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Introduction

According to the model of factors that affect athletic performance of young people, parent/coach relationship is one of the most important extraneous factors (Martin, Carl & Lehnertz, 1991). The understanding of parental expectations of coaches and the level of their involvement into training procedure holds a prominent meaning for progress of athletes (White, Kavussanu, Tank & Wingate, 2004). The purpose of the present study was to investigate the role of parental gender on the determination and hierarchy of their expectations of swimming coaches, as well as the level of their involvement into training procedure.

Method

The participants of the research were 215 parents of elementary and high school children, who were swimming athletes in swimming associations and clubs of Greece. A questionnaire of expectations of coaches and involvement into training procedure was used. The distribution of the questionnaire to parents was carried out by the coaches, who collected them as well. Two-way analyses of variance for dependent samples (factors: “coach characteristic” and “parental gender”) was applied for the determination of parental expectations of coaches and t – tests for independent samples were applied for the determination of the degree of parental involvement into training procedure. The level of significance was set as $p < 0.05$.

Results

The results revealed that there was not any statistically significant interaction between the two factors ($F_{9,1917} = 1.387$; $p > 0.05$). In addition there was not observed any main effect of the “parental gender” factor ($F_{1,171} = 0.000$; $p > 0.05$). On the other hand, it was found a significant main effect of the factor “characteristic of coach” ($F_{9,1917} = 112.601$; $p < 0.05$). Both male and female parents consider as most important coaching characteristic the ability to teach well, the knowledge of the skills of the sport and fairness and honesty in dealing with his athletes, while they don't consider as important his commitment to winning of his athletes or improve swimmers' chances at participated in a higher level, and also his experience as a swimmer. It was found that parents are moderately involved into training procedure of their children, and there are no differences among the gender of the parent. Focusing on the three aspects of parental involvement, directive behaviour, praise-understanding and active involvement, was perceived that parents, without regard to their gender, they used to behave directly in a low degree and they were actively involved in a moderate degree, whereas the most frequent occurrence of involvement was praise-understanding

Discussion

The parents in this study wanted very similar things from coaches as the parents did in the study of Stewart (1997; 1994). Parents consider as most important coaching characteristic the ability to teach well, while they continued to place the lowest priority on commitment to winning. Parental gender didn't seem to affect their expectations of coaches, whereas Stewart (1994) concluded to the opposite. In accordance to Wuerth, Lee & Alferman (2003), parental involvement into training procedure was found to be moderate facilitating sports development. However the degree of their involvement didn't differ according to their gender.

Conclusion

According to the above results there is no relation between parental gender and their expectations of coaches, neither in the level of their involvement into training procedure. The above results may be beneficial for parents and coaches in order to create a vigorous sports environment for even development of the young athletes.

Key words: involvement, expectations, parents, swimming

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