

The Appraisal of the Performance of Iran Volleyball National Team Coaches by 360° Feedback

*Amin Dehghan Ghahfarokhi, Mahmood Goodarzi, Madjid Jalali Farahani and
Amir Hosein Monazami*

University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Abstract: Coaches have an important role in team success. So, it is necessary to use effective systems to select, attract, maintain, evaluate and develop coaches. 360 degree feedback is one of the recent evaluation systems that can provide more realistic and accurate evaluation of individuals' performance by gathering approaches of different groups that have relations with those individuals. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the performance of volleyball national team coaches using 360 degree feedback. Statistical population of this study included all male and female athletes, (head) coaches and supervisors of volleyball national team in different age levels. For collecting data, "performance evaluation criteria for national team coaches questionnaire" was used that was provided by Shafiei (2009). In this questionnaire, 40 criteria in 4 total subscales including managerial skills, technical skills, social skills and personality characters were designed. Results showed that there was no significant difference between athletes, peer coaches, supervisors and self-appraisal evaluation results in managerial, technical and social and personality skills. Also, out of 40 investigated skills, there was a significant difference among groups in 19 skills. Finally, necessary feedbacks were provided to optimize coaches' behavior through finding differences in coaches' perspectives and recognizing their weaknesses and strengths.

Key words: Performance evaluation % 360 degree feedback % Self-evaluation % Coach % Volleyball

INTRODUCTION

As sports play a dramatic role in economic, social, cultural and even political development of countries, the development of sports has turned into one of the strategic priorities for planners around the world [1]. One of the important issues for sport planners is to win international sport games; this goal will be achieved by investing in national teams. Also, sport federations are responsible for determining policies and strategies in the related sport fields. One of the goals of sport federations like any other organization is to reach the highest level of efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency which can be achieved through occupying international places. Effectiveness of an organization depends on many different factors; no doubt one is human resources. In sport federations, one of the human resources which play a crucial role in organizational success is a sport coach especially a national team coach. The decisions of these coaches about the championship will affect the performance of a

federation. Therefore, the selection, absorption, assessment and development of national team coaches (through an assessment system) naturally enjoy an important level and it is often observed that they are hired, fired or assessed by media chaos, personal relationships or won-loss. Many factors can be involved in win and loss which are out of coaches' control (such as players' performance level, injury, referees' mistakes...) [2]. Therefore, it is essential to apply a valid performance appraisal system. 360° feedback is a modern assessment tool in developed organizations and gathers beneficiaries' viewpoints so that it can present more accurate and natural performance of the subjects under assessment. 360° feedback is a group assessment tool: a list of competencies is made and those who are directly or indirectly related to the organization (superiors, colleagues, staff and customers) are asked to assess the subjects. Those under assessment participate in this process as well (self-assessment). The results will be gathered and reported to the subjects as a feedback [3].

Performance appraisal systems go back to recent decades and are divided into two groups (traditional and modern systems). The traditional perspective (imperative and retrospective) aims at the judgment and retention of the subject's performance and controls him/her. The modern perspective aims to educate and develop the capacities of those subjects under assessment, to enhance and optimize people and their performance and the organizations, to provide consulting services, beneficiaries' public participation, motivation and responsibility to improve the quality and to optimize performance and mission. The main core of this perspective is to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of an organization. It stresses the modern needs and systematically evaluates the performance by modern techniques and tools. One of these modern tools is 360° feedback or multi-source assessment. The difference between traditional assessment and 360° feedback is that the former has only one source to assess while the latter has multiple sources; therefore, 360° feedback is more comprehensive than the traditional assessment [4]. McFarland (2001) in his research on 360° feedback for school sport coaches compared the traditional assessment and 360° perspective [5].

The domain of the performance measured can be the macro level of an organization, a unit, a process and staff. If the level of performance appraisal includes only people as it is common in human resource management nowadays, staff members will be assessed by different criteria in organizations. There are many different criteria and methods to assess coaches' performance. Some researches paid attention to win-loss aspects to assess coaches' performance [6]. But as there are many effective and uncontrollable factors such as players' performance, star players, injury, referees' mistakes, environment, chance..., it is not definitely right to assess coaches in this way [2, 7].

A substitution is that some properties and competencies are considered with an emphasis on coaching philosophy (win-oriented or athlete-oriented) and coaches' competencies and abilities are assessed by them. If we consider knowledge, skill, behavior and values as the performance of a person in an organization, "competency evaluation" is in fact the process of assessing the above mentioned factors and determining strengths and weaknesses of staff members for change and development. Fortunately, there are many researches on criteria to assess coaches

at different levels and each research has taken specific criteria and competencies into consideration based on their aim [2, 8, 9, 10].

Bradley (2001) states one important decision is that who assesses the coaches. Existing processes of performance appraisal suggest using different groups when assessing. The related literature, research results and analysis show that self-assessment is an important part of each assessment process. Also, athletes and counter coaches and managers can play an important role in increasing coaches' knowledge about the fields related to them. He assessed New Zealand coaches based on those factors which seemed important when assessing sport coaches. Players, team captains, counter coaches, coach assistants, coach committee, the coaches themselves (self-appraisal) and others participated in the assessment process. Basic skills, laws and regulations, coaches' personality traits, coaching abilities, being a pattern, education, results and relationships were the factors under assessment [11].

Lemyre *et al.*, (2007) divided coaches' way of learning into three general groups: a) to participate in formal educational courses b) to gain experience as a player, an assistant coach or instructor c) interaction with others (like interaction with an assistant coach, team manager, league supervisor, players, parents, friends and competing coaches). They stated that coaches firstly learn to coach by using previous experiences and participating in educational courses, but their new learning results from interactions; therefore, 360° feedback can prepare the ground for these interactions and new learning by considering various beneficiaries in the assessment process [12].

Cattau (2007) in his research on coaches' performance appraisal provided a multi-source list which suggested four groups as coach assessment sources. He considered principles for objective assessment in each group:

For Athletes:

- C Assessment of coaching skills.
- C Assessment of structure and content of training and match.
- C Interaction between coaches and athletes.
- C Athletes' satisfaction level.

For Counterparts:

- C Being aware of matching techniques and strategies.
- C The ability to transfer techniques and strategies to athletes.
- C Organizing training and managing matches.
- C Relationships with counterparts.

For Sport Managers:

- C Evaluation of work volume.
- C Working for the institute.
- C Evaluation of agreed criteria for job performance.

For Coaches:

- C Self-assessment of success in training and match.
- C Professional development and constant education.
- C Ability of professional recognition.
- C Improved goals and strategies [13].

Most researches on coach assessment investigated coaches' performance from the viewpoints of one or two items mentioned above. For example, Vute (2005) investigated self-perception of volleyball national team coaches of Slovenian disabled individuals. He investigated 26 properties important for a coach [14]. Santos *et al.*, (2010) in their research "coaches' perception of their professional competencies" gathered the results of self-assessment of 343 Portuguese coaches of different sport fields in a 5-point Likert scale. Competencies related to annual planning (3.58), competencies related to the recognition of training and match chances (4.07) and competencies related to personal and coaching education (3.69) were investigated; they were obtained by factor analysis of 22 factors and their evaluation scores were specified [15].

Myers (2006) and Philips and Jubenville (2009) investigated coaches' competencies from athletes' viewpoints only while Kavussanu *et al.*, (2008) investigated these competencies from the viewpoints of the coaches themselves and athletes. Effectiveness of motivation, effectiveness of strategy, effectiveness of techniques and effectiveness of personality were the four domains of effectiveness under evaluation. The results showed that coaches evaluated their competencies better than athletes and the reason is that people tend to evaluate themselves better than others [16-18].

Coaches have an important place in sport fields. They play a vital role (by their knowledge, experience and information) in sending the athletes to a winning place. Educating coaches is as important as educating athletes. The importance of coaches' role in educating and instructing athletes makes it necessary to recognize their condition and abilities and finally to develop them. The development of coaches' abilities is not possible without a performance supervision and evaluation system. 360° feedback is one modern evaluation system which is better than other evaluation methods. This research used this feedback to evaluate coaches.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research was a descriptive field research. The statistical population (n=147) consisted of all athletes, (head) coaches and supervisors and managers of Iran volleyball national teams (different age levels: adolescents, the youth and adults; males and females). The sample equaled the population and 108 questionnaires were received. The viewpoints of at least one superior manager, one colleague coach, four athletes as well as the coach himself were used to evaluate each coach. Shafiei's (2009) [10] questionnaire "criteria of national team coaches' performance" was used to collect the data; it consisted of 40 criteria of coach assessment in four main domains of technical skills, management skills, personality traits and social traits (statements) and in a 5-point Likert scale. The subjects were requested to assess the coaches using these domains (Table 1).

The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated by Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.92$). The reliability of each subscale is shown in Table 1 as well.

As the data were not parametric, Kruskal-Wallis test (non-parametric ANOVA) was used to inferentially analyze the data. Mann Whitney U test was used to compare groups to see differences.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Domains	No. of questions	Alpha coefficient
Management skills	10	0.76
Technical skills	12	0.74
Social traits	9	0.78
Personality traits	9	0.83
Scale of coaches' performance appraisal	40	0.92

RESULTS

You may see below coaches' management skills from groups' viewpoints (Table 2).

The above table shows that generally there was no significant difference in coaches' management skills among the viewpoints of athletes, colleagues, managers and the coaches themselves. But there was a significant difference in seven management items (the ability to maintain discipline, the evaluation of himself and athletes,

to use personal power, the evaluation of athletes' satisfaction, to use proper punishment and reward systems, decision-making power, to pay attention to athletes' specific needs) among the groups. To see this significant difference, the groups were compared by U Mann Whitney test.

Table 3 shows that generally there was no significant difference in coaches' technical skills among the viewpoints of athletes, colleagues, managers and the coaches themselves. But if each item is investigated

Table 2: The results of coaches' management skills from groups' viewpoints

Management skills	Mean	Chi ²	Sig.	U Mann Whitney
The ability to maintain discipline in a sport environment	4.59	12.20	0.00*	4, 2, 1<3
To use the most effective leadership techniques	4.20	5.43	0.14	-
The evaluation of himself and athletes	4	11.68	0.00*	3, 1<4, 2
To control and supervise sport events	4.65	3.62	0.30	-
To use personal power	4.43	15.93	0.00*	3, 2, 1<4
The evaluation of athletes' satisfaction	3.88	8.53	0.03*	4, 2, 1<2
To identify athletes' needs and expectations	4.24	2.46	0.48	-
To use proper punishment and reward systems	3.91	8.86	0.03*	2, 1<3
Decision-making power	4	9.40	0.02*	3<4, 2, 1
To pay attention to athletes' specific needs	3.86	8.06	0.04*	3<2, 1
Total management skills	4.18	5.53	0.13	-

*1= athletes 2=counter coaches 3=supervisors 4=self-appraisal

Table 3: The results of coaches' technical skills from groups' viewpoints

Technical skills	Mean	Chi ²	Sig.	U Mann Whitney
To be aware of different volleyball techniques and tactics	4.46	14.44	0.00*	4, 2, 1<3
Coaching capability in various levels	3.95	6.43	0.09	-
Familiarity with special sport sciences	4.01	6.06	0.10	-
The congruence between coaching certificate and coaching level	4.69	5.01	0.17	-
The ability to apply the knowledge in practice	4.55	0.98	0.80	-
Familiarity with laws and regulations	4.42	2.65	0.44	-
Familiarity with first aid and sport injuries	3.92	9.38	0.02*	3<4, 2, 1
Familiarity with banned and allowable supplements	3.92	3.16	0.36	-
Proper designs of short and long term exercises	4.10	4.43	0.21	-
Proper fitness and skills	3.94	6.99	0.07	-
Relative fluency in a foreign language	4.02	4.21	0.24	-
Up-to-date knowledge of volleyball	4.51	0.69	0.87	-
Total technical skills	4.22	0.69	0.87	-

Table 4: The results of coaches' social traits from groups' viewpoints

Social traits	Mean	Chi ²	Sig.	U Mann Whitney
To respect athletes	4.12	10.32	0.01*	3<4; 1<4, 2
The ability to teach and transfer concepts	4.54	3.02	0.38	-
To respond to sport societies and media	4.18	7.73	0.052	-
The ability to work with others and to stand them	4.12	2.36	0.50	-
The ability to motivate athletes	4.26	2.80	0.42	-
Not to use insulting words	3.98	4.26	0.02*	3, 2, 1<4
Punctuality	4.18	11.02	0.01*	3<4; 1<2
Being respected	4.29	1.08	0.78	-
To have international reputation	3.32	24.07	0.00*	4<3, 2, 1
Total social traits	4.11	1.70	0.61	-

Table 5: The results of coaches' personality traits from groups' viewpoints

Personality traits	Mean	Chi ²	Sig.	U Mann Whitney
Self-confidence	4.55	3.20	0.36	-
Creativity and innovation	4.33	7.89	0.04*	1<4
Perseverance	4.57	16.80	0.00*	3, 2, 1<4
To be tough on athletes	4.54	10.98	0.01*	4, 2, 1<3
Secrecy	4.25	8.82	0.03*	3, 2, 1<4
Personal interest in coaching	4.58	11.00	0.01*	3, 2, 1<4
Stress control	4.19	2.98	0.39	-
Appearance attraction	4.47	25.30	0.00*	4, 2, 1<3
Optimism	4.40	2.31	0.50	-
Total personality traits	4.43	1.70	0.61	-

separately, there will be a significant difference in two items (to be aware of different volleyball techniques and tactics, familiarity with first aid and sport injuries) among the groups.

Table 4 shows that generally there was no significant difference in coaches' social traits among the viewpoints of athletes, colleagues, managers and the coaches themselves. But if each item is investigated separately, there will be a significant difference in four items (to respect athletes, not to use insulting words, punctuality, to have international reputation) among the groups.

Table 5 shows that generally there was no significant difference in coaches' personality traits among the viewpoints of athletes, colleagues, managers and the coaches themselves. But if each item is investigated separately, there will be a significant difference in six items (creativity and innovation, perseverance, to be tough on athletes, secrecy, personal interest in coaching, appearance attraction) among the groups.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study assessed the coaches' performance by 360° feedback. Many researches emphasized 360° feedback in sport and coaching. For example, McFarland (2001) compared 360° feedback and traditional perspectives of performance appraisal and emphasized to use it in sports and finally provided guides to use this tool in sports mentioning its advantages and disadvantages. Puschack (2006) used many sources of 360° feedback and emphasized it as a reliable and valid tool which can be used to investigate coaches' emotional competencies [3]. Gucciardi and Gordon (2009) used it as an inferring technique for coaches and athletes as it covers a great domain of information and sources of performance [19].

The present study showed valuable findings as there was no significant difference in management skills, technical skills, social traits and personality traits among

athletes, colleagues, supervisors and the coaches themselves in volleyball national teams. But when the items were investigated separately, there was a significant difference in 19 items (out of 40 items) among the groups; the reason may be attributed to the fact that the nature of each item is totally different. For example, about decision-making power, coaches assessed it more precisely than managers and about the ability to maintain discipline, managers assessed it more precisely than coaches. When these two findings are added, it is observed that the general viewpoint of the two groups is similar. Therefore, 360° feedback general assessment criteria cannot identify the difference in the viewpoints of different groups and as a result cannot provide proper feedbacks. The more detailed the assessment criteria, the more useful the results.

The questions in the questionnaire were investigated separately and a significant difference was observed in 17 items between the scores of other-appraisal and those of self-appraisal. When there was no significant difference between the scores of other-appraisal and those of self-appraisal, it was concluded that coaches, athletes, counterparts and supervisors are familiar with coaching strengths and weaknesses. There was a significant difference between the scores of other-appraisal and those of self-appraisal in these items: the ability to maintain discipline, to use personal power, decision-making power, to be aware of different volleyball techniques and tactics, to have an international reputation, creativity and innovation. Although the different knowledge levels of coaches from other groups and different athletes' levels of skills and learning can justify above differences, the coaches should consider these differences in their coaching programs.

The ability to maintain discipline (mean=4.59=92%) was assessed at the highest level. This ability is defined as the ability to maintain discipline in the team by organizing training place and environment when training. The coaches of volleyball national team could maintain

high discipline by maintaining connection among the activities, those who performed these activities and those physical factors which were used to achieve goals (organization) and by having a predetermined program for training. Also, supervisors evaluated this item more precisely than others and the reason may be that supervisors are more familiar with the difficulties of coaching.

There was a difference between the coaches themselves and other groups in using personal power (charisma) to influence athletes as the coaches had evaluated themselves more precisely than other groups. This result was in line with Haselwood (2005); he stated that coaches knew themselves as friendly and sociable people [20]. Laios (2003) states that the personal power of a coach is the power derived from internal sources such as his special knowledge or his personality characteristics. This type of power is the main tool of the leader. Athletes, assistants, personnel and even spectators follow a coach because of respect, admiration and belief in his/her ideas and knowledge. Expert power and referent power are two types of personal power. In Laios (2003) research, coaches noted expert power and referent power as the main power sources to affect individual and team efficiency [21]. Therefore, coaches can develop efficiency if they use democratic leadership styles, improve interpersonal and social skills, altruism and help solve athletes' problems... although personal power is somehow internal. Personal power was assessed as high (mean=4.42=88%).

Decision-making power was assessed as high (mean=4=80%). Of course, there are differences between the viewpoints of managers with athletes and counter coaches. This difference can be attributed to the fact that athletes and counter coaches evaluated the decisions from a tactical viewpoint and managers from an organizational viewpoint and the coaches themselves from both viewpoints. This finding was not in line with Kavussanu (2008) [18]; in his research, one competency was vital decisions during the match and the coaches evaluated themselves significantly better than the athletes.

About the familiarity with volleyball techniques and tactics, there was a difference between managers and other groups as managers scored lower. The reason is that they may be more result-oriented with higher expectations; also they may be less involved in sports and as a result they are not very familiar with techniques and tactics. Although managers assessed this item at a good level, other groups assessed it as excellent (it cannot be better!). Therefore, this item is one of volleyball coaches' strengths.

The coaches (mean=3.32) were evaluated to be at a weak level regarding their international reputation. This item was their greatest weakness among 40 items under assessment. Although personal achievements and international places can compensate for this weakness, policies and support of volleyball federation can play a vital role in eliminating it.

Self-confidence, perseverance, personal interest in coaching and appearance attraction were four items in which the coaches were evaluated at their highest level. The main condition for coaching is to be interested in coaching and to feel responsible. If one accepts the responsibility for leading a team, but he does not feel the responsibility and commitment, he cannot succeed. Internal interest in coaching and enthusiasm for athletes' education are the main factors individuals should pay attention to when they choose to be a coach. Also, a professional appearance is an essential principle not only in coaching but also in every profession.

The coaches were evaluated at a high level regarding creativity and innovation. In Vute (2005) research on national team coaches in volleyball for the disabled in Slavonia, this item was at a moderate level (72%). If coaches innovate and use new methods when designing and performing team tactics, the effectiveness of this item will increase [22].

In this research, out of 19 items which showed a significant difference, in most items (11) coaches evaluated their performance better than at least one group. One reason why the coaches evaluated themselves higher than others is a lack of self-appraisal culture. One of the goals to assess coaches is to provide them with feedback. It can be noted that the most important component of 360° feedback is self-appraisal because when the coach himself is supposed to judge his behaviors and coaching competencies and when he recognizes the results of his activities as inappropriate, he will accept the responsibility for amending and improving his performance. If the results of 360° feedback is not considered to promote or not to promote a coach and they are used to eliminate a coach's weakness and to increase his abilities, these results will be more real. Firstly, it is essential to familiarize sport teams and coaches with a culture of 360° feedback and the reasons of evaluation should be explained to them; next, we can expect more real results.

One of the strengths of the present research was to use 360° feedback and to compare the viewpoints of related individuals and those of the coaches. One of the important results of this research is a lack of difference in general items including management skills, technical skills, social traits and personality traits as well as a difference

in self-appraisal and other-appraisal scores in some subscales. One of the weaknesses of this research was different age groups with different genders which may affect the results. Therefore, it is suggested that these factors will be eliminated and another research will be carried out.

REFERENCES

1. Jackson, R., 2001. Sport administration manual. Lausanne: IOC.
2. Gillham, A., 2009. Going beyond won-loss record to identify competent coaches: development of the coaching success questionnaire. Dissertation of University of Idaho.
3. Puschack, B., 2006. The interpersonal side of coaching: Exploring emotional competencies and coach perspectives in the workplace, Dissertation of Faculty of the school of human service professions: Widener University.
4. Maylett, T., 2005. The relationship of multi-rater feedback to traditional performance appraisals. A dissertation of Pepperdine University: Graduate School of Education and Psychology.
5. Mc Farland, A., 2001. 360-degree feedback: Should this corporate assessment tool be used in interscholastic sport. Report, Descriptive, Western Michigan University.
6. Brown, T., K. Farrell and T. Zorn, 2007. Performance measurement and matching: The market for football coaches. Quarterly Journal of Business and Economics, 46(1): 21.
7. Mallett, C., 2006. Beyond winning and losing: guidelines for evaluating high performance coaches. The Sport Psychologist, 20: 213-221.
8. Cunningham, G. and M. Dixon, 2003. New perspectives concerning performance appraisals of intercollegiate coaches. Quest, 55: 177-192.
9. Myers, N., E Wolfe and D. Feltz, 2005. An evaluation of the psychometric properties of the coaching efficacy scale for coaches from the United States of America. Measurement in Physical Education and Exercise Science, 9(3): 135-160.
10. Shafiei, M. and M. Goodarzi, 2009. Determining national coaches selection criteria in swimming, diving and water polo by coaches' viewpoints. World Journal of Sport Sciences, 2(4): 241-247.
11. Bradley, S., 2001. Performance appraisal of sports coaches: A New Zealand analysis. New Zealand Journal of Industrial Relations, 26(2): 235.
12. Lemyre, F., P. Trudel and N. Durand-Bush, 2007. How youth-sport coaches learn to coach. The Sport Psychologist, 21: 191-209.
13. Cattau, C., 2007. High school head coach evaluations: A study on the process of coaching evaluations and the use of specific criteria and their connection to mission and purpose in parochial high schools. Disertation of The University of New Mexico.
14. Vute, R., 2005. Self-perception of national team coaches in volleyball for the disabled. Acta Universities Palackianae Olomucensis Gymnica, 35(1): 169.
15. Santos, S., I. Mesquita, A. Graça and A. Rosado, 2009. Coaches' perceptions of competence and acknowledgement of training needs related to professional competences. Journal of Sports Science and Medicine, 9: 62-70.
16. Myers, N., D. Feltz, K. Maier, E. Wolfe and M. Reckase, 2006. Athletes' evaluations of their head coach's coaching competency. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 77: 111.
17. Phillips, M. and C. Jubenville, 2009. Student-athletes' perceptions of men's basketball head coaches' competencies at 15 selected NCCAA Division II Christian Colleges. Journal of Sport Administration and Supervision, 1(1): 39-51.
18. Kavussanu, M., I. Boardley, N. Jutkiewicz, S. Vincent and C. Ring, 2008. Coaching Efficacy and Coaching Effectiveness: Examining Their Predictors and Comparing Coaches' and Athletes' Reports. The Sport Psychologist, 22: 383-404.
19. Gucciardi, D. and S. Gordon, 2009. Construing the athlete and exerciser: research and applied perspectives from personal construct psychology. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 21(1): 17-33.
20. Haselwood, D. and A. Joyner, 2005. Female athletes' perceptions of head coaches' communication competence. Journal of Sport Behavior, 28(3).
21. Laios, A., N. Theodorakis and D. Gargalianos, 2003. Leadership and power: Two important factors for effective coaching. International Sports Journal, 7(1): 150.
22. Barber, H. and J. Eckrich, 1998. Methods and criteria employed in the evaluation of intercollegiate coaches. Journal of Sport Management, 12: 301-322.