Burnout in the Singapore Coaching Population

Nathanael Ong
Associate Sport Psychologist
Nathanael_ONG@sport.gov.sg
Introduction

• Coaching is a stressful job!
• Prolonged period of stress + Lack of rest and recovery = Risk of Burnout
What is “Burnout”? 

[Images of people looking tired or upset]
What is “Burnout”?  

- 3 Burnout Dimensions  
  - Emotional/Physical Exhaustion  
  - Sports Devaluation  
    - The extent to which the coach stops caring about his/her sport and coaching performance  
  - Reduced Sense of Personal Accomplishment  
    - The coach’s feelings of reduced effectiveness and abilities in the coaching role
Demographic, personal, and situational variables associated with burnout in Singaporean coaches

Nathanael Chong Hao Ong and Jin Hong Zhao

Sport Science Centre, Singapore Sport Institute, Singapore, Singapore

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to investigate the demographic, personal, and situational variables that are associated with burnout in the Singaporean coaching population. One hundred and eleven coaches from the Singaporean National Registry of Coaches (NROC) completed a series of questionnaires assessing their demographics, burnout, perceived stress, coping style, workload, workaholism, trait anxiety, perfectionism, social support, leadership style, and turnover intention. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that a higher number of coaching hours predicted higher levels of emotional/physical exhaustion, while fewer years of coaching experience predicted higher levels of reduced sense of accomplishment. Cluster analysis split the sample into three groups according to...
SSI Coach Burnout Study

• 2-part Study
  • Part 1: Survey of NROC coaches
  • Part 2: Follow-up interviews with 8 coaches
Part 1 (Survey)

- 111 NROC coaches
- Demographic variables
  - Gender, Age, Years of Experience, Job Status (Full-time vs Part-time), Coaching Hours
- Personal and Situational variables
  - Perfectionism, Coping Style, Leadership Style, Social Support, Perceived Stress, Workaholism, Workload, Trait Anxiety, Turnover Intention
Key Findings

• More *coaching hours* and higher *perceived workload* predicted higher levels of burnout

• Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model
  • If job demands exceed resources to cope -> burnout
Key Findings

- Coaches with \textit{fewer years of coaching experience} had greater burnout
- Inexperienced coaches might not have developed coping mechanisms to deal with stress/challenges
Key Findings

• Coaches with higher stress and anxiety had greater burnout
  • Stress and anxiety can come from a wide range of sources
  • Inadequate coping resources
Key Findings

• Coaches who used *avoidant coping strategies* had greater burnout
  • In particular *resignation* and *withdrawal*
  • Instead of trying to find a solution, such coaches either give up or try to avoid the problem
Key Findings

• Coaches who used *autocratic leadership style* had greater burnout than those who used *democratic leadership style*

• However, if your style is “too” democratic, you also run the risk of burnout

• Key is to find a good balance, and know when to use each style
Key Findings

- Coaches who had higher burnout had greater intention to leave the coaching profession
- Disillusioned, tired, lost passion for coaching
Part 2 (Interview)

- 8 coaches
  - 4 from “high burnout” group
  - 4 from “low burnout” group
- Semi-structured interview to find out more about the causes and effects of burnout
- Examine deeper into their burnout experience
Factors which contribute to burnout

• Result oriented culture
  • Pressure from school to get Top 4
  • Unrealistic expectations + results not guaranteed
  • Conflict of values: Coach the right way/develop players VS getting quick results
Factors which contribute to burnout

- Overwork
  - Long working hours (esp during competition period)
  - Lack of social life/time with family
  - Have to perform other roles aside from coaching (e.g., admin)
Factors which contribute to burnout

• Financial considerations
  • Insufficient pay
  • Job instability/short-term contracts
  • Need to earn money VS Need to rest
Factors which contribute to burnout

• Systemic issues
  • Monopolisation by big companies – hard for the individual coach to survive
  • Lack of career advancement
  • Sense of entrapment: nowhere else to go other than coaching
• Lack of facilities
Factors which contribute to burnout

- Challenges when coaching
  - Classroom management
  - Planning multiple training sessions
  - Dealing with parents
  - Lack of progress by students
Factors which contribute to burnout

- Problems with coach training
  - Inadequacy of coaching course
    - Overemphasis on technical component
    - Lack of interpersonal/soft skills training
  - New coaches have a steep learning curve and sometimes feel unprepared
Factors which contribute to burnout

• Challenges for young coaches
  • Hard to get coaching opportunities
  • Lack of understanding about coaching landscape
  • Little/no mentorship
Effects of burnout

• Loss of motivation/drive
  • “Go through the motions”
  • Don’t look forward to coaching/coach less

• Health issues
  • Fall sick often
  • Tiredness
Effects of burnout

• Emotions
  • Get easily angered with students
  • Feelings of inequality when compared with peers
• Social isolation – lack of friends who can empathise
Factors which help prevent burnout

• Having the correct perspective
  • Strong intrinsic motivation
    • “Don’t do it for the money”
  • Remember to enjoy coaching
• Think long term – don’t “hit and run”
Factors which help prevent burnout

• Good organisational support
  • Alignment of values – not just about the results
  • Help with administrative matters/facilities booking
  • Good support staff (e.g. teacher-in-charge, team manager)
Factors which help prevent burnout

• Good social support
  • Family
    • Make compromise to spend time with family during off days
  • Friends
  • Fellow coaches
Factors which help prevent burnout

• Experience/Maturity
  • Gain competency, “know what works”
  • Know how to choose and group students
  • Have realistic expectations
Factors which help prevent burnout

- Self-care
  - Long breaks (holidays)
  - Short breaks (in-between coaching sessions)
  - Have time off to do things other than coaching
Take Home Tips

• Closely monitor your workload and ensure that the no. of coaching hours is within your ability and capacity
  • Don’t pack your schedule, as you will burnout in the long run
• Coach with the right motivation
  • Not just to earn more money or to get success/fame
  • Enjoy coaching and helping athletes grow
Take Home Tips

• Learn to manage stress and anxiety
  • Have an avenue to unwind
  • Support group (family, fellow coaches)

• Adopt approach coping strategies
  • Actively find solutions to problems
  • Plan ahead to prevent future problems from arising
Take Home Tips

• Learn to use a leadership style appropriate for each situation and context
  • Know when to be more democratic or autocratic
• Greater support mechanisms needed for less experienced coaches
  • Mentorship
  • Opportunities to practice coaching
Thank you for your kind attention

Any questions?

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