



The light quartet: Positive personality traits and approaches to coping in sport coaches



Sylvain Laborde ^{a, b, *}, Félix Guillén ^c, Matthew Watson ^a, Mark S. Allen ^d

^a German Sport University Cologne, Germany

^b Normandie Université Caen, France

^c University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

^d University of Wollongong, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 April 2017

Received in revised form

17 June 2017

Accepted 19 June 2017

Available online 20 June 2017

Keywords:

Hope

Optimism

Perseverance

Resilience

Positive psychology

ABSTRACT

Objectives: Research on coping in sport has focused predominantly on athletes. However, coping is also relevant to coaches who are known to experience much competitive stress. The aim of this investigation was to examine the association between positive personality traits (the light quartet: hope, optimism, perseverance, and resilience) and coping strategies adopted by sport coaches.

Design: Cross-sectional observational study.

Method: In total, 2135 Spanish individual and team sport coaches (657 women, 1478 men, mean age = 31.10 years, range = 18–74 years), working in 41 different sports, completed a battery of questionnaires assessing approaches to coping, hope, optimism, perseverance, resilience, and various demographic questions.

Results: The data showed that facets of the light quartet were associated with the coping strategies adopted by coaches. Perseverance and resilience were most important for emotional calming and active planning, optimism was most important for mental withdrawal and turning to religion, hope and perseverance were most important for seeking social support, and optimism and perseverance were most important for taking behavioral risks. Some associations between personality and coping were moderated by coach sex and type of sport coached (team vs. individual).

Conclusions: The findings of this study provide evidence that positive personality traits are important for coping among sport coaches. Further research using prospective designs and natural experimental methods is encouraged.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Stress is known to affect those involved in competitive sport including athletes, parents, coaches, support staff, officials and sport fans (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). Much is known about the coping strategies adopted by athletes in competitive situations and the factors that contribute to those coping strategies (Nicholls, Taylor, Carroll, & Perry, 2016). In contrast, relatively little is understood about the factors that might contribute to the coping strategies adopted by coaches. Personality is one factor that has been identified as important for coping (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). In sport settings, research on the big five trait dimensions

(openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) has found that personality is important for athlete coping strategies (Allen, Greenlees, & Jones, 2011; Kaiseler, Polman, & Nicholls, 2012). Recently, it has been recommended that researchers move beyond the big five trait conceptualization and explore negative traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (labelled ‘the dark triad’; see Paulhus & Williams, 2002) or positive traits such as hope, optimism, perseverance and resilience (that we term here ‘the light quartet’), as these traits might have a greater role in sport-related behavior (Laborde & Allen, 2016; Roberts & Woodman, 2015, 2017). These positive traits are also important for well-being and flourishing and therefore the current research falls within the broad domain of positive psychology (see Gable & Haidt, 2005). The aim of this study was to investigate whether facets of the light quartet relate to the coping strategies used by sport coaches.

* Corresponding author. DSHS (Deutsche Sporthochschule), Institute of Psychology, Am. Sportpark Müngersdorf 6, 50933 Cologne, Germany.

E-mail address: s.laborde@dshs-koeln.de (S. Laborde).

Coaches have been found to adopt a variety of coping strategies for dealing with stressors associated with coaching in sport (Olusoga, Butt, Maynard, & Hays, 2010). Various conceptualizations of coping have been used in research (see e.g., Nicholls et al., 2016) and coping strategies in sport are thought to be best categorized into three main dimensions (Nicholls et al., 2016): *mastery* (controlling the situation and eliminating the stressor), *internal regulation* (managing internal stress responses), and *goal withdrawal* (ceasing efforts toward goal attainment). The current study focuses on six components of coping that can be placed within this classification: 1) emotional calming, 2) active planning/cognitive restructuring, 3) mental withdrawal, 4) behavioral risk, 5) seeking social support, 6) turning to religion (Kim, Duda, Tomaas, & Balaguer, 2003). The dimensions of active planning/cognitive restructuring, seeking social support, and behavioral risk reflect mastery coping strategies; emotional calming reflects internal regulation coping; and mental withdrawal and turning to religion reflect goal withdrawal coping strategies (Nicholls et al., 2016). The effectiveness of a particular coping strategy ultimately depends on the specific stressor and context. However, in most cases mastery and internal regulation strategies represent more adaptive coping, whereas goal withdrawal represents more maladaptive coping (Nicholls et al., 2016).

The investigation of coping in sport coaches has received little empirical attention. Often coaches are sampled as a means of understanding athlete coping strategies, either regarding the coaches role in influencing the athlete coping process (Nicholls & Perry, 2016) or being asked to rate the coping abilities of the athlete (Smith & Christensen, 1995). Much of the research on coping in coaches has been qualitative and exploratory in nature (Day, Bond, & Smith, 2013; Olusoga, Butt, Hays, & Maynard, 2009; Olusoga, Maynard, Hays, & Butt, 2012; Olusoga et al., 2010). This research highlights important differences between athletes and coaches regarding the various stressors encountered and coping strategies utilized. This suggests that independent research on sports coaches is necessary and that findings from athletes cannot be assumed to transfer directly to coaches. One of the few quantitative studies on coping in coaches found that coaches tend to use strategies that directly tackle the stressor (mastery coping strategies) in favor of other types of coping (Valadez Jimenez, Flores Galaz, de los Fayos Ruiz, Solís Briceño, & Reynaga Estrada, 2016). However, as far as we are aware, research has not explored individual difference factors that might contribute to the coping strategies adopted by coaches.

The light quartet (hope, optimism, resilience, and perseverance) was chosen as a framework of positive personality based on research demonstrating the importance of these traits in athletic samples (Laborde, Guillen, & Mosley, 2016; Laborde, Guillen, Dosseville, & Allen, 2015). Hope reflects an expectation of success relative to one's goals (Snyder et al., 1991) and has been consistently found to relate to favorable outcomes including positive emotions, goal-related thinking, perceived capabilities, and successful outcomes (see Snyder, 2002). In sport settings, hope has been found to predict athletic outcomes and psychological states such as self-esteem, confidence, burnout, and mood (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997; Gustafsson, Hassmén, & Podlog, 2010; Gustafsson, Skoog, Podlog, Lundqvist, & Wagnsson, 2013; Woodman et al., 2009). Hope has also been identified as a common trait amongst Olympic gold medalists (Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002). As far as we are aware, dispositional hope has not been explored in sport coaches, but hope theory predicts a positive association between hope and a greater use of adaptive coping strategies (Snyder, 2002).

Optimism is defined as a generalized expectancy that good things will happen (Scheier & Carver, 1985) and has been

consistently found to positively relate to approach-based coping strategies (aiming to eliminate, reduce, or manage stressors) and negatively relate to avoidance-based coping strategies (seeking to ignore, avoid, or withdraw from stressors) (Solberg Nes & Segerstrom, 2006). In sport settings, optimism has been found to relate to adaptive coping strategies among athletes (Gaudreau & Blondin, 2004; Nicholls, Polman, Levy, & Backhouse, 2008) and overall better athletic performance (Gordon, 2008). The role of optimism in sport coaches has not been directly explored (as far as we are aware), but given the consistent associations observed across performance domains (for a meta-analysis, see Solberg Nes & Segerstrom, 2006), dispositional optimism can be predicted to have a positive association with adaptive coping strategies.

Perseverance refers to an eagerness to work hard despite fatigue or frustration (Cloninger, Praybeck, Svrakic, & Wetzel, 1994) and is described as being a critical factor for success among gold medal winning athletes (Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002), elite modern pentathletes (Bertollo, Saltarelli, & Robazza, 2009), expert cricket batsmen (Weissensteiner, Abernethy, Farrow, & Gross, 2011), and ultramarathon runners (Jaeschke, Sachs, & Dieffenbach, 2016). Perseverance has recently been incorporated into conceptualizations of 'grit' – defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). In sport settings, trait perseverance ('grittier players') has been found to have a positive association with athletic performance (Larkin, O'Connor, & Williams, 2016; Moles, Auerbach, & Petrie, 2017). Perseverance as a disposition has not been explored in relation to coping responses of athletes or coaches. However, based on standard conceptualizations (see Duckworth et al., 2007), trait perseverance can be predicted to relate to more mastery focused coping strategies.

Psychological resilience is conceptualized as the interactive influence of psychological characteristics within the context of the stress process (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013) and reflects the ability to maintain stable levels of optimal physical and mental functioning. Resilience is a key factor underlying the ability to cope with setbacks in sport (Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012). Some research is available that has explored the role of resilience in coping in sport. Sport performers with higher levels of resilience have been found to use more mastery coping strategies and fewer goal withdrawal coping strategies (Nicholls, Morley, & Perry, 2016; Secades et al., 2016). Resilience has also been identified as an important factor affecting the performance of sport coaches (Weinberg, Butt, & Culp, 2011). How resilience relates to coaches' coping has not been explored. Based on findings from athlete samples, it can be predicted that greater resilience will relate to more mastery strategies and fewer goal withdrawal strategies.

To summarize, little is known about the factors associated with coping strategies adopted by sport coaches. The current investigation explores whether facets of the light quartet (hope, optimism, perseverance and resilience) relate to the coping strategies used by coaches. Based on the literature reviewed, we hypothesized that higher scores on the light quartet (higher levels of hope, optimism, perseverance and resilience) would have a positive association with mastery coping strategies (active planning/cognitive restructuring, seeking social support, behavioral risk) and internal regulation strategies (emotional calming), and a negative association with goal withdrawal strategies (mental withdrawal, turning to religion). Because coping responses tend to differ between subsamples, such as between men and women (see Nicholls & Polman, 2007), we also explore whether associations between the light quartet and coping strategies are moderated by demographic factors (age, sex, type of sport, coaching experience). Moderator analyses were exploratory and no specific hypotheses were generated.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5036472>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5036472>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)