

THE EFFICIENCY EVALUATION OF TAEKWONDO COACHES¹

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Abstract: The aim of this research³ was to explore the level of agreement between athletes and taekwondo coaches regarding their efficiency, as well as to investigate the deeper meaning behind coaches' responses regarding their preparation methods for regular training sessions and collaboration with other coaches. The research sample included ten coaches from the Taekwondo Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 265 taekwondo athletes. A quantitative-qualitative research approach was employed. In the quantitative part, research instruments such as a questionnaire for coaches and a five-point Likert scale were used for the assessment and self-assessment of taekwondo coaches' professionalism, along with an interview protocol for coaches. The qualitative part of the research utilized in-depth interview techniques. In line with specific research questions and qualitative coding methods, two areas and four categories with corresponding dimensions of taekwondo coaches' efficiency were identified in the final version of the codebook. The analysis of the obtained results suggests a positive assessment and self-assessment of taekwondo coaches' efficiency, with no significant difference between athletes' assessments and coaches' self-assessments of the given factor. In the qualitative part of the research, insights from coaches' responses revealed that the majority of coaches are efficient and dedicated in their coaching endeavours.

Keywords: *competence analysis, martial arts, coaches*

INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain professionalism and efficiency in one's profession, one must also be educated. Being an educated individual today is not the same as it was ten or more years ago (Mikanović, 2015). In contemporary education, the essence, understanding, and dedication are important, rather than simply acquiring a large amount of information that is rather inapplicable and ineffective in practice (Orlović-Lovren, 2012). With globalization, the role and understanding of coaching have changed. Lepir (2021) states that the role of a sports coach has evolved, and it is more appropriate to refer to a coach as a sports educator.

Modern sports represent a bio-psycho-social phenomenon with a large number of elements. To be effective in sports, diverse and not solely sports-related education is necessary. Improvements in other sciences such as medicine, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, and law are necessary (Singer 2002, cited in Lepir, 2021). The aspiration for a higher level of knowledge involves a lifelong acquisition of abilities and skills in accordance with current sports practices and innovations (Šormaz, 2018). The efficiency and professionalism of a coach are reflected in their personal abilities to make a sports-psychological impact on the development of children and the achievement of

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top sports results (Nović & Čančarević, 2015). Through their actions and efficiency in the training process, a coach influences the formation of the child's overall personality (Bubbs, 2019).

Professional competencies of coaches can be developed through various forms of continuous education. Continuous education represents permanent and continuous improvement and enrichment of knowledge, skills, and abilities of adults (Marić, 2012). Authors mention three ways in which coaches improve their effectiveness and professional abilities:

- a) Gaining experience in practice: Coaches enhance their knowledge and abilities through continuous participation in training practice (experience forms an important part of their professional development).
- b) Formal education: This entails various types of courses. By attending courses, coaches attain formal qualifications and various forms of certificates.
- c) Action research: this has become increasingly popular among researchers (previously applied only in education and physical education, but now used in sport, as well) (Evans & Light, 2007).

Grk (2010) investigated the relationships between the advancement conditions provided by sports organizations for coaches and their awareness of the importance of professional development and enhancing coaching effectiveness. The obtained results show a positive correlation between the conditions provided by the sports organization to the coach, their personal advancement, and their awareness of the importance of progressing towards greater coaching efficiency (Grk, 2010). Vujanović (2015) states that coaches generally express the need for a greater number of professional seminars and educational courses aimed at improving coaching effectiveness, which is reflected in achieving top sports results.

Nash and Sproule conducted research in the United Kingdom. The sample of respondents included nine elite coaches in swimming, hockey, and football. Coaches believed that formal education was not crucial for the development of their careers. According to the coaches, crucial factors for personal advancement are experience and mutual collaboration among coaches. Researchers concluded that there is a "need to support and nurture networks between coaches at the local and regional levels" (Nash & Sproule, 2009, 135). Although personal experience and mutual collaboration among coaches are essential, we can conclude that a coach must do more than just perform their job. Through their work, coaches should strive for advancement and the development of professional and pedagogical skills. Through continuous dedication and improvement, coaches become more effective in their work and ensure the progress of all members within the club (Simic & Vardo, 2018).

Sports coaches carry many responsibilities that far exceed their sporting competencies (O'Neil, 2011). Vukadinović and Rađević (2019) conducted a study aiming to gather opinions on the positive and negative factors of coach-athlete relationships. Variance analysis shows that the interaction between athlete gender and type of sport is significant for all three subtests (social support, depth, and conflict). Significant differences relate to the social support that young athletes receive from coaches. Athletes in individual sports showed a higher level of social support than athletes of the same age in team sports. The results indicate that athletes in individual sports develop a more complex relationship with their coaches than female athletes, whereas in team sports, the results are opposite. Female athletes expressed a higher level of conflict with their coaches in individual sports. In team sports, males are more susceptible to conflict. All factors investigated in this study relate to the complex component of coaching effectiveness. Scientists studying sport strive to determine, through collaboration with coaches, the most important segments in identifying and developing young talented athletes (Arsić, 2017).

Through efficient work and great responsibility, coaches encounter the phenomenon of burnout syndrome. Burnout syndrome is the result of accumulated stress, arising from excessive work and dedication to the job. This syndrome occurs in many professions, most commonly in professions involving direct interaction with people. In sport, burnout syndrome is not uncommon because sport requires discipline, persistence, and perseverance over many years. Trifković (2022) addressed the patterns, symptoms, and consequences of burnout syndrome in a conducted study. It was concluded that in sport, it is necessary to take preventative action through collaborative efforts between coaches and psychologists. With the help of psychologists, athletes and coaches would work on: eliminating stressors, valuing recovery time and rest, monitoring the body's condition, and thereby raising awareness of suppressed defence mechanisms.

Athletes and coaches are known for their perseverance, resilience, and focus on victory. They are always expected to achieve top results, indicating years of stress, hard work, and dedication (Trifković, 2022). Karaleić (2019) notes that stress and athlete overload can lead to anxiety and aggressive behaviour. Athletes may experience lower self-esteem and love for the sport. These aspects manifest in weakened coaching performance, resulting in less ef-

fectiveness in training and inferior sports results. Therefore, coaching effectiveness is a complex segment of various personal competencies of coaches and personal development. To be effective in their work, coaches need years of training, self-assessment, and acceptance and correction of their errors (Martins, 2014). Effectiveness is a variable process, and all coaches should strive for progressive improvement in this process.

The aim of this research was to examine the level of congruence between athletes and taekwondo coaches regarding their effectiveness, as well as to investigate the deeper meaning of taekwondo coaches' responses regarding preparation for regular training and collaboration with other coaches.

METHOD

The methods employed in this research were selected in accordance with the defined problem, objective, and tasks of the study: the theoretical analysis and synthesis method, and survey or the descriptive research method. Depending on the applied research methods, and particularly on the context of the study and examination of variables, the following scientific research techniques were utilized: survey technique, scaling technique, in-depth (qualitative) interview, documentation analysis, and content analysis.

Participant sample

The sample of this research was selected from the population of taekwondo coaches and taekwondo athletes of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The sample consists of a total of 265 athletes from a population of approximately 2500 taekwondo athletes, and 10 male coaches out of 155 licensed taekwondo coaches. The age range of athletes is from 8 to 17 years. The average age of coaches is 41 years. Coaching experience ranges from 6 to 30 years.

Variables

In this non-experimental study, dependent and independent variables were defined. Dependent variables include: coaches' attitudes and self-assessment of personal effectiveness, as well as athletes' attitudes and assessment of the effectiveness of taekwondo coaches. Independent variables include: club, coaching experience, coaches' age, frequency and mode of collaboration with parents, and the number of official taekwondo seminars attended.

Procedure

Quantitative-qualitative research and field data collection were conducted during 2022. Prior to completing the research instruments, athletes and taekwondo coaches received necessary instructions and information about the research.

Instruments

For the purposes of this research, independently created instruments were used: 1. "Self-Assessment Scale of Taekwondo Coaches' Pedagogical Competencies" (SSTLPK), 2. "Athletes' Attitudes Scale on Coaches' Pedagogical Competencies and Motivation for Continuous Education" (SSPKMTT), 3. Questionnaire for Coaches (APT), and 4. Interview Protocol for Coaches (PIT) (Njegovan, 2022).

The first two instruments represent a five-point Likert scale where taekwondo coaches and athletes indicated their level of (dis)agreement. For each statement, athletes and coaches circled a number expressing their degree of agreement with the statement on a scale from 1 to 5. The numbers represent the following: 1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Uncertain, 4 - Mostly agree, and 5 - Strongly agree. This precise scoring method ensures objectivity in the assessment scale. For negative statements, the scoring direction is reversed. Recoding is done according to the following principle: 1 to 5, 2 to 4, 3 remains 3, 4 to 2, and 5 to 1.

The "Coaches' Self-Assessment Scale of Pedagogical Competencies" (STLPK) consists of 50 statements where taekwondo coaches indicated their level of (dis)agreement with each statement. The "Athletes' Attitudes Scale on Coaches' Pedagogical Competencies and Motivation for Continuous Education" (SSPKMTT) comprised 60 statements. The first 50 statements aligned with the coaches' scale, with adjustments made to the wording and meaning to suit the athletes' age. Through these initial 50 statements, athletes assessed coaches' pedagogical com-

petencies by indicating their level of (dis)agreement. The last 10 statements (from 51 to 60) pertain to the athletes' indirect assessment of coaches' motivation for improvement and continuous education (Njegovan, 2022).

The reliability of the instrument was established on a sample of 10 coaches from the Taekwondo Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, yielding a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.93$. The validity of the instrument was confirmed through expert analysis for methodological relevance of the instrumentation and with the aid of factor analysis.

Through the Varimax rotation, seven nearly equal and dominant factors were extracted, explaining 54% of the variance of the variable, attitudes towards coaches' pedagogical competence. The second extracted factor is the efficiency of taekwondo coaches (Table 1). This factor is determined by statements numbered: 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 46, and explains 6.7% of the variance of the variable, possessing characteristics of a dominant factor (Njegovan, 2022).

Table 1. *Efficiency of Taekwondo Coaches*

The efficiency of a taekwondo coach is determined by the following statements:
14. I am respected as a top coach and expert in my sport in sports clubs throughout RS/BH.
15. I always come prepared for training, with a clear plan for organizing the training session.
16. I have a good relationship with parents.
17. I have a very good knowledge of our sport.
18. I worry too much, even about trivial things.
21. I feel uncertain when it comes to making quick decisions.
22. I lack self-confidence (faith and assurance in myself).
24. I train competitors who are winners of European and world medals.
46. After a defeat, I provide comfort and motivation to athletes for progress.

The questionnaire for coaches consists of six open-ended questions aimed at collecting necessary objective and subjective data. The questionnaire is anonymous to encourage coaches to be as honest as possible when filling it out. The questions defined in the questionnaire are: 1. Coach's club, 2. Coach's gender, 3. Coach's age, 4. Coaching experience (How many years has the coach been coaching), 5. How often does the coach collaborate with parents, and 6. How is collaboration with parents realized (Njegovan, 2022).

The interview protocol for coaches (Table 2) consists of 10 pre-established questions. Two groups of questions are defined: those related to the pedagogical competencies of taekwondo coaches (in this case, to the efficiency of taekwondo coaches, the second determined factor) and questions related to the assessment of taekwondo coaches' motivation for continuous education. The protocol is designed for individual and indirect examination of the coaches' attitudes towards their effectiveness in their work and coaching profession. The obtained data are processed through an analysis involving five steps: transcription, coding, analysis, drawing conclusions, and report writing.

Table 2. *Interview Protocol for Taekwondo Coaches - PITT*

Questions:
1. How do you prepare for regular training sessions?
2. How often do you study sports literature (books, encyclopedias, videos, etc.)?
3. Do you study pedagogical-psychological literature?
4. How do you approach athletes when they are defeated?
5. How often do you give praise to athletes?
6. Do you collaborate with other coaches? What is your relationship like?
7. How do you motivate athletes?
8. What motivates you for personal development? How often do you attend seminars?
9. How do you separate your private life (issues) from training?
10. Are there any differences in your relationship with younger/older athletes or between boys/girls? Explain!

Source: Njegovan, 2022.

Data Analysis

The entire statistical data processing was carried out using the software package "SPSS" (SPSS 20.0 for Windows) and the statistical program "JASP" (JASP 0.16). In the process of data processing and application of descriptive statistics, the following parameters were obtained: mean (M), significance (p), and sum (Σ). Comparative results were obtained using the Mann-Whitney test (MW) (Njegovan, 2022).

RESULTS

One of the research tasks was to examine whether there is a significant difference in the assessment and self-assessment of taekwondo coaches' efficiency. The results of the examined factor are presented in tabular form in the following work (Table 3).

Table 3. *Efficiency of Taekwondo Coaches*

Coaches' self-assessment	Σt	26	27	28	31	31	33	35	37	38	39
Athletes' assessment	<i>Ms</i>	32.31	35.36	32.60	33.73	34.66	37.50	35.35	36.33	34.13	36.31
	<i>Ns</i>	35	25	15	30	20	40	20	15	30	35
	$\Sigma t - Ms$	-6.31	-8.36	-4.60	-2.73	-3.66	-4.50	-0.35	0.67	3.87	2.69

Σt (sum of coaches' self-assessment); *Ms* (mean athletes' assessment); *ns* (athlete sample); $\Sigma t - Ms$ (difference between sum of coaches' self-assessment and mean athletes' assessment)

Based on a logical analysis of the presented results, it can be stated that most coaches underestimated their efficiency compared to the athletes' assessment. The difference between athletes' assessment and coaches' self-assessment of taekwondo coaches' efficiency is 0.35 (-0.35). The average difference between coaches' self-assessment and athletes' assessment of taekwondo coaches' efficiency is -23.27.

Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that there is a positive assessment by athletes and a positive self-assessment by taekwondo coaches regarding their efficiency. Individual results Σt and *Ms* are greater than 24 (Table 4).

Table 4. *Differences in Assessment of Taekwondo Coaches' Efficiency*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>P</i>
Coaches	10	32.50		
			901.00	0.85
Athletes	265	34.92		

n (sample); *M* (mean); *W* (Mann – Whitney test); *p* (significance)

The hypothesis has been confirmed. There is no significant difference between athletes' assessment and taekwondo coaches' self-assessment regarding their efficiency ($p=0.85$), the significance level exceeds the usual threshold of 0.05.

DISCUSSION

A qualitative coding method was used to construct a code tree with corresponding domains, categories, and dimensions. In the final version of the code tree, two domains and four categories with their respective dimensions were defined (Table 5).

Table 5. *Code Tree - Preparation of Taekwondo Coaches for Regular Training and Collaboration Between Coaches*

CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES	DIMENSIONS
1. Coaches' preparation for regular training sessions	1. Preparing sports equipment 2. YouTube and videos as a tool for coaches' preparation 3. Discussions with other coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the training, necessary equipment such as: dobok, focus mitts, stopwatch, scales, etc. is packed. • Prior to the training, information is disseminated through the Internet and other media. • Interactions with other coaches for the purpose of information exchange.
2. Collaboration among coaches	4. Collaborative and friendly relationships based on respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches' relationships are based on agreement and collaboration. • Mutual respect and friendship among coaches

In accordance with specific research questions and the qualitative coding method, the defined areas, categories, and dimensions, as well as the opinions of taekwondo coaches on sports effectiveness, preparation for regular training, and collaboration with other coaches, are presented in tabular form.

1. Coaches' preparation for regular training

The first area is related to coaches' preparation for regular training. Based on the responses of ten taekwondo coaches, the following categories were identified:

Packing necessary equipment

[T6] "I have a certain order, for years now. Personal preparation, packing equipment, wearing a tracksuit or dobok, if needed I bring a scale or something similar... The focus mitts are in the gym."

[T2] "Preparation is routine, I bring dobok, belt, necessary equipment, water, etc. to training sessions" Gathering information through the Internet and other media

[T1] "Sometimes I watch a video on the internet, it is good for new ideas and applying new exercises, it breaks the monotony."

[T3] "I research YouTube or Instagram profiles of professional athletes, coaches, or clubs that post videos from training sessions."

Interactions with other coaches

[T4] "I consult with a fitness trainer or call one of the more experienced and knowledgeable coaches."

[T8] "I seek advice from other coaches and sports experts. I gladly watch the training sessions of my colleagues. I often notice some new exercises."

2. Collaboration between coaches

The second defined area pertains to collaboration between coaches. In this area, taekwondo coaches provided approximately similar responses, thus only one corresponding category was defined. Collaborative relationships are based on mutual respect, consideration of opinions, and jointly solving possible problems (Reeve, 2010).

Collaborative and friendly relationships based on respect

[T5] "They are my old friends, the relationship is excellent. We collaborate on various issues, we are there for each other, we are one big family."

[T10] "I collaborate, the relationship is good. I'm in better relationships with some. We strive to always make decisions together, none of us is in conflict."

When discussing sports-psychological competencies, we can say that they refer to various types of abilities that a sports pedagogue needs to apply in their work with young athletes (Kostović-Vranješ & Ljubetić, 2008). Due to its multifunctionality, psychological competency can be divided into eight dimensions. These dimensions are

as follows: personal, communicative, analytical, social, emotional, intercultural, developmental competency, and problem-solving skills competency (Juričić, 2014). In individual sports, athletes often demonstrate greater closeness, dedication, and complementarity with the coach compared to team sports (Rhind & Jowett, 2012), which is confirmed by the results of the aforementioned studies (Vukadinović & Rađević, 2019).

The effectiveness of a coach is reflected in the application of professional knowledge aimed at improving the training process and social connection with the athlete (Eccles & Tran, 2012). In this case, the effectiveness of a taekwondo coach relates to their knowledge of the sport and taekwondo techniques, coaching approach towards children, parents, other taekwondo coaches, the method of preparing and organizing regular training sessions, and self-assessment by the coach to apply appropriate pedagogical approaches.

Researchers Greblo-Jurakić and Keresteš (2017) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of positive aspects of a coach's leadership style. They also examined whether athletes from team and individual sports differ in their assessment of their coach's effectiveness. The results indicate that athletes in individual sports experience significantly fewer negative behaviors and a higher degree of positive behaviors from the coach compared to athletes in team sports. Many coaches are overly ambitious, and parents often have unrealistic expectations of their children, wanting them to achieve top results. Many talented young athletes often end their sports careers due to inadequate training, injuries, and insufficient intrinsic motivation (Čoh, 2019). Consequently, being a professional and efficient coach means having adequate knowledge and being able to choose values, methods, and skills based on the specific situation and the individual athlete (Zamfir, 2017). Every coach should respect the psycho-physical abilities of the athlete.

A sports pedagogue should feel love and stability in the training process. Through personal satisfaction and a pleasant relationship with athletes, the coach will be able to meet contemporary sports needs and effectively perform their job (Milanović et al., 2006). If the coach is satisfied and committed to progress, it can be assumed that the same emotions will be transferred to young athletes, and through joint and efficient work, top sports results will be achieved. Coaches should be aware of the importance of continuous education and lifelong learning. With globalization and the rapid development of sports knowledge, equipment, and technology, they should strive for continuous and lifelong learning (Kulić et al., 2010).

One of the limitations of this study could be the small sample size of taekwondo coaches. In future research, a larger sample of taekwondo coaches could be included to obtain more reliable statistical data. However, considering that the study examined the alignment between athletes' assessments and taekwondo coaches' self-assessments of their effectiveness, it can be said that the obtained results are of satisfactory nature and were as expected at the beginning of the research. The advantage of this study lies in the qualitative part, which involves in-depth interviews with coaches. Through these conversations, a deeper understanding of coaches' attitudes towards their effectiveness in work, preparation methods, and collaborative relationships with other coaches was achieved. All these factors are directly related to achieving top results for both coaches and athletes.

CONCLUSION

The professional competencies of coaches are reflected in their comprehensive work, psycho-physical impact on young athletes, achievement of sports results, and coaching effectiveness. Coaching effectiveness entails the continuous application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge aimed at enhancing competence, self-confidence, social connection, and the character of the athlete (Lepir, 2021). A coach must have an active and effective role in the overall development of young athletes' personalities. In sport, victory and defeat are often considered the best criteria for assessing coaching effectiveness, while coaches' negative behaviours are often being ignored. The situations in which such behaviors are usually ignored are those associated with success in sports (MacKinnon, 2011). However, through the training process, a coach also acts as an educator who influences the psycho-physical development of young athletes. Negative behaviours should be avoided, and the emphasis in effective coaching should primarily focus on the health and happiness of athletes.

The conducted research led to the conclusion that the majority of coaches of the Taekwondo Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are effective in their coaching work, indicating a positive assessment and self-assessment of coaches regarding their effectiveness. Seven out of ten surveyed coaches underestimated their effectiveness in comparison to the athletes' assessment. In the qualitative part of the research, it was concluded that the majority

of coaches of the Taekwondo Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly prepare for the training process. Coaches' preparation mostly includes: preparing sports equipment, using social media (mostly YouTube and watching other online videos), and discussing and sharing experiences with other coaches. Additionally, coaches of the Taekwondo Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have positive collaborative relationships based on mutual respect and progress.

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