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Coaching Behavior: Any Consequences for the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment?

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ABSTRACT

Coaches can easily dominate athletes and this unbalanced power distribution may be strengthened by authoritarian behavior; i.e. negative feedback, directive communication, coach-led decision making, task-centered role orientation, and goal orientation on performance. An unwanted risk emerges when the power is abused, which can lead to the occurrence of sexual harassment. This article examines whether authoritarian coaching behaviors may have any implications for female athletes' experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches. The participants in this survey were 399 female sport & PE students from Czech Republic, Greece and Norway. The study revealed that both the prevalence of authoritarian behaviors and of sexual harassment were significantly higher from male coaches. There was a higher prevalence of sexual harassment experiences from both male and female coaches among those participants who had experienced authoritarian behaviors compared to those who did not. This indicates that authoritarian behaviors are a stronger predictor of experiences of sexual harassment than the gender of the coach.

Key words: Authoritarian Behaviour, Coaching Philosophy, Gender, Power, Sexual Harassment

INTRODUCTION

The coach is generally assumed to play a major role for athletes in relation to their athletic success and failure. Hence, coaches' methods of instruction, guidance, and support provided to the athletes have been issues thoroughly explored by scholars [e.g. 1, 2, 3]. 'What is effective coaching?' and 'What makes a good coach?' are typical questions in the literature when discussing the role of the coach in successful athletic performance. For many years, the demanding and controlling authoritarian coach was regarded as the ideal. This was particularly based on Penman et al.'s [4] classic study of high-school coaches which concluded that successful coaches were more authoritarian than their counterparts. Typical of authoritarian coaching behaviors are negative feedback, directive communication, coached decision making, task-centered role orientation, and goal orientation on performance [5]. However, the authoritarian coaching approach as an ideal has been gradually weakened. Today's coaching literature emphasizes a holistic approach to coaching where the athletes' needs, feelings, and well-being are taken into account [6]. Such a perspective emphasizes that there exists multiple realities and needs among athletes. Consequently, the coach needs a flexible, rather than a fixed, approach toward coaching if the athletes are going to reach their performance potential [7]. Supporting this line of thinking, studies have shown that the most preferred coach leadership behaviors among athletes incorporate positive feedback, a focus on training and instruction, and democratic behaviors [e.g. 8, 9]. Accordingly, an important part of the coach-athlete relationship is the quality of the communication, which is assumed to have an important function in building a close and trusting relationship [10]. A coach-athlete relationship based on authoritarian coaching behaviors most likely will not take in the closeness and trust factors, which are found to be associated with the development and well-being of athletes [e.g. 11, 12, 13]. Nonetheless, Kellett [14] revealed that authoritarian behavior still is a common practice among many coaches. Our task was to examine the implications authoritarian coaching behaviors may have on female athletes. The term coaching behavior refers to a coach's distinct actions in a specific situation where the aggregations of these behaviors can be characterized as a coach's coaching style [5]. The debate of different types of coaching styles has traditionally been associated with the polarized dichotomy of a democratic versus an authoritarian style of coaching. This is a comparison of two extreme styles and most coaches do not fit exclusively into one of these limited categories. Coaches' behaviors will often not be characterized by only one type of coaching style; normally they incorporate different types of behaviors associated with different types of styles. Interactions with athletes will take place in a wide range of situations and settings and will therefore normally imply both democratic and authoritarian behaviors. It can however be argued that most coaches will have a dominating pattern of coaching behaviors based on their interpretation of what is required for being a 'good coach'. For this reason, in the text that follows we use the term 'coaching behaviors' and avoid the term 'coaching style'.

Important aspects of the coach-athlete relationship are the power relations and power differences that are in place. According to Potrac [15], all social interactions (including coach-athlete relationships) are influenced by power differences between individuals. Such power can be perceived as both "the ability of one individual to influence another person or persons" [15, p.149], "the ability to get others to do what you want them to do" [16, p.150] and "the ability to get others to do something they otherwise would not do" [17, p.150]. However, a fine line appears here in the distinction between 'power to' and 'power over'. Simplified, one can say that 'power to' represents a more positive idea of power compared to 'power over'. 'Power to' refers to a person's abilities, where it is also required to have an

opportunity to use these abilities [18]. Typical sources of this kind of power are knowledge, intellect, resources, etc. On the other hand, 'power over' relates to the ability to dominate and impose one's will on other individuals or groups, and is often associated with force and threat. The dominant person has the ability to accomplish what he or she wants others to do, and has the power to use force to make subordinate persons comply with his/her will. In other words, 'power over' can reflect the ability to carry out the power regardless of other persons' needs and desires. Hence, the risk of abuse of power becomes a central aspect in the case of 'power over'. Consequently, power relations need regulation to avoid abuse and unwanted outcomes. In the case of the coach-athlete relationship, Jowett et al. [19] argued that there exists a set of unwritten rules that define and thereby regulate the relationship. These unwritten rules are formed by the individuals' expectations for appropriate behaviors and thereby repeatedly define the relationship based on how these rules function. As a result, these rules can form the basis for positive outcomes stemming from the coach-athlete relationship, such as clarifying preferred behaviors, creating stability and predictability, enhancing interaction, and contributing toward the achievement of mutual goals. On the other hand, such unwritten rules may also be violated or abused by the coach with few, if any, consequences. In most cases, coaches usually possess much more power than the athletes due to factors such as age, gender, knowledge, access to resources, authority in decision making, and the ability to give rewards and punishments [20]. Consequently, coaches hold a position with great opportunity for dominance and authority, whereas athletes have limited influence on the unwritten rules within the relationship. This unbalanced power distribution embodies a potential ethical dilemma [5], and holds great importance in relation to authoritarian behavior, which contributes toward strengthening the unbalance of power between coaches and athletes [7].

Initially, a coach possesses different kinds of power, where the aggregate of the different types of power can be regarded as a coach's 'power capital'. Inspired by French and Raven [21] and Brackenridge [22], four main types of power essential in the coach-athlete relationship can be outlined.

First, there is 'positional power'. Coaches possess positional power due to the formal position of the coaching role. Given that sport is viewed as an institution that legitimates and reproduces hegemonic masculinity [23], the positional power of the coach may easily reinforce this type of masculinity. Hence, it is a common perception in sport that the coaching role is typically masculine and that coaches preferably should be males. Female coaches will not achieve the same degree of positional power due to the mismatch of the gendered expectations of a coach. In other words, 'positional power' contributes much more to male coaches' power capital compared to female coaches'.

Second, there is 'expert power'. Coaches will normally have (or are supposed to have) superior knowledge to athletes in the development of athletic skills and performance enhancement issues. This is based on the coach's education, sporting skills, and/or (previous) performance level, where these aspects together form the coach's expert power. Similar to the case of positional power, hegemonic masculinity represents an important influence, rooted in sport as a male manufacturer and distributor of traditional masculine values [24]. This shapes a great challenge for female coaches in modern sport, and potentially has a generic negative effect on athletes' considerations of female coaches' skills and knowledge. As a result, it is more difficult for female coaches to gain a high degree of expert power.

Third, 'physical power' is of great significance, particularly for female athletes since most are coached by males [25]. This is due to average sex differences in physical strength where most males will possess a potential physical power over most females. Hence, the potential

physical power will increase most male coaches' power capital in relation to female athletes.

And finally, there is the 'gender power' which relates to our modern society's gender order, where males maintain a cultural dominance over females [23]. This is a type of power male coaches have towards female athletes grounded in the individual and institutional male dominance in the modern society. In sum, the four types of power imply that male coaches will generally possess much more power capital than female coaches.

A serious and unwanted risk related to this unbalance emerges when the power is abused, which can lead to the occurrence of sexual harassment. According to Stockdale [26], unbalanced power distribution in interpersonal relationships and individuals with strong needs for power, control, and dominance over others appear to be important factors in understanding the occurrence of sexual harassment. This is based on the fact that exploitation is often perpetrated by authority figures, where the victim stands in a subordinate relationship to the harasser. Hence, the coach can represent a potential risk for athletes' experiences of sexual harassment. Previous research has indicated that the experiences of sexual harassment can be associated with the masculine culture of sport, and should therefore be explained by more structural conditions like unbalanced power distribution [27]. This does not mean that all coaches are harassing coaches, yet studies that have explored the experiences of sexual harassment among female athletes indicate that the coach is often the perpetrator [28-33]. Furthermore, studies of the experiences of sexual harassment in sport settings have indicated that the perpetrator usually is a man [28, 34]. However, the previous studies on experiences of sexual harassment in sport do not distinguish between experiences from male and female coaches. Hence, there is a need for an investigation that separates the experiences between male and female coaches. This is crucial to get a valid picture of the experiences of sexual harassment of coaches.

Some years ago Brackenridge [22] pointed out that authoritarian coaching behavior when combined with different kinds of power exerted by coaches, in itself could be regarded as a risk factor for sexual harassment. This was partially supported through a qualitative study by Fasting and Brackenridge [35], where the 'authoritarian coach' emerged as one out of three main types of harassing coaches, based on interviews with female athletes who had been sexually harassed by their coaches. It is therefore of great interest to investigate on a larger sample whether there is any relationship between authoritarian coaching behaviors and female athletes' experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches. Based on this introduction the following research questions are asked in this paper:

- Are there any differences in female athletes' experiences of authoritarian behaviors from male and female coaches?
- Are there any differences in female athletes' experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches?
- Is there any relationship between female athletes' experiences of authoritarian behaviors and their experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches?

METHOD

The data presented in this article are from a larger cross-cultural research project titled 'Gender Relations in Sport – The Experiences of Czech, Greek, and Norwegian Female Sport Students'. The overall aim of the project was to "develop knowledge about the influence and the meaning of gender-relations in the lives of European female sport students" [36].

The participants in the study were females who at the time of data collection were studying in sports departments of academic institutions. The overall sample included 616 female sport and PE students. To answer the research questions in this part of the study, only those who had been coached by both males and females were included due to the comparison of experiences from both male and female coaches. This limitation implied a sample of 399 sport and PE students (Czech Republic $n = 141$, Greece $n = 104$, Norway $n = 155$). Ages ranged from 17 to 45 years with a mean of 21.90 ($SD = 3.22$).

Data were gathered through a questionnaire administered at the students' institutions to ensure a high answering rate. One of the researchers was always present to elaborate on possible questions and uncertainties. The questionnaire was originally written in English. Following back-to-back translation procedures to ensure that the versions were accurate, the questionnaire was translated into Czech, Greek and Norwegian languages by the researchers before data collection.

The experiences of authoritarian coaching behaviors were measured through four questions about behaviors which were regarded as indicators of authoritarian coaching behavior [5]. The students were asked if they had experienced the following types of behaviors from the coaches; 'rough language', 'deciding everything alone', 'screaming at the athletes', or 'puts pressure on athletes'. The students were asked to mark whether they had experienced each type of a behavior from a male coach or from a female coach. If a student had marked all four behaviors, she scored as having 'experienced authoritarian coaching behaviors'. This is a kind of measurement where it is important to emphasize that it does not indicate frequency, total volume or the period of time that the experiences took place. It only indicates whether the student had experienced all four kinds of coaching behaviors or not. In other words, this is a rough measurement.

Sexual harassment is difficult to define and therefore to measure. According to the Norwegian gender equality act, sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome sexual attention that is offensive to the object of such attention" [37]. Many respondents will not label unwelcome sexual behaviors as sexual harassment, and therefore one should not ask subjectively 'Have you ever been sexually harassed?' [38]. Instead one should ask for the participants objectively experienced behaviors, without mentioning sexual harassment specifically. In this study, sexual harassment was therefore measured through three questions based on a study by Fasting and Sundgot-Borgen [39]. The students were asked if they had experienced the following situations; 'unwanted physical contact, body contact (for example pinching, hugging, fondling, being kissed against your will, etc)', 'repeated unwanted sexually suggestive glances, comments, teasing and jokes, about your body, your clothes, your private life, etc.', or 'ridiculing of your sport performance and of you as an athlete because of your gender or your sexuality (for example 'Soccer is not suitable for girls')'. The students were asked to mark whether they had experienced it from; a male coach, a peer-athlete, a member of the sport management team, a teacher, a peer-student, a family member, others outside sport, or never experienced. The questions were asked twice for labeling experiences from males and females, respectively. If a student marked 'yes' for an experience from a coach to at least one of these questions, it was considered as 'experiences of sexual harassment from coach'.

The questionnaire was coded and the data analyzed using SPSS 15.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were generated. The differences between male and female coaches in relation to the participants' experiences of authoritarian behaviors and sexual harassment were investigated by a series of nonparametric binomial tests. The relationship between the female participants' experiences of authoritarian behaviors and the

experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches were investigated by the use of a series of Pearson's chi-square tests.

RESULTS

EXPERIENCES OF AUTHORITARIAN BEHAVIORS FROM MALE AND FEMALE COACHES¹

Most participants had not experienced any authoritarian behaviors from their coaches. This is shown in Table 1. But there was a significant difference in the experiences of authoritarian behaviors from male and female coaches. As displayed in table 1, 20% of the students had experienced authoritarian behaviors from male coaches, whereas only 5% had experienced this kind of behaviors from female coaches ($p = 0.000$).

Table 1. Experiences of Authoritarian Coaching Behaviors (AB) – Male vs. Female Coaches²

	AB from male coach n (%)	AB from female coach n (%)	P (bin.)
Experienced	71 (20)	17 (5)	0.000
Never experienced	292 (80)	330 (95)	0.000
Total	363 (100)	347 (100)	

It should be noted that the participants in this study had been coached by more male (3.7 in average) than female (2.3 in average) coaches. Hence, it can be argued that the difference in the experiences of authoritarian coaching behaviors can be explained by this fact. However, analyses show that there was a significantly higher prevalence of authoritarian behaviors from male coaches compared to the experience of female coaches when controlling for the number of coaches (Table 2). For example, among those who had had one or two male coaches, 15% had experienced authoritarian behaviors from male coaches, whereas only 5% of those who had had one or two female coaches had experienced this kind of behavior from the female coaches ($p = 0.000$).

Table 2. Experiences of Authoritarian Coaching Behaviors (AB) – Male vs. Female Coaches Controlled for the Number of Coaches

Number of coaches	AB from male coach n (%)	AB from female coach n (%)	P (bin.)
1-2	19 (15)	11 (5)	0.000
3-4	18 (15)	6 (6)	0.009
≥5	34 (30)	0 (0)	0.000
Total	71 (20)	17 (5)	0.000

¹Due to small sample sizes (n) the results for Czech Republic, Greece and Norway are presented together. However, the same relationship trends between the experiences of authoritarian behaviors and gender of the coach were found in each one of three countries.

²When the total number of n in a table is lower than the number of participants this is due to unanswered questions.

EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT FROM MALE AND FEMALE COACHES³

There was also a significant difference in the experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches (Table 3). Among the participants, 20% had experienced sexual harassment from a male coach, whereas only 6% had experienced this behavior from a female coach ($p = 0.000$).

Table 3. Experiences of Sexual Harassment (SH) – Male vs. Female Coaches

	SH from male coach n (%)	SH from female coach n (%)	P (bin.)
Experienced	79 (20)	23 (6)	0.000
Never experienced	310 (80)	361 (94)	0.000
Total	389 (100)	384 (100)	

The counter-argument relative to the participants having had more male than female coaches should be considered in this case as well. However, the analyses in this situation also revealed a significantly higher prevalence in the experiences of sexual harassment from male coaches compared to the experiences with female coaches when controlling for the number of coaches (Table 4). For example, the prevalence of sexual harassment among those who had had one or two male coaches was 21%, whereas only 4% of those who had had the same number of female coaches had experienced this kind of behaviors from a female coach ($p = 0.000$).

Table 4. Experiences of Sexual Harassment (SH) – Male vs. Female Coaches

Number of coaches	SH from male coach n (%)	SH from female coach n (%)	P (bin.)
1-2	29 (21)	10 (4)	0.000
3-4	23 (18)	12 (11)	0.050
≥5	27 (23)	1 (3)	0.000
Total	79 (20)	23 (6)	0.000

AUTHORITARIAN COACHING BEHAVIORS AND EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT FROM COACHES

Tables 5 and 6 show a clear tendency of higher prevalence of sexual harassment experiences among those participants who had experienced authoritarian coaching behaviors compared to those who did not report such experiences. This was found to be true for the experiences from both male and female coaches (Tables 5 and 6). As many as 32% of those who had experienced authoritarian behaviors from male coaches had also experienced sexual harassment from a male coach, whereas only 18% had experienced sexual harassment among those who never had experienced authoritarian behaviors from a male coach ($\chi^2 (1, n = 357) = 7.341, p = 0.007$). Regarding the experiences from female coaches, 25% of those who had experienced authoritarian behaviors also experienced sexual harassment, whereas only 6% of those who had never experienced an authoritarian female coach had had this kind of experience ($\chi^2 (1, n = 338) = 8.768, p = 0.003$).

³Due to small n the results for Czech Republic, Greece and Norway are presented together. However, the same relationship trends between the experiences of sexual harassment and gender of the coach were found in each one of the three countries.

Table 5. Experiences of Sexual Harassment and Authoritarian Behaviors - From Male Coaches

	Never exp. auth. coaching behaviors n (%)	Experienced auth. coaching behaviors n (%)	Total n (%)	p (χ^2)
Never exp. SH from male coach	235 (82)	48 (68)	283 (79)	0.007
Exp. SH from male coach	51 (18)	23 (32)	74 (21)	
Total	286 (100)	71 (100)	357 (100)	

Table 6. Experiences of Sexual Harassment and Authoritarian Behaviors - From Female Coach

	Never exp. auth. coaching behaviors n (%)	Experienced auth. coaching behaviors n (%)	Total n (%)	p (χ^2)
Never exp. SH from female coach	303 (94)	12 (75)	315 (93)	0.003
Exp. SH from female coach	19 (6)	4 (25)	23 (7)	
Total	322 (100)	16 (100)	338 (100)	

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the participants in this study had experienced more authoritarian behaviors from male coaches compared to authoritarian behaviors from female coaches. This finding supports previous studies from Norway, Germany, and Czech Republic where female athletes perceived male coaches to be more authoritarian compared to female coaches [40, 41]. This difference in the experiences of authoritarian behaviors from male and female coaches should be seen in light of traditional gender stereotypes which are present in today's modern societies. Studies have consistently revealed the different beliefs people hold about men and women [e.g. 42]. Men are typically believed to be more active, competitive and individualistic; characteristics that usually are regarded as masculine. Women on the other hand, are commonly expected to be more loving, compassionate, caring, nurturing, and sympathetic; characteristics generally considered as feminine. These stereotyped views of men and women represent a structural element in all types of social settings [43], and the term 'gender regime' can be used to describe this state in a particular setting or institution [23]. Hence, the traditional masculine culture of sport can be seen as a gender regime where stereotyped images of men and women have important consequences for men and women's behaviors and how they interact.

As mentioned in the introduction, sport has been and still is a male-dominated arena, and can be regarded as a carrier of traditional masculine values such as strength, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. An important contributor to this reproduction and maintenance is the coach's historical standing as mediator of the hegemonic masculinity through the male authoritarian coach figure. This is a noticeable characteristic of the gender regime in sport, and some men will therefore reproduce the traditional masculine values through their behavior by 'coaching like a man' in order to fulfill the social expectations from the male-

dominated and identified organizational culture of sport [44]. A cultural condition exists for a male coach to act in accordance with the gender stereotype of what a male coach is supposed to be, and this stereotype incorporates characteristics of authoritarian coaching behaviors. Women coaches on the contrary are met with other expectations. Typical female gender stereotypes stand in opposition to the established masculine culture of sport. In this picture, women are not regarded to have 'what it takes' to be a good coach, and are therefore not considered as relevant candidates for many coaching positions. The limited number of females coaching male athletes and females coaching at the elite level illustrate this. Female coaches typically train children, novices or girls [45]. Elite level sport is preserved for male coaches due to both the masculine requirements of coaching and the stereotypical beliefs about female coaches. However, this traditional gender stereotyping reveals a cultural condition for both male and female coaches to act in specific but different ways. Contrary to males, female coaches are expected to be the opposite of authoritarian; e.g., more caring and inclusive. In other words, sport is a gendered practice, which has crucial implications for coaching.

Based on the mechanisms of the gender regime in sport, one could theoretically expect that the participants in this study should have had no experiences of authoritarian behaviors from female coaches. However, our analysis showed that 5% of them had experienced this kind of behavior from female coaches. Even if most female coaches are confronted with these gendered expectations which initially should result in the absence of authoritarian behaviors; they also are part of, and interact in, the established masculine culture of sports. There are indications that those females, who enter a male dominated environment like sport and the coaching role, exhibit a tendency to alter and adapt to the culture [46].

Moreover, our findings revealed that the participants in this study had experienced more sexual harassment from male than from female coaches, which supports previous studies [22]. This can be explained by the gender order in the society at large. Whereas the gender regime described a particular setting or institution, the term 'gender order' is the complete structural inventory between different gender regimes. The gender order consists of patterns of power relations between men and women, masculinities and femininities, which are widespread throughout our society [23]. Fundamental in the gender order is the global dominance of males over females, demonstrated by the dynamic characteristics of different forms of hegemonic masculinity at different arenas, such as sport [47]. Hence, the unbalanced power distribution in the coach-athlete relationship is rooted in the structural element of the gender order in our society, which thereby is of particular importance for the experiences of female athletes. The gender order may have some important implications for the power distribution in the coach-athlete relationship and thus contribute to the explanation of difference in the experiences of sexual harassment from male and female coaches. This is due to the fact that the imbalance in power between a male coach and a female athlete is much larger than in a same-sex relationship. It is important to emphasize that unbalanced power distribution does not imply the occurrence of sexual harassment *per se*, but only that the risk of abuse of power is higher when the imbalance in power is increasing. Hence, with reference to the unbalanced power distribution as an underlying explanation for the experiences of sexual harassment, we argue that this can explain the higher degree of experiences of sexual harassment from male compared to female coaches.

Lastly, our main findings show that there was a relationship between the experiences of authoritarian behaviors and the experiences of sexual harassment independent of the gender of the coach. This may indicate that authoritarian behaviors are more important for the experience of sexual harassment than the gender of the coach. Furthermore, the crucial point

in the coach-athlete relationship is not only the coach's power capital, but also how the power is carried out. The distinction between 'power to' and 'power over' is therefore of importance. In relation to 'power to', coaches can in fact with their power capital have a positive contribution to solve common challenges such as the achievement of mutual goals. 'Power over,' to the contrary, can represent a negative feature to the coach-athlete relationship. We will argue that authoritarian behaviors from coaches can be seen as an indicator of 'power over'. This is based on the central characteristics of authoritarian behaviors in coaching where the strict, demanding, and top-down decision making implies that the decisions, priorities, etc. in the coach-athlete relationship are centered to what merely the coach think is the best. Hence, the likelihood that the coach's dispositions differ from the needs and wills of the athlete is larger compared to a more holistic approach. One of the characteristics of authoritarian coaching is the risk of overlooking and intruding on the needs and wills of the athlete since the athlete is left out of important processes in the relationship. First, the chance of building a close and trusting relationship between the coach and the athlete becomes limited, which increases the risk of misunderstandings, unclear communication, etc. Second, the athlete may perceive actions or behaviors from the coach as offensive and unwelcome (e.g., harassment) even if this was not the intention of the coach. On the contrary, through a more holistic approach, the coach will be more focused on the athlete's individual differences and needs and have a better understanding of what kind of behaviors are perceived as unwelcome or offensive. Therefore, a holistic approach to coaching should be emphasized.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of our study some important consequences can be outlined. As already noted, a central aspect of sexual harassment is that the perceptions of the victim and not the intentions of the perpetrator are of importance. It is crucial to educate coaches about good communication skills and about the consequences that their behaviors may have for their athletes. This ought to be implemented at all levels of coaching education. By doing this, coaches will develop a better understanding and enhance their awareness of their athletes' needs and feelings. Consequently, the risk of unintentional actions from the coach that can be experienced as unwanted and unwelcome by the athlete may be reduced. However, in many sports it is common practice to use coaches without any formal coaching education. In addition, many coaches who in fact have a formal education continue to coach for many years without revising or updating their knowledge. For example, a study by Gilbert et al. [48] showed that many coaches devote very little time to formal coach education. Therefore, a focus on the importance of ongoing formal coach education, which includes information on sexual harassment, should be emphasized by sport organizations.

In addition, coaching behaviors and the consequences of sexual harassment should play an important role in coaches' development of a coaching philosophy. Coaching philosophy is an extensive term that implies that a coach's behaviors are based on a reflection of his/her values over coaching, the sport he/she coaches, and the relationship between individuals in general [5]. Taking into account the recommendations of today's coaching literature, a holistic approach to coaching should therefore be adopted. Kerr and Sterling [49] conclude that the promotion of an athlete-centered philosophy in coaching can represent a strong tool to combat child abuse in sport. This argument can be transferred to other unwanted behaviors, such as the case of sexual harassment. Nash et al. [50] recently argued that the development of a coaching philosophy should not just be caused by the call for prevention of unwanted behaviors; it can also benefit the coach and the athlete in more general terms.

According to their study, the knowledge and the experience of the coach entail crucial factors for developing a coherent coaching philosophy, which may subsequently result in a more holistic coaching practice. Such a practice would be based on the clarification of values and thereby increase the consideration of the responsibilities and obligations of the coach.

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