

## The prioritization and comparison of criteria in the selection of national table tennis coach: Sport elites perspectives

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was prioritization and comparison of criteria in the selection of Iran's national table tennis coach from the sport elite's perspectives. As this was a descriptive study, survey methodology was employed. The study population consisted of 100 table tennis sport elites of whom 80 subjects were randomly selected using the Morgan table. McLean and Zakrajsk model was used in examining as selection criterion of Iran's national table tennis coach. Questionnaire designed for this study consisted of 44 items. Measure to the importance of each items, 5-point Likert scale was selected. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used. Data were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used for demographic data description while inferential statistics such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Friedman ANOVA test for rating the criterion and Kruskal-Wallis test for testing the study's hypotheses. Data were analyzed using SPSS software. Results of this study indicate that there is no difference among the participants in prioritizing as a criterion ( $P>0.05$ ).

[Tahereh Rahmati, Mehrzad Hamidi, Habib Honari. **The prioritization and comparison of criteria in the selection of national table tennis coach: Sport elites perspectives.** *Stem Cell* 2016;7(2):60-65]. ISSN: 1945-4570 (print); ISSN: 1945-4732 (online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/stem>. 10. doi:10.7537/marscj07021610.

**Keywords:** Coaching, Criteria, Table Tennis

### 1. Introduction

A successful coach isn't an architect tactics today, but he is a manager uses his psychic abilities to lead the players into good manner and will guide them (1). The greatest goal of a coach is that do their most efforts by their most abilities to prepare their team as much as possible (2).

Kohandel (2000) told that characteristics feachers, cognitive feachers, social features, human-emotional skills, scientific-expert feachers, managerial skills, sporting characteristics, personal characteristics, and records for some group sport in selection criteria of national team coaches (3). Shafiee (2007) determined the model for the selection criteria of national team coaches swimming, diving and water polo based on the human-emotional skills, personality skills, technical skills, social feachers, management skills, work history, personal characteristics and sport skills (4). Nasiri (2008) showed that one of the outstanding points of coaches is their skills in training and introduce mighty players to national teams and coaching experience with the best rank (5). Hamidi (2010) mentioned that two main factors exist as independent variables of the Instructors choice model including technical and leadership skills (6). Baniamerian (2010) showed that personality characteristics, social characteristics, emotional – human specific, technical skills, management skills, athletic skills, work experience, and personal attributes

in the selection of national team coaches for rugby team in this study are affected (7).

Cross (1981) believes that a successful coach is one who has benefited from psychological knowledge (8). In an article on the psychology of coaching, Spink (1991) refers to a coach's communication skills as his ability to transmit messages and concepts to athletes and bilateral relationship between them (9). Gerever (1992) believes that being a successful coach depends on the development of strategies and use personal evaluation and practice (10). McLean and Zakrajsk (1996) mentioned in their research as review important factors in the in the evaluation of sports team coaches from universities in Canada, one of the factors was the use of appropriate tactics, another use scientific principles and the ability of competitors (11). Couch, Stephan (2000) mentioned that having to evaluate the skill, ability to plan and lead are The selection criteria of coaches at various levels (12). Sean McCann (2002) a member of America National Olympic Committee's Department of Psychology, believes that three key factors including knowledge and personal information, capabilities for controlling the emotional factors affecting an athlete, and having a strong and effective relationship with athletes can cause success or failure of coaches (13). Maetzo (2004) who is director of the health sector and physical education at the University of Pennsylvania of the United States in an article entitled to prepare professional coaches for the olympic

sports(2006) to express the necessary capabilities for success in the Olympic Games. positive human communication, within the framework of the olympic competitions can help to succeed in international communications. The more ability in creating an interaction with other people has led to the understanding development of the other nations and their values, and therefore to change human form in their life style. coaches as well as in the case of positive communication with other people in international competitions and travel to other countries, they can gain more success. it is necessary to be a good leader coach for the youth who were capable in planning and organising of sports games. He must know that good communicate with doctors and coach training. He must strength in international communications through the emotional control, effective negotiation and ability to negotiate and meet various people and should be able to establish effective communication. Also, it is necessary he decides on his athlete performance or team's goal and compels them to make decision to achieve that goal and choose people from their athletes which they can do their task well. In addition, it is necessary that the coach make decision to practice and competition planning, also he knows the relative techniques and tactics, the first aid, fitness and familiar with the coaching psychology(14). Martens (2004) suggests that a number of coaching features: sports knowledge, motivation and familiar with communication skills and motivation, evaluation of their work and athletes, organizing and planning. The coach - athlete relationship is an important determinant in this system. Establishing goals, setting priorities and understanding the values (both appropriate and inappropriate) placed on winning, fun and development are areas that coaches have the potential to both directly and indirectly influence the sporting experience. The most influential coaches are not only well - versed in the tactical and technical components of their sport, they understand the role that communication, sport management, sound pedagogical skills, liability, first aid, physiology and mental skills training have on the sporting experience of their athletes(15).

USA Table Tennis Federation (2004) qualified for the national coaching certification: obtaining qualification in all matters related to the area of coaching, sports psychology, goal setting, communication, attitudes, motivation, personal action planning (analysis), advanced theory and methods of training and teaching tennis, science activity in sports and philosophy in table tennis, and knowledge of rules of table tennis international tournaments and at least 3 years' experience(16). ITF coaching program in (2007) consists of the following: A good coach should be a good communicator. The very essence of coaching is

communication. Coach-Player communication: Why is it important? It conveys information, influences motivation and provides feedback in learning. Types of communication: Verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication includes talking, asking, giving feedback, giving rewards, listening and receiving feedback. Nonverbal communication includes facial expression, gestures, body movements, body posture, body contact, spatial awareness, clothes and appearance (17).

Steve Nash (2008) reported that to be successful in coaching, you must be able to effectively communicate with your players, parents, other coaches and officials. Good communication skills arise from constantly making an effort to become a better communicator. The keys to becoming an effective communicator are being able to communicate openly, positively and clearly (18). Khoran et al. (2008) reported a positive relation between leadership behaviors realized by Athlete (exercise and training, democratic behavior, social support and positive feedback) with Athlete's satisfaction, but they did not observe a meaningful relation between leader's despotic behaviors and other satisfaction indexes (19). D'Amato et al.(2009) reported to offer an in-depth look at how coaching is practiced in organizations today and what skills and business processes can most positively have an effect when implemented in a thoughtful and efficient way. As demonstrated by the detailed survey data and particularly the importance/effectiveness of scatter plot analysis, while current coaching programs are addressing certain valuable business skills like stronger communication, building bench strength and increasing conflict management, there are other critical needs that are not being addressed (20). laury Hodges (2010) Member of the Federation, criteria for obtaining 2010 U.S. Table Tennis Federation coaching record: Coaching for beginners: A test exam, coaching or teaching experience, familiarity with the basic rules of table tennis and table tennis skills, advanced coaching for preparation for the World Championships or Olympic coaching: regional document provincial, national coaching (with a research project), having won the tournament, in order to have a moral code of the table Tennis Federation, having good physical condition, first aid certificate(21). Phil, Moy(2010) as a member of the US table tennis says :One of the most important coaching factors is having the target(22).

Table Tennis Federation of the United States of America(2010) mentioned the selection criteria for the Pan American Games coach(2011): Having records acceptable, having passports to be at least six months after the expiration games, available during the game, perfect in health that can travel and accompany the team, have international acceptable experience, high - skilled mental and physical, familiar with techniques

and game strategy, motivated, to establish good relations and acceptable practical record in the Federation(23). Richard MacAfee (2011) a member of table tennis coaches association of America said: "Today's educators must be familiar with psychology techniques to practice" (24). Criteria for Manitoba hockey coach in Canada for the Canada Winter Games (2011): Having level 3 Advanced Certificate, coaching certificate, good experience in coaching, great knowledge and understanding of the strategies and new modern systems, ability to lead, make discipline and make motivate a team(25). Selection criteria of assistant coach by Basketball federation of America for olympics(2012): At least three years of coaching experience at any level, should have experience in international competition, Should not have any conflict with the United States Basketball, having basketball knowledge, character, discipline, sense of responsibility and other conditions that may be set by basketball America(26). Serguei and et al (2012) argue that experience is an important factor in any career. In this paper exist a positive relationship between experience coaching and effective use of the Timeout in basketball (27). Team's success and failure is most important in coaches' evaluation criteria, and effective coaching is closely with the victory (Brain, 2012)(28). Judy McHugh (2012) said: "Coaching can be a critical way to build executive presence and interpersonal skills. This is especially important for leaders in technical roles. They have a lot of knowledge, but may struggle to guide others and listen and internalize feedback. It not an issue of performance, but about how coaching can help these individuals develop their leadership skills"(29). Joo et al. (2012) said: "Today, it is more important than ever to establish and support strong leadership at every level in an organization. Intangible skills like communication and conflict management are the keys to success in this environment and coaching is an efficient method to address such challenges. Coaching can be targeted to address any development need or problem solving that is required and it is this adaptability that makes it particularly effective(30). Harrison et al. (2012) said: "Coaching as a leadership skill has become vital as managers need to develop employees, retain key talent, build productive teams and influence change"(31). Edmond Otis (2013) indicates that: coaches (leaders) communicate to command others, resolve conflicts, express oneself, Persuasion and Influence and share information(32). Baluguer et al.(2013) believe that people like referees, coaches and managers who work in the advanced level sports, having psychological knowledge is important for a good performance(33). Crespo et al. (2013) believe that the coaches should develop their abilities and skills

through successful control of psychological factors that this is the best result for athletes(34).

There isn't certain criteria for selection of national team coaches in the sport federations. Given the importance of coaching and selecting a qualified coach in the success of sports teams, having coaching selection criteria will help in choosing the right people. To resolve this problem, identifying criteria for selecting coaches seems necessary. As is observed several criteria can be used to select a worthy coach, but researcher established appropriate criteria for selection of national team coaches.

## 2-Materials and methods

The research method was descriptive and data collected were both qualitative and quantitative. The main objective of the study was prioritization and comparison of criterion in the selection of national table tennis coach from the perspectives of sport elites. Based on literature review and experts' views research questions were formulated. Selection criteria of national team coaches based on model McLean and Zakrajsk is divided two important part, the technical skills and leadership skills. Technical skills is divided to two important part (technical records and action ability) and leadership skills as two important parts (communication skills and specific skills). The questionnaire, with 44 items was prepared. Likert scale was selected for measuring the degree of importance of each item with each criterion having 5 as the highest value and 1 as the lowest values from low to high. Subjects read each item to determine how it is important to select the desired option. The views of 10 sports management professors were used to determine the content validity of the research. The questionnaires were distributed among 20 subjects to determine the reliability of the study; The Cronbach's Alpha (0.968) was used. In the quantitative part, data from the questionnaires were analyzed. The population was 100 table tennis elite. Based on the Morgan table, 80 elites were randomly selected as sample thus:

1 - 20 people from Directors (board members, federation committees' directors, and the board of table tennis).

2 - 10 people consisting coaches of adult, youth and adolescent national teams.

3 - 30 people consisting of youth and adult national athletes.

4 - 20 people consisting of the sport's pioneers (championship level managers who had experience in executive activities or degree of national and international tennis coaching).

After the data collected through the questionnaire, they were coded and classified. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used for demographic

description while inferential statistics such as Friedman ANOVA test was used for rating criteria, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests to determine the distribution of natural data and Kruskal-Wallis test for hypothesis testing. Data were analyzed using SPSS software.

### 3-Results

#### 1.3 The descriptive

The study samples were categorized in four groups included national athletes, national coaches, directors and pioneers.

**Table 1** - Frequency distribution and Frequency percentage of four groups of respondents

Group	Frequency	Percentage
National athlete	30	37.5
National Coaches	10	12.5
Directors	20	25
Pioneers	20	25
Total	80	100

**Table 2**- Frequency distribution and Frequency percentage of 4 groups of respondents according to educated, field of study, job, and.....

Sample	players		Coaches		Directors		pioneers		total	
	Frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage
Educated (B. A)	11	37.9	5	50	8	40	10	50	34	44
Degree (Physical Education)	17	56.7	7	70	9	47.4	8	40	41	51.9
Job(coach)	7	41.2	8	80	11	61.1	10	50	36	55.4
Championship Record(below 10 years)	18	60	2	28.6	6	42.9	6	50	32	50.8
National Team Record(below 10 years)	24	80	4	57.1	9	81.8	6	75	43	76.8
Coaching Records(11-20) years	7	41.2	4	40	9	45	8	40	28	41.8
International coaching Degree	4	21.1	6	60	10	50	7	35	27	39.1

The highest percentage frequency related to Bachelor's degree, degree in Physical Education, job,

championship record, national team record, coaching record and international coaching degree.

#### 2.3-Inferential analysis

**Table 3**- Prioritization criteria for the selection of national team coaches on the average ratings of sport elite based on the Friedman test

Index	Sample	Average	SD	Rating Average	chi-square	significance level
Communication skill	80	69.000	6.30652	3.84	227.316	0.001
Action Ability	80	62.3407	4.00507	3.16	227.316	0.001
Special Skill	80	42.0211	3.58837	1.99	227.316	0.001
Technical background	80	32.8634	3.25032	1.01	227.316	0.001

**Table4** - Test results Kolmogorov Smirnov

Dimension	Technical Background	Action ability	special skills	communication skills
Statistics				
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	2.29	2.05	2.04	1.68
Significant	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.007

Data distribution is not normal, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test the hypothesis

**Hypothesis** - There are difference between view of sport elite to prioritize the selection criteria of national team coach.

**Table 5-** Kruskal-Wallis test between views of sport elite to prioritize the selection criteria of national team coach.

Population	Sample	Rating Average	Mean	Standard Deviation	Chi-Square	Significance Level
National Player	30	36.68	206.2252	13.73544	2.681	0.444
National Coach	10	43.60				
Directors	20	46.88				
Pioneers	20	38.30				
Total	80					

There is no significant difference among the participants ( $P>0.05$ ).

#### 4-Discussion & Conclusion

Collected which includes investigation, articles and material from different books, researchers and writers in connection with the coaching and various aspects of it, though some of them didn't indicate directly to this study, but characteristics to choose coach were investigated. The results of the research suggests that only one factor wasn't efficient to choose a success coach. Therefore, a set of attributes and qualities should gather in a coach to work successfully. Since the coach is the manager and uses the art and science of managing to manage a sports team, he tries to achieve success over a relatively long period. He uses all of his abilities; physical, mental, technical and expertise to manage and lead a sports team to bring about perfection of mental and physical skills of his players and to leads them to victory as a cohesive group/unit. He should be capable in all areas of physical, mental, technical, social and human aspects and use all elements of his existence in these areas to serve the sports organization.

Kohandel (2000), Shafiee (2007) and Baniamerian (2010) showed that all communication skills, action ability, specific skills and technical skills are important. Nasiri (2008) showed that some of the important factors in coaching are action abilities and thecnical skills. Hamidi (2010) suggest technical skills and action abilities. Cross(1981), Spink(1991), Sean, McCann (2002), Tennis coaching plan(2007), Nash (2008), Khooran et al. (2008), Damato & Hannom (2009), Judi MC Hugh(2012), Brian(2012), Joo, B.K et al. (2012), Harrison (2012), Edmond, Otis (2013) stressed on communication skills. Gerver (1992), MacLean and Zakrajsek (1996), Couch, Stephan (2000), Phil, Moy (2010), Richard, McAfee (2011), Baluguer et al. (2013), Crespo et al. (2013) stressed on action abilities. Laury Hodges (2010), Basketball federation of America (2012) showed the technical skills and specific skills. Serguei etal. (2012) stated technical skills. Maetzo (2004), Martens (2004), table tennis of America (2010) and canadian Hockey team stated on four skills.

The results of the study indicate that each criterion has separate and highly valued importance. Therefore, the researcher suggests that to achieve the desired criteria in the selection of national team's coach, considering the priorities will achieve better results. There was no consistent pattern for choosing suitable coach in the Federation; therefore, it is recommended that this model can be used to choose a qualified coach in order of priority. Results of this study indicate that there is no difference among the participants in the prioritization of criteria ( $P>0.05$ ). Therefore, a unity pattern could be outlined to select national coaches.

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6/9/2016