

Determining Best Practice in Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of Sport Coaches: Lessons from the Traditional Business Environment

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ABSTRACT

This article undertakes a review of traditional performance management appraisals against 360-degree feedback applied to the sport coaching setting. The role of the coach is central to the overall performance of any team or athlete and how this performance is managed and evaluated may have significant impacts on overall sporting success. The benefits and challenges of both traditional performance appraisals and 360-degree feedback are outlined within this review and it is argued that although at potentially greater time cost to an organisation, 360-degree feedback for coaches is a superior method of managing and evaluating coaching performance therefore potentially facilitating high levels of sustainable long-term sporting success.

Key words: 360-Degree Feedback, Management, Performance Appraisal, Sports Coaching

INTRODUCTION

There is a consensus that the sports coach is central to the coach-athlete performance relationship and thus an imperative component in contributing to improving sporting success. It is essential therefore, that an individual performance management system is in place that helps coach's understand their role in achieving team or individual athlete objectives, and in turn contributing to overall organisational success for the entity they are employed by. However, with exception of Gilbert and Trudel [1] and Mallett and Côté [2] whose research are loosely related to the area, few scholars have examined this issue in depth and as such it is imperative that a system of best practice is established to ensure that organisations (such as National Governing Bodies) and teams can adequately assess coaching performance. Given the lack of empirical studies documenting any form of coaching performance management practices or processes, it can be assumed that these

systems are not embedded within the cultures of sport organisations. It is therefore necessary to examine these practices within the traditional business setting where these systems *are* embedded in the cultures of these organisations.

There is much debate on the issue of performance appraisals within all industries as employers attempt to adopt a suitable system or process that is relevant to their organisation. It is apparent that performance appraisals within the sport industry and sport coaching specifically, is regarded as an equally challenging task. The varied competencies that are required to be an effective and successful sports coach, and the fact that a sports coach's employer will often be absent when they are undertaking their roles and responsibilities further adds to the complexities of performance appraisals in this sector. In addition, uncovering the true performance of a sports coach over a given period of time can be difficult given the variety of issues that can impact on overall performance – some outside of the direct control of the individual being appraised. It is unsurprising therefore, that many sport organisations find it difficult to fully engage in this process and to adopt a system that fully meets the needs of the organisation. Through an examination of extant literature relating to performance appraisals within the traditional business environment, this article outlines two of the common appraisal systems employed in this sector and argues for the adoption of the latter within the sport coaching context. As this is a new approach to performance appraisals within sport coaching there remains a number of areas that require future empirical research that are also addressed within the closing part of this article.

SPORT ORGANISATIONS AND TRADITIONAL BUSINESS: COMMON GROUND

In traditional business, previous research has shown a distinct correlation with applying performance management models or systems and enhanced organisational results [3, 4]. It would appear that given the era of professionalization that is currently unfolding within the sport industry that such systems may also provide benefit to these organisations. Chappelet and Bayle [5] suggest that sport is playing an increasingly important role in a rapidly changing economic, political, cultural and social world. A new context for all levels of sport is developing around the globe, providing an extraordinary opportunity to discover and develop new areas of sport management in amateur and professional contexts. Many commentators [6, 7] on sport as a business suggest that management involved in the sport industry is limited by their ability to transfer knowledge of conceptual business practices to the sports business environment. However, Chelladurai [8] insists that non-profit sport organisations are in desperate need of managers/governors from within their own ranks who have the capabilities of managing the performance of their organisation and developing their strategic goals. Regardless of where they are sourced, one of the greatest challenges for sport organisations is to ensure that their current and future management have the necessary skills set to lead a high performing entity that will undoubtedly involve adapting systems and processes from the traditional business environment such as performance appraisals [5].

In traditional business organisations, McCarthy and Garavan [9] suggest employees must receive constant support and feedback on their own performance and have opportunities to gain more expertise in their roles through learning and development programs. They add that performance management can only be successful if each section manager truly understands how to motivate and provide adequate learning and development resources; so that each employee or section can be sufficiently measured by the success of their direct reports, not simply by business results. The same logic can easily be applied to a sporting context with the coach assuming the position of the employee and the organisation assuming the position

of management. The setting that surrounds behavior, for example what people say and do that is praised or criticized over time can also help in supporting patterns of success. Much like the traditional business environment, the level of success an organisation experiences in applying the elements of individual performance management for coaches originates in the capability of the coach serving stakeholder needs, meeting organisational objectives, and creating a culture where the focus is aimed at building long lasting habits of success [9].

If a sport organisation can employ a suitable performance management process it may help the organisation to get the best out of coaches under its control. Weldy [10] argues this is done by setting out clear steps on how to improve performance that are based on the principles of individual learning. He claims that the philosophy that is fundamental to individual performance management is derived from the science of 'behavior analyses' commonly referred to as the psychology of learning. Van Dyk and Conradie [11] suggest learning relates to collecting and analysing information and assessing this information to bring about a positive change, and that learning from one's own activity and from others is equally important. For the learning process to be successful, a willingness to be challenged over actions and achievements must be established within the coaching context. For coaches to fully take part in the learning process, they should understand why there is a need to do so. The organisation must convey that learning can drive improvement and performance at the team/organisational level and also impact upon the development of the coach, resulting in team success along with opportunities for career progression in the coaching ranks [11].

Van Emmerik [12] believes a critical component of successful performance management implementation is that performers gain excellence in their own performance. This is achieved by developing strong high performance habits that can be applied across similar or different areas for effective problem solving and work habits. Regardless of the task, the goal at the individual level of performance is often to produce results that are of a high standard and to establish a real sense of pride in the work that they do [13]. An integral component of adopting coaching performance management practices within a sport organisation is to ensure that these methods are successful in motivating the coach in a number of areas, including improving coaching engagement as they are required to see how their contribution directly affects the organisation's high level goals [14]. An additional important component is the involvement of the sports coach in the construction phase as they are most aware of what measures should be taken in order to ensure the alignment of the appraisal with the organisation's overall objectives [15, 16]. Furthermore, organisations should ensure that each coach's role description is intrinsically linked to broader organisational objectives in order to facilitate this situation. If it is the case that sport organisational performance is directly associated with performances at the coaching level, it is necessary that this performance dimension is managed effectively. The following section provides an analysis of how sport organisations can manage coaching performances and suggests a 'best practice' approach to this issue that can be adopted by entities within this unique sector.

THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Within a sporting context, progressive organisations have used the performance appraisal as a method of evaluating coaching performance, setting goals for future performances and identifying areas of professional development required by the individual. The frequency of these appraisals are typically limited to once per year/season, however in traditional business organisations a formal appraisal process is normally conducted for an employee at a minimum of twice per year [17, 18]. DeNisi and Pritchard [17] state:

The goal of the performance management process is performance improvement, initially at the level of the individual employee, and ultimately at the level of the organisation. The ultimate goal of performance appraisal should be to provide information that will best enable managers to improve employee performance. Thus, ideally, the performance appraisal provides information to help managers manage in such a way that employee [and organisational] performance improves. [17, p. 255]

Many traditional business organisations also use the performance appraisal as a means of assessing employee eligibility for performance based pay and possible promotion opportunities [19, 20]. Manasa and Reddy [18] suggest that the goal of any performance management system is to ensure alignment and effective management of all organisational resources in order to facilitate optimal performance. They add that the manner in which performance is managed within organisations is a key indicator of overall success or failure. As the coach is clearly an integral resource impacting upon organisational performance in the sporting context, it is therefore essential that performance appraisal processes are adequate and create value within the broader performance management system. There are a number of benefits associated with the effective use of performance appraisals; most notably the potential for improved communication between the organisation and the coach. Conversely, challenges such as dissatisfaction with the process and potential legal issues if implemented incorrectly have also been highlighted more recently within the management literature [18, 21]. An additional challenge in relation to the performance appraisal process is that a system that is deemed to be effective within one sport organisation or for one particular sport dependent on their specific roles and responsibilities may not be as appropriate in another. Given the varied work that coaches undertake within sports and between sports, this challenge becomes further complicated. Furthermore, although academic research relating to performance appraisals in traditional business is well established, DeNisi and Pritchard [17] argue that there is often disconnect between this research and actual practice. They suggest that “one possible explanation is that academic research has provided answers, but that practitioners are simply not aware of the relevant research findings” [17, p. 254]. It can be assumed that the same situation is present within the sport coaching research-practice relationship.

The frequency with which performance appraisals should be conducted is a source of constant debate within both research and practice. As noted above, many sport organisations simply conduct performance appraisals on an annual basis if at all [22]; however, Schraeder et al. [21] argue that conducting performance appraisals on a more regular basis (as much as quarterly) can yield positive implications both for the individual and the organisation. Furthermore, Sudarsan [23] suggests more frequent appraisals result in reducing the extent of unexpected or surprising feedback on the part of the individual at year/season end reviews. A logical argument to the frequency of performance appraisals would suggest that the nature and role of the coach’s position and the sport they are involved in is a determining factor in this decision. For instance, quarterly performance appraisals maybe more appropriate for coaches who are involved in a sport with a continuous competition schedule due to the various objectives and timeframes in which they must achieve or make progress towards particular team goals.

BENEFITS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

There are a number of potential benefits that sport organisations can avail of as a direct result of implementing effective performance appraisal processes. The general consensus in the extant literature is that performance appraisals are an important mechanism involved in performance management within all types of organisations and have the potential to increase an organisation's effectiveness [24, 25]. There are also a number of other specific benefits that are associated with the implementation of this practice:

- Improved Communication: the issue of poor communication has been identified as one of the major concerns within the extant literature [21, 25]. As performance appraisals involve direct discussion, feedback and an opportunity to comment on issues with the coach's employers, they contribute positively to removing concerns about uncertainty. Furthermore, Schraeder et al. [21] claim feedback from an organisation relating to individual performance is of crucial importance in guiding increased levels of performance.
- The establishment of trust between the organisation and the coach: developing mutual trust between the individual and the organisation has been noted as an important factor in facilitating individual high-performance results [26]. Schraeder et al. [21] add that distrust between individuals and the organisation can negatively impact upon performance and causes a lack of engagement on the part of the individual with organisational objectives. Mayer and Gavin's [27] article discussing the issue of "trust" within organisations, also claims effective performance appraisals can contribute to increased trust within the organisation and therefore impact positively upon individual performance.
- Linking coaching performance to strategy: best practice in terms of organisational management supported by literature [21] suggests that individual employee roles and responsibilities should be intrinsically linked to overall organisational objectives. In a sporting context, this allows both the coach and the organisation to see exactly how the coach contributes to the organisation and how their performance can directly impact upon strategic imperatives. Performance appraisals create an ideal situation for both coaches and the organisation to discuss individual roles and responsibilities, set specific future performance criteria and provide opportunity to establish a "line of sight" between individual performance and overall organisational goals.
- Identification of training and professional development needs: as coaching performance contributes to overall organisational performance, it is important that coaches are given access to training and professional development opportunities in order to better serve their organisation. In order for the performance appraisal process to be complete, the coach must be presented with opportunities to address areas of required development identified within the appraisal itself. In addition, using performance appraisals to identify the development needs of newly employed coaches in particular has been shown to be most effective [28].
- Finally, the performance appraisal process is an instrumental tool in facilitating

performance improvement, which is the ultimate goal of any performance management practice either at coaching or organisational levels. At a fundamental level, if performance appraisals are conducted within sport organisations, coaches will receive feedback on their performance and have the opportunity to become more effective based upon that constructive feedback. In support of this, Schraeder et al. [21] claim there is a general consensus in the management literature that effective human resource practices such as performance appraisals are positively related to individual and organisational performance improvement.

CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Although, as argued above there are clear positive implications for sport organisations that are successful in implementing an effective performance appraisal system for coaches; the practice is also fraught with a number of challenges that must be acknowledged in order to ensure the process is not counterproductive. For instance, in terms of linking strategy to individual coaching performances, it has been noted that this can be a difficult task to undertake particularly in sport organisations that employ a large number of coaches much like organisations with large numbers of employees within the traditional business setting [29]. Ultimately, problematic issues relating to performance appraisals arise as a result of two main factors: a) the performance appraisal process is not being implemented correctly, or b) the process is not suitable to the manner in which the organisation operates [21]. The challenges that arise from these issues are:

- It has been noted that individual employees including coaches often have negative perceptions about the performance appraisal process. The evaluation and critique of an individual's performance can cause stress and discomfort [25] that may ultimately lead to a short- or long-term drop in performance. In addition, the anticipation of a performance appraisal meeting may cause tension between coaches and the organisation.
- The rating system used to evaluate coaching performance should be appropriate and applied to all coaches of a similar level within the organisation. The appraiser should also be completely unbiased in assessing the individual's performance otherwise the performance appraisal process will serve little benefit to the organisation [21]. Furthermore, the appraiser must not provide skewed results to either the organisation or the coach about their performance in order to please coaches and avoid conflict.
- If the performance appraisal process is not conducted appropriately and professionally, the organisation may be subject to legal issues that could arise as a result. Although not originally designed for this purpose, many organisations use the performance appraisal process as a tool to help in promotion decisions and disciplinary actions [25]. Therefore, if the process is implemented incorrectly, the organisation may be left open to legal action.
- For sport organisations that use a performance-based pay scheme, the performance appraisal is a significant factor in determining how much of a bonus a coach is entitled to. This further illustrates why the process must be

implemented appropriately as if it is not, the benefits of other initiatives such as performance-based pay become completely undermined.

In addition to the various challenges set out above, research has suggested that individuals within organisations who operate a performance appraisal system are often not satisfied with the process [23]. This dissatisfaction generally relates to three major areas within the appraisal process: the subjectivity of the appraiser; the level of supplied feedback; and the frequency of the reviews, with individuals suggesting that more regular reviews would be beneficial [23].

Although they are a useful instrument in assessing coaching performance, traditional performance appraisals (a single rater) have become synonymous with a number of defects even when implemented correctly within organisations. A major theme within the management literature relates to the negative associations around the performance appraisal interview; with both the appraiser and interviewee viewing this process as a stressful event and a chore that must be carried out to satisfy senior management. Furthermore, Folger and Cropanzano [30] claim that employers are not good at supplying and dealing with negative feedback in relation to the performance appraisal interview and as a consequence, the results of the appraisal interview can often be inflated. If this is indeed the case as Folger and Cropanzano [30] would suggest, then any performance management system operating at the coaching level may be undermined and will ultimately create a negative impact upon organisational-wide performance. Additionally, as a result of inflated appraisals from employers, a coach's expectations of pay and promotion may not be congruent with their actual performance and position within the organisation. Finally, a major area of concern in relation to the performance appraisal of individuals as outlined by Lepsinger and Lucia [31] is that their performances may be judged on the results of the athlete/team as opposed to their leadership skills and other behaviours that actually constitute individual performance.

Perhaps the most limiting factor within the traditional performance appraisal process is that the athletes' voice is often marginalized in such appraisals yet they are the ones who spend more time and therefore should have a more informed view of the quality of the coach's work [2]. Due to the above difficulties associated with the traditional performance appraisal process, it is clear that a new method is required to ensure coaching performances are being managed and assessed appropriately. In response to this growing concern over the potential defects within the performance appraisal process, traditional business organisations have successfully re-developed the process that eliminates issues of appraiser bias and provides robust feedback to the individual (and the organisation) on various aspects of their job performance - this process has been labelled 360-degree feedback. It is argued that this process should also be adopted by sport organisations who wish to employ a robust system of evaluating and monitoring individual coaching performances.

360-DEGREE FEEDBACK

In response to the varied challenges that are evident within the traditional performance appraisals approach as outlined above, 360-degree feedback has been developed as a performance appraisal process that can take the opinions and feedback of various groups and individuals into account when determining the overall performance of a sports coach. This can be contrasted with more traditional performance appraisal approaches that simply rely on a single appraiser's discretion in determining coaching performance. This process has typically been utilised for managerial positions within organisations due to the complexities involved in carrying out the process for an organisation that may employ a vast number of individuals.

A unique aspect of the 360-degree process is that the coach can also carry out a self-assessment of their performance that can be compared and contrasted to the views of the other “raters” (other coaches, parents, athletes, sponsors, fans) involved in the process. McCarthy and Garavan [9] claim that a structured evaluation report is sought from various internal and external stakeholders of the organisation who can comment on the performance of the individual being appraised. The same structured evaluation can also be sent to the coach for the purposes of self-evaluation. Lepsinger and Lucia [31] suggest that the process involves a collection of perceptions about the individual in terms of their performance from a number of suitable “rating” sources. The authors go on to claim that the purpose of the 360-degree feedback process is to show management and the individual exactly how their behaviour (performance) impacts upon other organisational members (athletes and other coaches) and the organisation’s objectives.

360-degree feedback has been used under a number of different terms within both the extant literature and in practice. All of the terms refer to a number of individuals or groups contributing to the feedback and appraisal of the individual involved. They include: stakeholder feedback; group performance appraisal; full-circle assessment; and multi-rater feedback. For the purposes of this article, 360-degree feedback is defined as an appraisal process involving a number of different sources as opposed to traditional performance appraisals undertaken by a single ‘rater’. Figure 1 below, adapted from McCarthy and Garavan’s [9] study shows the various potential raters within a 360-degree feedback performance assessment in a traditional business environment. Although external groups and individuals add greater depth to the appraisal process, the most common raters within the 360-degree feedback process are the line manager; subordinates; peers; and self. In a sporting context this could be easily adapted to include other coaches, athletes, parents, and self.

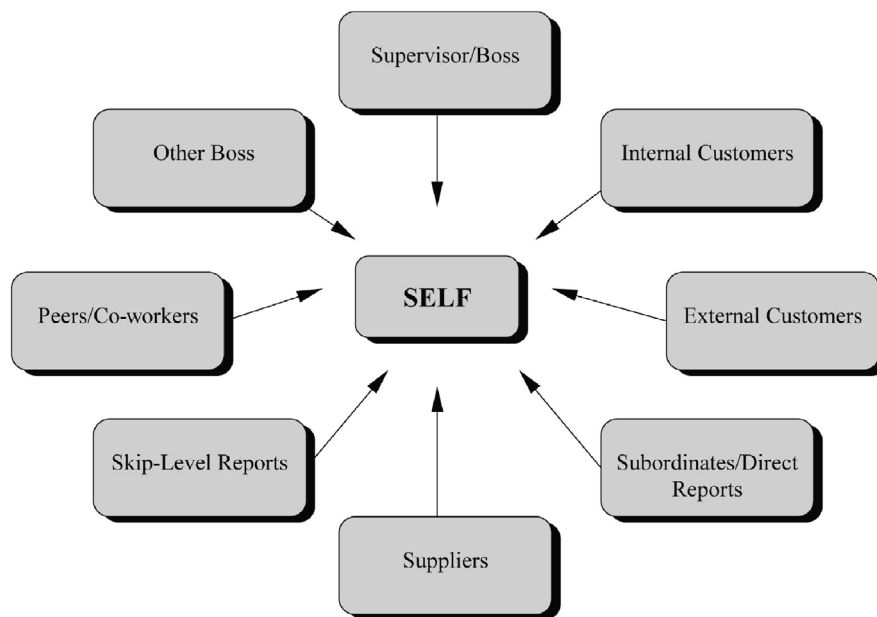


Figure 1. Potential ‘Raters’ in 360-Degree Feedback Within Traditional Business Environment, Adapted from McCarthy & Garavan [9]

360-DEGREE FEEDBACK VS. TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

When employing a 360-degree feedback approach, the multi-rater feedback is anonymous therefore potentially allowing for a more accurate review of coaching performance. In addition, the stress/confrontational aspects of the appraisal are also removed as the organisation is not required to carry out an in-depth interview with the coach. A further barrier to conducting effective appraisals as noted by Longenecker [32] can be the lack of information available to the appraiser to adequately assess the true performance of a coach. As 360-degree feedback provides opinion from a number of different sources, greater information and a more complete view of the coach's true performance can be presented. It is important to note that identification of training and development needs is still possible and perhaps more effective within 360-degree feedback, as this has been identified as one of the core necessities within any individual performance management system [12, 17].

There are a number of significant differences between a traditional performance appraisal approach (single rater) and a more modern 360-degree feedback approach (multi-rater). In the business world, traditional approaches are largely focussed on providing an evaluation of the employee's performance and are generally linked with pay and promotion prospects [33]. Although this is not necessarily a detrimental technique, as within the coaching profession, performance improvement and development are often understated and there is a large focus on past performance as opposed to creating a situation for improved future coaching performance. As a contrast, and in line with 'forward looking' principles of performance management, 360-degree feedback can place more emphasis on coaching improvement and development by supplying the coach with robust feedback in relation to their behaviours and actions within their coaching environment. It is clear that the most obvious difference between the two approaches lies in multi-rater feedback as opposed to a single rater appraisal and as such 360-degree feedback can take the complexities of the coaching profession into account. Furthermore, the various individuals and groups that the coach interacts with are clearly a more appropriate source of feedback rather than one employer who the coach may not necessarily interact with on a regular basis [9].

Table 1. Traditional Performance Appraisals vs. 360-Degree Feedback in the Traditional Business Environment

Criteria	Traditional Performance Appraisals	360-Degree Feedback
Why?	To provide an evaluation on past performances from a single source.	To provide an evaluation and feedback on behaviour and development needs from multiple sources.
Raters	Line Manager.	Peers, subordinates, self, line manager, external individuals and groups.
Feedback	The line manager cannot have anonymity.	The multiple sources of feedback are able to remain anonymous.
Assessment	Both quantitative and qualitative methods employed.	Generally only quantitative methods employed.
Outcomes	Salary, promotion, transfer, demotion, training and development.	A strong focus on training and development in order to improve future performance. Can also be linked to compensation.
Frequency	Annual event.	Continuous, not limited to specific time frames.
Applicability	All employees.	All employees (unless staff numbers too vast).

BENEFITS OF 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK

360-degree feedback essentially encompasses all of the same benefits as traditional performance appraisals, but also adds a number of ‘unique’ benefits. The sole reliance on one individual to assess a coach’s performance as in traditional appraisals is widely considered a flawed process and the multi-rater feedback of the 360-degree approach is now being regarded as best practice, most notably within the traditional business environment [34]. Athletes, other coaches, administrators and parents along with the organisation have the ability to provide a more comprehensive outlook of the coach’s performance as opposed to single-rater feedback. This type of appraisal is especially relevant within sport organisations where the roles and responsibilities of coaches can vary greatly and the organisation may not have the opportunity to observe all areas of the coach’s performance [34]. In addition to above, there are also a number of associated benefits with the successful implementation of a 360-degree feedback approach:

- The process can address a number of performance dimensions that may not have previously been addressed under traditional performance appraisals or that have been neglected by the organisation. Furthermore, by collecting feedback from a number of raters, sources of conflict may be uncovered or resolved, in turn leading to a more effective coaching and organisational performance. Also, through seeking feedback from a number of sources, the organisation is demonstrating to athletes and other sources of feedback that they value their opinions within the organisation [33].
- Garavan, Morley and Flynn [35] suggest that 360-degree feedback facilitates increased employee involvement within the organisation and improved workforce relationships. In terms of benefits for the individual, Garavan et al. [35] claim the feedback from the appraisal process is more valid as it is generated from multiple sources. The authors go on to suggest that this feedback helps the individual become more “self-aware” [35, p. 141], which is an important step in terms of learning and development.
- The anonymity aspect of 360-degree feedback allows athletes to praise or criticise coaches without fear of repercussions or confrontation. This also has benefits for the coach as it illuminates their weaknesses and gives them an opportunity to identify specific areas for performance improvement.
- Finally, Hoffman [36] argues: where there is no set standard of performance within an organisation in relation to certain tasks or activities, feedback from multiple sources can help create such a standard, through conveying expectations of different facets and dimensions within the organisation. This again can be applied within the coaching context through garnering the feedback of a variety of sources including other coaches.

CHALLENGES OF 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK

Although there are clear benefits as outlined above for the implementation of a 360-degree feedback approach within the coaching environment, there are also a number of acknowledged limitations and challenges. It may take a number of attempts at implementing a successful approach where raters are comfortable with providing the feedback that is required to make 360-degree feedback a success. Furthermore, the coach being assessed may

not initially be accepting of the feedback as they may not understand that it is simply used as a method of improving performance standards. In time, coaches must understand that the appraisal system is not solely about criticism, but rather identifying areas for improvement that in turn will increase potential for salary progression and promotion (if applicable). The reluctance to accept feedback may be more evident where performance based pay is based on the 360-degree feedback approach [34]. Similarly, a further challenge in relation to this is that raters may not be as willing to criticise the coach if they are aware that the coach's salary or promotion prospects may be adversely affected as a consequence. Some further challenges associated with 360-degree feedback include:

- Inevitably, feedback will not always be positive and in certain circumstances, the coach may receive a large amount of negative feedback. This may cause a defensive reaction within the coach and lead to demotivation within their coaching role. This will ultimately cause a decrease in coaching and therefore team performance.
- When 360-degree feedback is introduced as an organisation-wide appraisal system for a number of coaches, the potential for 'survey fatigue' exists due to the possibility of individuals filling out a number of feedback reports about their relationship with various coaches [33, 37]. This situation may result in less than accurate evaluation reports. The organisation should make an effort to ensure no individuals are charged with filling out excessive amounts of reports to create an 'even spread' across the entire organisation.
- A further limitation of the 360-degree approach is that the feedback obtained from the multiple raters is most commonly quantitative. This does not allow the raters to discuss specific areas or performance tasks where the coach may have performed well or poorly. Given the variety of roles and responsibilities that a coach may have, all of which may not be addressed within the appraisal process, this is a problematic issue. The adoption of some qualitative measures within the process would appear to address this issue to a certain extent.
- Schneier et al. [38] suggest that many 360-degree feedback systems are not directly linked to strategic imperatives within the organisation. This must be a fundamental concern for all sport organisations as in the first instance: it is imperative that coaching roles and responsibilities are directly aligned with strategy and therefore the evaluation of those roles and responsibilities must also be strategically aligned.
- Finally, 360-degree feedback requires a significant increase in cost and administrative responsibilities on the entire organisation as almost all individuals are involved at some stage of the process [33]. Traditional performance appraisals can often be conducted at a far lesser cost to the organisation. However, sport organisations must be willing to sacrifice both cost and time in the short term in order to reap the rewards of a successfully implemented 360-degree feedback approach, which potentially will provide significant more benefit to the organisation in increasing overall coaching performance as compared with the traditional approach.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As there is a lack of empirical studies relating to 360-degree feedback for coaches within sport organisations, future research should focus on confirming that this process is indeed the most appropriate system to be adopted by these entities in their efforts to accurately assess and monitor the performance of their coaching employees. It is assumed that the 360-degree process can be adapted from the traditional business environment without much change, but it is important to acknowledge the many different roles and responsibilities a coach may have as opposed to the traditional business employee who generally has a much narrower boundary of specific organisational duties.

An important area that future scholarly work should concentrate on is the number and type of stakeholder that is consulted in relation to the analysis of the coach's performance within the 360-degree feedback model. Athletes, other coaches, parents, and administrators would all appear to be suitable groups to engage with in this process, but perhaps other external groups such as sponsors and supporters may be equally as relevant to include in the feedback process. The coach is often seen as the figurehead of the team and important component of how the general public create a perception or association with that team. The coach's responsibilities often encompass more than just sport related performances and issues such as public relations are certainly required within the contemporary sport coach's skillset.

Finally, as noted above, the interpretation of feedback received by the individual being appraised can often be a problematic issue and potentially cause negative outcomes such as a decrease in motivation and performance. Additional research is required to understand how this process can be managed that may include feedback de-briefs either with the organisation's human resource department or with external business/executive coaches to help the coach being reviewed accept and decide how best to address the feedback in their review.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that there are a number of associated benefits and challenges that are synonymous with the 360-degree feedback approach in sport coaching. It is also clear that this approach can offer significantly more benefit and more accurate assessment of coaching performance in contrast to the traditional performance appraisal approach that many organisations currently employ. It is important to note that 360-degree feedback can be used as both a development tool and as a performance appraisal tool. In comparison to the traditional approach, 360-degree feedback still allows the organisation to assess target achievement; performance in relation to strategy; and any other coaching performance criteria sought by the organisation. The contrasting aspect between the two is that 360-degree feedback provides a far greater insight into the coach's overall performance as multiple aspects and responsibilities of their role are critically appraised from sources that have an intimate knowledge of those areas. Finally, the 360 degree-feedback approach can also be linked to performance based pay which may have significant consequences in terms of performance. Performance based pay can be linked to the achievement of particular goals within the process rather than an overall performance rating that makes the award of such compensation more valid. However, the focus of the process should still remain on performance improvement through the identification of areas for professional development [9, 34]. It is clear that the coach can be a significant contributor in determining overall team/organisational performance standards, and as such it is imperative that an appropriate performance appraisal and improvement system is in place. This review argues that 360-

degree feedback is the most appropriate system in terms of managing this imperative aspect of coaching performance within the contemporary sport organisation. It is anticipated that the directions for future research provided above will provide empirical results that will indeed confirm this hypothesis.

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