The Influence of athletes' perceived justice of the coach on the intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of top handball and volleyball players

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Introduction: Perceived justice was broadly highlighted in organizational settings (2). Research clearly showed that this justice had an important impact on the employees’ performance, intrinsic motivation and satisfaction (3, 5). Since sport teams shared many of the characteristics of other types of organizations, it seemed likely that perceived justice would have a valuable influence in a team sport setting (4). Based on these assumptions Chelladurai and Trail (1) hypothesized that the perception of the coaches’ fairness by the athletes determined the athletes’ attitudes and behaviors in a sport context. For this reason, the aim of the present study was to examine the impact of this perceived justice on athletes’ satisfaction and intrinsic motivation in team sports. Additionally we were interested in the influence of coach’s transparency, team identification, social cohesion and task cohesion as predictor variables.

Methods: Male and female team players (N=91) in Belgian highest and second highest handball and volleyball competitions had to complete a web-based questionnaire about the perceived justice of the coach during 7 consecutive weeks. A factor analysis was executed on the items of perceived justice and transparency. The internal consistency of all subscales was calculated using the Cronbach’s alpha. Finally, a linear regression analysis was conducted in five matches to study the influence of the predictor variables on the satisfaction and intrinsic motivation of the athletes.

Results: The results showed that the variance in the athletes’ satisfaction that could be explained by the variance in the predictor variables fluctuated between 38% (match 1) and 60% (match 5). Actually perceived justice had for every match a significant contribution in the relationship between the predictor variables and the athletes’ satisfaction (p<0.005). The mean of the variance in the athletes’ intrinsic motivation that could be explained by the variance in the predictor variables fluctuated between 40% (match 1) and 69% (match 3). Again, only perceived justice contributed significantly for every match in the relationship between the predictor variables and the athletes’ intrinsic motivation (p<0.001).

Conclusions: Our results clearly accentuated the importance of perceived justice since it was the most important predictor variable of the satisfaction and the intrinsic motivation of team athletes. Future research should investigate which determinants will influence (in a positive or negative way) this perception of justice of the coach by the athletes.

References