

The state of teacher-coaches' sport-specific training, participation and coaching experience, mentor interaction and methods of continued education in sport coaching

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the current state of teacher-coaches' sport specific training, playing- and coaching experience regarding sport coaching. Fifty five (55) schools from the Kenneth Kaunda district in the Northwest province of South Africa were selected. Vosloo and Trudel and Camiré's questionnaires were adapted for this study. One hundred and forty four (144) questionnaires were used in the compilation of the results. The Epi-info program was used to capture the data. For the analyzing of the data, frequency tables and cross-tabulations were used to obtain statistical ($p < 0.05$) and practical (Cramer's V-value) significance. The study revealed that 6 of the 12 priority sports codes have sport specific trained teacher-coaches. Most sport specific training were completed more than than five (5) years ago. In most sports codes the majority of teacher-coaches have less than 10 years coaching- and participation experience. The transfer of quality coaching knowledge between coaches were found to be questionable. Teacher-coaches also use few, and possibly outdated information to improve their coaching skills. Sport specific training is needed in all types of school (especially township- and farm schools) and in all priority sports codes. T-eacher-coaches also require quality coaching mentors as well as professional and current sport specific information.

Keywords: Youth sport, teacher-coach, coaches development, athlete development.

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Introduction

Professionalism in sport and the standard of world-class performance remains to increase. Hence the development of a country's sport potential is of cardinal importance (Martindale, Collins & Abraham, 2007). In South Africa, school sport is universally considered the basis of elite sport (Rajput & Van Deventer, 2010). Teacher coaches are in most cases responsible for the development of

children's sport potential at this level and often are not properly trained, whilst the expert coaches are applied at elite level (South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee: SASCOC, 2011a).

The success of participant development at school level directly depends on the quality of the adult leadership involved in the development (American "National Coaching Report": NASPE, 2008). Thus it is understandable why Sport and Recreation South Africa's (SRSA) current strategic plan sets it as an objective to ensure that access to sport participation in all schools exists, leagues be instituted and that *technical officers (including coaches) be trained* (SRSA, 2011). The successful development of school sports therefore demands the development of successful coaches as a priority (SRSA, 2011).

It appears that coaching skills are developed when a coach acquires direct practical coaching experience, undergoes formal coaches training and is exposed to mentorship (Lynch & Mallett, 2006). A great deal of participation in sport during the coach's youth and also as a young adult further lays the foundation for knowledge and understanding of coaching and the coaching process, (Lynch & Mallett, 2006). Apart from practical coaching experience, regular meetings with mentors improve the effectiveness of the coach (Nash & Sproule, 2009; DeWeese, 2012). Successful coaches make active attempts to obtain additional knowledge and skills right through their careers as coaches (Young, Jemczyk, Brophy & Côté, 2009).

During the 2008/9 school sports and mass participation programmes of the respective provincial departments of sport and recreation, 6 400 persons were already trained as coaches. However, feedback following this training indicated that development of school sports should be a definite priority in the coming years (SASCOC, 2011b). This research aim was to determine the level of sport-specific training, coaching and participation experience, mentor interaction and methods of continuing coaches training of teacher-coaches in schools within the Kenneth Kaunda district, Northwest Province. Due to the probable extent of this survey in South Africa, the investigation was limited to the Kenneth Kaunda region in the North-West Province. The findings of this survey can be useful to the Department of Basic Education, SRSA, SASCOC and the Department of Sport and Recreation in the North-West Province concerning the state of the sport coaching at school level and the viability to provide coaches education and training programmes for teacher-coaches and/or certified coaches.

Methodology

Design

Quantitative data were collected by means of questionnaires. A cross sectional study design was used because it is considered descriptive of the current situation.

Participants

A representative number of schools (as grouped by the Department of Basic Education in the province) from the Dr Kenneth Kaunda region of the North-West Province were randomly chosen. A maximum of three (3) teacher-coaches involved in the coaching of learners (within school context) in the priority sports codes were requested to complete the questionnaire..

The priority sports codes involved in the study are as follows (according to the list of the provincial Directorate of School Sports): Athletics, Baseball, Basketball, Cricket, Cross-country, Hockey, Netball, Rugby, Soccer, Softball, Table tennis and Volleyball.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires of Vosloo (2007) and Camiré (2012) (used in the study of Forneris, Camiré & Trudel, 2012) were adapted to design a questionnaire for this study. Vosloo's (2007) study deals with management training for school sport in Gauteng. The adapted questionnaire was only translated into English and then distributed, since English is the general industrial and commercial language in South Africa.

The face validity of the compiled questionnaire was tested and confirmed by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). Furthermore, a pilot study was done according to the method of Gratton and Jones (2010) so as to determine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

Data collection

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Regional Head of Basic Education and the head of school sport in the Kenneth Kaunda region. Following this, contact was made with the sport officials at each regional office involved where contact details and physical addresses of the chosen schools were obtained. The sport officials also indicated schools that did not present sport and/or where sport no longer exists. These schools were therefore left out of the study.

The division of the schools that actually participated in the investigation is indicated in Table 1. Thereafter the school principal of each school involved was contacted during which the aim of the study was explained to him/her. A suitable date and time for the visit to the school was confirmed. The researcher was present and available for inquiries during the completion of all the questionnaires.

Table 1: Exposition of school types after adjustment

	Town Schools	Township Schools	Farm Schools
Primary	4	16	25
Intermediate	1	3	2
Combined	0	0	3
Secondary	4	8	0
Total	9	27	30

Data processing

The Statistical Consultation Services of NWU guided the researchers concerning the compilation of a data capturing template by means of the Epi-info programme as well as with statistical methods used to process data and checked the data.

During the analysis, frequency tables and cross tabulation was compiled. The statistical significance was determined ($p \leq 0.05$), after which the practical significance (Cramer's V-value) was also investigated. Cramer's V-value (V) serves as a measure for the strength relations between data sets. This value can also use Effect sizes (Table 2) for cross tabulations to investigate the practical significance of effects between these data sets (Ellis & Steyn, 2003).

Table 2: Guidelines for using effect sizes in cross tabulations

Effect size (V)	Effect
$0.1 \geq V < 0.3$	Small
$0.3 \geq V < 0.5$	Medium
$V \geq 0.5$	Large

(Ellis & Steyn, 2003)

Results

Questionnaires were presented at 57 schools, from which questionnaires were completed at 54 of the initial 66 available schools. This represents a return rate of 81.8%. Out of 144 teacher coaches that formed part of the investigation group, the majority were from the black population and between ages 36 and 50 years (Figure 1). The highest percentage of schools that participated in the study was farm schools. Almost halve (48.6%) of the sport coaches had undergone no

sport-specific training. The remaining 51.4% of sport-specific coaches training is further reflected in Figure 2.

Figure 2 reflects the formal sport-specific training teacher-coaches had received during their career as coaches. Most of the coaches are involved in coaching athletics (n=91), netball (n=61) and soccer (n=63). It is observed that in only 6 of the 12 priority sports codes a significant number of teacher-coaches had undergone acknowledged training.

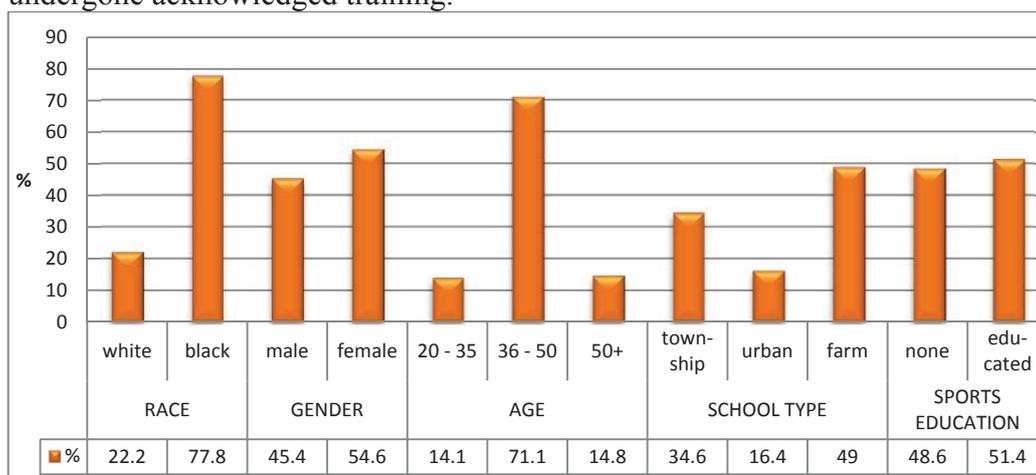


Figure 1: Division of the investigation group

In following tables (Figure 3 and onwards) only the sports in which coaches received sport-specific training will be referred to.

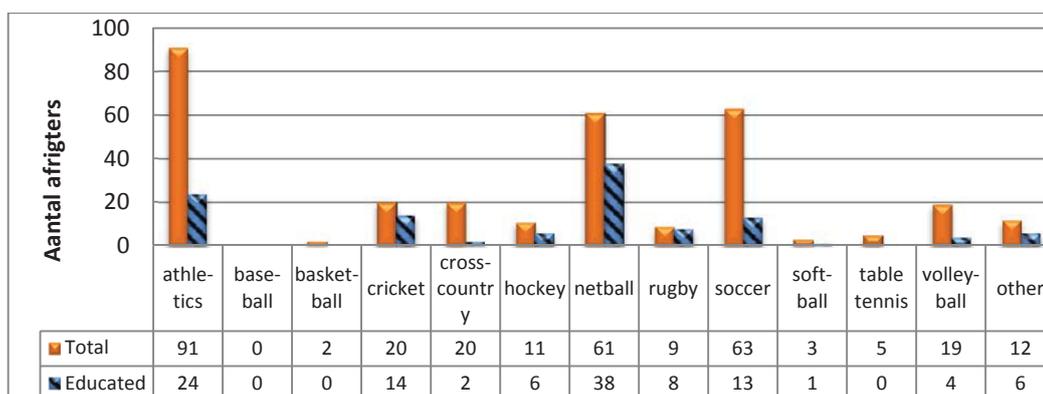


Figure 2: Number of coaches trained per sports code

Most of the sports codes have less than 50% trained coaches (Figure 2). Coaches that had indeed received training (n=103), mostly received it in the past 5 years (Table 3). The majority of coaches (n=71; 68.9%) in all the sports codes had further only received orientation or level 1 training.

Regarding coaching experience, it is very clear that the majority of coaches in the indicated sports codes had accumulated less than 10 years' coaching experience. Coaches with less than 10 years' coaching experience were mostly employed at farm and township schools (Figure 3).

Table 3: Level of sport training and recentness thereof

Sport	Number	Level of training				Recentness		
		Umpire	Orientation	Level 1	Levels 2-4	<5 years	>5 years	Unknown
Athletics	24	0	10	7	7	16	7	1
Cricket	14	1	3	5	5	10	3	1
Hockey	6	1	1	2	2	2	4	-
Netball	38	5	7	21	5	14	21	3
Rugby	8	0	0	3	5	5	3	-
Soccer	13	0	10	2	1	8	5	-

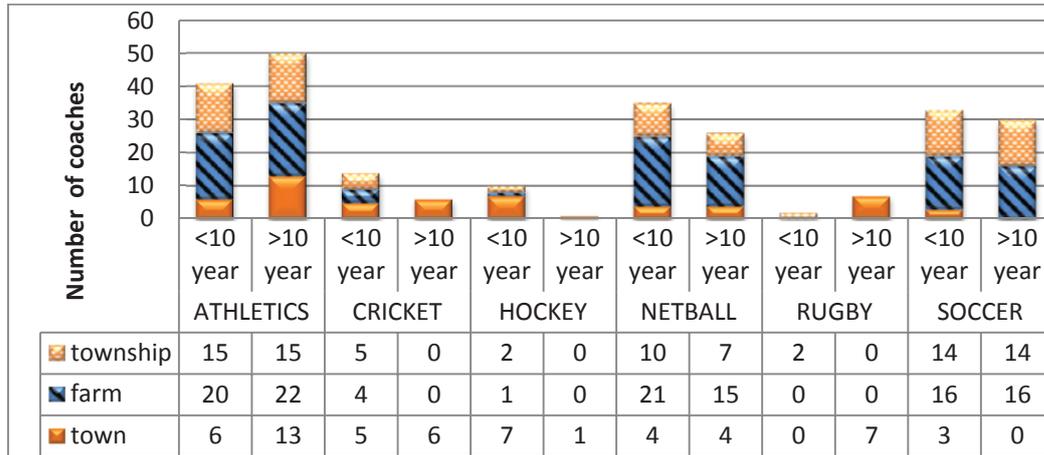


Figure 3: Coaching experience per type of school

With the exception of rugby, no statistically significant or practically significant relation could be found between the type of school and coaching experience in any of the sports codes (Table 4). With rugby and cricket it was found that coaches with more than 10 years' coaching experience were found exclusively at town schools (large practically significant difference, $V \geq 0.5$), although this relation was only also statistically significant in the case of rugby ($p = 0.003$).

Table 4: Relation between coaching experience and type of school

Sport	p	Cramer's V-value
Athletics	0.406	0.141
Cricket	0.3	0.592 [#]
Hockey	0.814	0.194
Netball	0.902	0.058
Rugby	0.003 [*]	1 [#]
Soccer	0.239	0.213

$p < 0.05$ ^{*}Significant difference, Cramer's V-value ≥ 0.5 [#]Large

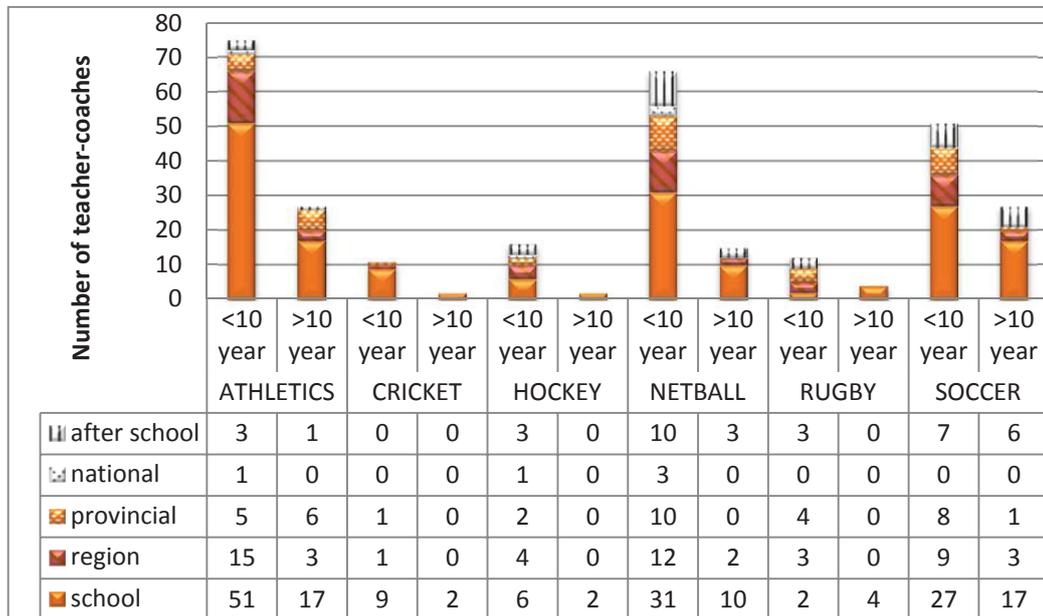


Figure 3: Level of teacher-coaches' own participation experience

With regard to coaches' own participation in sport it was found that among the 144 teacher-coaches, sports codes participation had taken place 317 times. Therefore teacher-coaches had participated in 2.2 in sports codes on average. The results indicate that in all the sports codes, the majority of coaches (all more than 60%) had participated in the sports code involved for less than 10 years (Figure 4).

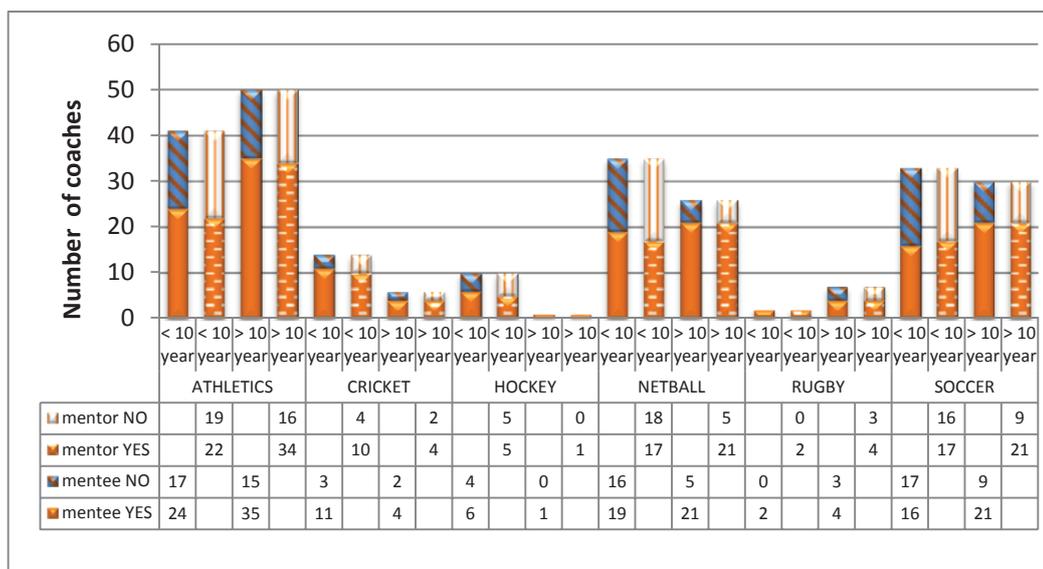


Figure 5: Mentorship and coaching experience

Figure 5 depicts that the majority of mentors in most sports codes have less than 10 years' coaching experience. The results in Figure 5 reveal that the majority of teacher-coaches with less than 10 years' coaching experience in the sports code involved did indeed receive mentorship. However, in this respect soccer is the exception, where the majority of teacher-coaches with less than 10 years' coaching experience (n=17) had not received mentorship.

Table 5: Relation between mentorship received, mentorship presented and coaching experience

Sport	Mentorship presented (mentor)		Mentorship received (mentee)	
	P	Cramer's V	P	Cramer's V
Athletics	0.162	0.147	0.254	0.119
Cricket	0.831	0.048	0.573	0.126
Cross-country	0.278	0.505 [#]	0.262	0.513 [#]
Hockey	0.338	0.289	0.428	0.239
Netball	0.010 [*]	0.329 ^{##}	0.031 [*]	0.276
Rugby	0.257	0.378 ^{##}	0.257	0.378 ^{##}
Soccer	0.134	0.189	0.083	0.218
Volleyball	0.163	0.520 [#]	0.454	0.371 ^{##}

p<0.05 ^{*}=significant difference, Cramer's V-value ≥ 0.5 [#]Large, $0.3 \geq V < 0.5$ ^{##}Medium

Table 5 shows that only netball showed a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between mentorship received and coaching experience, with proportionally the smallest number of coaches (n=5) that had more than 10 year' experience, but had not undergone mentorship. Netball furthermore shows a statistically ($p < 0.010$) and medium practically significant relationship ($V = 0.3$) between coaching experience and mentorship presented. Proportionally netball has the largest number of coaches with more than 10 years' coaching experience (n=21) that has also acted as mentors. Cross-country, rugby and volleyball each show a large to medium practical significant relation ($V \geq 0.3$) to coaching experience and mentorship presented as well as mentorship received, but no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) relationship was found.

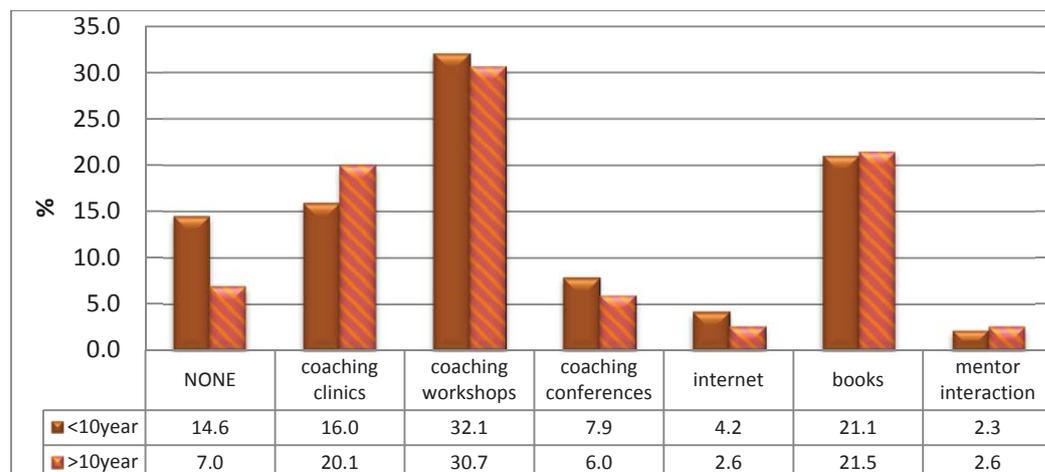


Figure 6: Methods of continuing training according to coaching experience

The coaches also had to indicate in the questionnaire which methods they had followed during the past 12 months to broaden or sharpen their knowledge and skills as coaches. Figure 6 indicates that 21.5% of all teacher-coaches had made no effort to improve their coaching skills. The majority of these teacher-coaches also have less than 10 years' coaching experience.

Discussion

It is evident that only six out of the twelve priority sports codes have significant number of trained teacher-coaches. Teacher-coaches did not necessarily received training in the last 5 years; thus their training can possibly be considered outdated (NSW, 2012). In conjunction with this, SASCOC (2011b) points out that there is a shortage of sport-specifically trained coaches in schools. It is clear that not all sports codes are given the same representation or priority at the different types of schools. In light of SRSA's objective that all schools should have coaches that can instruct the priority sports codes (SRSA, 2012), this situation in the schools involved should receive urgent attention.

Based on the deficient coaching experience indicated in Figure 3, it can be deduced that sport participants in schools are exposed to teacher-coaches that have not yet developed the required coaching skills to develop into excellent coaches (Lynch & Mallett, 2006). This finding chimes with SASCOC's view that teacher-coaches have not developed into high quality, trained sports coaches (2011b). Contributing to the inexperience of teacher-coaches are the fact that on a statistical average a teacher-coach in this study has only participated in 2.2 sports codes (Figure 4), whilst broad participation in sport is set as a measure for excellence in coaching (Lynch & Mallett, 2006).

Majority of teacher-coaches with less than 10 years' coaching experience act as mentors for other coaches. The majority of teacher-coaches that receive mentorship also have less than 10 years' coaching experience. This means that inexperienced coaches act as mentors for equally inexperienced beginner coaches. This has led to the required transfer of coaching knowledge and experience not necessarily occurring among coaches, which should be considered detrimental to the continued existence of the coaching community (Day, 2011).

Concerning continuing coach's training, it was found that the majority of teacher-trainers that did not have any further coaching information have less than 10 years' coaching experience. This trend echoes the findings from Vargas-Tonsing's (2007) study that volunteer coaches of youth sport are inclined to only undergo further training if the formal structure(s) they are associated with expect it from them.

Limitations

Due to the demographics and compliancy of schools only 57 of the 66 available schools in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda region of the North-West Province were sampled. As such the results of this study cannot be considered representative of the study population in the province.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate a shortage of experienced coaches exists for all the priority sports codes. Teacher-coaches also wish to have quality mentor interaction as well as recent and quality coaching information to be able to develop as coaches. In light of the national directive (SASCOC and SRSA) on the need and necessity for trained coaches at this level should, teacher-coaches in this region of the province (and probably also in a broader field), thus be encouraged to remain involved in sport coaching and to share acquired knowledge across all schools and at different coaching levels.

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