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**Original Article**

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# Does the experience influence the efficacy of football coach? A perspective from coaches with different levels of experience as player and as coach

DANIEL DUARTE <sup>1</sup> , JÚLIO GARGANTA <sup>2</sup>, ANTÓNIO FONSECA <sup>2</sup>


<sup>1</sup> *Research Centre in Sports and Physical Activity, Maia Institute of Higher Education, Maia, Portugal*

<sup>2</sup> *FCIFI2D, Faculty of Sport, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal*

## ABSTRACT

Duarte, D., Garganta, J., & Fonseca, A. (2014). Does the experience influence the efficacy of football coach? A perspective from coaches with different levels of experience as player and as coach. *J. Hum. Sport Exerc.*, 9(1), pp.17-30. The experience is as an important predictor of the football coach efficacy. To study its relevance in valuation of efficacy factors we used the CESp (Duarte et al., 2010), an adapted version of the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES), of Feltz et al. (1999), in a sample of 60 football coaches from different competitive levels working in Portugal, which were categorized according to their experience as players (professionals and non-professionals) and as coaches (high and reduced). Based on the analysis of the results it was concluded that: 1) professional experience as a player does not interfere in valuing of the efficacy factors; 2) professional experience as a coach involves a factor's different valuation, with a significance level on character factor; 3) coaches with less experience as athletes and coaches shows less consistency in the practical application of the factors with regard to their hierarchy and frequency of its use. This is a study that allows a deeper understanding of the importance of experience in football coach performance, emphasizing the need to consider the different levels of experience in coach training, and still require subsequent studies, particularly with coaches who work in other contexts, in order to better support the applicability of the results. **Key words:** FOOTBALL, COACH, PLAYER, EFFICACY, EXPERIENCE.

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 **Corresponding author.** Research Centre in Sports and Physical Activity, Maia Institute of Higher Education, Maia, Portugal.  
E-mail: [dftsd@hotmail.com](mailto:dftsd@hotmail.com)  
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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important aspects in the coach efficacy study is the perception of confidence about his ability to influence the process of learning and performance of their athletes (Kowalsky et al., 2007). Feltz et al. (1999) designated this assumption by self-efficacy and created a conceptual model for his study which led to the development of a scale for assessing the efficacy of the coach, the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES), with a multifactorial structure based on several skills like motivation, game strategy, technique, and character building. The motivation refers to the coach' capacity to influence the athlete's skills and psychological condition and strategy represents the coach skills in promoting a successful performance of the team during competition. Technique is meant as the coaching skills in diagnosis and instruction during practice; whereas, character building relates itself to the coach' belief in his capacity of affecting the athlete's personal development and positive attitude towards sports.

Most studies in this area tends to focus on the validation of the scale (Duarte et al., 2010; Myers et al., 2005; Tsorbatzudis et al., 2003; Feltz, et al., 1999) and its application in different contexts (Feltz et al., 2009; Boardley et al., 2008; Thelwell et al., 2008, Myers et al., 2006; Campbell & Sullivan, 2005; Chase et al., 1997). Some studies focus on the analysis of efficacy predictors of the coach (Kavussanu et al., 2008; Sullivan & Kent, 2003), the team and player (Vargas-Tonsing et al. 2003), but not determine the importance that they assume in valuation of the factors by the coach, particularly in its self-perception, considered by several investigations as an important construct in the study of the coach efficacy (Lent & Lopez, 2002; Alzate et al., 1997; Bandura, 1997; Chase et al. 1997).

The coach' experience is reported by many authors as one of the predictors that influence the perception of coaches efficacy (Gilbert & Rangeon, 2011; Jones et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Feltz et al., 1999). Marback et al. (2005) concluded that the coach experience can predict the efficacy in factors such as character, motivation and strategy. Properly supported in a continuous process of reflection, the coaches' experience is, in association with training courses, as one of the most proficuous sources of coaches' knowledge (Cushion, 2007; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Given the importance of experience in the coaches' knowledge, and naturally in their success, it is important to realize how it turns in to competence (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001).

In Barros et al. (2010) investigation it was found that more experienced coaches perceive themselves more competent in planning, evaluation, conducting training in the management and training, not only of coaches but also of the athletes. However, this study also not show the relation that the experience has with the efficacy factors valuation by the coaches. According to the results of Vergeer & Lyle (2009) the coaches' experience influences one of the most important aspects of the training, the decision making process. Thus, it can be assumed some differentiation in factors valuation, especially on the practical level. Other aspect to consider in the coaches' experience is the analysis of their reputation, fruit of results or successes achieved. To Manley et al. (2010) this is one of the factors that most influence the expectations of the players, and they attribute greater competence to the coaches who are successful. For these authors the results and the sports success have implications in the development of an effective coach-athlete relationship, so it is important to understand if they influence the efficacy factors valuation by the coaches, during the training process.

Also the coaches' experience as a player seems to take preponderance in the efficacy study (Kowalsky et al., 2007). Feltz et al. (2009) reported in their study that the coaches with higher past as players, and coaches, are those that presents greater confidence. In this direction, Werthener & Trudel (2006) point out

that the experience as a high level player is presented as a valuable source of knowledge and to Rodgers et al. (2007) it seems to be associated to the use of techniques connoted as good practice in the high performance training. It is a view shared by Hanin (2007) that considers the experience as a player as a precondition for the coach to understand the stress and emotions of the competition. Hence it is relevant a deeper understanding on the value given to the efficacy factors, basis on his experience as a player, checking if the fact that be a professional athlete involves a different valuing of the skills. Gilbert et al. (2009) report that the combination of the experience as a player, with the coach formal preparation tends to increase the efficacy of the coach. Also the analysis of the current football suggests a tendency to recruit coaches with past as professional athletes, and with success as players, which reinforces the importance of understanding about how this factor interferes with the coaches' efficacy.

However, there is the emergence of a group of coaches who, using their skills in teaching, have appeared in the current football scene with success, often without any experience as athletes. This evidence has been put into question the importance of the past as a professional athlete in the coach performance. In fact, nowadays are known coaches who reached the highest level successfully, even without to have done as players, as it is the case of José Mourinho (Carter & Bloom, 2009). For these authors the superior knowledge of the coach can have the same dimension been or not been high level athlete, and it can be acquired in different ways. The experience gained by being high level player is an advantage, but it can not be the sufficient condition for being a football coach, because it requires a specific knowledge to develop specific tasks (Alberda & Murphy, 1997). Still, James (2007) considers that it's essential the experience as an assistant coach in the case of coaches without experience as players.

As warns Lyle (2002) the experience of the coach, together with practical training, which relates to the activities of the personal and professional coach, are parameters of a conceptual framework of the activity of the coach with a strong interest in research. In fact, Cushion & Jones (2001) consider that the training process is clearly influenced by the context and it is essential to study the practical behavior of the coach to control variables such as the philosophy of coach, the nature of group to coach and experience as a player and coach, in order to understand the connection between the valuation of the factors and their practical application. According to Mielke (2007) the years as head coach, the experience as assistant coach and as a player are fundamental to a good performance on high level, especially in football.

Once that experience is an important predictor of the coach efficacy, this study investigated the relevance of experience as a player and coach in the valuation of different efficacy factors, based on the perception of football coaches from different competitive levels, acting in Portugal. More specifically, we examine whether experience as a professional footballer and competitive experience as a coach imply a different valuation of the efficacy factors, and if they influence his practical application. We pretend that this results not only sustain better the understanding of the coach efficacy, but also that can be considered as an important parameter for the development of training programs for coaches, adapted to the different levels of experience of the coach, in the line of Fung (2003) research that suggests, according to the results of his study, a different coach training course, according to the level of competition in which they operate.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### *Participants*

This research presents a total sample of 60 male coaches, who works at different competitive levels of Portuguese football, particularly in young amateur championships and in the senior professional leagues. Is

noteworthy that in function of the analyses and the data collected were not always used all the sample elements, due to absence of response from the respondents.

Coaches of the sample range in age between 18 and 57 years, with a mean of 36 years. These are coaches with different levels of experience, either as coaches or as athletes.

### *Measures*

In this investigation we used the CESp (Duarte et al., 2010) which arises of the validation for the Portuguese population of the CES, by Feltz et al. (1999). According to Duarte et al. (2010) the instrument has a good psychometric properties and acceptable fit to the proposed four factor structure used in this study, which gives it validity in its application to this sample.

It is a multifactorial oriented instrument, in which each of four factors is characterized by a set of items. The instrument have twenty four items. The motivation factor includes items such as "maintain confidence in the performance of their athletes", "psychologically preparing the athletes for the strategy game", among others. The strategy presents items as "identify the strengths of the opposing team" and "dominate strategies to use in competition." In turn, the technical factor involves items as "individually train the technical aspects of the athletes," "detect errors of individual and collective", among others. Finally the character factor considers items as "promote an good character attitude" and "to promote fair-play".

Based on CESp, two questionnaires were produced to assess the coaches perceptions. Thus, the first questionnaire is about the importance of efficacy factors in the success of the coach, whereas the second want to know the perception of the coaches in respect to the frequency of the practical use of the behaviors that characterize the efficacy. The quotation of the two used questionnaires followed the suggestion of Myers et al. (2005), having been used a Likert 5 categories scale. In the first questionnaire was considered an importance scale in which one (1) was considered "not important" and five (5) "totally important" and in the second the respondents considered an scale, related with the practical behaviors of the coaches in which one (1) it is understood as "never" and five (5) as "always".

### *Procedures*

The questionnaires were mainly held in the premises of the clubs or in the local of concentration camp, in the presence of one element of this research. To the respondents were explained the research objectives and ensured the confidentiality of responses.

According the research objectives, were considered two levels of experience of the coach. On the experience as a player in the sample we distinguish the highest competitive level in that they acted as athletes, differentiating the professionals from the non-professionals. In the categorization of coaching experience were globally considered aspects as the experience years number, the highest competitive level and the main success as a coach. Based on these parameters we divided the sample into coaches with reduced experience and coaches with high experience

### *Statistical Analyses*

In the results analysis we used an optical system to read the questionnaires, and were used different statistical procedures. Thus, in addition to the descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) it was performed an inferential test (independent measures t-test) to compare the two categories, concerning to the experience of the coach, as an athlete and coach, with regard to the valuation of the factors. Also

developed a correlation analysis between the importance given to factors by the coaches and the frequency with which they use them in practice, based on the determination of the Pearson coefficient. In comparison of the factors valuation with the frequency of its use, we resort, in both categories, to the independent measures t-test.

## RESULTS

The analysis started by understanding the importance of experience as a player in efficacy factors valuing. Thus, Table I shows that all factors are highly valued, both by coaches with professional experience as players and coaches without professional experience as players.

**Table 1.** Mean (m), standard deviation (sd), t-test (t) and Hierarchy (H) of most important factors to determine the sports success of the football coach, in the opinion of coaches with professional experience as players and coaches with no experience as professional players.

Factor	Coaches with experience as professional players n= 25		Coaches without experience as professional players n= 33		T-Test (t)
	H	m ± sd	H	m ± sd	
	<b>Motivation</b>	1°	4,69 ± 0,32	1°	
<b>Strategy</b>	2°	4,54 ± 0,53	2°	4,47 ± 0,34	t= 0,67; p= 0,51
<b>Technique</b>	3°	4,31 ± 0,50	3°	4,30 ± 0,43	t= 0,03; p=0,99
<b>Character</b>	4°	4,13 ± 0,60	4°	4,26 ± 0,70	t= -0,73; p=0,47

Comparing the coaches with different experience as players is evident that, with the exception of character, all other factors are most valued by coaches who were professional players, although there are no statistically significant differences in the results presented.

The table I also shows that the dimension order use by the two categories of coaches is the same. The motivation is presented as the factor that assumes greater relevance to the coaches, with high values, and the character is considered as the least important, regardless the experience as professional athlete.

We also analyze the competitive experience of the coaches, looking for a relationship with the factors valuation. Thus, we present the comparison results between coaches with reduced experience and coaches with high experience (Table II).

**Table 2.** Mean (m), standard deviation (sd), t-test (t) and Hierarchy (H) of most important factors to determine the sports success of the football coach, in the opinion of coaches with reduced experience and coaches with high professional experience.

Factor	Coaches with Reduced experience n= 18		Coaches with Higher experience n= 35		T-test (t)
	H	m ± sd	H	m ± sd	
<b>Motivation</b>	1°	4,65 ± 0,35	1°	4,57 ± 0,44	t=0,168; p= 0,50
<b>Strategy</b>	2°	4,45 ± 0,36	2°	4,52 ± 0,49	t= -5,35; p= 0,60;
<b>Technique</b>	3°	4,41 ± 0,34	3°	4,26 ± 0,50	t=1,19; p= 0,24;
<b>Character</b>	1°	4,65 ± 0,38	4°	3,97 ± 0,70	t= 3,86; p≤ 0,001

The table II shows that the results in both categories are high, indicating that all factors are highly valued by coaches with different levels of experience.

However, the two categories of coaches comparison shows some differences in the hierarchy of the factors. Thus, for coaches with reduced experience, the motivation and character are equally important, with higher values than the strategy and technique. On the other hand, for coaches with high experience the most important factor is the motivation, and the character appears as a minor factor in the opinion of these coaches. Note that the difference between the two categories of coaches in character building factor is statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Other of parameters in the analysis was the correlation between the importance attributed to efficacy factors by the coaches and the frequency with which they use those behaviors in practice, according to the different levels of experience. The results are shown in the table III.

**Table 3.** Correlation coefficient (*r*) for the efficacy factors in terms of importance attributed and frequency of use among different categories

Factor	Coaches ex-professional players	Coaches non-professional players	Coaches with Reduced experience	Coaches with higher experience
	r	r	r	r
<b>Motivation Importance</b>	0,78 p≤ 0,001	0,86 p≤ 0,001	0,82 p≤ 0,001	0,84 p≤ 0,001
<b>Motivation Frequency</b>				
<b>Strategy Importance</b>	0,86 p≤ 0,001	0,74 p≤ 0,001	0,73 p= 0,01	0,84 p≤ 0,001
<b>Strategy Frequency</b>				
<b>Tecnique Importance</b>	0,87 p≤ 0,001	0,81 p≤ 0,001	0,83 p≤ 0,001	0,83 p≤ 0,001
<b>Tecnique Frequency</b>				
<b>Character Importance</b>	0,91 p≤ 0,001	0,93 p≤ 0,001	0,66 p= 0,03	0,91 p≤ 0,001
<b>Carácter Frequency</b>				

The results indicate a significant and positive correlation between the importance attributed to the efficacy factors and the frequency with which the same are used in practice, in both categories.

Thus, due the higher values found, is evident a practical work supported on the importance attributed to the efficacy factors, independently of the professional experience of the coaches, either as athletes and as coaches.

Even so, we consider relevant to compare the results on the basis of professional experience as athletes and coaches, according to the valuation order established and the magnitude of its practical valuation. Table IV presents the comparison results of coaches with experience as professional players and coaches with no experience as professional players.

**Table 4.** Mean (m), standard deviation (sd), t-test (t) and hierarchy (H) for the comparison of the importance attributed to the factors and the frequency of their use, in ex-professional players coaches and coaches with no experience as professional players.

Factor	Coaches ex-professional players n= 25					Coaches with no experience as professional players n= 33				
	Factors Importance		Use Frequency		t	Factors Importance		Use Frequency		t
	H	m ± sd	H	m ± sd	t	H	m ± sd	H	m ± sd	t
<b>Motivation</b>	1°	4,69 ± 0,32	1°	4,73 ± 0,27	t=-0,98 p= 0,34	1°	4,57 ± 0,43	1°	4,36 ± 0,54	t=-4,17 p≤ 0,001
<b>Strategy</b>	2°	4,54 ± 0,53	2°	4,53 ± 0,45	t=-0,16 p= 0,88	2°	4,47 ± 0,34	3°	4,21 ± 0,74	t=-2,75 p=0,01
<b>Technique</b>	3°	4,31 ± 0,50	3°	4,33 ± 0,46	t=-0,41 p= 0,69	3°	4,30 ± 0,43	2°	4,23 ± 0,54	t=-1,30 p=0,21
<b>Character</b>	4°	4,13 ± 0,60	4°	4,09 ± 0,62	t=0,78 p= 0,44	4°	4,26 ± 0,70	4°	4,20 ± 0,80	t=-1,14 p=0,26

According to the table IV it can be seen that coaches with past as professional players, remain the valuation order of the factors in practice, and there aren't significant differences in comparison of any factor.

On the other hand, in the coaches with no experience as professional players is visible a different order of valuation between the importance attributed to the efficacy factors by the coaches and the frequency that they use them in practice. Thus, although remains high the use of the motivating factor, and the character as the factor that coaches less use in practice, in this assumption the technique appears to be more relevant than strategy, contrary to what occurs in importance given by coaches to the same efficacy factors. In this category, and in particular on the most valued factors, motivation and strategy, we can note statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between the valuation of the efficacy factors and the frequency of its use. Thus it appears that coaches with no experience as professional athletes show a less utilization of efficacy factors than the importance attributed to them.

Continuing this analysis, we present in table V the comparison results of the importance and the use frequency of the factors, in coaches with different levels of competitive experience.



**Table 5.** Mean (m), standard deviation (sd), t-test (t) and hierarchy (H) for the comparison of the importance attributed to the factors and the frequency of their use, in coaches with reduced experience and coaches with high experience

Factor	Coaches with reduced experience n= 18					Coaches with high experience n= 35				
	Factors Importance		Use Frequency		t	Factors Importance		Use Frequency		t
	H	m ± sd	H	m ± sd	t	H	m ± sd	H	m ± sd	t
<b>Motivation</b>	1°	4,65 ± 0,35	2°	4,44 ± 0,47	t=-3,28 p≤ 0,001	1°	4,57 ± 0,44	1°	4,52 ± 0,52	t=-0,99 p=0,33
<b>Strategy</b>	2°	4,45 ± 0,36	4°	4,10 ± 0,87	t=-2,27 p= 0,04	2°	4,52 ± 0,49	2°	4,49 ± 0,47	t=0,72 p=0,48
<b>Technique</b>	3°	4,41 ± 0,34	3°	4,35 ± 0,49	t=0,98 p= 0,34	3°	4,26 ± 0,50	3°	4,27 ± 0,50	t=0,19 p=0,85
<b>Character</b>	1°	4,65 ± 0,38	1°	4,57 ± 0,62	t=1,07 p= 0,30	4°	3,97 ± 0,70	4°	3,96 ± 0,75	t=0,14 p=0,90

Such in coaches with different levels of experience as athletes, also in the analysis of the efficacy factors on coaches with different background are evident some differences.

Thus, in coaches with high professional experience it is evident that there is a concordance between the valuation of the factors and the frequency that they utilize in practice, both in terms of hierarchy, as the level of importance for each situations.

On the other hand, the analysis of the coaches with reduced experience reveals some differences in the use frequency of the efficacy factors when compared with importance attributed to them. More specifically, with regard to the order of valuation, it appears that in practice the Character and Motivation factors remain the most valued, having the technique a higher valuation over than strategy, that is relegated to last place. It was also found that the use frequency of the efficacy factors Motivation and Strategy is significantly lower ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) than the importance attributed by the coaches, revealing once more discrepancy in theoretical and practical terms.

## DISCUSSION

Such as the literature indicates, the experience of the coach is assumed as one of the most influential predictors of coaches efficacy perceptions (Gilbert & Rangeon, 2011; Jones et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel,

2001; Feltz et al. 1999) and, according to Gilbert & Trudel (2001), also considered one of the most important sources of coaches knowledge. Presented research aims to understand the relevance of professional experience as athlete and coach, in the efficacy factors valuing, with respect to the magnitude and hierarchy of the importance attributed by the coaches and the use frequency of the same factors in practice.

Kowalsky et al. (2007) suggests a close relation between high experience as a player and efficacy. However, the comparison between coaches with different levels of experience as a player, revealed no significant differences in valuing order of the efficacy factors, with motivation appearing to be the most important factor for both categories and character to take less relevance in the importance attributed to him. Taking into account that, according to Gilbert et al. (2009) an high experience as a athlete tends to increase the efficacy, we expected different results between coaches with experience as a professional players and coaches with no experience as a professional players. However, this assumption is not verified, there being a identical valuation, regardless of the experience as an athlete.

In addition, the identical efficacy perception in both categories contradicts Feltz et al. (2009) results that point to an greater confidence of the coaches with more past as players. In fact, these results allow, in a way, counter the idea that the recruitment of coaches should be based on his high experience as a player, confirming the thesis of Alberda & Murphy (1997) who reported that the experience as a high level player, despite confer advantage to the coach, is not enough for success, to the extent that it should be supported by specific knowledge, acquired through training course.

The comparison of coaches with different levels of experience in the exercise of its function has shown that the hierarchy of importance attributed to the efficacy factors is different, specially in the character that for coaches with reduced experience is presented, along with the motivation, as the most valued factor. The different valuation of the factors by the two categories of coaches validates, in a way, that the competitive experience of the coach presents himself as a influential predictor in the coaches efficacy perception (Gilbert & Rangeon, 2011; Jones et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Feltz et al. 1999).

An important aspect of this analysis is that the sample includes youth coaches that, according to Gilbert & Trudel (2001), are usually volunteers, revealing limited experience, which could also lead to the valuation of certain factors in detriment of others. In fact, the significant valuation of the character by the coaches with reduced experience, when compared with the more experienced coaches, may be related to the fact that in this category be present youth coaches that naturally, apart from conducting the training of his athletes, have accentuated concerns with the formation of his personality and the acquisition of determinant values and references to their future life and character (Kowalsky et al., 2007; Pacheco, 2005).

Although only in character factor the difference is significant, it is evident that with the exception of the strategy, all other factors are most valued by coaches with reduced experience, distancing themselves from the results of Barros et al. (2010) who consider that the most experienced coaches perceive themselves more competent in all areas, in particular with regard to the planning, conduct and evaluation of training and also in management and training of the coaches as well the athletes.

Lyle (2007) considers the experience and practical training as two of the most important aspects in the study of the coach, stimulating interest in this relationship understanding, consummated on this research through its correlational analysis.

The correlation between the valuation of the factors and the frequency of their use in practice in both categories was positive and significant, which suggests a congruence between the factors valued and their practical application, regardless of level of experience as a player or coach. This assumption is relevant in our view, indicating an action supported by the formal coach knowledge acquired through training courses, and informal by his experience as a coach and player. It is a premise defended by Gilbert and Trudel (2001) who consider the blend of experience coaching and specific training as one of the most proficuous sources of knowledge of the coach, supported in a continuous process of reflection.

The comparison of the factors valuation and their practical application revealed differences between coaches with experience as professional players and coaches without experience as professional players. Thus, in the case of ex-professional players coaches, no significant differences were found either in use frequency of the factors as in the importance hierarchy of the same. On the other hand, in the coaches without experience as professional players we found that the use frequency of the motivation and strategy factors is significantly lower than the importance attributed, which may indicate some difficulties in the practical application of the factors, due to a lower knowledge of them, as a result of his inexperience.

These differences suggest that less experience as an athlete may reflect less consistency in the coaches practical performance, as a result of a lower use of the factors that value in the practical context. Moreover, according to Hanin (2007) the smallest experience as an athlete makes it difficult for coaches to understand the emotions and the competitive stress, which may justify the practical lower use frequency of some factors by coaches with no experience as professional players, in particular the motivation and strategy, as we found in our study.

According to Montiel (1997) the fact of have been professional athletes, in addition to facilitating the relationship with the players, confers the coach a better understanding of the practical context which, in our view, can facilitate and enhance the practical application of the factors, reflected in high values found in this investigation in the category of coaches with experience as professional players.

As in the previous analysis, also the comparison of the importance attributed to the factors and their practical application reveals significant differences in coaches with reduced experience, both in the hierarchy of factors such as the frequency of their use, particularly in terms of motivation and strategy. To Veerger & Lyle (2009) the experience of the coach influences its decision making process, so it follows that less experience may interfere with the factors practical application. Another relevant aspect of this analysis is that the category of highly experienced coaches include coaches with relevant sports success, which naturally may make them more confident and consistent in the practical use of efficacy factors that they most value. In fact, Manley et.al. (2010) report that the reputation of the coach is one of the factors that most influence the expectations of athletes and the establishment of an effective relationship, making the coach more confident in their efficacy perceptions, in terms of importance and use.

Thus, the greater consistency in the practical use of the factors presented by coaches with more experience as players and coaches confirms the importance attributed by Mielke (2007) to the experience in these two fields, for a great performance on high level, particularly in football

## CONCLUSIONS

The development of this study, based on the experience of the coach as a player and coach, searched for better understanding of the coach efficacy, and also a greater attention to the importance of experience in the coach training.

Thus, the results showed that the professional experience as an athlete does not interfere in efficacy factors valuing, with both categories presenting a higher valuation of the motivation and a lower appreciation of character.

On the other hand, the coaching competitive experience influences the factors valuation, being evident, in general, a greater valuation of them by coaches with reduced experience, significantly in the character factor.

Despite the positive correlation revealed in both categories, with regard to the importance attributed to the factors and the frequency of its use in practice, significant differences were found in the comparison of their magnitudes and hierarchy. Thus, it is concluded that coaches with less experience as athletes and as coaches are also less consistent in the practical use of the factors, either in how prioritize factors, as the frequency with which they use them, particularly in terms of strategy and motivation.

It is in this way that the results suggest the need for an adaptation of training programs based on the level of experience of the coaches, to ensure a better transfer of the factors valued, for practical context, improving the consistency of its actions, that may be reflect in better results, and consequently in its success. It should be noted that this is a sample of coaches that operate in Portuguese Leagues, which limits the transfer of results to other realities. Thus, we suggest investigations in other domains in order to find the necessary methodological adjustments to each context. Furthermore, the fact that the study was based, primarily, on coaches perceptions can establish itself as a limitation, been relevant subsequent studies involving an analysis of the practical behavior of coaches.

On the other hand, the amplitude and qualification of this sample, which includes the best level coaches that operate in Portugal, and also because it is one of the sports with higher global impact, constitute an added value to this research.

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