Sports coaches’ interpersonal motivating styles: Longitudinal associations, change, and multidimensionality

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Akademisk avhandling
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Abstract
Coaches play a central role in shaping the sport environment for young athletes. This thesis is focused on the leadership process in sports and how coaches' autonomy-supportive and controlling interpersonal styles longitudinally are related to young athletes' motivation and ill- and well-being. The aim is also to examine psychometric multidimensionality in measures of coaches' need-supportive and controlling interpersonal styles. Questionnaire data from young athletes were used in the empirical studies. In Study 1, we examined an adaptive motivational process (i.e., longitudinal associations between autonomy support, need satisfaction, self-determined motivation, and well-being). The results showed that within-person changes in perceived autonomy support, need satisfaction, self-determined motivation, and well-being were all positively correlated. Higher self-determined motivation and well-being early in the season longitudinally predicted higher levels of perceived autonomy support from the coach. Higher self-determined motivation was also a positive predictor of within-person changes in perceived autonomy support and well-being over the season. In Study 2, we examined a maladaptive motivational process (i.e., longitudinal associations between coaches’ controlling behaviors, controlled motivation, and ill-being). The findings demonstrated that athletes who perceived their coach as more controlling reported higher controlled motivation at the end of the season and that higher controlled motivation early in the season predicted higher ill-being at the end of the season. Controlled motivation was also a positive predictor of athletes' perceptions of coaches' controlling behaviors at the within-person level. Study 1 and 2 suggest that individual factors (e.g., motivation and well-being) seemed to function as important determinants of how athletes perceived their coach and future research should explore the underlying mechanisms through which these processes occur. In Study 3, we examined psychometric multidimensionality in measures of athletes' perceptions of coaches' need-supportive (Interpersonal Supportiveness Scale-Coach [ISS-C]) and controlling (Controlling Coach Behaviors Scale [CCBS]) interpersonal styles. The analyses indicated that the ISS-C is not multidimensional; it appears to comprise a single factor. Three of the four subscales of the CCBS appear to share a common core, whereas the fourth subscale (i.e., controlling use of rewards) seems to represent a slightly different aspect of a controlling interpersonal style. These results bring into question the multidimensionality in measures of athletes’ perceptions of coaches’ interpersonal styles. Neither measure displayed a coherent multidimensional pattern, indicating a need for better alignment between theory and measurement.

Keywords
athletes, change, leadership, motivation, multidimensionality, psychological health, self-determination theory, sports, structural equation modeling