

# Education and Years of Experience as Determinants of Coaches' Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills for Professional Practice in Benue State

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**Abstract: Purpose:** This study assessed education and years of experience as determinants of coaching and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State to assess the differences in coaching and mentoring skills based on educational qualification and years of experience. **Methods: and Materials:** The research design that was adopted for this study was survey research design. The Population of the study consisted of all the coaches of Benue State Sports Council Makurdi. One hundred and sixty two (162) coaches of Benue State Sports Council were used for the study. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for data collection in the study. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse differences in coaches' level of education in coaching and mentoring skills. The independent sample t-test was used to find out years of experience differences in coaching and mentoring skills. All the analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) at 0.05 level of significance. **Findings:** The mean rating by coaches on their training needs ranged between 2.78 and 3.00. The analysis further indicated that, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of educational level of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conversely, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of years of experience of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p > 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** The study concluded that more experienced coaches should be aware that as coaches they are leaders and mentors and should build their capacity to maintain and sustain their wellbeing and that of others for their professional practice.

**Key Words:** Education, Experience, Coaching, Mentoring Skills, Coach, Professional Practice.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Coaching and mentoring are development techniques based on the use of one-to-one discussions to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge, or work performance. However, some companies refer to the activities of coaching and mentoring in general terms such as business coaching and mentoring, executive coaching and mentoring, skills coaching and mentoring, personal (life) coaching and mentoring, and

performance coaching and mentoring (Al Hilali *et al.*, 2020). Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be a successful coach requires knowledge and understanding of process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place (Osei, 2008). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2002) stated that "coaching targets high performance and improvement at work and usually focuses on specific skills and goals, although it may also have an impact on an Individual's attributes such as social interaction or confidence. The process typically lasts for a relatively short defined period, or forms the basis of an on-going management style". Parsloe (1999, 8) defined coaching as a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve.

Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999) stated that mentoring is an off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking. CIPD (2002) mentioned that mentoring is basically to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague uses his or her more excellent knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of a more junior or inexperienced member of staff. Therefore, mentoring can be defined as professional learning related to transfer of knowledge leading to professionalism between an experienced, knowledgeable athlete and less experienced, knowledgeable athlete.

According to Cushion *et al.* (2013) there are many similarities between coaching and mentoring. Many coaching clients will seek coaching or mentoring for performance enhancement rather than the rectification of performance issues. Coaching and mentoring have been shown to be highly successful intervention in these cases. When an organization is paying premium rates for development services, performance is usually the key pay back they are looking for. Cushion *et al.*

further asserted that indeed, most sports people and many coaches would freely admit that they have sought the advice of experienced player or coaches at some point in their career. Indeed, as has been stated, it is often considered a highly effective way for new coaches to learn their role.

With the ever-changing and conflicting professional demands, work-related stress, anxiety, burnout and increasing work–life imbalance, now more than ever, educators are in dire need to attend to the well-being of athletes (Clutterbuck, 2013). Well-being here is broadly understood to include both hedonic aspects of feeling good positive emotions and more eudemonic conducive to happiness aspects of living well that entail experiences of positive relationships, meaningfulness in life and work, senses of mastery and personal growth, autonomy, and achievement (Marback *et al.*, 2015). Working in different roles and at different levels of teaching practice and career stages, many educators are rightfully concerned with the impact that well-being or the degrees of its absence can have on everyday functioning of students in their classrooms, lectures or other learning environments, recognizing their own limited knowledge about how to develop environments conducive to student thriving and flourishing (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2014). However, the need is great for ensuring that educational professionals are also attuned to the importance of their own well-being as an essential grounding for their job satisfaction, and caring for and fostering well-being among those they serve and with whom they work (Clutterbuck, 2013).

As such, the potential impact of mentoring and coaching on the well-being of coaches and athletes transcends the sports levels and contexts. Beginning coaches need support to not only survive but also thrive, grow professionally, and build their capacity to maintain and sustain their well-being personally and of others, including through support systems such as coach induction and mentoring programs (Fourie, 2016; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2014). Coaching and mentoring are not only limited to early career stages but also instrumental for experienced coaches and team leaders (Campbell & Sullivan, 2015). Experienced coaches who no longer have the formal supports through induction can benefit from peer coaching and informal mentoring. Sports managers and leaders, likewise, value professional and institutional structures and supports in the form of mentoring and coaching aimed at leadership development (Davies, 2016). Similarly, youth taught by sport coaches at these various sports institutions increasingly find mentoring and coaching practices beneficial for their overall development and learning (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2014).

Mentoring and coaching in sports often have the dual aims of personal support and professional learning because the coachees are being helped to assimilate into new roles or responsibilities as well as to develop employment-related skills. The primary intended beneficiaries of the mentorship and coaching may be athletes, recently qualified or more experienced coaches, and instructors in club/team settings.

However, there is limited research on the role of mentoring and coaching in supporting holistic well-being and ongoing development of coaches at these various levels.

Much of the research carried out on coaches' knowledge has identified coaching experience and the observation of other coaches as primary sources. Despite Uti and Ojeme's (2007) conclusion that a paucity of research exists investigating and elucidating the mentoring processes in sport, if the activity can be described as learning from more senior others, then much mentoring does appear to be taking place in the sporting context in developed nations (Cushion, 2017). Indeed, most sports people and many coaches would freely admit that they have sought the advice of an experienced player or coach at some point in their career (McNamme & Parry, 2008). Indeed, as has been stated, coaching and mentoring is often considered a highly effective way for new coaches to learn their role (Bloom, 2018). This apprenticeship of observation, according to Mirabile (2007), leaves its mark. It does so as it is through such experiences that collective understandings begin to develop and the shared meanings about an occupational culture start to take shape. Not surprisingly, much of what a new coach learns then is through ongoing interactions in the practical coaching context, as well as through a variety of informal sources such as observing and talking with significant others and peers (Gilbert & Trudel, 2011).

The impact of coaches on the performance of athletes cannot be easily downplayed nor over emphasized since they have the responsibility of training athletes by applying various training methods, principles, tactics and strategies as well as adopting coaching and mentoring skills that are aimed at improving the overall performances of Benue State athletes. While studies outside of Benue State and Nigeria have established varying results on the coaching and mentoring skills of sports coaches based on their level of education and years of experience (Quratul Ain, Qayyum, Saira & Mahek, 2017; Benetto, 2010), these cannot be assumed to apply within the context as the culture and socio-demographic characteristics of Benue people are different and as such calls for an examination of this phenomenon in the area. Based on these factors and the recent dwindling performances of Benue State athletes, the researcher became motivated to investigate the role education and years of experience will play as determinants of coaches' training and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State to ascertain if the poor performance of the Benue State athletes can be attributed to failure of good or competent coaching or mentoring skills of the coaches.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

1. To assess the differences in coaching and mentoring skills of sports coaches in Benue State based on their level of education.

2. To assess the differences in coaching and mentoring skills of sports coaches in Benue State based on their years of experience.

#### Research Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in coaching and mentoring skills of sports coaches in Benue State based on their level of education.
2. There will be no significant difference in coaching and mentoring skills of sports coaches in Benue State based on their years of experience.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

*Study Design:* The research design used for this study was survey research design. Survey research design concerns itself with the present and attempts to determine the current status of the phenomena under investigation. Brinkerhoff Robert (2010) stated that survey research design is used to describe, interpret, access and analyze the existing conditions as at the time of the study.

*Study Location:* There was a sports council in Makurdi which is a parastatal under the Benue State Government. It is known as the Benue State Sports Council, Makurdi.

*Research Population:* The population for this study consisted of all the one hundred and sixty two (162) coaches of the Benue State Sports Council (BSSC) Makurdi. The population consisted of 128 male and 34 female coaches within the age bracket of 25 – 60 years. There were 73 senior and 89 junior coaches. The study is a census study, hence all the accessible population is used for the study. By using all the coaches for the study, the responses obtained from the coaches will represent their ideal perception of their coaching and mentoring skills for professional practice rather than making generalizations from a few coaches' perceptions.

*Instrument for Data Collection:* A structured questionnaire was used for data collection in the study. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire is divided into two sections, section A and B. Section A contained demographic information of the respondents such as sex, age, educational qualification and years of experience. Section B of the questionnaire sought information relating to coaching and mentoring skills. The instrument was a 12 item, close ended questionnaire, set on a 4-point modified Likert scale requiring respondents to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement concerning their training needs with values attached as follows: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire was validated by one expert from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education and Educational Foundations, both from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State as well as one from Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education Benue State University, Makurdi for face and content validity in line with the study objectives. The instrument had a reliability coefficient of .788. The Intrinsic Validity Coefficient of the tool was established by taking the

square root of reliability coefficients, which was found to be 0.899. Thus from these two coefficients it can be inferred that the tool is highly reliable and valid.

*Data Collection:* Data for this study was obtained through the administration of the questionnaire to respondents. This was done with the aid of four research assistants who were instructed on the administration of the questionnaire. These research assistants underwent a trial version of the data collection before the actual data collection process. The questionnaire was given to the coaches prior to their training sessions after they have been briefed about the essence of the exercise. The coaches were allowed a meaningful time to complete the questionnaire and return to the researcher on the spot to ensure high return rate.

*Data Analysis:* Data in this study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Answering the research questions was based on the following criteria

Response	Real Limits
Strongly Agree	3.5-4.0
Agree	2.5-3.49
Disagree	1.5-2.49
Strongly Disagree	0-1.49

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse differences in coaching and mentoring skills based on level of education. The independent sample t-test was used to find out differences in coaching and mentoring skills based on years of experience. The analyses considered two groups for years of experience 1 – 5 years for beginning coaches and 6 years and above for experienced coaches. All the analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) at 0.05 level of significance. In testing the hypotheses using t-test, p-value was used to test for significance. The hypotheses were rejected if p value is < 0.05 and vice versa.

## III. RESULTS

Table 1: Mean Ratings of coaches on Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills for their professional practice N=162

Coaching and Mentoring Skills as training need	Mean	SD	Remark
Understanding how to communicate a vision that generate enthusiasm and commitment among the athletes	3.00	.61	Agree
Knowing how to articulate the team's strategy and objectives	2.96	.60	Agree
Understanding how to influence, inspire and motivate the athletes.	2.93	.61	Agree
Knowing how to act as an inspirational role model for other members of the team	2.96	.63	Agree
Understanding how to take responsibility and be accountable for the team loss more than its successes.	2.87	.66	Agree

Knowing how to inspire and instil accountability within the team.	2.97	.61	Agree
Understanding how to coach others	2.91	.59	Agree
Knowing how to mentor others.	2.78	.65	Agree
Mean of Means	2.92	.62	Agree

Data in Table 1 show the mean ratings of coaches on their training needs range between 2.78 and 3.00. The mean ratings show that, although the coaches identified all the skills relating to coaching and mentoring as areas they need training, “Understanding how to communicate a vision that generate enthusiasm and commitment among the athletes” (Mean = 3.00) is the highest area of training need while “Knowing how to mentor others.” (Mean = 2.78) is the area of least training need relating to coaching and mentoring skills.

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Coaches Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills

Educational Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
SSCE	24	2.25	.442	.090
NCE/ND	54	2.52	.693	.094
HND/First Degree	59	2.90	1.012	.132
M.Sc	25	3.60	.764	.153
Total	162	2.78	.904	.071

Table 2 shows the mean analysis of coaches training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills. The results

available indicate that coaches who had only SSCE as their educational qualification had the least mean ratings of coaching and mentoring skills (2.25) while coaches with M.Sc had the highest mean rating of coaching and mentoring skills (3.60)

Table 3: Analysis of Variance on the Mean Ratings of Coaches’ Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Coaches of Different Educational Levels

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	.84	3	.28	2.66	.05	Significant
Within Groups	16.60	158	.11			
Total	17.44	161				

The ANOVA result in Table 3 show that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of coaches’ training needs relating to coaching and mentoring by coaches of different educational levels,  $F(3/158) = 2.66, p = .05$ . Since the  $p$ -value is equal to the stipulated 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected. Since, the ANOVA test is significant, a post-hoc test is conducted to ascertain the group that is significantly different from the other.

Table 4: Scheffe Multiple Comparison of Coaches’ Mean Rating to Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Educational Levels

(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
SSCE	NCE/ND	-.269	.198	.609	-.83	.29
	HND/First Degree	-.648*	.196	.014	-1.20	-.09
	M.SC	-1.350*	.231	.000	-2.00	-.70
NCE/ND	SSCE	.269	.198	.609	-.29	.83
	HND/First Degree	-.380	.152	.106	-.81	.05
	M.SC	-1.081*	.196	.000	-1.63	-.53
HND/First Degree	SSCE	.648*	.196	.014	.09	1.20
	NCE/ND	.380	.152	.106	-.05	.81
	M.SC	-.702*	.193	.005	-1.25	-.16
M.SC	SSCE	1.350*	.231	.000	.70	2.00
	NCE/ND	1.081*	.196	.000	.53	1.63
	HND/First Degree	.702*	.193	.005	.16	1.25

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Scheffe post-hoc analysis in Table 4 showed no significant difference between SSCE and NCE/ND. However there was a significant difference between SSCE and

HND/First Degree and SSCE and M.Sc. There is also no significant difference between NCE/ND and HND/First Degree, but there is a significant difference between NCE/ND

and M.SC. Lastly, there is a significant difference between HND/First Degree and M.SC. This indicates that coaching

and mentoring skills increases with educational qualification of coaches.

Table 5: t-test Comparison of Mean Rating of Coaches' Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Coaches of Different Years of Experience

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Beginning coach 1-5years	73	2.54	.33	160	-.54	.59	Not Significant
Experienced coach 6 years and above	89	2.57	.33				

The results in Table 5 show that the mean rating of training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills by experienced coaches (M=2.57, SD=.33) is not significantly greater than the mean rating by beginning coaches (M=2.54, SD=.33);  $t(160) = .54, p=.59$ . The null hypothesis is not rejected since the  $p$ -value of .59 is greater than 0.05.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study showed that the mean rating by coaches on their training needs ranged between 2.78 and 3.00 as presented in Table 1. The mean ratings show that, although the coaches identified all the skills relating to coaching and mentoring as areas they need training, "Understanding how to communicate a vision that generate enthusiasm and commitment among the athletes" (Mean = 3.00) was the highest area of training need while "Knowing how to mentor others." (Mean = 2.78) was the area of least training need relating to coaching and mentoring skills. The result of the study corroborated Likona (2001) who conducted a study on strategies for mentoring and coaching through sports participation in University Utara Malaysia and results revealed a significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on coaches being mentors of their athletes. The analysis further indicated that, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of educational level of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conversely, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of years of experience of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p > 0.05$ ). This finding is in contrast with that of Quratul Ain, Qayyum, Saira and Mahek (2017) whose study found no statistically significant difference related to mentoring practices on the basis of academic qualification and professional qualification. However they found a significant difference in mentoring practices on the basis of job experience. Their result shows that the employees having experience from 4 to 6 years were more responsive towards the mentoring practices as compared to the employees having more than 6 years of experience or having less than 4 years of experience.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Coaches have high coaching and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State. Coaches differed significantly in their coaching and mentoring skills based on their level of education. However, coaches are not significantly different in their coaching and mentoring skills

based on years of experience. Mentoring is a relationship between less experienced and more experienced coaches therefore, beginning coaches need support to not only survive but also thrive and grow professionally. In view of this, more experienced coaches should be aware that as coaches they are leaders and mentors and should build their capacity to maintain and sustain their wellbeing and that of others for their professional practice.

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