

1. PERSONAL AND WORK-RELATED RESOURCES AS CONTRIBUTORS TO WORK ABILITY IN SPORT COACHES

2. Kokkonen, Marja, Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Pirttimäki, Mikko, Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Introduction. Although sport and exercise psychology aims at understanding the mental processes and well-being of individuals involved in sport and exercise, it has mostly focused on negative topics such as anxiety, burnout, and stress (Salama-Younes, 2011). Similarly, the majority of studies on coaches' occupational well-being are on ill-being with the emphasis on coaches' work-related stress and stressors (e.g. Knight *ym.*, 2013; Thelwell *ym.*, 2008). Inspired by the recommendation by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) that human strengths and the positive personality should be explored, we adopted this contemporary approach and studied coaches' resources. Our primary aim was to examine the extent to which the personal and work-related resources explained the variance in Finnish coaches' work ability. Secondly, because this study was part of a larger intervention study on the occupational well-being in male-dominant occupations, we were also interested in how coaches and firefighters differed from each other in these resources.

Method. Members of the Professional Coaches of Finland and the Rescue Department of Central Finland were invited to take part in an online survey in the autumn of 2015. After the data collection period ended, responses from 72 coaches (44 males, 25 females, 3 unreported gender) and 31 male firefighters were analysed through independent samples t-test and linear regression analysis. The survey covered the participants' personality (e.g. optimism, trustfulness), personal skills (emotional and mindfulness skills), occupational well-being (e.g. work enjoyment, work ability, work engagement) and work-related resources (e.g. work motivation, team efficacy).

Results. High self-assessed health (beta .39), work enjoyment (beta .40), and mindfulness skills (beta .24) explained 63% of the variance of coaches' work ability ($F=17.644$, $p<.001$). Coaches scored statistically significantly lower than firefighters in external work motivation, team efficacy, and mindfulness skills, but higher in trustfulness, intrinsic, integrated, and introjected work motivation, work engagement, emotional skills, and reappraisal.

Discussion and Conclusion. Our results support the earlier findings that the role of subjective health and work enjoyment is important in work ability. In addition, although recent studies show that coaches seem to appreciate coach education that offers them sport-specific knowledge of coaching methodology that helps them plan, implement and evaluate in the training and competition settings (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006; Santos, Mesquita, Graca, & Rosado, 2010), we believe that for the sake of coaches' work ability, coach education should provide coaches with opportunities to learn and rehearse their mindfulness skills in practice to gain higher work ability.

References

- Abraham, A., Collins, D., & Martindale, R. (2006). The coaching schematic: validation through expert coach consensus. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 24(6), 549-564.
- Knight, C. J., Reade, I. L., Selzler, A.-M. & Rodgers, W. M. (2013). Personal and situational factors influencing coaches' perceptions of stress. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, DOI:10.1080/02640414.2012.759659
- Salama-Younes, M. (2011). Towards a Positive Sport Psychology: A prospective investigation in physical practice. *World Journal of Sport Sciences*, 4 (2), 104-115.
- Santos, S., Mesquita, I., Graca, A., & Rosado, A. (2010). What coaches value about coaching knowledge: A comparative study across a range of domains. *International Journal of Applied Sports Sciences*, 22(2), 96-112.

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.

Thelwell, R.C., Weston, N.J.V., Greenlees, I.A. & Hutchings, N. V. (2008). Stressors in elite sport: a coach perspective. *Journal of Sports Science*, 26(9), 905-918.

Bio of the presenting author Marja Kokkonen

Marja Kokkonen (PhD, Psychology; MSc, Sport Sciences) is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research interests include the socio-emotional competence in coaching, as well as psychological safety and discrimination in different sporting contexts. As a certified clinical and sport psychologist, she also provides coach education, and sport psychology consultancy to athletes and teams. She is a former Treasurer in the European Federation of Sport Psychology.