



The examination of sport managers and coaches' stress levels and depressed mood at work in Turkey

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Abstract

This paper is an investigation of stress levels and depressed mood at work in sport managers and coaches. Three different questionnaires were applied to professional sport managers (n=60) and coaches (n=52) in Turkey to regard to potential sources of stress before, during and after competitions. This sample represented approximately 21% of the total professional football, basketball and volleyball clubs in Turkey. The questionnaires used are "Perceived Stress Questionnaire", "Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire" and "Depressed Mood at Work Questionnaire". Our findings indicated that: The aim of first questionnaire was to assess perceived stressful situations and results show that general stress levels of managers and coaches are under the average. When we examine the second questionnaire consisting of health, physical condition, tension caused by stress; it is seen that negative effects of these factors increase. At last; according to the depressed mood at work questionnaire which evaluates the physiological conditions related to stress; it's found out that both managers and coaches aren't satisfied with their working atmosphere and managers' unhappiness levels are higher than coaches are.

Keywords: Sport managers; coaches; stress; depressed mood

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Introduction

Stress is defined as a state in which some demand is placed on the individual, who is then required to react in some way in order to be able to cope with the situation (Jones 1990). Definitions have basically focused on two major components of stress: a) stressors in terms of environmental conditions, and b) the person's reaction to stress (Fliege et al, 2005). The general occupational stress literature indicates that job stress can contribute to a wide range of physical (e.g., sleep deprivation), psychological (e.g., depression), social (e.g., interpersonal conflict), and behavioural (e.g., alcohol and other drug abuse) health problems (Kalimo and Mejman, 1987; Levi, 1996). In their recent study of stress in sports coaches (Thelweel et al, 2008), drew upon Fletcher and colleagues definition of stress as “ an ongoing process that involves individuals transacting with their environments, making appraisals of the situations they find themselves in, and endeavouring to cope with any issues that may arise” (Fletcher and Scott, 2010; Thewell et al, 2008).

Generally, competitive and organizational stresses are between major categories of stress for sport managers and trainers. Organizational stress is defined as “work-related social psychological stress” and conceived it to be an interaction between an employee and the work environment to which he or she is exposed (Shirom, 1982). Hence, it is neither an individual nor the environment that is central to this organizational stress process, but rather a person's cognitive appraisal of the work situation they find themselves in (Cooper et al, 2001). In accordance with these assumptions, Woodman and Hardy recently generated a theoretical framework of organizational stress in sport that emphasizes the interaction between an individual and the sport organization. They defined organizational stress as “the stress that is associated primarily and directly with an individual's appraisal of the structure and functioning of the organization within he/she is (Woodman and Hardy, 2001; Hanin, 1993; Fletcher and Hanton, 2003). Competitive stress is the psychological mood which is observed in coaches and managers before, during and after competition. There are stress factors in coaching and sport management which are just obvious as the stress factors observed in athletes (Kroll, 1982). Stress symptoms which occur during the competitions are these; physiological symptoms – increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, increased sweating, increased respiration, decreased flow of blood to the skin, dry mouth, tightness in neck, upset stomach - psychological symptoms – worry, feeling over-whelmed, inability to make decision, inability to concentrate, inability to direct attention appropriately, narrowing of attention, feeling out of control-, behavioural symptoms – rapid talking, nail biting, pacing, scowling, yawning, trembling, raised voice pitch, frequent urination-(Martens, 1989). Gazes and his associates, for example, reported that the mean heart rate of football and basketball coaches to be

132 during contest compared to a resting heart rate of 68/70 per minute. Some heart rates were up to 150 during the pre-game period, and one coach had a mean heart rate of 166 throughout a contest reaching a peak of 188 per minute. The use of tranquilizers, towel chewing, and boisterous antics of coaches are common observations (Gazes et al, 1969).

Additionally, there are a growing number of studies that have examined the overall sporting experience (Cohn, 1990; Gould et al. 1993; Scanlan et al, 1991). These studies have identified a wide range of sources of stress that extend well beyond the competitive event. For example, the sources of stress identified by Scanlan et al. (1991), included worries about performing poorly, interpersonal conflict, limited financial resources, family disturbances, player transfers, contract disputes, long-distance relocation, and fear of job loss (Nobled and Gifford, 2002).

High levels of perceived stress and burnout have been reported in a variety of service professions, including social workers, physicians, psychologists, police officers, lawyers, and counsellors. However, the limited literature on burnout and stress in sport has focused on coaches and sport officials (Capel, 1986; Taylor 1992).

Research with coaches and coach-teachers has demonstrated significant relationships between the personal and situational variables and stress appraisal and between stress appraisal and dimensions of burnout. In addition, this research has demonstrated distinctions among professions (Kelley and Gill, 1993; Kelley 1994). Another research finding examining burnout in Division I athletic trainers were similar to those of other studies investigating coaches and coach-teachers (Hendrix et al. 2000). Despite the growing recognition of stress in coaches' lives, research specifically focused on its causes has been late to emerge. American NCAA Division I coaches' were interviewed and nine stressor themes were identified: interpersonal / personal sources; other people; sources that would lead to quitting; task-related sources; recruiting; time demands; being the head coach; outcome of competition; and self-imposed stress (Frey, 2007; Fletcher and Scott, 2010).

Consequently if managers and coaches manage to cope with stressors, they can easily assist their athletes in developing mental skills such as motivation, energy management, focus, stress management and self-confidence leads to increased enjoyment, improved life skills and enhanced performance (Burton and Raedeke 2008). The study of stress has been and continues to be heuristic value to the sports sciences (Hanton et al, 2005).

Material and method

Participants

60 sport managers and 52 coaches from sport clubs which, struggle in football, basketball and volleyball professional leagues in Turkey participated this study. This sample represented approximately 21% of the total professional football, basketball and volleyball clubs in Turkey. They consisted of 18 females and 94 males aged between 20 and 55 years. The branches of participants were 41,1% football, 35,7% basketball and 23,2% volleyball.

Measures

Perceived Stress Questionnaire

Levenstein et al. developed the PSQ to assess perceived stressful situations and stress reactions on a mainly cognitive and to some degree emotional level. With regard to stressors, the aim was to assess the subjective experience of their quality as stressful. The scale construction was based on classical test theory and was carried out by factor analyses. The final instrument comprises 30 items that fell on factor analysis into 4 scales (lack of joy, demand, worries, tension). Respondents rate how often an item applies to them on a 4-point scale (1: usually, 2: often, 3: sometimes, and 4: almost never) (Levenstein et al. 1993).

Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire

Negative emotions were assessed simultaneously using the Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire (House and Rizzo, 1972). The Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire assessed the subjective experience of job tension, namely Job-Induced Tension (seven items), Somatic Tension (five items), and General Fatigue and Uneasiness (five items)

Depressed Mood at Work Questionnaire

The Depressed Mood at Work assesses self-reported experience of depressed mood at work (ten items) (Quinn and Shepard 1974).

Findings

Table1. T-test results of sport managers and coaches according to their answers to the Questionnaires.

	Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P
Worries	Managers	60	2,64	,513	-2,140	,035*
	Coaches	52	2,84	,479		
Tension	Managers	60	2,58	,360	,948	,345
	Coaches	52	2,50	,563		
Lack of joy	Managers	60	2,19	,557	1,631	,106
	Coaches	52	1,99	,703		
Demands	Managers	60	2,22	,398	-,486	,627
	Coaches	52	2,26	,420		
Job-Induced Tension	Managers	60	1,56	,296	1,450	,150
	Coaches	52	1,48	,281		
Somatic Tension	Managers	60	1,70	,269	3,069	,003*
	Coaches	52	1,53	,301		
General Fatigue and Uneasiness	Managers	60	1,64	,281	,879	,387
	Coaches	52	1,59	,334		
Depressed mood at work	Managers	60	1,72	,316	-1,807	,074
	Coaches	52	1,85	,425		

*P<0,05

Examining “Perceived Stress Questionnaire”, “Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire” “Depressed Mood at Work Questionnaire” and their sub-dimensions, significant differences between managers and coaches are determined on the sub-dimensions worries and somatic tension ($p < 0,05$). It is not found significant differences between other parameters. Regarding these results it is seen that managers have worries (*afraid for the future, problems seem to piling up, feel lonely, fear not manage to attain goals, conflict, pressure from other people, frustrated, responsibilities*) and coaches are affected by somatic tension (*heartburn, insomnia, ulcer, temper*). The more mean values are high the less stress levels occur. (Table1)

Table2. Anova results of sport managers and coaches according to their branches.

	Branch	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P
Worries	Football	46	2,58	,604	3,924	,023*
	Basketball	40	2,84	,387		
	Volleyball	26	2,83	,409		
	Total	112	2,73	,506		
Tension	Football	46	2,54	,521	,012	,988
	Basketball	40	2,55	,385		
	Volleyball	26	2,55	,491		
	Total	112	2,54	,465		
Lack of joy	Football	46	2,18	,657	,720	,489
	Basketball	40	2,04	,571		
	Volleyball	26	2,03	,687		
	Total	112	2,10	,634		
Demands	Football	46	2,32	,385	2,726	,070
	Basketball	40	2,24	,446		
	Volleyball	26	2,09	,350		
	Total	112	2,24	,407		
Job-Induced Tension	Football	46	1,54	,309	,564	,570
	Basketball	40	1,54	,306		
	Volleyball	26	1,47	,230		
	Total	112	1,53	,291		
Somatic Tension	Football	46	1,65	,322	,269	,765
	Basketball	40	1,60	,305		
	Volleyball	26	1,61	,230		
	Total	112	1,62	,295		
General Fatigue and Uneasiness	Football	46	1,64	,314	,156	,855
	Basketball	40	1,61	,309		
	Volleyball	26	1,61	,297		
	Total	112	1,62	,306		
Depressed mood at work	Football	46	1,86	,409	1,936	,149
	Basketball	40	1,75	,313		
	Volleyball	26	1,70	,384		
	Total	112	1,78	,375		

*P<0,05

“Perceived Stress Questionnaire”, “Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire” “Depressed Mood at Work Questionnaire” and their sub-dimensions are examined according to their braches and it is seen that there is a significant difference in sub- dimension; worries ($p<0,05$) and no significant differences are found out in other parameters ($p>0,05$) (Table2). The more mean values are high the less stress levels occur.

Table3. Correlation values of sub-dimensions.

		Worries	Tension	Lack of joy	Demands	Job-Induced Tension	Somatic Tension	General Fatigue and Uneasiness	Depressed mood at work
Worries	r	1	,557**	-,548**	,253**	,461**	,049	,374**	-,366**
	p		,000	,000	,007	,000	,609	,000	,000
Tension	r	,557**	1	-,647**	,185	,576**	,500**	,625**	-,612**
	p	,000		,000	,051	,000	,000	,000	,000
Lack of joy	r	-,548**	-,647**	1	-,041	-,523**	-,247**	-,476**	,469**
	p	,000	,000		,670	,000	,009	,000	,000
Demands	r	,253**	,185	-,041	1	,100	-,185	,055	,032
	p	,007	,051	,670		,295	,051	,566	,735
Job-Induced Tension	r	,461**	,576**	-,523**	,100	1	,559**	,618**	-,485**
	p	,000	,000	,000	,295		,000	,000	,000
Somatic Tension	r	,049	,500**	-,247**	-,185	,559**	1	,566**	-,522**
	p	,609	,000	,009	,051	,000		,000	,000
General Fatigue and Uneasiness	r	,374**	,625**	-,476**	,055	,618**	,566**	1	-,450**
	p	,000	,000	,000	,566	,000	,000		,000
Depressed mood at work	r	-,366**	-,612**	,469**	,032	-,485**	-,522**	-,450**	1
	p	,000	,000	,000	,735	,000	,000	,000	

** . Correlation is Significant At The 0.01 Level (2-Tailed).

According to the correlation values of sub-dimensions, we found that these results;

Worries (*afraid for the future, problems seem to piling up, feel lonely, fear not manage to attain goals, conflict, pressure from other people, frustrated, responsibilities*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; worries and sub-dimensions; tension, general fatigue and uneasiness, job-induced tension, demands. A negative relation is found out between worries and lack of joy and depressed mood at work ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with sub-dimension somatic tension ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Tension (*feel tired, feel tense, mental exhausted, panic, get angry, bad temper*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; tension and sub-dimensions; worries, general fatigue and uneasiness, job-induced tension, somatic tension. A negative relation is found out between tension and lack of joy and depressed mood at work ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with sub-dimension demands ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Lack of Joy (*full of energy, job security, light-hearted, enjoy your job*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; lack of joy and depressed mood at work. A negative relation is found out between lack of joy and worries, tension, general fatigue and uneasiness, job-induced tension and somatic tension. ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with sub-dimension demands ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Demands (*have to many things to do, enough time for yourself, under pressure from competition, in a hurry, feel that too many demands are being made on you*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; demands and sub-dimension; worries. ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with other sub-dimensions. ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Job-Induced Tension (*job tends to directly affect health, work under a great deal of tension, feel fidgety or nervous as a result of job, If I had a different job, my health would probably improve, problems associated with job keep awake at night, feel nervous before attending meetings in the clubs, I often take my job home*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; job-induced tension and sub-dimensions; worries, tension, general fatigue and uneasiness, somatic tension. A negative relation is found out between job-induced tension and lack of joy and depressed mood at work. ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with sub-dimension demands ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Somatic Tension (*heartburn, insomnia, ulcer, temper*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; somatic tension and sub-dimensions; tension, job-induced tension, general fatigue and uneasiness. A negative relation is found out between somatic tension and lack of joy and depressed mood at work. ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with other sub-dimensions ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

General Fatigue and Uneasiness (*have not very good health, wake up with stiffness or aching in joints or muscle, seem to tire quickly*): A positive relation is seen between sub-dimension; general fatigue and uneasiness and sub-dimensions; worries, tension, job-induced tension, somatic tension. A negative relation is found out between general fatigue and uneasiness and lack of joy and depressed mood at work. ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with sub-dimension demands ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Depressed Mood at Work (*feel downhearted and blue, get tired for no reason, find him/herself restless and can't keep still, he/she finds it easy to do the things he/she used to do, feel hopeful about the future, find it easy to make decisions, more irritable than usual, he/she feels that he/she is useful and needed*): A positive relation is seen between depressed mood at work and lack of joy. A negative relation is found out between depressed mood at work and sub-dimensions; general fatigue and uneasiness, worries, tension, job-induced tension and somatic tension ($p < 0,01$). There is no relation with sub-dimension demands ($p > 0,05$). (Table3)

Table4. LSD results according to worries comparison between braches.

Dependent Variable	(I) Branch	(J) Branch	Mean (I-J)	Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Worries	Football	Basketball	-,269*		,107	,013*
		Volleyball	-,259*		,121	,034*
	Basketball	Football	,269*		,107	,013*
		Volleyball	,009		,124	,940
	Volleyball	Football	,259*		,121	,034*
		Basketball	-,009		,124	,940

According to LSD test made to find out which group is the source of difference in worries dimension, significant differences occurred between branch of football and branches of basketball and volleyball. ($p < 0,05$). As a result of these values, it is seen that people whose branch are football have less worries (Table4).

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the stressors experienced by sports coaches and management.

Coaches' reported feelings of isolation and lack of support are particularly important findings given that coaches also described a number of stressors related to the pressure and expectations they experienced in their roles. Specifically, coaches reported placing a great deal of pressure upon them, and that this pressure was a stressor for them (Olusoga nad Butt, 1974).

Athletic trainers who scored lower on hardiness and social support and higher on athletic training issues tended to have higher levels of perceived stress. Furthermore, higher perceived stress scores were related to higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and lower levels of personal accomplishment (Amy et al. 2000). Other studies examining coaches and coach-teachers, found of stress and burnout scored at the similar levels (Kelley and Gill, 1993; Vealey et al. 1992).

Indeed, a lack of cohesion within the sporting organization emerged as a specific stressor for coaches. The lack of trust, lack of cohesion, and atmosphere of tension in the organization reported by elite coaches certainly suggests that lines of communication within sport organizations might be improved. Along these lines, five of the 12 coaches interviewed indicated that they felt some stress as the result of being in an isolated role and it could be that this lack of cohesion within

the team is a contributing factor to coaches' feelings of isolation (Olusoga nad Butt, 1974). Although Bowes and Jones suggested that coach education programs should present coaching as a "complex, interactive process", the content of coach education programs is often directed towards promoting athletic achievement. Thus, it is possible that helping coaches develop the communication skills that will enable them to work as part of a wider organizational team would also seem prudent (Bowes and Jones, 2006).

Conclusion

This study has provided a detailed insight into the sources of stress that were experienced by a cross-section of professional sport manager and coaches. When we examine applied questionnaires and their sub-dimensions, first questionnaire - Perceived Stress Questionnaire (lack of joy, demand, worries, tension)- shows us the stress levels of managers and coaches are a little under the average. The results also show that managers and coaches have some physical illnesses and negative emotions (tiredness, health problems, tension) according to the results of second questionnaire, Anxiety-Stress Questionnaire and its sub-dimensions (Job-Induced Tension, Somatic Tension and General Fatigue and Uneasiness). Regarding the depressed mood at work it is seen that both groups aren't pleased enough about their job.

For many people, stress is daily reality. Some events such as important sport competitions can cause stress, some physical and psychological problems or help motivate us to perform at our best. For this reason managers and coaches have to know stress management and sport psychology. Learning how to manage stress will make them more able to handle challenging situations and significant events in their life. And also sport psychology provides information that helps them build mental toughness and achieve excellence in sport and in life.

Consequently the present study is an attempt to investigate the stress levels of managers and trainers, who have little attention from researchers. To know coping strategies for stress play an important part in trainers and managers' preparation for competition.

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