

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT AMONG ATHLETE AND COACHES AT NATIONAL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA) – DIVISION 1 UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: This study examined how managers and coaches managed communication with athletes in team and individual sports. Also, discover ways to develop communication styles and communication timing between coaches and athletes. Communication is a critical element in the relationship between coaches and athletes in team and individual sports, and between managers, referees, scorers, and other officials, who involves indirect measures of Development Communication Management (DCM). The researcher surveyed 200 athletes and 14 coaches in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference. Data were collected using two questionnaires designed by the researcher, one for coaches and one for athletes -that employed a 5.0 Likert scale. The researcher used (MANOVA) models to test for significant differences between coaches and athletes, between genders, team, and individual sports. The significance level was set at $p^{.05}$. There is a significant difference between team and individual athletes regarding who they communicate with most frequently ($p\text{-value} < .001$).

Keywords: Coaches, communication, management, sport event, NCAA - DI University.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process that requires a vast repertoire of skills. We develop verbal and non-verbal communications in various ways. It is a critical intermediary of performance between coaches and athletes in team and individual sports, yet there is little extant research in sports that involve direct measures of communication. In this study, the researcher is looking for the model of communication which perhaps makes message interpretation more reliable. This study investigated player-coach communication and specifically, we were interested in the impact that coaches use of DCM before, during, or after the game. The researcher wanted to find out the most effective way that coaches communicate with players, and if coaches and players prefer the same kind of communication.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explored a new theory of the Development of Communication Management (DCM) In order to know what style of communication is the most frequently used by coaches (Dale & Wrisberg, 1996). Winning teams communicate twice as many messages as losing teams (Li & Smith, 2005). In this study, the researcher investigated the athletes and coaches styles of communication. Specifically, the impact of coaches' uses of DCM which occur before, during, and/or after the game. The researcher was also interested in determining the best style for coaches to use to communicate with their athletes, so the athletes would understand their coaches and increase performance. The participants were college undergraduate students who had competed in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC).The students completed a questionnaire related to the development of communication, communication styles, and communication timing. The

researcher measured the differences between the team and individual athletes and coaches. Results of the questionnaire were used to describe the best communication styles used by athletes and coaches. While DCM has allowed a better understanding of actual and preferred coaching behaviors across a number of sports settings, the process nature of communication between coaches and athletes has remained largely overlooked. How coaches communicate with their players is similar to how players communicate with their coaches from the perspective of training and motivating their teams to high performance. (Schrodt & Turner, 2004, p.131). Stated that instilling an appreciation for organized team activities, sportsmanship and a sense of satisfaction in their athletes through communication are goals equally worthy of coaching. They investigate the relationship between coaches' leadership behaviors and athletes' effective learning. (Bain & Wendt, 1983); (e.g. Chelladwai & OBryant, 1999); (Turman, 2001- 2003). By studying how coaches communicate with their players the potential exists to identify how coaches can adapt their communication in order to be more effective, given that how coaches communicate has a direct influence on how players perform and behave Horn (2002). This study by (Alina & Gabriel, 2016). Indicated that such interference and to communicate effectively required the following steps in the development process of communication. (Figure 1.1)

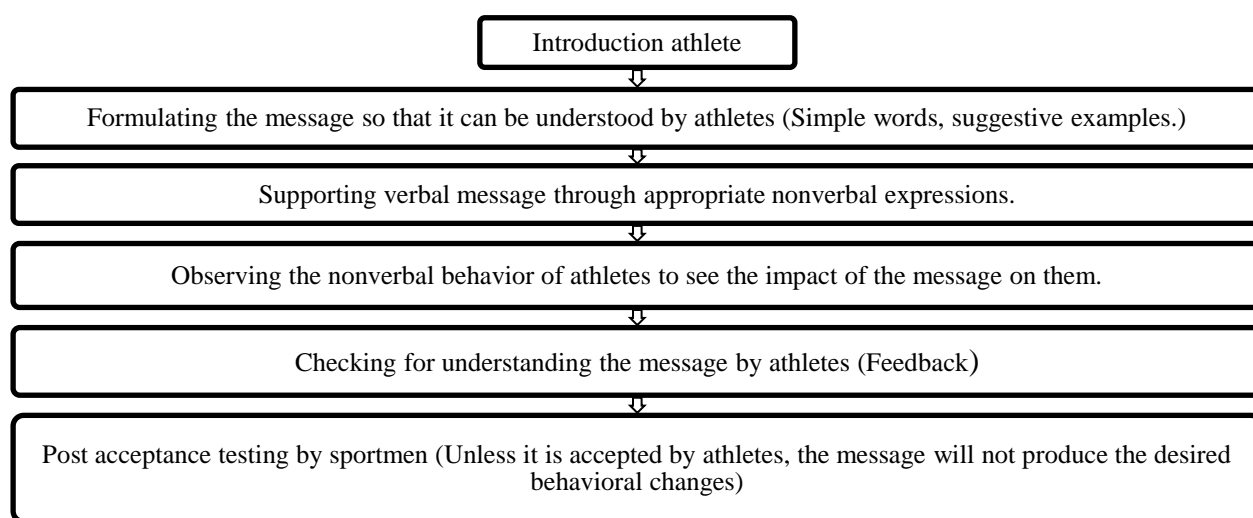


Figure 1.1: Stages of Effective Communication

Regarding formulating the message, it is useful to consider the (6C) that define effective communication. Thus, an effective communication might be: Clear – requires clear presentation of information; Concise – to the point, without unnecessary

detail; Correct – requires providing accurate, not misleading; Complete – providing all necessary information, not some distorted information; Constructive – positive, avoiding unconstructive criticism and negativity; Courteous – polite, non-threatening, avoiding conflict. (Smith, et al., 2005) found that when coaches provide positive feedback to their players, the players are more willing to work harder and sacrifice for the team, while negative feedback was related to less teamwork amongst the players on the team. Positive and supportive feedback from coaches also leads to greater player self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and team cohesion (Horn, 1985-2002). These findings provide support to the claim by (Bain & Wendt, 1983); (Haselwood et al., 2005) that communication skills are the most important skills for coaches to possess. The purpose of this study is to indicate the development of communication, the communication style, and communication timing, of coaches and athletes in both team and individual sports to guide the principles for DCM that can lead to success. DCM needs to be organized inside the team, so the coaches can communicate effectively with their athletes. Several previous studies related to communication in sports focused on attitudes and perceptions between coaches and athletes for team sports. On one hand, for individual events, the previous research focused on the athletes as individuals and overlooked the importance of teamwork and intra-team communication. However, in this current study the results show that in an individual sport, swimmers rely on their teammates more often than on their coaches. The coaches' styles of communication were similar to those of the athletes. However, coaches and athletes differed in their perception of training and motivation. It has been reported by (Mensch, et al., 2005); Schubiger (1993) that college and high school athletes perceived their coaches to use significantly more social support and training. Hastie (1993) found no effects of athletes' satisfaction with communication, and Schliesman, (1987) found athletes' perceptions of democratic and social

support behaviors to contribute to significant variance, while Chelladureir (1984) identified perceptions of training and instruction and positive feedback to be significant predictors of satisfaction among athletes. (Gardner et al., 1996); (Weiss & Westre, 1991) similarly concluded that teams with a high level of cohesion or consistency were likely to perceive their coaches as using relatively high levels of training and instruction. No significant differences in athletes' perceptions were found when comparing male and female athletes Eichas (1993) male and female coaches Tastie (1993). To explore coaches' self-perceptions of their styles of communication (Bennett & Manne, 1988); (Dwyer & Fisher, 1988- 1990); Lam (1995) male coaches saw themselves using more positive feedback while coaching male teams than when coaching female teams Mondello (2001). While communication has allowed a better understanding of actual and preferred coaching behaviors across the team and individual sports settings, the process nature of communication between coaches and athletes has remained largely overlooked, Hastie (1993). Development practitioners and agencies consider sport to play a valuable role in social development; however, the emerging evidence does not yet adequately describe sport's contribution to social development (Barry & Marshall, 2015).

III. METHODOLOGY

To assist in the collection of data, the researcher had the approval from the Internal Review Board at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical Engineering University (FAMU). The coaches filled out a questionnaire related to the coaches' development of communication, the communication style, and communication timing. Each coach conducted an initial meeting with their athletes to describe the purpose and rationale for this study. Those athletes who agreed to participate were asked to return a signed consent statement. Athletes completed the questionnaire only one time during their season. Questionnaires were enclosed in envelopes, which were sealed to ensure confidentiality. The athletes were then asked to return the questionnaire to their coaches. A 28-item questionnaire was completed by 14 coaches. (Appendix A) The coaches included nine males and five females; eight coaches of team sports and six coaches of individual sports. A similar 27-item questionnaire was completed by 208 student-athletes. (Appendix B) This sample included 110 male and 98 female athletes; 106 team athletes and 102 individual athletes. All questionnaire responses were given on a 5.0 Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The male team athletes were from football, basketball, baseball, and soccer the female team athletes were from volleyball, softball, bowling and basketball and the individual athletes were track & field, tennis and cross country. The items on the questionnaire given to the athletes and the coaches' fall into three categories: development of communication, communication style, and communication timing. Statistical method and analyze the data, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) models were used to test for differences between types of sport (team and individual), genders, and roles (coach and athlete). A separate (MANOVA) model was applied to each subset of questionnaire items. In addition, those related to the development of communication, communication styles, and communication timing. The (MANOVA) models included the questionnaire responses as dependent variables. The questionnaire items related to communication styles and communication timing were common to both coach and athlete questionnaires, so the (MANOVA) models applied to these items included gender, type of sport, and role (coach or athlete) as independent variables. The questionnaire items related to the development of communication were different for coaches and athletes, so separate (MANOVA) models were applied to the coach and athlete responses with gender and type of sport treated as independent variables. The models tested for main effects and for two-way interactions.

IV. RESULTS

Development of Communication:

There is a significant difference between team and individual athletes regarding who they communicate with most frequently (p -value $< .001$). Athletes of team sports agreed that they communicate most with their coaches while athletes of individual sports agreed that they communicate most with their teammates Turman (2008). However, there are no significant differences between male and female athletes regarding who they communicate with the most. Athletes of both types of sports, team, and individual, and both genders agreed on average that communication enhances performance (p -value = .879). There is a significant difference between male and female athletes regarding their communication with the scoring table or referee. On average, females tend to agree that they communicate most with the scoring table or referee while males tend to disagree slightly on average (p -value $< .001$). Both males and females disagree on average that communication affects winning or losing, however, females tend to disagree significantly more strongly (p -value = .011). There is a significant difference between male and female athletes in their use of special signs and gestures. Males agree

slightly on average that they use special signs while females disagree slightly on average (p-value < .001). There are no significant differences in average responses between male and female coaches on questionnaire responses that deal with the development of communication (p-values > .073). There is a significant difference between coaches of individual and team sports in the tracking of communication and in beliefs that communication enhances performance. Coaches of individual sports agree that they track communication during competition while coaches of team sports tend to disagree (p-value = .011) slightly. Coaches of team sports agree that communication enhances performance and coaches of individual sports are more neutral (p-value = .006). All coaches agree on average that their communication at away games is effective, that their communication is different depending on whether they are calm or nervous, that they use special signs, and that they would rather communicate with one athlete during competition. All coaches are neutral or in slight agreement that they would rather communicate with the whole team during competition. (Fig1.2 & Fig2)

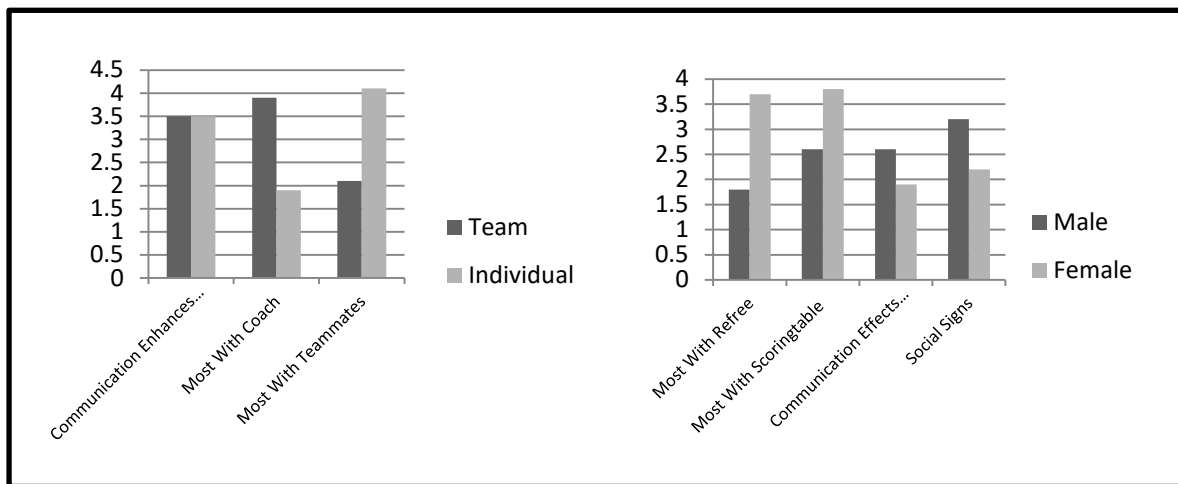


Fig 1.2: Average Level of Agreement for Athlete to DCM Questionnaire Items Related To the Players' Development of Communication

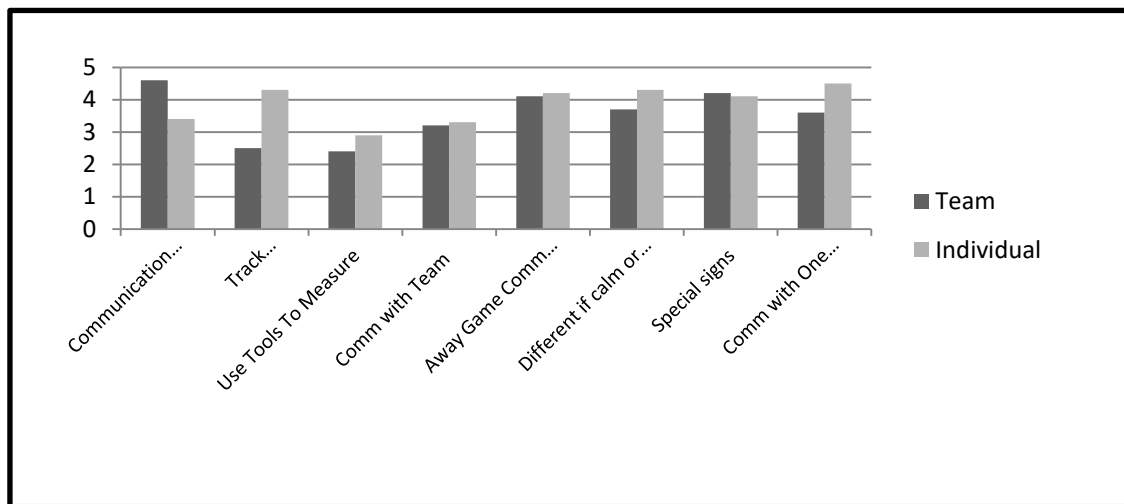


Fig 2: Average level of agreement for athlete to DCM Questionnaire Items Related to Players' Development of Communication

Communication Styles:

Regarding communication styles, there are some significant differences between males and females and between coaches and athletes. However, no significant differences were detected between the team and individual sports. Athletes and coaches on average agreed that their communication styles were visual in a current study by Howard (2017, P 281). Presents a “theoretical process of “hot” sign indicator obfuscation whereby the pitcher and catcher use unique hot indicator values that are generated after each pitch via an algorithm derived from randomly changing situational and/or scoreboard data” In a 2015 Survey Results about Social Media Use of Student Athletes, discover that Broadening the

scope of this line of inquiry by examining social media policies at multiple levels within the (NCAA) will add to the growing body of literature. Additionally, it should be noted that social media has changed dramatically since the 2011 study, as visual platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat emerged and appeared to be growing in use by student-athletes (Social Media Use of Student-Athletes Survey, 2015). There is a significant interaction between gender and coaches roles. (Sanderson, et al., 2015). The adoption of social media platforms by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), athletic conferences, and athletic departments continues to evolve in efforts to achieve respective organizational goals. Regarding nonverbal communication. On average, male coaches disagreed that their communication style is non-verbal, while female coaches and athletes of both genders were more neutral regarding non-verbal communication ($p = .026$). All groups agreed that they used more than one communication style during competition ($p\text{-value} = .163$). Regarding the fastest mode of communication during the competition, coaches showed a preference for verbal communication, followed by visual or non-verbal. Male athletes showed equal preference for visual and verbal communication as being the fastest mode of non-verbal communication. Female athletes preferred visual communication as fastest, followed by verbal and non-verbal communication. This difference in preferences for males and females is statistically significant ($p\text{-value} < .001$). (Fig 3 & Fig 4).

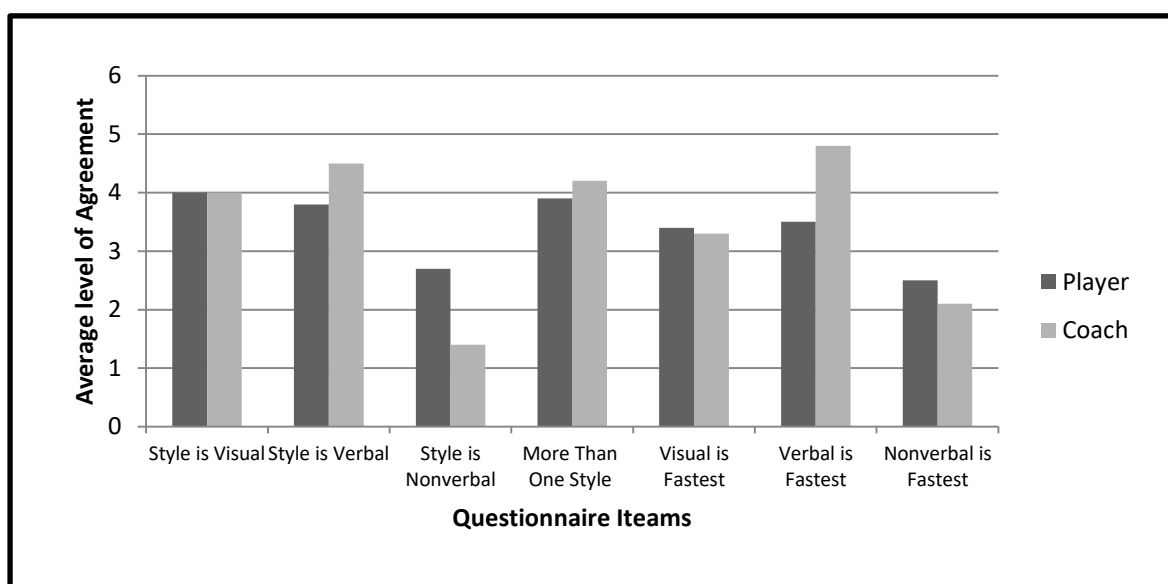


Figure 3: Average level of agreement for male coaches and athletes to DCM questionnaire items related to communication styles.

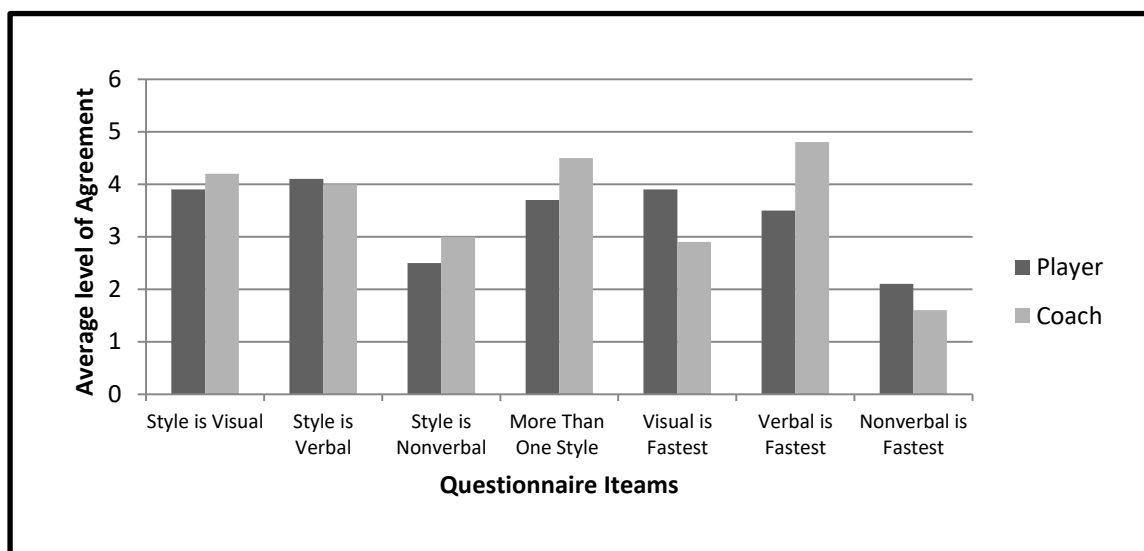


Fig 4: Average level of agreement for female coaches and athletes to DCM questionnaire items related to communication styles.

Communication Timing:

Average coaches agreed significantly greater than athletes regarding the focus of their communication both before (p-value < .001) and after (p-value = .023) competition. On average, athletes and coaches of both team and individual sports were in slight agreement that they increased communication when winning. However, there is a significant difference between coaches of the team and individual sports in terms of their use of communication when losing. When losing, coaches of team sports on average agreed that they increase communication while coaches of individual sports disagreed slightly (p-value = .002). There is a significant interaction between team role and type of sport about coaches and athletes contacting one another after the competition. Athletes of both team and individual sports agreed on average that they contacted their coach after the competition. The coaches of team sports agreed that they contacted their athletes after competition while coaches of individual sports disagreed (p-value = 0.043). (Fig 5 & Fig 6).

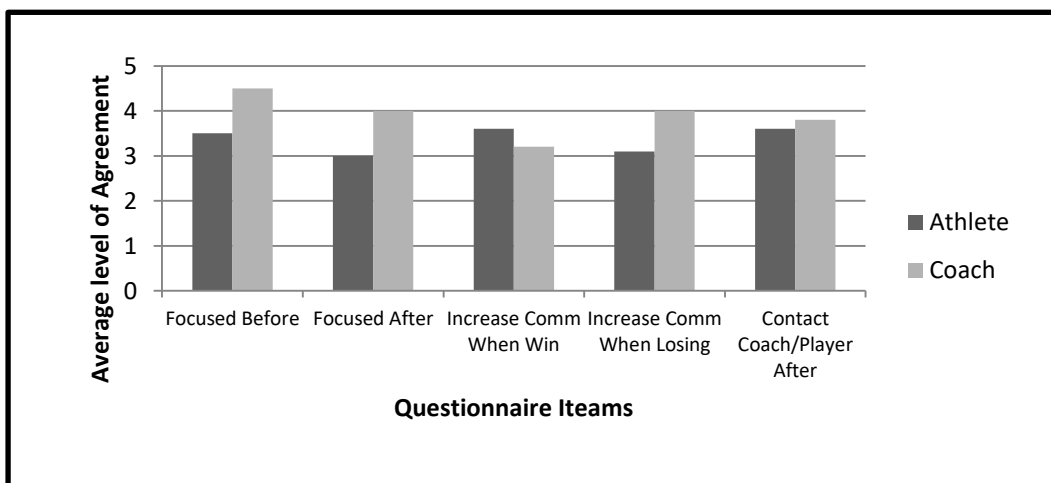


Fig 5: Average level of agreement for team coaches and athletes to DCM questionnaire items related to communication timing.

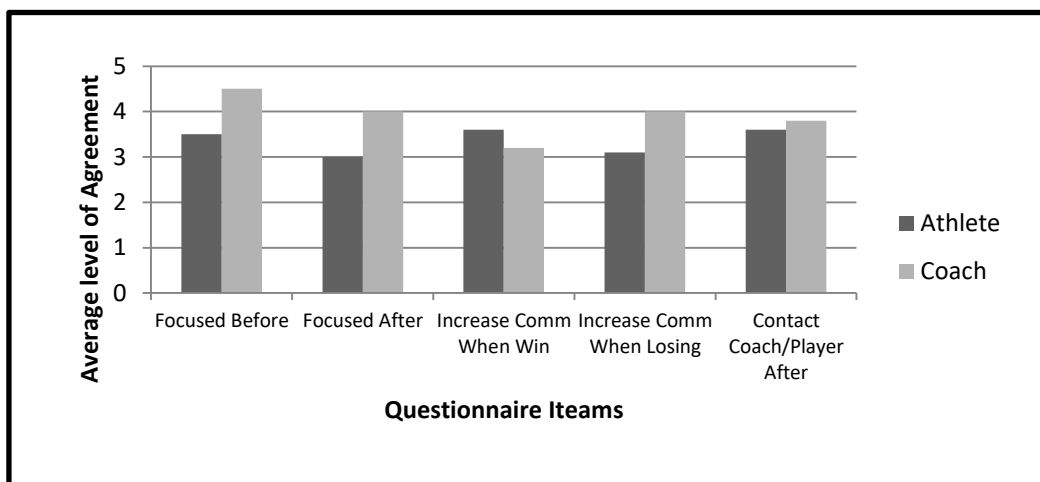


Fig 6: Average level of agreement for individual coaches and athletes to DCM questionnaire items related to communication timing.

V. DISCUSSION

Development of Communication:

The study found that there was a significant difference between team and individual athletes in terms of who they communicate with most often during competitions. Team athletes agreed that they communicated most with their coaches rather than teammates, while individual athletes agreed that they communicated most with their teammates rather than their coaches (e.g. Donohue et al., 2007); (Fretwell & Weiss 2005). Within team sports, the team had a plan set by the

coach going into the game. It was not in the best interest of the team for athletes to discuss or change the plan set by the coach in the midst of competition. This structure promotes communication occurring primarily with coaches rather than between athletes in team sports. However, individual athletes had minimal contact with their coaches during competition. Communication between coaches and athletes in individual sports usually occurs well before competition rather than immediately before the competition. Thus, individual athletes tended to rely on their teammates for encouragement and cheering as they competed. This present study found a significant difference between male and female athletes in terms of their use of special gestures or signs during games (or competition). On average males were neutral to slightly agreeing regarding the use of special gestures or signs while females were in slight disagreement. (Jowett & Sagar, 2012, p2) “Explained that the communication between a coach and athlete increases the likelihood of developing feelings of closeness and improving the athlete’s perception of the coach. Communication would also increase the satisfaction of their training and performance, physical self-concept, achievement goals, intrinsic motivation, and sustaining a passion for the sport. Clear and precise communication increases a better understanding of the role of the player, developing skills, and building a trusting relationship”. Within the results related to communication styles, on average female athletes indicated that visual communication is their fastest mode of communication. On the other hand, they indicated that they were in slight disagreement regarding the use of special gestures or signs. This apparent inconsistency was a potential opportunity for DCM. A natural recommendation is to increase the use of special signs and gestures for female athletes. Lyras (2009, 2012a) proposed a sport for development theory (SFDT) as a specific model to increase understanding of the processes and conditions involved in the sport for development (SFD) programs. Lyras (2009, 2012a) proposed a sport for development theory (SFDT) as a specific model to increase understanding of the processes and conditions involved in the sport for development (SFD) programs.

Communication styles:

According to the statistical results, of the present study, there are some significant differences in communication styles between males and females and between coaches and athletes. However, no significant differences detected between the team and individual sports. This study indicated that athletes and coaches on average agreed that their communication styles were visual and verbal. Male coaches indicated that they did not use non-verbal communication, while all other groups were neutral regarding the use of nonverbal communication. (e.g. Canal & Rouwen, 2007); (Haselwood, et al., 2005); (Antonini & Seiler, 2006). The statistical analysis of the questionnaire indicates that all groups agreed that they used more than one communication style. Regarding the fastest mode of communication, coaches showed a preference for verbal communication. Male athletes showed an equal preference for visual and verbal communication as fastest, while female athletes preferred visual communication over verbal as being the fastest, Chand (2005).

Communication Timing:

Coaches are more focused on their communication before and after competition than athletes (Bloom & Carter, 2009) When winning, all coaches are in slight agreement that they increase communication. When losing, coaches of team sports tended to increase communication. In individual sports such as Crosse Country, Track & Field, there is not an opportunity to increase communication when losing, physically coaches and athletes are not near each other, Track & Field events brief so hard to have a come-back. Antonini (2006). The questionnaire suggested that athletes of both teams and individual sports agreed that on average they contacted their coaches after the competition. The coaches of team sports agreed that they contacted their athletes after competition while coaches of individual sports disagreed that they contacted their athletes after the competition. In research by Sanderson, et al., 2015) the results indicated that the policies overwhelmingly framed social media as restrictive (Sanderson, et al., 2015). Equally, uncovered that student-athletes were given inconsistent messages about responsibility for media content and were subjected to decide that governed content, observing, and the activities of others. In that capacity, the authors propose that social media approaches ought to incorporate more dialect that clarifies how student-athletes can profit by web-based social networking advances as methods of communication timing.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that there are differences in the communication practices of coaches and athletes and between the team and individual sports. The results suggest that to aid in the development of communication within team sports, coaches and athletes should determine what the fastest mode of communication is. Rather than watching for a visual sign, an athlete may instead be listening for a verbal cue if their coach finds verbal communication to be faster than

visual. In this way, the coaches and athletes can progress in DCM. What is the best time to communicate? Knowing the best time to communicate will lead to DCM to communicate as a coach whenever it is necessary and beneficial for the athletes to encourage and motivate the athletes to do their best during their event.

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