2016; Rutkowska et al., 2012; Trigueros et al., 2019). Grijalbo et al., (2022) found that there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and effective coping behaviours, which means that training programs aimed at enhancing emotional skills may help reduce stress and enhance motivation.

Structural support, such as fostering mindfulness practices, has also proven effective (Kane, 2020; Worthen et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). Feng et al., (2024) found that mindfulness enhances the positive effects of challenge stressors, enabling individuals to transform stress into a motivational force. Similarly, McCoy et al., (2024) proposed a cognitive-behavioural therapy and motivational interviewing model, which can enhance resilience and continuity in stressful environments, including coaching.

Finally, autonomy-supportive communication and tailored feedback are vital in maintaining motivation (Altendorf et al., 2021; Carpentier et al., 2013; Mabbe et al., 2018). Endrejat et al., (2021) demonstrated that such communication strategies improve readiness for change and reduce resistance, which can translate to greater motivational sustainability for coaches.

Intersections of Stress, Communication, and Motivation

How Stress Levels Impact Communication Quality

Stress significantly influences communication quality, often acting as a barrier to effective exchanges (Cheng et al., 2019; Steinmo et al., 2016). Atinga et al., (2024) identified that communication gaps during nurse handovers stem from attitudinal, organisational, and cultural factors, which are exacerbated under stress. Similarly, Liu et al., (2025) highlighted that high stress levels among professionals disrupt internal communication, leading to inefficiencies and decreased productivity. In the realm of coaching, such disruptions can manifest in reduced clarity, empathy, and adaptability, ultimately affecting team cohesion and athlete development (Gillham et al., 2015; Posner et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Tasoulis et al., (2024) emphasised how stress induced by cyber incivility diminishes communication effectiveness, highlighting the need for resilience strategies to counteract these effects. Stress-driven communication fatigue is another concern, as demonstrated by Pang et al., (2023), who showed that information and communication overload lead to exhaustion and diminished engagement. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to manage stress and maintain communication quality in high-pressure environments like sports coaching.

Stress as a Mediator/Moderator in Motivation and Communication Dynamics

Stress serves as both a mediator and a moderator in the interplay between communication and motivation (Ning et al., 2012; Wang, 2018). Yan et al., (2024) found that readiness to change moderates the impact of stress on well-being, suggesting that adaptive strategies can mitigate stress's negative influence on motivational dynamics. Similarly, Shrivastava et al., (2023) demonstrated that peer and family support enhance coping mechanisms under stress, thereby preserving motivation and improving communication quality.

Stress can also mediate the relationship between communication effectiveness and performance (Taghipour et al., 2013; Wahyuningtyasti et al., 2023). Rehan et al., (2024) revealed that leadership and communication gaps under stress conditions impede project success, with supportive environments alleviating these impacts. In coaching contexts, such mediation highlights the importance of fostering resilient communication strategies to sustain motivation amidst challenges.

Langdown (2023) provided insights from the sports domain, showing that lockdown-induced stress disrupted training and communication routines, resulting in heightened psychological strain. These disruptions likely parallel scenarios in coaching, where stress modulates the effectiveness of motivational and communicative efforts.

Case Studies and Examples from Reviewed Literature

Several case studies provide concrete examples of the stress-communication-motivation nexus. Laske et al., (2024) explored communication about menstrual health in German sports clubs, revealing that stress associated with sensitive topics inhibits open dialogue despite athletes' willingness to engage. This case underscores the critical need for stress reduction strategies to enable effective communication in sports settings.

González-García et al., (2022) examined the impact of coaching leadership on team cohesion, noting that stress from competitive pressures influences both communication styles and motivational outcomes. Coaches who adopted democratic behaviours faced challenges in maintaining effective communication, especially under high-stakes scenarios, while authoritarian styles had mixed effects on motivation and cohesion.

Lastly, Grijalbo et al., (2022) highlighted how emotional intelligence enhances verbal coping strategies among coaches, demonstrating a link between stress management and improved communication. By fostering emotional intelligence, coaches can mitigate stress's impact on motivation and maintain effective communication, even in demanding circumstances.

Discussion

The reviewed studies consistently highlight the intricate relationships among stress, communication, and motivation in various contexts, including sports coaching, education, healthcare, and organisational settings. A recurring theme is the role of stress as both a disruptor and a modulator in communication and motivation dynamics. For example, Ling et al., (2024) demonstrated that preferences, such as strong music preferences, alleviate stress and bolster career adaptability, indirectly influencing communication and motivational patterns. Similarly, stress has been shown to impair effective communication during critical interactions, such as nurse handovers, while also mediating the relationship between leadership and team cohesion in sports coaching contexts (Atinga et al., 2024; González-García et al., 2022).

Stress negative effects can be countered by motivational strategies and emotional intelligence (Castro-Sánchez et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2020; Stevens et al., 2019). Higher emotional intelligence in coaches, as discovered by Grijalbo et al., (2022), is linked with appropriate coping mechanisms that positively influence the quality of communication and motivational processes. Similar conclusions are reached by Clarke et al., (2021) and Laske et al., (2024), who maintain that specific educational programs are required to fill the knowledge gap and make conversations about sensitive subjects, including menstrual health, more conventional in the context of sports coaching and stress and motivation.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite the robust findings, several gaps remain in the understanding of stress, communication, and motivation within the realm of sports coaching. First, while studies like those by Barden et al., (2022) explore task-orientated and value-driven motivation, little is known about the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators under high-stress conditions. Additionally, while numerous studies highlight the impact of stress on communication, fewer delve into longitudinal or contextual analyses of how communication evolves under varying stress levels, especially in dynamic environments like competitive sports (Rehan et al., 2024).

Another significant gap lies in the practical application of findings. For instance, Callary et al., (2022) defined psychosocial competencies essential for strength and conditioning coaching, yet there remains limited research on how these competencies are applied in real-world coaching scenarios. Furthermore, while methodologies such as regression analysis and thematic coding provide valuable insights, there is a lack of experimental and intervention-based studies to validate and expand these findings, particularly within diverse cultural and organisational contexts (Ling et al., 2024; Raya-Castellano et al., 2024).

Practical Implications for Sports Coaching Practices

Enhance Emotional Intelligence and Coping Strategies

Previous research highlights how crucial emotional intelligence is for stress management and enhancing communication in sports coaching settings. Efficient verbal coping mechanisms are linked to increased emotional intelligence, which promotes a supportive coaching environment (Grijalbo et al., 2022). Coaches' capacity to effectively handle stress and interact with players might be greatly improved by integrating emotional intelligence training into coaching certification programs. This strategy supports the findings of González-García et al., (2022), who draw attention to the complex effects of leadership philosophies on team dynamics and athlete feelings.

Strengthen Communication and Knowledge Transfer

Key component of successful coaching is good communication. In order for coaches to be adequately knowledgeable and self-assured, it is crucial to have specific educational frameworks for talking about delicate subjects like menstruation health (Clarke et al., 2021; Laske et al., 2024). Additionally, fostering transparent and open dialogue with athletes can enhance trust and support, as seen in the findings of Leibovitz and Martin (2022), where trauma-informed communication improved coaching efficacy. Practical implementation of communication training programs, including the use of virtual reality simulations could provide immersive learning experiences for coaches to refine their communication skills (Hoek et al., 2023).

Integrate Motivation into Coaching Practices

The right motivating techniques are necessary because of the interplay between internal and extrinsic motivators in the sports environment. According to Raya-Castellano et al., (2024), pre-match conversations that include supportive signals about autonomy, competence, and relatedness can significantly improve athletes' engagement and performance. Berengüí et al., (2022) found that task orientation and team cohesiveness are positively impacted by coaching methods that align with athletes' own values. Athlete objectives and coaching strategies may be better aligned with motivation-centric frameworks such as those found in Self-Determination Theory, which would enhance overall performance.

Address Stress and Promote Well-being

The widespread effect of stress on coaches and their performance and wellbeing requires targeted interventions. Disrupted routines and the presence of heightened stress levels can affect both coaches and athletes (Langdown, 2023). Mindfulness exercises offer a means to lessen the detrimental effects of stress while improving interpersonal and group dynamics (Feng et al., 2024). By integrating mindfulness training into coaching techniques, coaches may maintain composure under duress and contribute to the development of a resilient sports culture.

Bridge Gaps in Knowledge and Practice

To optimise the implementation of injury prevention programs, Barden et al., (2022) suggest that coaches need clear guidelines and training on program adaptations, respectively. Callary et al., (2022) also emphasize the need for standardised definitions and applications of psychosocial competencies in strength and conditioning coaching. Developing comprehensive coaching curricula that integrate these elements can ensure consistency and efficacy across diverse sports settings.

Relevance of Findings to Enhancing Coach Effectiveness and Athlete Outcomes

Effective Communication and Knowledge Dissemination

Good communication is essential for improving coaching efficacy and overall athlete performance (Keatlholetswe et al., 2019). According to Clarke et al., (2021), male coaches should be educated on the menstrual cycle in order to better support the health requirements of female athletes. The necessity of having conversations on menstrual health in sports clubs and the fact that most athletes are open to have such conversations (Laske et al., 2024). These findings suggest that creating comprehensive educational frameworks and fostering open communication can bridge existing knowledge gaps and enhance coach-athlete relationships. Additionally, the need of trauma-informed coaching techniques has been emphasised. Leibovitz et al., (2022) assert that coaching effectiveness is greatly increased by knowledge of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. A more inclusive and productive coaching environment may be created by coaches by including trauma-specific knowledge into training plans and offering athletes who are struggling with emotional or psychological issues more assistance.

Leadership Styles and Team Dynamics

González-García et al., (2022) have investigated the impact of coaching leadership styles on team cohesiveness and athlete emotions. Depending on the situation, authoritarian leadership had varying effects on team cohesiveness, whereas democratic coaching techniques had variable consequences. These findings underline the importance of tailoring leadership approaches to individual athlete needs and team dynamics.

Additionally, Berengüí et al., (2022) showed that social cohesiveness and task orientation are strongly influenced by personal values, especially for younger athletes. Teams may become more cohesive and motivated if coaches match their leadership philosophies with those of their athletes. In a variety of sporting contexts, the effective use of these techniques can result in enhanced wellbeing and performance.

Motivation and Pre-Performance Strategies

Performance of athletes has been demonstrated to be greatly impacted by the incorporation of motivational techniques into coaching procedures. Pre-game discussions that include themes that enhance relatedness, competence, and autonomy result in higher levels of engagement and improved performance (Raya-Castellano et al., 2024). By adjusting these tactics and considering contextual elements like the opponents' rankings, coaches may optimise their athletes' performance during contests (Allan et al.; Braun et al., 2019; Sung et al., 2024).

Nguyen et al., (2023) also highlighted the importance of competence and intrinsic motivation in promoting long-term success. Coaches may establish settings that promote long-term athlete growth and performance by placing a high priority on creating an atmosphere that promotes intrinsic objectives (Adie et al., 2010; Tscholl, 2020).

Managing Stress and Enhancing Resilience

Effective stress management is essential for the well-being of both coaches and athletes (Butt et al., 2010; Lang, 2015; W. Liu et al., 2023; Razmaite et al., 2021). Langdown (2023) found that disruptions in training routines, particularly those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, increased stress levels among athletes, indicating a need for the integration of mindfulness practices to alleviate these effects. Grijalbo et al., (2022) found that emotional intelligence improves coaches' verbal coping strategies, fostering a more positive and resilient coaching environment.

The incorporation of mindfulness and emotional intelligence training into coaching programs provides coaches with essential tools for effectively managing stress and promoting resilience in their athletes (Iancheva & Prodanov, 2018; Longshore & Sachs, 2015; Zakrajsek et al., 2017). These practices not only enhance individual performance but also contribute to a more cohesive and supportive team culture (Ahmed & Bein, 2023; Sundaram & Mary, 2024; Yoon et al., 2010).

Limitations of Current Research and Potential Biases

Variability in Methodological Approaches

The study on stress, communication, and motivation in coaching has methodological discrepancies (Krouse et al., 2011; Rocchi et al., 2013). Research conducted by Barden et al., (2022) and González-García et al., (2022) utilised qualitative and mixed-method methodologies to investigate program adaptability and leadership styles, respectively. However, these designs often lack the generalisability that larger, quantitatively driven studies might provide. Laske et al., (2024) and Leibovitz & Martin (2022) employed surveys to examine sensitive subjects such as menstruation health conversations and trauma-informed coaching; however, they were constrained by self-report biases, which may affect data reliability. Future research should focus the triangulation of methodologies to mitigate these constraints and strengthen the robustness of findings.

Under-representation of Diverse Populations

The studies reviewed often lack representation of diverse coaching environments and athlete demographics. Clarke et al., (2021) and Laske et al., (2024) concentrated on male coaches inside German sports clubs, which may restrict the generalisability of their results to other settings, including female or non-binary coaches and athletes from under-represented areas. Furthermore, research such as that conducted by González-García et al., (2022), which investigated coaching leadership within certain sports contexts, may not sufficiently represent the experiences of players or coaches in less conventional or developing sports. Greater inclusion of diverse populations across geographical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts would strengthen the generalisability of this research.

Narrow Focus on Specific Variables

Many investigations isolate singular variables without fully considering their interplay with broader systems. For instance, studies such as Ling et al., (2024), which examined music preferences and job search stress, and Grijalbo et al., (2022), which explored emotional intelligence and coping behaviours, offer valuable insights but fail to integrate these factors into a comprehensive framework that addresses the multifaceted nature of coaching dynamics. This narrow scope limits the ability to draw connections between stress, communication, and motivation within the complex coaching environment. Future research should adopt integrative frameworks that reflect the interconnectedness of these variables.

Challenges in Longitudinal and Intervention-Based Studies

Few longitudinal research has examined how stress and motivational tactics affect coaching effectiveness and athlete performance. Langdown (2023) and Nguyen et al., (2023) examined stress and intrinsic motivation but did not offer follow-up data to determine lasting changes. Intervention-based research like Callary et al., (2022) on psychosocial competences generally struggle with implementation and scalability, limiting their practicality. Addressing these gaps requires investments in longitudinal and intervention-based methodologies that provide actionable insights over extended periods.

Potential Biases in Data Collection and Analysis

Self-report measures, utilised in most examined research, involve social desirability and memory biases. Survey-based studies like Leibovitz & Martin (2022) and Laske et al., (2024) may be biased, skewing results. Research suggests that cultural and language biases might impact the interpretation of cross-contextual study outcomes (González-García et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023). Objective data gathering methods like physiological stress assessments or third-party coaching evaluations must be used in future studies to overcome these biases.

Gaps in Addressing Organisational and Systemic Factors

Many studies focus on individual-level variables while neglecting the broader organisational or systemic factors influencing coaching performance (Strode et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2023; Theeboom et al., 2014). In project management, Rehan et al., (2024) identified essential success elements, but their application to systemic coaching frameworks is unexplored. Clarke et al., (2021) and Barden et al., (2022) identified coaching challenges without addressing institutional or policy factors. For a better understanding, research should involve multi-level analyses that combine human, organisational, and systemic characteristics.

Conclusion

Stress, communication, and motivation greatly affect sports coaches' performance and well-being. Recent research by González-García et al., (2022) and Ling et al., (2024) show how stress and coping mechanisms impact motivation and emotional reactions. Clarke et al., (2021) and Laske et al., (2024) emphasise education and open communication in addressing sensitive topics like menstrual health, while Grijalbo et al., (2022) emphasise emotional intelligence in fostering positive coping strategies. Callary et al., (2022) and Barden et al., (2022) highlight

coaches' different psychological and injury prevention competency implementation challenges and enablers.

Motivation remains central to cohesive team dynamics and individual growth. Berengüí et al., (2022) link personal values to task orientation and cohesion among youth athletes, while Raya-Castellano et al., (2024) explore the nuanced strategies coaches employ to motivate athletes in competitive settings. The evidence collectively stresses the critical need to address stressors and optimise communication to enhance coaching efficacy and well-being.

Stress, communication, and motivation must be addressed holistically rather than separately. Transparent communication and intrinsic motivation reduce stress and improve performance (Leibovitz & Martin, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023). Langdown (2023) shows how everyday disturbances can increase stress, emphasising the necessity for extensive support systems. Grijalbo et al., (2022) and González-García et al., (2022) found that combining emotional intelligence, structured communication, and adaptable leadership styles can increase resilience and motivation in coaches and athletes.

Suggestions for Future Research

Interdisciplinary study on sports coaching stress, communication, and motivation is needed. These occurrences can be better understood with psychology, sociology, and organisational behaviour insights. Emotional intelligence in verbal coping methods crosses psychological and social realms (Grijalbo et al., 2022). Similarly, Ling et al., (2024) examined how personality factors affect stress and career flexibility, emphasising the necessity to integrate personality psychology with sports science. Callary et al., (2022) suggest combining these viewpoints with sociocultural research to better understand stress and motivation across coaching contexts and player demographics. An interdisciplinary approach would enable comprehensive ways to solve sports coaches' varied issues.

Longitudinal research is needed to prove stress, communication, and motivation causal. Academic stress and motivation research, like Nguyen et al., (2023), has mostly used cross-sectional designs, restricting causal findings. According to González-García et al., (2022), coaching leadership styles have diverse impacts on team cohesiveness and athlete emotions, but their long-term consequences are unknown. Similar to Langdown (2023), COVID-19 disrupted training patterns, although the long-term impacts on motivation and performance need more study. In longitudinal studies, researchers may uncover patterns and determine how treatments affect stress management, communication, and motivation in coaching.

Sports coaches need customised approaches to manage stress and motivation. Grijalbo et al., (2022) stressed the need of emotional intelligence for good coping techniques, whereas Leibovitz & Martin (2022) stressed trauma-specific training for coaching efficacy. Clarke et al., (2021) and Laske et al., (2024) recommended normalising sensitive issues like menstruation health to minimise stress and increase communication. Raya-Castellano et al., (2024) also showed that targeted motivating messages during pre-match discussions work. These findings should be used to design mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, tailored communication training, and motivation-enhancement seminars. To guarantee efficacy and flexibility, these approaches should be carefully evaluated across multiple coaching situations.

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