PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNGER AND OLDER COACHES

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Abstract:

A coach is a key to developing an athlete's career and one of the most important factors in his/her success. The career of a coach is a stressful one, it requires a lot of work and dedication, and a great amount of involvement. The goal was to find any differences that might arise between coaches who were in this profession for a longer time and were thus older and those who worked as coaches for a shorter period of time. We assumed that such differences occur in coaches due to the stressfulness of the occupation. Our hypothesis was confirmed by the results obtained on the sample of 275 Slovene coaches. The group of younger coaches consisted of those who were up to 34 years old, whilst the older coaches were 35 years of age or older. Their personality traits, social skills, leadership styles, achievement motivation and self–motivation, emotional competences and attitudes were measured. The younger coaches are more accurate, more open to novelties, more conscious, more agreeable and they know how to manage their emotions better. The older coaches behave in a more democratic manner, but they more frequently behave autocratically as well. The older coaches report more frequently that working as a coach is a source of problems for them.

Key words: *personality traits, social skills, leadership styles, motivation, emotional competence, attitudes*

Introduction

Many authors define the coach as the leading character in developing an athlete's career (Tušak & Tušak, 2001; Krevsel, 2001; Martens, 1990; Gummerson, 1992; Sabock, 1985), while Solomon (2001) states that only the coach's evaluation of the athlete's confidence can predict his/her success at the oncoming competition. Dick (1997) defines coaching as "more an art form than a science", whereas Everd and Selman (1989, in Popper & Lipshitz, 1992) say that coaching is a process of creating a culture of development and an atmosphere of teaching. A coach is thus clearly an important figure in the process of achieving athletic success. A complex approach by Tušak and Tušak (2001) defines 6 areas of the coach's functioning:

- *Sports preparation process* – This is the most demanding part of the coach's work. It requires an insight into several areas surrounding sport, such as biomechanics, psychological knowledge, sports medicine, etc. A coach need not be an expert in all these areas, but he/she has to know them well enough to be willing to include experts into his/her work and to know what to expect from them.

- *Training programme execution* – This is actually the most obvious part of the coach's work. It involves the execution of strength and endurance training programmes as well as training programmes aimed at mastering technical and tactical skills and knowledge. Practice is a process of delivering such information to the trainee that he/she will be able to understand. The coach also needs to explain the goals of practice to his/her athletes.

- *Training programme effects control* – The coach should supply steady and regular feedback to his/her athletes. This is important for two reasons: first, for enabling athletes to work well and to correct constantly their mistakes, and second, from the motivational point of view. The coach should provide regular feedback on the athletes' performance.

- *Comprehensive care for the athlete* – The coach should structure the athletes' environment in such a fashion that they will be able to do their best at practice and competition – he/she should enable positive mood states and disposition by making sure that all is taken care of while travelling, that the athletes will have all the profes-

sional support they need, by checking the conditions of the competition, taking into account the individual requests of athletes, etc. It also includes being able to control the athletes' emotions and states on the competition site, which also includes the coach's ability to control his/her own emotions.

- *Counselling* – The coach should be able to help the athlete both in the matters of sports preparation and competing as well as in private affairs (school issues, partner and parent relationships, etc.).
- *Competition aspect* – The coach has to be aware that he/she is first and foremost a role model for his/her athletes – he/she has to approach the competition seriously, stay positive in all situations, and be realistic. He/she can help the athlete with his/her pre-start routine. During the competition he/she should have a positive influence on the athlete's emotions and confidence and afterwards he/she has to provide a thorough and objective analysis of the event.

The authors also researched the characteristics of coaches from the aspect of stress at work and found that coaches frequently experience large amounts of stress and that they frequently experience burnout (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984, in Dale & Weinberg, 1989). Within the dimensions of burnout Cape, Sisely and Desetrain (1987, in Dale & Weinberg, 1989) found that conflict of roles causes emotional exhaustion, that indistinctiveness of roles is connected with stronger feelings of depersonalization, and that less experience as a head coach causes decreased self-confidence. The environment is also a major factor in experiencing burnout. Coaches who spend a lot of time taking care of the athletes seem to experience burnout more often than other coaches. Dale and Weinberg (1989) explained that great amounts of energy spent with emotional involvement and care for the athletes caused the coaches to pay less attention to their own needs.

There are few studies about different aspects of development in adulthood. Super (1951, in Clarke–Stewart, Perlmutter, & Friedman, 1988) established the theory of career development as a process of adjusting oneself to the environment. He mentions five stages of career development. Phase one is supposed to be the stage of growing up (until the age of 14), in which the attitudes, interests and abilities of an individual begin to appear and stabilize, and his/her own identity begins to shape itself. The second phase is the research period, and a person is believed to be in it from 15 to 24 years of age. In that time the individual pursues and experiments with roles, looking for his/her professional orientation. This phase frequently results in considerable confusion, which ends in

the next phase, the period of enforcement (from the age from 25 to 44). In that time the individual takes an active part in his/her work environment. He/she tries to obtain promotion, develop his/her potential and improve. Promotion denial of any kind might result in a career change.

The next phase is called the period of maintenance (from 45 to 65 years of age), in which the individual wants to hold on to his/her job. People rarely change careers in this phase, also because it precedes the last phase, called the period of decrease, when individuals retire from work and employment (after the age of 65). Super (1951, in Clarke–Stewart, Perlmutter, & Friedman, 1988) pointed out that people who have many hobbies and leisure activities deal better with the retirement and are less stressed by it.

Levinson (1986) is the author of the next influential theory of development in adulthood. His theory, called "the periods of life" is based on an individual's chronological age. It also separates the main and transitional periods. In the main periods we are strengthening and improving our present position and in the transitional ones we look for possibilities for changing ourselves and our environment. He states the following stages (Levinson, 1986):

- *Transition to early adulthood* (ages from 17 to 22), which represents the transition from childhood to adulthood, leaving the primary family and adolescent group, starting university, military service and marriage.
- *Entrance to the adulthood world* (ages from 22 to 28) is the time of choices and decisions, defining the goals, the period of first employment, adapting to life in marriage.
- Ages from 28 to 33 are a *transition into the thirties*, i.e. the period of renovation, changing the life structure in which the early career development begins and an individual consolidates his/her position; thinking about previous achievements and possible change of early career model prevails (Sabadin, 2004).
- In the *stage of stabilization* (ages from 33 to 40) a person accepts some important goals; he/she has already found his/her work place and he/she is looking for promotion.
- *The transitional stage in the middle of life* (ages from 40 to 45) represents the period of middle age crisis. It represents the connection between the early and middle adulthood period. It is a revision and evaluation of early adulthood. Intensive self-evaluation can cause emotional disturbances and doubts in several aspects of life.

Levinson's (1986) study consisted of the participants younger than 45 years and that was why his description, based on their experiences, ended

with the beginning of middle adulthood. However, he gave some indications to an individual's development in later ages.

- At the age of 45–50 years we enter *middle adulthood*, where self-evaluation of our achievements ends. New choices begin to appear, we begin to create new, more mature attitudes towards our profession, marriage and society.
- *The transitional phase in the fifties* (age from 50 to 55 years) represents further work on the tasks which have been set up in the transition to middle adulthood. If there was not enough change of life structure in the earlier phases of development, a crisis could occur. In the career, further attempts to improve professional position are made (Sabadin, 2004).
- *The peak of middle adulthood* (age from 55 to 60 years) can be a period of high fulfilment for those who know how to enrich their life and wish to rejuvenate themselves.
- *The transition into late adulthood* occurs in the period between 60 and 65 years of age. People in this stage wish to finish what they have started in middle adulthood, and construct the bases for life that is to come after the retirement. Sabadin (2004) names this period *the late career period*.
- After the year of 65 comes the *late adulthood*, in which the retirement from professional work occurs.

Similar to this theory is Vaillant's theory (1977, in Rice, 1998), which says, that events are always based on what happened in the past. He talks about "the best" and "the worst" possible outcomes during key periods. Those are: in adolescence - searching for identity, in young adult period - reaching intimacy, consolidating a career and resolving the middle age crisis around the 40s. He especially emphasizes the ages between 25 and 35 when people work hard, consolidate their careers and spend time with their own young families. The most complaints about not feeling so good come from the individuals in their twenties who withdraw from their intimacy, in the thirties are the complaints about emotional troubles as a result of career failures. At this age a lot of individuals should try to find a mentor.

Based on these theories we can say that coaches are also different with regard to their age and different stages of their lives. They think and act differently and they also develop different types of relationships with their athletes.

Since coaching is a stressful occupation, we believe that the stress will affect people differently according to the stages of their development and that it might also lead to changes in the psychological characteristics of coaches. The goal of our research was to see whether this actually occurs and whether there are any differences in psychological characteristics (personality traits, leadership styles, social skills, emotional intelligence, achievement motivation and attitudes toward coaching) between younger and older coaches. According to our goal we set the following hypothesis:

There are differences between younger and older coaches in their psychological characteristics.

Method

Participants

Out of 275 Slovene coaches who participated in the research, 237 were male and 37 female, one coach did not answer this question. The average age of the coaches was 38.87 years (SD=10.01), the youngest was 21 and the oldest 64 years old. Their average in years of coaching experience was 17.47 years (SD=10.34). Further, 220 of them were top-level athletes' coaches. A coach was classified as a top coach if he/she had in the past 5 to 10 years work experience with athletes who were in junior or senior teams. The rest of 55 coaches were "National sport schools" programme coaches. There were no significant differences between the two groups of coaches (Ferjančič, 2006). As the criterion of the division into the younger and older coaches Levinson's (1986) definition of adulthood development stages as well as the definition by Gould (1978, in Rice, 1988) were used: the younger coaches were those who were up to 34 years old, and the older coaches' age exceedsed 34 years.

Instruments

The instruments used in the research were as follows:

- *Big Five Questionnaire – Slovene version* (*BFQ*) by Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, Bucik and Boben (1997). The questionnaire measures five main personality dimensions (Energy, Agreeability, Conscientiousness, Emotional stability and Openness) and contains a social desirability scale. Reliability analysis for the questionnaire reveals α coefficients between .63 and .82 and has a stable factor structure.
- *Social Skills Inventory* (*SSI*) by Riggio and Trockmorton (1986, in Lamovec, 1994). The inventory contains 7 dimensions (emotional expression, emotional sensibility, emotional control, social expression, social sensibility, social control and social manipulation). The authors report high test–retest reliability and a high internal consistency of the inventory's dimensions (α between .81 and .96).
- *Achievement Motivation Questionnaire* by Costello (1967, in Lamovec, 1988). Two dimensions pertain to the questionnaire. They are: the need for achieving success based on our own work and effort, and the need for achieving success regardless of our effort. Split-

-half reliability for the test varied between .73 and .82.

- **Self–Motivation Inventory (SMI)** by Dishman, Ickes and Morgan (1980, in Tušak, 1997). The test measures internal motivation and has high split-half reliability coefficients.
- **Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)** by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980). The scale is composed of five dimensions: training and instruction, democratic behaviour, autocratic behaviour, social support and positive feedback. The authors report test–retest reliability coefficient between .72 and .82.
- **Emotional Competence Questionnaire (VEK 45)** (Taksić, 1998). The shorter version of the emotional intelligence questionnaire contains 45 items, which converge in 3 dimensions: ability to recognize and understand emotions, ability to express and name emotions, and ability to manage emotions. It is based on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso's concept of emotional intelligence. First two dimensions have high reliability (α=.84 and .89 consecutively), the third dimensions is slightly less reliable (α=.67).
- **Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD)** (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). The instrument consists of 12 problem situations and measures 4 styles (telling, selling, participating and delegating) and adaptability of leadership. It is normally used for individual consulting. Research reveals a fairly low reliability (α coefficients ranged from .26 to .36, except for the style of telling – α=.65) (Kajtna, 2006). The instrument was used with the approval of the company Biro Praxis.
- **Attitude Inventory for Coaches (Vprašalnik stališč za trenerje)** (Kajtna & Hvalec, 2006, in Kajtna & Tušak, 2007). The inventory measures some important attitudes in sport and has 3 dimensions: development, achievement and problems. Its α coefficients range from .69 to .72 for the three dimensions.

Procedure

The results were collected within the framework of the project of the Slovene Ministry of Sport and Education called "Leadership styles in Slovene coaches". The participants were tested from October 2004 to September 2005. The majority of coaches were tested individually. The data were processed using descriptive statistics and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the SPSS 16.0 statistical programme.

Results

Table 1 shows that there are several significant differences between the younger and older coaches. The younger coaches were more accurate, more open to both culture and experience, they were more

agreeable, scored higher in conscientiousness and openness and knew how to manage their emotions better. The older coaches more frequently used both democratic and autocratic behaviour and reported work–related problems more frequently. We also found some tendencies toward statistical significance – the older coaches emphasized achievement in sport somewhat more often and delegated more, while the younger coaches tended to be friendlier. Other dimensions revealed no differences between the younger and older coaches. An interesting result is that two out of the seven measured areas of psychological functioning showed no differences between the two groups of coaches – these were *achievement motivation* and *social skills*. It seems that those two fields of psychological characteristics are similarly expressed in both the older and younger coaches.

Discussion and conclusion

In inspecting the differences between the younger and older coaches in the area of personality, we found the younger coaches to be higher in three dimensions and three subdimensions. They were more accurate, more open both to culture and experience and were more agreeable, as well as more conscientious and more open. The younger coaches were thus able to control themselves better, were more accurate, thought twice before doing something, were more orderly, scrupulous and persistent: we can say that they are very orderly and like to have a good oversight of things. We can assume that they will do their best to finish what they have started, to carry out the novelties they pursue – this can be said especially on the basis of high levels of openness. Due to their higher openness, we could call the younger coaches more cultural if we take into account some older definitions of the trait (Norman, 1963, in McCrae & Costa, 1987) or even more "mentally open". They describe themselves as better educated, well informed, as persons who show interest in novel experiences and approaches as well as open to being in contact with other cultures. This self–description is actually confirmed by the computed statistical data described in the chapter Method of this work. The older coaches could thus be described as *preferring to keep things as they are*, rather than experimenting or trying out something new.

The younger coaches can be described, due to their higher agreeability, as cooperative, friendly, unselfish, giving, generous and empathic, while the older coaches appear to be less inclined to cooperating, less friendly (especially if we take into account the tendency toward statistical significance) and less altruistic. All these data make a complete picture of the personality structure of our coaches. The younger coaches cooperate better, they are

Table 1. Comparison of the younger and the older coaches

Category	Dimension	Younger		Older			
		M	SD	M	SD	F	p(F)
Personality subdimensions	Social desirability scale	34.86	6.16	35.62	5.69	1.05	.31
	Activity	42.53	5.43	42.30	5.67	.11	.74
	Dominance	42.51	5.31	41.97	4.96	.73	.39
	Cooperation	43.53	4.75	42.58	4.72	2.60	.11
	Friendliness	40.32	5.07	39.22	4.74	3.20	.07**
	Accuracy	42.75	6.60	40.70	6.38	6.43	.01*
	Perseverance	47.86	5.11	47.24	6.02	.77	.38
	Emotional control	40.73	6.02	39.82	6.68	1.28	.26
	Impulse control	36.13	5.58	36.84	6.59	.86	.35
	Openness to culture	42.76	5.67	41.34	6.00	3.77	.05*
	Openness to experience	43.37	4.56	41.51	5.43	8.57	.00*
Personality dimensions	Energy	85.05	9.52	84.26	9.07	.46	.50
	Agreeableness	83.85	8.63	81.80	8.03	3.90	.05*
	Conscientiousness	90.61	10.06	87.94	10.49	4.31	.04*
	Emotional stability	76.86	10.47	76.66	12.08	.02	.89
	Openness	86.13	8.82	82.85	10.01	7.59	.01*
Leadership styles	Training and instruction	4.30	.38	4.36	.36	1.83	.18
	Democratic behaviour	2.87	.60	3.01	.58	4.04	.05*
	Autocratic behaviour	2.69	.48	2.84	.48	6.44	.01*
	Social support	3.29	.47	3.35	.54	.92	.34
	Positive feedback	4.52	.42	4.51	.47	.09	.77
Leadership styles – situational approach	Telling	3.35	2.18	2.92	2.20	2.47	.12
	Selling	5.22	1.82	5.23	1.93	.00	.97
	Participating	2.67	1.48	2.86	1.52	.98	.32
	Delegating	.76	1.01	1.00	1.09	3.22	.07**
	Adaptability	7.28	9.16	5.79	10.71	1.40	.24
Achievement motivation	Self-motivation	158.16	15.85	157.61	17.68	.07	.79
	Achievement based on effort	7.59	1.73	7.54	1.61	.05	.82
	Achievement regardless of effort	6.42	2.13	6.63	2.67	.48	.49
Social skills	Emotional expression	78.71	13.97	75.90	13.99	2.64	.11
	Emotional sensibility	94.66	12.21	92.22	15.12	1.99	.16
	Emotional control	79.30	15.89	77.35	7.12	.89	.35
	Social expression	87.19	19.55	85.23	18.96	.68	.41
	Social sensibility	77.62	17.19	75.92	14.90	.75	.39
	Social control	92.76	15.45	92.84	15.77	.00	.97
	Social manipulation	73.73	12.44	72.63	10.80	.60	.44
Emotional intelligence	Recognizing emotions	58.08	7.50	57.55	7.62	.32	.57
	Expressing emotions	47.39	6.79	46.62	7.30	.78	.38
	Managing emotions	60.91	5.46	59.32	6.24	4.70	.03*
Attitudes	Development	97.29	6.88	98.39	5.27	2.21	.14
	Achievement	60.20	7.49	61.72	7.21	2.84	.09**
	Problems	68.88	10.11	74.13	9.91	18.13	.00*

Legend: Younger – younger coaches (up to and 34 years of age); Older – older coaches (35 years of age and older); M – mean; SD – standard deviation; p(F) – statistical significance of F; * – statistically significant difference (p<.05), ** – tendency toward statistical significance (.05<p<.10).

friendlier and more conscientious and willing to accept novelties. They are at the beginning of their professional careers and try to find their place in a highly competitive environment. To do this, they

are forced to find something new and introduce it in practical situations – the use of novel technologies can be considered in this manner since the younger coaches are often more familiar with the Internet

which is a useful source of new ideas. This is where their openness comes forward, while their conscientiousness and agreeability are useful in enforcing these new approaches.

Sport can be a fairly rigid system and somebody's attempts to trying out something new in such a system take a lot of patience, hard work and an accurate and precise approach. One has to endure and overcome many obstacles, often caused by fellow coaches, who would prefer to keep things *the old way*. With a friendly and positive attitude and willingness to cooperate and explain their methods to work in teams, it is easier for the young coaches to actually use and validate something new. Such behaviour is consistent also with Levinson's stages of career development (Levinson, 1986). Our younger coaches span over two Levinson's stages – the stage of first employment and establishing professional role models and the early stage of career development, when the position of the first employment is stabilized (when one is satisfied with his/her job) or attempts to a new career are made (when one is unhappy with his/her job). The stages of career development thus force younger coaches to try out many new things and many new technologies in order to be able to succeed in their environment – we could perhaps even say that their personality traits are a way of adapting to their work. While both developmental stages (as defined by Levinson, 1986 and Gould (1978, in Rice, 1998) in the group of the younger coaches indicate the need to change and experiment, only one of the six stages of the older coaches implies the need to attempt something new – the transitional stage in the fifties. Attempting novelties in the group of younger coaches is thus not just an adaptation to the environment, but it is also developmentally based.

The area of leadership shows that the older coaches more frequently use both democratic and autocratic behaviour. It does not mean, however, that these are the most common types of behaviour. All the coaches frequently display behaviours that imply training and instruction and giving positive feedback, followed by offering social support to the athlete. These behaviours are equally represented in both evaluated groups of coaches. The older coaches include their athletes more in the process of decision making; trainees have the possibility to decide which goals they will pursue, which competitions they will attend, what kind of processes will be included into their sports preparation process, etc. The autocratic leadership means that coaches often say how things will be and make some choices without asking the athletes their opinion.

A result like this might seem contradictory, but can be explained with a vast experience of the older coaches. With ample knowledge on how things work in sport, they also know when they must decide by themselves and when they can allow the athlete

to choose from the different options – they have learned from previous situations when to behave autocratically and when to behave democratically. Chelladurai (1990) stated in his motivational theory of leadership in sport that correct leadership is always adapted to the leader (the coach, in our case), the one following the leader (the athlete) and the situation itself. This has been also experimentally proven. Garland and Barry (1990) found top coaches to be democratic in practice and training processes and autocratic when the athlete is in a crisis or in a tense situations such as competitions. Coaches with less experience, thus being younger coaches, have less experience on how to guide the athlete, therefore they rather rely on behaviours that focus on training and instruction, positive feedback, i.e. behaviours that can be, at least up to a point, learned from a theoretical point of view.

We can say that the older coaches have learned well when the democratic behaviour will bring better results than the autocratic one and vice versa – they can skilfully apply the required type of behaviour and can do it without hesitation, whereas the younger coaches sometimes stand back and focus on other types of behaviour. We could say that older coaches are somewhat more "expressive" in their behaviours since they use direct guidance more frequently. We also found a tendency toward statistical significance in the area of leadership (the older coaches seemed to use more delegating), but decided not to focus greatly on it since previous studies had shown that the questionnaire used, composed by Hersey and Blanchard (1988), to be somewhat unreliable (Kajtna, 2006).

There were no differences in achievement motivation and social skills, but the field of emotional intelligence revealed one difference – the younger coaches scored higher in managing their emotions. We can thus say that they can manage, monitor and deal with their own emotions and react better in highly emotional situations. This result is consistent with higher openness and cooperation as subdimensions of agreeability, and can be explained with the type of situations the younger coaches find themselves in. Achievement motivation and social skills inventories showed no differences between the younger and older coaches.

We can conclude that the social skills of a coach do not change throughout his/her career: he/she is equally able to understand, express and recognize emotions, and to control his/her emotions well through the entire professional career. He/she is also motivated equally throughout the entire coaching career from the perspective of striving for achievement. We can attribute these findings to the fact that most top coaches were themselves athletes and had learned social skills already before they started working as coaches. Sport is said to improve social skills (Kajtna & Tušak, 2007), but

the coaches gained their social skills already while practising sport, so a further coaching career does not seem to change those skills. Equally could be claimed for achievement motivation.

Younger coaches have not established themselves yet in the field of sport, they have fewer achievements and have not yet had enough time to "create a name" for themselves. They have yet to find their place in the world of coaching. We previously stated that one way to do that is to try out new approaches and accept good ideas from their older colleagues and, of course, to cooperate with them and try to get along with them. However, the younger coaches are sometimes misunderstood, or even have quarrels with the older coaches, or a club, or team managers. With good abilities to control their emotions they will know how to handle such situations calmly. The older coaches, especially top ones with several outstanding achievements (as was the case in our participants), can on the other hand, sometimes afford themselves to have misunderstandings with either younger coaches or managers since they will be less affected by the consequences, because they are already established and well recognized.

One difference was also found in the area of attitudes. The older coaches reported having a greater amount of problems, stemming from their work and related with it. They claimed that coaching is very time-consuming, and that they have little free time for themselves. They even have problems with their own vacations. They frequently complained about the financial aspects of their work, they said that their work was very stressful, etc. This is more than understandable since within the time they have been working as coaches they have been faced with a larger number of problems than their younger colleagues and it is only normal that they have noticed these problems. This can present quite an obstacle since it indicates low satisfaction with their work – loss of internal satisfaction with what we do can eventually lead to burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997), which is not surprising when the amount of stress coaches have to endure is taken into account. We believe that coaches could profit a great deal from a programme of stress reduction (Hvalec, 2005) that could be designed for them in the future. The older coaches could profit from such a programme since they are already experiencing stress in order to deal with it and the younger ones in order to avoid it.

The practical implication of this research could be in designing such a stress reduction programme, where older coaches, who are more likely to burn out, could learn how to manage stress better and avoid its negative consequences. Also, another result could have a practical implication – there seems to be quite a gap in the personality traits of the younger and older coaches. Unfortunately, this could lead to poor relationships between both generations of coaches and to communication disruptions. It would be a pity since they all could profit from one another. The younger coaches could learn a lot from the older coaches' experience, and the older coaches could learn something about the new approaches their younger colleagues are using. In other words, perhaps some sort of a mentoring programme could be established. A young coach, entering his/her profession, could have a mentor in a more experienced coach, which would help both to improve in the previously described manner and lessen the generation gap.

In our hypothesis we assumed that there will be differences in psychological characteristics of the younger and older coaches. This hypothesis can be confirmed since the younger coaches in our research were more open to novelties, more conscientious, more agreeable and they knew how to manage their emotions better. A greater openness for new information is both a consequence of the developmental stages the younger coaches are in and of their adaptation to the environment. The older coaches, on the other hand, have a larger amount of experience in their work and because of that they more frequently use both democratic and autocratic behaviour, which could be called expressive behaviours, but they also more frequently report experiencing problems in their line of work.

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PSIHOLOŠKE KARAKTERISTIKE MLAĐIH I STARIJIH TRENERA

Trener je ključna osoba u razvoju sportaševe sportske karijere i jedan od najvažnijih faktora njegova uspjeha. Trenerska karijera je stresna, zahtijeva puno rada i posvećenosti tom poslu te visoku razinu uključenosti u proces sportskog razvoja sportaša. Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je utvrditi razlike koje se mogu pojaviti između trenera koji se trenerskim poslom bave duže vrijeme, zbog čega se smatraju starijim trenerima, i onih koji se tim poslom bave nešto kraće. Pretpostavka je da se psihološke razlike između trenera javljaju zbog stresa s kojim se susreću u svojoj profesiji. Naša pretpostavka je potvrđena dobivenim rezultatima na uzorku od 275 slovenskih trenera. Grupu mlađih trenera činili su treneri u dobi do 34 godine, dok su grupu starijih trenera činili treneri u dobi od 35 godina i više. Mjerene su njihove osobine ličnosti, socijalne vještine, stilovi rukovođenja, motivacija postignuća i samo-motivacija te socio-emocionalne kompetencije i stavovi. Mlađi treneri su pedantniji, otvoreniji prema novitetima, savjesniji, ugodniji i znaju bolje upravljati vlastitim emocijama. Stariji treneri su demokratičniji, ali se isto tako i češće ponašaju autokratično. Također, stariji treneri češće izjavljuju kako je trenerski posao za njih izvor problema.

Ključne riječi: *osobine ličnosti, socijalne vještine, stilovi rukovođenja, motivacija, socio-emocionalne kompetencije, stavovi*