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The Role of a Performance Coach on Athlete's Loyalty: A Case Study of Youth Soccer Players in San Diego and Orange County

Authors' contribution:
A. Conception and design of the study
B. Acquisition of data
C. Analysis and interpretation of data
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Abstract. The definition of coach effectiveness is ambiguous, with several perceptions on creating an engaging learning environment. Thus, understanding why athletes remain with their respective organizations and recognizing the impact of their coach is essential to increasing retention rates. This study will review existing literature on coach effectiveness and the coach-athlete relationship impacting athlete engagement while mining primary data from elite academy soccer clubs in San Diego and Orange County. The results provide valuable information on athletes' and parents' decision(s) on what club they want to join based on the coaches' behaviors using a qualitative analysis approach. In addition, the results highlight correlations between the athletes' and parents' views of events. The study contributes' to providing practical information for youth sports organizations, who will be able to implement the recommendations of this study to enhance their coaches' education and create a positive coach-athlete experience.

Keywords: coach-athlete relationship; coach effectiveness; athlete engagement; coach education
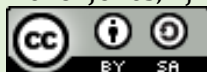
INTRODUCTION

Over the years, questions like what is coach effectiveness? What differentiates successful coaches from unsuccessful coaches in creating an engaging learning environment for their athletes? what can we learn to increase player loyalty within a youth sports organization? have been frequently asked in the coaching field. Studies investigating coach effectiveness began as early as 1976, which has guided many other researchers in the quest to define the terminology and approach (Tharp & Gallimore, 1976).

Cote & Gilbert (2009) investigated 113 articles on coaching expertise to present an integrated definition of coach effectiveness and expertise; this integrated definition is specific and conceptually grounded in the coaching, teaching, positive psychology, and athlete development literature. In this study, aligned with the context of existing phenomenology, coach effectiveness is defined as creating an opportunity to implement knowledge and skills to maximize athletes' learning and performance through prioritization technique, Kano Prioritization, Outcome-Driven Innovation, or IDEA-model approaches.

Today, over 38 million kids are currently involved in youth sports each year in the United States (Williams, 2016), illustrating the significance of creating an engaging learning environment that motivates athletes to compete and instill a passion for sports. However, various sports psychologists, youth development scholars, and researchers announced that youth participation rates drop by the time they reach 12 to 13 years old; it is a serious concern (O'Sullivan, 2015; Wallace, 2016; Diffley, 2021).

Diffley (2021) reports that an estimated 70 percent of youth sports participants drop out of physical activity by 13. According to Alvarez et al. (2009), the primary dropout rate between the ages of 10-13 is due to a lack of an enjoyable sports environment, disinterest, and a lack of pleasure when participating in a sports environment. Moreover, Guvener (2020) reports that 49 percent of parents believe their children will be less likely to participate in youth sports due to the financial factors in working-class families. In addition, the transition from high school to collegiate soccer shows a distrust, where the probability of competing in college soccer after high school is a minuscule percentage of 5.6% for men and 7.2% for women (The National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2020). Therefore, this study's theoretical and qualitative significance will contribute to the existing literature on coach effectiveness and provide practical recommendations to enhance organizational effectiveness to increase athlete retention rates within youth soccer organizations.

According to (Alvarez et al., 2009), engagement is heavily influenced by the coach-athlete relationship's quality and interests. For coaches, athletes sharing confidence in their capabilities to organize and perform collective tasks is an essential indication of whether they feel motivated to participate in a sports setting. Therefore, coaches need to learn from past experiences with different individuals and groups to understand coach effectiveness to improve the overall experience comprehensively. This is supported by previous research stating that the coaching process is inevitably related to the constraints and opportunities of human interaction (Potrac et al., 2002). This reinforces why coaches need to engineer positive practice environments to ensure athletes remain engaged. Although several considerations to factor in, such as age, skill level, and maturity, can impact the coach's delivery methods (Potrac et al., 2007). Still, it needs to be considered broadly as the athlete's perception of the coaching behaviors, highlighting a crucial link between coach leadership behavior and trust.

According to previous research, trust has been predominantly conceptualized as a psychological phenomenon (Kao et al., 2017). While (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712) state that "trust is the willingness of a party [or parties] to be vulnerable to the action[s] of another party based on the expectation[s] that the other[s] will perform a particular action[s] important to the trustor[s], irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party [or parties]." Based on this definition, trust is a positive expectation and desire of an

individual to be vulnerable. In the context of direct and repeated interactions, athletes regard their relationship with their coach as part of the process of trusting in fulfilling their commitments to the coach-athlete relationship. This impacts an athlete's performance in any sport, from professional athletes to youth athletes, building confidence in what they do.

Numerous questionnaires or scales have been created to determine leadership behavior in industry or business (i.e., leadership models based on organizational settings). For example, the path-goal theory by (House & Dessler, 1974) states that leadership effectiveness is related to how a leader can provide sufficient rewards to achieve effective and satisfying performance. In other words, effective leadership is based on the satisfying behavior of the leader. However, small existing studies have successfully or appropriately adapted to a sports context using various methods. As a result, (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). The LSS quantified the Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML), so the leadership behavior of coaches could be measured. It consisted of a 40-item LSS designed to assess leadership behavior by evaluating the hypothesized relationships within the MML.

Through their research, five distinct coaching dimensions of leadership behavior in sports were identified: (a) training and instruction, (b) democratic behavior, (c) autocratic behavior, (d) social support, and (d) positive feedback. Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) suggested that these five coaching dimensions of leadership represent a unique dimension. Training and instruction involve an individual coach who exhibits behavior that provides the roles and responsibilities in a training environment that concentrates on technical and tactical instructions to improve athletes' performances. Through this dimension, the coach will help maximize the physical potential by providing instruction on aligning the necessary tools within the sport to be successful. Thus, coaches must be clear and concise in their communication when coaching.

Democratic behavior involves a coach who allows the athletes to partake in the decision-making process, which includes preparing for practices and games, strategies, and the variety of exercises to be performed in the training sessions. According to (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980), it reflects why a coach permits participation that pertains to the team to maximize the alignment between athletes and goal setting and how they will be accomplished. On the other hand, autocratic behavior is when a coach demonstrates an apparent demand for authority. This is the coaching style that a coach exhibits to their athletes that can assess the freedom of whether a coach will allow his athletes to be strategic thinkers and involve them in the process of each decision. Social support indicates coaching behaviors that are personal and independent of athlete performance. You need to establish a relationship between the athlete and coach that provides personal attention in any sport. Thus, this dimension emphasizes the positive relationship between the athlete and coach. Finally, coaches must involve themselves in meeting their athletes' interpersonal needs either through a direct approach or by creating a culture where trust is built. Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) implies this will measure the coaches' abilities to satisfy the interpersonal needs of the athletes, either directly or indirectly, by creating a supportive environment.

The theoretical significance is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the definition of coach effectiveness and a conceptual coaching process from the perspective of players and their parents. For example, how can youth soccer coaches, who are essentially leaders, make practices more efficient for the athletes while promoting individual development and improving retention rates in the sport? Addressing these questions will benefit organizations, athletes, and coaches because a greater understanding of the relationship between these factors can lead to more enhanced training strategies.

Study Limitation

During the distribution of the questionnaires to participants, Google Forms (Jones & Osiobe, 2022) was an effective tool and provided participants with an opportunity to participate using their phones, computers, or laptops easily. However, email correspondence was not frequently read, and multiple reminders had to be sent. In addition, there was an assumption that parents would provide the questionnaires directly to the athletes; this can become problematic for the athlete if they do not want to participate in the questionnaire. Thus, a parent might force them to do it, which could impact the results and speed of their responses. Also, the following two questions came to mind while analyzing the results that would have helped in understanding the club selection choices.
1. What is the approximate distance from the club to your residence?
2. What is your reservation distance between a club and your residence?

These two questions would have helped analyze population density concerning the set questions using the Gravity Model methodology, and a more quantitative approach in compiling the data may lead to an extensive understanding of future studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature suggests that effective coaches prominently use more praise than other behaviors (Black & Weiss, 2013; Høigaard et al., 2008; Lacy and Darst, 1985; & Potrac et al., 2007). According to (Potrac et al., 2002), high levels of praise are invaluable in reinforcing specific player behaviors desired by the coach and enhancing players' self-efficacy and confidence levels. The authors' findings reinforce the phenomenon that coaches can achieve more by using positive-instead-of-negative reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement nurtures the athletes' environment to believe in themselves and their abilities. However, some studies have indicated that positive reinforcement does not instill confidence; high levels of praise can have the opposite effect (Black & Weiss, 2013; Høigaard et al., 2008; & Lacy and Darst, 1985). Furthermore, (Høigaard et al., 2008) noted that the effectiveness of 'praise' is a function of its appropriateness. In contrast, praise can be seen as an effective tool for the coach (Potrac et al., 2002) report that its overuse could be regarded as a sign of non-specific feedback, diluting its motivational effects. Additionally, (Cushion & Jones, 2002) consequently raised a question, not about the aims of coaches in providing a supportive and positive learning environment, but about such a strategy's success if the feedback is repeated, non-specific, and somewhat meaningless to the players (Cushion & Jones, 2001).

Høigaard et al.'s (2008) findings suggest a greater desire for positive feedback, which encompasses expressions of appreciation such as recognizing athletes for their work ethic and contribution to their overall performances. However, coaches who do not effectively use questioning with their athletes do so because they do not want to be perceived as lacking expertise. As a result, the coach might use more of a command approach when delivering their instruction without allowing the athletes to problem solve or learn how to be autonomous. Consequently, coaches might tend to adopt a command approach due to their coaching education, previous experiences, and when their accountability for success is a high priority for the team. Therefore, it is essential to identify the concepts coaches need to apply to support and engage their athletes. Otherwise, it can be detrimental to the individual athlete's experience and does not reflect the value of their time spent with the coach. Gearity (2009) states that more successful coaches questioned their players more frequently, about 2.8% more than less successful coaches who questioned their athletes, 1.3 % less than the successful coach on average. Based on these findings, parents could consider it as a return of investment for the financial aspect of participating in youth sports, especially across the US.

Moreover, (Balaguer et al.'s, 2005) study found that soccer coaches who provided autonomy support to their athletes demonstrated a positive link to the satisfaction of coach

autonomy support and perceptions of competence, autonomy, and relatedness; and identified a positive link to the self-determined motivation of athletes. The implications of motivational regulations on athletes' emotional responses have shown a positive relationship between the more self-determined motivated students and having an enjoyable learning environment and a negative relationship between the less self-determined students and enjoyable learning environment. The authors also discussed the central concept of the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Indicating that when the coach takes on the athletes' viewpoint, offers them a choice; considers their feelings, and explains to them why the coach demands certain behaviors, athletes feel more competent, more autonomous in their actions, and better relate to impact others from their environment significantly. The results illustrate that psychological need satisfaction produces the essential piece for self-determined motivation; when young soccer players feel satisfied with their psychological needs, they report a higher self-determination motivation (Balaguer et al., 2005).

Høigaard et al. (2008) also suggested that prolonged failure, while not directly impacting individual characteristics such as their experience, can de-motivate the athlete making them less confident in their abilities, self-efficacy, and engagement, which translates to an overall decrease in performance levels. This provides implications for organizations and how they can enhance their coach effectiveness, such as their leadership style. In this study, leadership will be defined "as a process that unifies a diverse group of people to work effectively as a team toward a common goal under varied and often [challenging circumstances] (Northouse, 2019)". Therefore, it is essential to understand the complexities of the process and how athletes perceive the coach's application. Høigaard et al. (2008) suggest within the context of sports coaching. The actual coach behavior is influenced not only by individuals' characteristics, such as experiences but by the coaching behavior that is required and preferred by the organization. Antecedent situational characteristics and individual characteristics determine this.

Potrac et al. (2007) state that the leadership power can fluctuate in line with the expertise portrayed by the coach within the training environment. While results are consistent with previous research discussions on coach responsibilities for the outcome of teams, and individual performance is a significant determinant in understanding a coach's effectiveness and determination to be in control of their athletes and coaching situations; also, arguing that the demonstration and acquisition of 'informational power' are essential for coaches to gain the respect of their athletes. This power is determined by the knowledge provided to the coach to influence a behavior change. This supports high levels of instruction, which could represent the effort of coaches to prove their knowledge and expertise to their athletes in an attempt to sustain or enhance the environment. Although, many athletes tend to experience stress and pressure in competitive sports from various avenues. As a result, social support from coaches is imperative.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a motivational theory that focuses on the factors that motivate choice[s]. The SDT proposes that social factors within an environment influence motivation while the satisfaction levels explore how the interpersonal behavior of a teacher or coach influences the student or player's motivation, well-being, and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gillet et al., 2010). The SDT reinforces the [assertion] that the social environment can impact outcomes. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation (Bandura, 1989). Athlete-centered learning and a question-based approach to coaching improve player development and motivation and provide a positive learning environment (Light & Harvey, 2017). The process of athlete-centered learning includes questions, purposeful dialogue, and social interactions created by the coach. Game-based approaches such as teaching games for understanding, game sense, play practice, and the tactical-decision

learning model exemplify athlete-centered approaches that encourage positive learning experiences (Light, 2013; Light & Harvey, 2017). In addition, athlete-centered methods provide coaches with practical tools for improving technical abilities and increasing player motivation through reflection and dialogue to assist in the learning process and therefore are related to positive pedagogy (Cassidy & Kidman, 2010; Kidman, 2005; Kirk, 2005; Mitchell et al., 1995; Pope, 2005,).

Four core features of Game Sense pedagogy can be utilized to promote positive learning experiences for players in practice: (a) highlighting the physical environment or experience, (b) asking questions to facilitate discussion and player thinking as opposed to continuing telling the players what to do, (c) providing opportunities to solve problems, (d) creating a safe and supportive environment in which mistakes are acceptable and deemed a natural part of the learning process (Light, 2013). In addition, as players progress through the positive pedagogy learning process, they are encouraged to take ownership of the practice, team activities, and team progress. Consequently, players tend to rely less on their coach and take more responsibility for their learning, which leads to empowered learners with a deep understanding of the sport (Light & Harvey, 2017).

An essential facet of the game sense approach, and positive pedagogy in general, is questioning, which fosters communications, debate, and reflection through open-ended questions that generate thinking about a range of possible solutions (Light & Harvey, 2017). An environment is continuously created where mistakes are an expected part of the learning process, and a coach's role is to be encouraging, not critical. Instead of being critical, the coach can ask a player to reflect upon and formulate a solution that may produce a better outcome. This player-centered approach fosters active learning through problem-solving. The solution-based approach focuses on the goals of a practice session and what the player can do to devise solutions to help the team accomplish a goal (Light & Harvey, 2017). Again, a collaborative, positive, and supportive environment is fostered to encourage players to speak up since the effective use of questioning can stimulate thinking and improve learning.

These game-based methods challenge the traditional approach and put the player at the center of the learning process. The traditional practice method is orderly, organized, and typically follows a progressive pattern. On the other hand, the athlete-centered game-based practice is more free-flowing and creative. Overall, the positive pedagogy approach encourages learning through social interactions and joyful experiences (Harvey, 2009; Renshaw et al., 2012), while also positive pedagogy embraces purposeful dialogue, discussion, compromise, and embracing democratic processes while making learning enjoyable (Light & Harvey, 2017).

One response to dissatisfaction is when an individual player first learns a skill. It is learned through positive coaching environments as a coach emphasizes skills; without consideration of the game, it can lack technical mastery (Hastie, 2003). For example, a player who performs well at practice that emphasizes technique and skills first may achieve little in the game portion of practice. Thus, it is essential to educate and demonstrate the application to the game scenario. This is due to the players' perceived lack of understanding of the rationale for practicing specific skills (Turner & Martinek, 1995). Game-centered teaching emphasizes decision-making and game awareness. Skills are practiced and developed as needed when critical to the game's success. Growing research demonstrates that children report games to be more fun than drills in organized sports (Benegoechea et al., 2004; Strean & Holt, 2000).

The Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) has asserted that three factors determine an individual's motivation: achievement goals, perceived ability, and achievement behavior (Nicholls, 1984). The theory's application is ascertained that the main achievement goal of every individual is maximizing the ability for skills and minimizing the portrayal of low ability

(Hood, 2009). Furthermore, the theory asserts that individuals assess their ability by demonstrating task mastery or personal improvement and comparison to peers. Therefore, those who assess their ability through personal improvement are more likely to exhibit elevated levels of intrinsic motivation (Nicholls, 1984) will lead to higher participation rates. On the contrary, when individuals assess their ability through social comparisons, it is predicted that they may develop negative expectations, which may lead them to leave the sport.

Two distinct environmental factors have different implications for motivation and achievement-related behaviors (Ames,1992; Nicholls, 1984). It has been suggested that coaches create a more task-oriented environment when they focus on participation and teamwork and when players feel they have an essential role in the team. Coaches create a more task-oriented environment when they emphasize effort and personal improvement. When individuals assess their ability through a task orientation, they experience increased levels of intrinsic motivation (Nicholls, 1984). It is detrimental when a coach pays the most attention to their best players; it can cultivate a rivalry between teammates, creating an ego-centric climate; this can create a hostile environment leading to a dropout in participation (Newton et al., 2000).

METHOD

This study will utilize a quantitative (Jones & Osiobe, 2022) approach to examine the relationships between parent and athlete perceptions of coach effectiveness and the retention rates in youth soccer organizations. Questionnaires are frequently used as a research instrument for obtaining information about opinions, perceptions, and attitudes. This will help us better understand the coach-athlete experience's perceptions in creating an engaging learning environment. Therefore, the coach-athlete experience questionnaire for the study was shared with the youth soccer parents, guardians, and athletes from the San Diego and Orange County area in California. This included background questions to identify the demographic characteristics and questions specific to coach-athlete relationships, trust, communication, projected retention rates, enthusiastic practice, and games. As a research design method, the questionnaire enabled a more expansive outreach to collect responses, assured participants' confidentiality, and effectively provided insight into the field of study.

The sampling method reasoned that participant were accessible, local, and demonstrated a representation of Southern California competitive soccer organizations from recreation to elite level. Participants included athletes aged 10 - 16 years old. The process included sending formal letters explaining the study via email to local club directors and coaches to recruit parents and players to participate (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The sample population consisted of various levels of competition and time frames competing in organized soccer organizations. The primary youth sports groups that participated in the questionnaire included City Soccer Club, Express Soccer Club, and Laguna United Football Club.

The questionnaire was created via Google Form with 28-questions, with the coach-athlete section having 21 questions (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). Clear and concise words were used, with only a couple of written answers to make it easy to complete. Participants had a choice in the first section to choose whether they were a parent/guardian or athlete responding to the questionnaire. This proceeded to the consent information page, where they were required to click next once they read through the form. Thus, these methods helped obtain 222 respondents who participated in this study ((157 (70.7%) were parents or guardians, and 65 (29.3%) were athletes) see Figure 1, Tables 1 & 2). In addition, the sample represented a wide range of levels of competition, with 35% of respondents categorizing themselves as playing on a team classified as MLS Next or Girls Academy, 29.2% categorizing themselves as Elite Academy members, and 26.2% competing within the SoCal Development

Soccer League platform (see Table 1). The Leadership Scale for Sports was the foundation for the questionnaire because it was designed to examine coaches' behaviors, their coaching style preferred by athletes, and specific sports (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978), and it was shortened to help reduce potential participant fatigue and time constraints.

After securing approval for the research through the University of Saint Katherine's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the directors of the soccer clubs in San Diego and Orange County were emailed the study questionnaire and then sent it to their directory list. Participants had a couple of weeks to complete the questionnaire; data were stored in a Google Drive and will be deleted upon the completion of the study (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The return rate will be ambiguous as it is uncertain how many of the coaches or directors were able to reach out to all their club members. Diffley (2021) reported that an 8-12% return rate is the average. With an estimated 2500 email invitations sent out by the clubs' directors, our study is within the (8%-12%) response range.
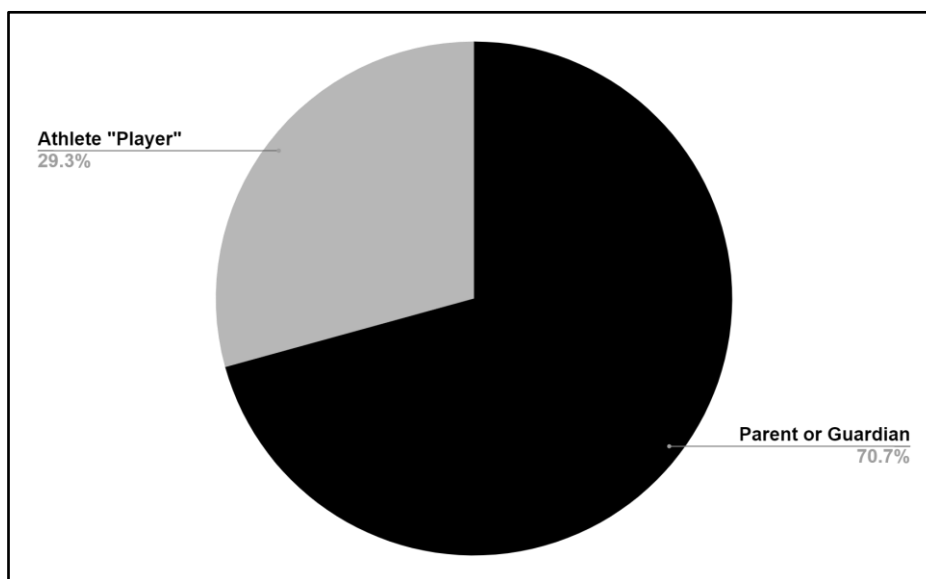

Figure 1. Number of Participants

This study aimed to investigate the influence of coaches' behaviors on the parent and athlete experiences and the retention rates in youth soccer organizations. The assumption of a good experience comes from positive participation with a good coach. Thus, the study examines their expectations and the likelihood of continuing to play soccer after their experiences. In addition, whether parents have had any previous experience coaching or players would determine their expectations within the specific environment. The QDA Miner software codified, analyzed, and visualized our findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the athletes' age, gender, ethnicity, playing experience, and league categorization. Table 1 group A shows the participants' age distribution; 55% of athletes in the study were between the ages of 13 to 15, 23% between ages 10-12, 17% between ages 16-19, and 5% were older than 19 years. Table 1 group B presents the gender distribution of the participants; 85% identified as male, 14% as female, and 2% as non-binary. (Table 1 group C) shows the ethnicity distribution of the participants; where 62% identified as Caucasian, 14% as Hispanic or Latino, 9% as Asian, 5% as Black or African American, 2% as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaskan Native, Egyptian, American Italian, Filipino, and mixed race.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics for The Athletes

Group	Category	N	%
A	Age Level		
	10-12	15	23
	13-15	33	55
	16-19	11	17
	20<	3	5
	Gender		
	Male	55	85
B	Female	9	14
	Other	1	2
	Ethnicity		
	Caucasian; Non-Hispanic	40	62
	Hispanic or Latino	9	14
	Black or African American	3	5
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	2
C	Asian	6	9
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	2
	Egyptian	1	2
	Mixed Raced	2	3
	American Italian	1	2
	Filipino	1	2
	Years Playing Soccer		
	1-4	4	6
D	5-8	35	53
	9-12	23	35
	13<	3	5
	Level of Competition		
	MLS Next	20	31
	Girls Academy	3	5
E	Elite Academy	19	29
	Development Player League	4	6
	SoCal Soccer League	17	26
	Recreational League	2	3

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Table 1 group D presents the athletes' playing experience; 53% have between 5-8 years of playing experience, 35% have between 9-12 years of playing experience, 6% have between 1-4 years of playing experience, and 5% between 13 or more years of playing experience. Table 1 group E shows what competition level our participants are currently playing in. 31% of our athletes play in the MLS Next, 29% play in the Elite Academy, 26% play in the SoCal Soccer League, 6% play in the Development Player League, and 5% play in the Girls Academy, and 3% play at the Recreational League level.

Table 1 group E information is valuable because it provides a more profound understanding of the variety of levels and experiences the athletes were receiving from their coaches. The higher the level of competition an athlete participates in, the more demanding the commitment levels of the athlete and the coach. In addition, the parents' expectations of receiving more qualified coaches or a higher level of development increase whether you participate in the MLS or GA level compared to recreational where athletes are more likely to be happy to participate with their friends vs. the level of competition.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics ror Parents or Guardians

	Category	N	%
	Gender		
A	Male	81	52
	Female	76	48
	Ethnicity		
	Caucasian; Non-Hispanic	108	69
	Hispanic or Latino	24	15
	Black or African American	3	2
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	1
	Asian	13	8
B	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1
	Mixed Raced	3	2
	American Italian	1	1
	Filipino	1	1
	Serbian	1	1
	Bi-Racial	1	1
	Parents Played Soccer		
C	Yes	86	55
	No	71	45
	Years Playing Soccer		
	0	41	25
	1-10	85	51
D	11-20	18	11
	21-30	3	2
	31-40	5	3
	41<	5	3
	Level of Competition Parent Played		
	Professional	1	1
	Semi-professional	7	5
E	Collegiate	11	7
	Competitive	47	30
	Recreational	41	26
	None	50	32

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Table 2 shows the parents' or guardians' gender, ethnicity, soccer pedigree, years of experience, and competition level. (Table 2 group A) shows the participants' gender distribution, where 52% identify as male and 48% identify as female. (Table 2 group B) shows the ethnicity of our participants, where 69% identified as Caucasian, 15% as Hispanic, 8% as Asian, 2% as [Black or African American and mixed race], and 1% as [American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, American Italian, Filipino, Serbian, and Bi Racial]. These results (Table 1 group B and Table 2 group A) show similarities between parents and athletes, with over two-thirds identifying as Caucasian, following suit for the remaining ethnicities in the study with a (+/- 2%) error difference. (Table 2 group C) inquires the parents' or guardians' soccer pedigree; 55% had played soccer, and 45% had not played soccer.

This information is significant because there is a positive correlation between prior sports experiences (soccer) and higher expectations from the clubs and their coachs' (see Table 3). (Table 2 group D) shows the parents' or guardians' soccer playing experience; where

51% had between 1-10 years of playing experience, 25% had no playing experience, 11% had 11-20 years of playing experience, 2% had 21-30 years of playing experience, and 3% had [31-40; 40+] years of playing experience. Our results show somewhat of a discrepancy between (Table 2 group C and Table 2 group D) as 45% of the participants answered no to playing soccer growing up (Table 2 group C), which [can/maybe] be interpreted as potentially an error in the question or defining the maximum age of growing up (between the participants and the researcher). (Table 2 group E) shows the maximum level the participants' played. 32% did not identify in any group, 30% played at the competitive level, 26% at the recreational level, 7% at the collegiate level, 5% at the semi-professional level, and 1% at the professional level.

Table 3. Expectations from the Club

Category	Description	N	%	Participants
Data Sample - Parents or Guardians	Far Exceeds Expectations	11	7	
	Exceeds Expectations	36	22.9	
	Meets Expectations	80	51	*70.7%*
	Improvement Needed	21	13.4	
	Does Not Meet Expectations	9	5.7	
	Total	**157**	**100**	
Data Sample - Athletes				
	Far Exceeds Expectations	7	10.8	
	Exceeds Expectations	26	40	
	Meets Expectations	21	32.3	*29.3%*
	Improvement Needed	11	16.9	
	Does Not Meet Expectations	0	0	
	Total	**65**	**100**	
Total		**222**	**-**	*100%*

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Table 3 shows the correlation between the participants' experiences and expectations. Based on our study, 51% of the parents' or guardians' participants said that the club where their child/children are playing met their expectations, 22.9% said it exceeded their expectations, 13.4% said it somewhat met their expectations, but it needs some improvement, 7% said it far exceeded their expectation, while 5.7% said it did not meet their expectations. On the other hand, according to the athletes, 40% stated that the club exceeded their expectations, 32.3% stated it met their expectations, 16.9% stated it somewhat met their expectations, but some improvements are needed, and 10.8% stated that the club far exceeded their expectations. Our findings support previous literature (Adie & Jowett, 2010) that athletes are more concerned about meeting their parents' expectations versus being intrinsically motivated to play sports.

Figure 2 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question one (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.5% – 4.5%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. According to our findings, {36.9%} <1.5%> [35.4%] of {parents or guardians} [athletes] found the relationship to be excellent, {31.2%} <1.1%> [32.3%] found it to be very good, {21.7%} <4.5%> [26.2%] found it good, {5.7%} <0.5%> [6.2%] said it was fair, while {4.5%} <4.5%> said the relationship was poor. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the coach-athlete relationship positively at the aggregate level with {89.8%} <4.1%> [93.9%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.
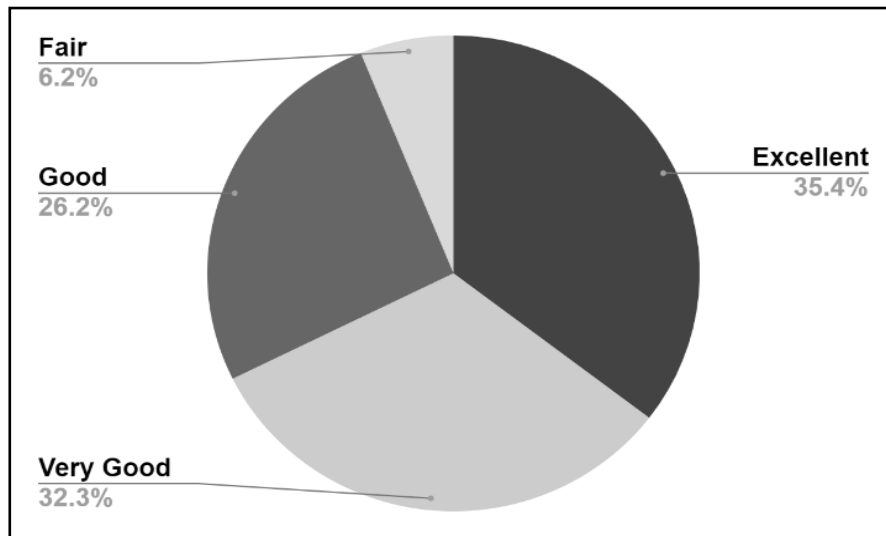
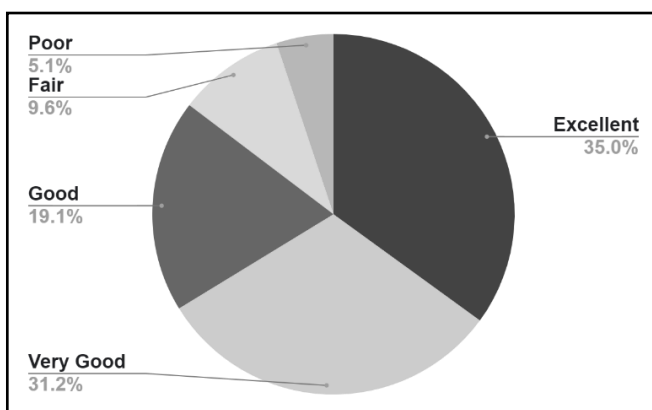**Figure 2.** Child's coach-athlete relationship: Athletes' responses

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
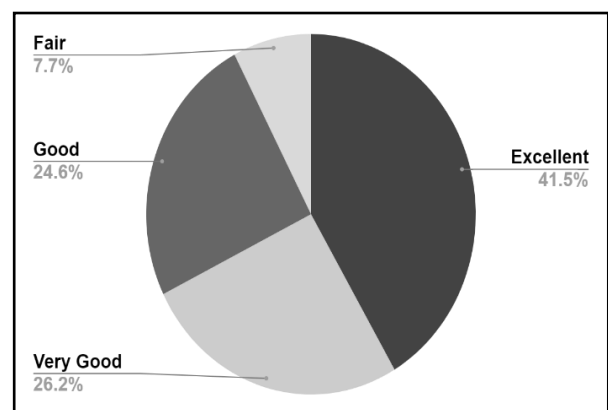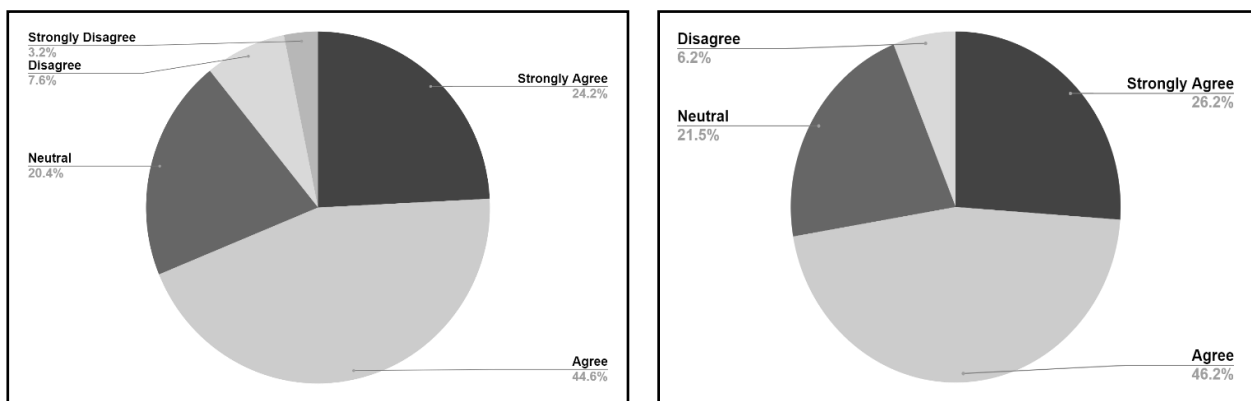Where: { } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
       [ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
       < > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 3 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question two (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 1.9% – 6.5%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Per the findings, {35%} <6.5%> [41.5%] of {parents' or guardians} [athletes] found the trust levels to be in an excellent state, {31.2%} <5%> [26.2%] said it was very good, {19.1%} <5.5%> [24.6%] deemed it good, {9.6%} <1.9%> [7.7%] said it was fair, while {5.1%} <5.1%> viewed the trust levels to be poor. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the trust level of the coach positively at the aggregate level with {85.3%} <7%> [92.3%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses
Figure 3. Level of trust from the coach

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 4 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question three (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 1.1% – 3.2%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. From our study, {24.2%} <2%> [26.2%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] strongly agree that their practice environment prepares them to compete at the highest level, {44.6%} <1.6%> [46.2%] agree, {20.4%} <1.1%> [21.5] are neutral, {7.6%} <1.4%> [6.2%] disagree, and {3.2%} <3.2%> strongly disagree. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the practice environment as highly competitive while preparing them to compete at the highest level with an aggregate level of {68.8%} <3.6> [72.4%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses

Figure 4. *Practice environment and readiness*

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 5 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question four (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.3% – 6.9%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Based on our questionnaire, {40.8%} <6.9%> [47.7%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] assert that the coach is always committed to facilitating a learning environment that produces results, {38.2%} <0.3%> [38.5%] said the coach is often committed, {15.9%} <6.7%> [9.2%] said the coach is sometimes committed, {3.8%} <0.8%> [4.6%] said the coach is rarely committed, while {1.3%} <1.3%> said the coach is never committed to facilitating a learning environment that produces results. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the coach's commitment to facilitate a learning environment that produces results to be highly effective at the aggregate {79%} <7.2%> [86.2%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Figure 6 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question five (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 2.1% – 4.2%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. According to our findings, {28.7%} <2.1%> [30.8%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] rated the coach as having excellent communication skills in influencing the athletes, {36.3%} <2.2%> [38.5%] rated the coach to have very good communication skills, {22.3%} <2.3%> [20%] rated to coach to have good communication skills, {7%} <2.2> [9.2%] rated the

coach to have fair communication skills, and {5.7%} <4.2%> [1.5%] rated the coach to have poor communication skills. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the coach's communication skills very positively and to be highly effective in influencing the athletes at the aggregate {87.3%} <2%> [89.3%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.
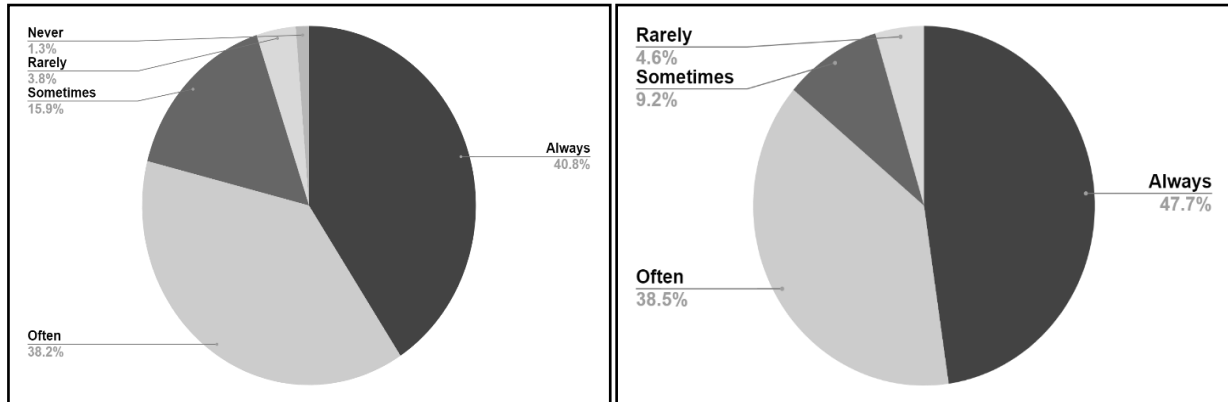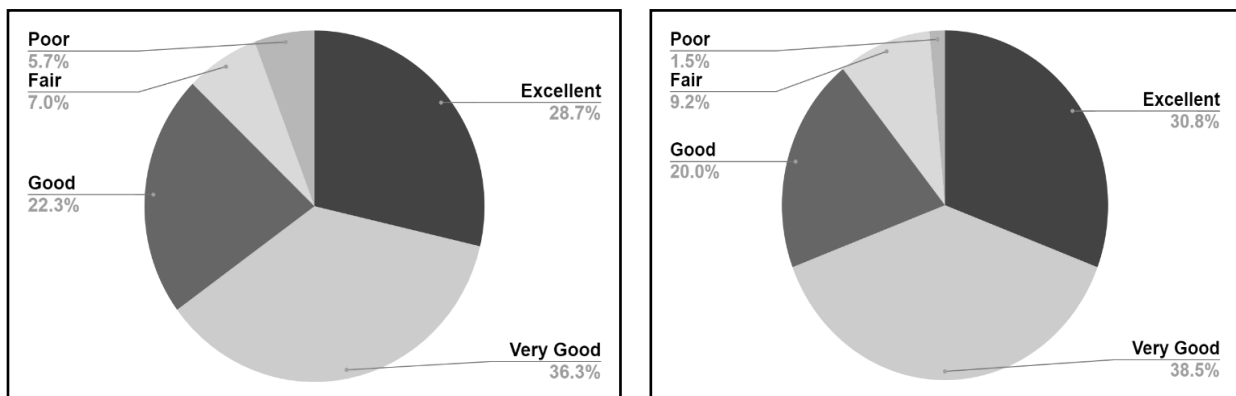

Figure 5. Facilitating learning and results
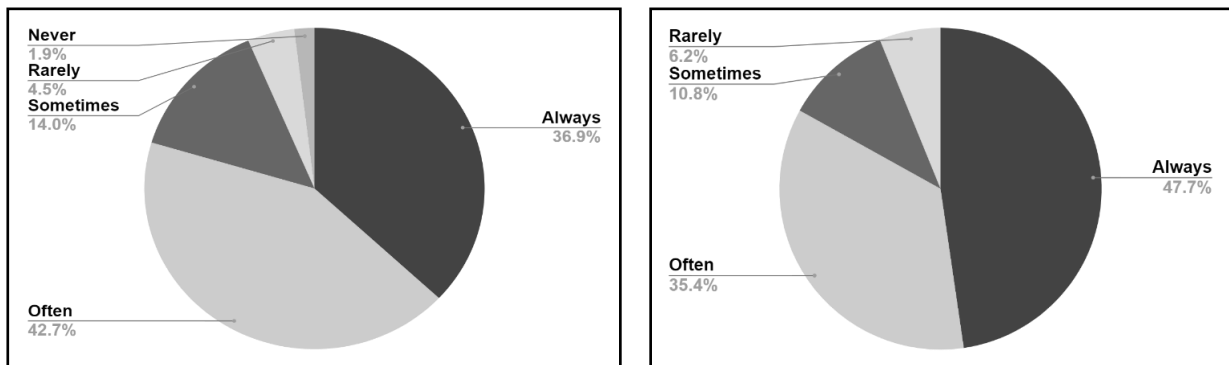
Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses
Figure 6 Coaches' communication skills

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 7 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question six (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 1.7% – 10.8%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Our results show that {36.9%} <10.8%> [47.7%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] agree that the coach always clearly stated the roles and responsibilities of the athletes, {42.7%} <7.3%> [35.4%] said the coach often, {14%} <3.2%> [10.8%] said the coach sometimes, {4.5%} <1.7%> [6.2%] said the coach rarely, while {1.9%} <1.9%> said the coach never clearly stated

the roles and responsibilities of the athletes. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the coach's communication skills in stating the athletes' roles and responsibilities clearly to be effective at the aggregate {79.6%} <3.5%> [83.1%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses
Figure 7. Coach clearly states the athletes' roles and responsibilities

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 8 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question eight (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.6% – 6.9%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Based on our results, {40.8%} <6.9%> [47.7%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] believe that the coach motivates the athletes to the best of their ability, {36.3%} <0.9> [35.4%] confirms the statement, {17.2%} <3.4%> [13.8%] says the coach sometimes motivates the athletes, {2.5%} <0.6%> [3.1%] say the coach rarely motivates the athletes, while {3.2%} <3.2%> says the coach never motivates athletes to the best of their abilities. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the coach's motivational skills to be effective at the aggregate level {77.1%} <6%> [83.1%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses. However, other results indicate other reasons why they are motivated to practice, such as being with friends, and they do it because it makes them feel good about themselves (see Table 4).

Figure 9 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question eleven (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.8% – 13.2%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Our analysis shows that {26.8%} <13.2%> [40%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] were always satisfied with the coach, {46.5%} <9.6%> [36.9%] were often satisfied with the coach, {21%} <2.5%> [18.5%] were sometimes satisfied with the coach, {3.8%} <0.8%> [4.6%] were rarely satisfied with the coach, {1.9%} <1.9%> were never satisfied with the coach regardless of the failure or success of the team. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes were satisfied [on aggregate] with the coach regardless of the results {73.3%} <3.6%> [76.9%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses. And somewhat of an inverse relationship between "always & often" with the percentage share.
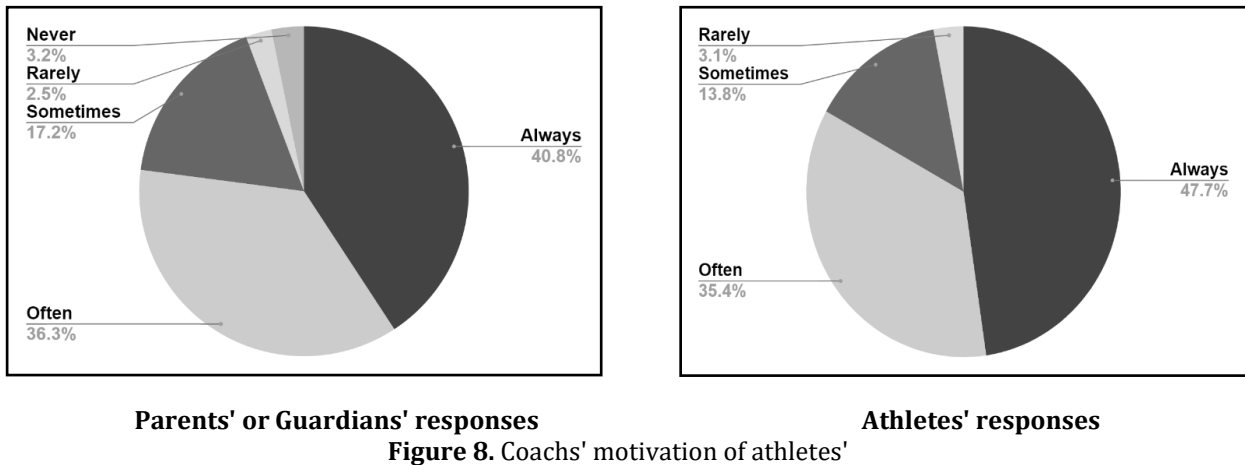
Parents' or Guardians' responses   **Athletes' responses**
Figure 8. Coachs' motivation of athletes'

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses
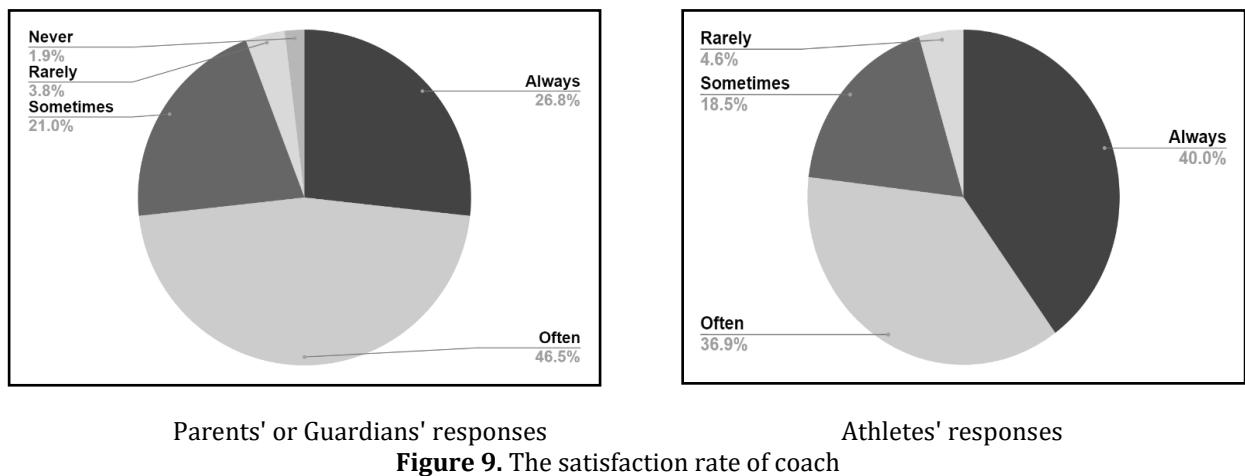

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses
Figure 9. The satisfaction rate of coach
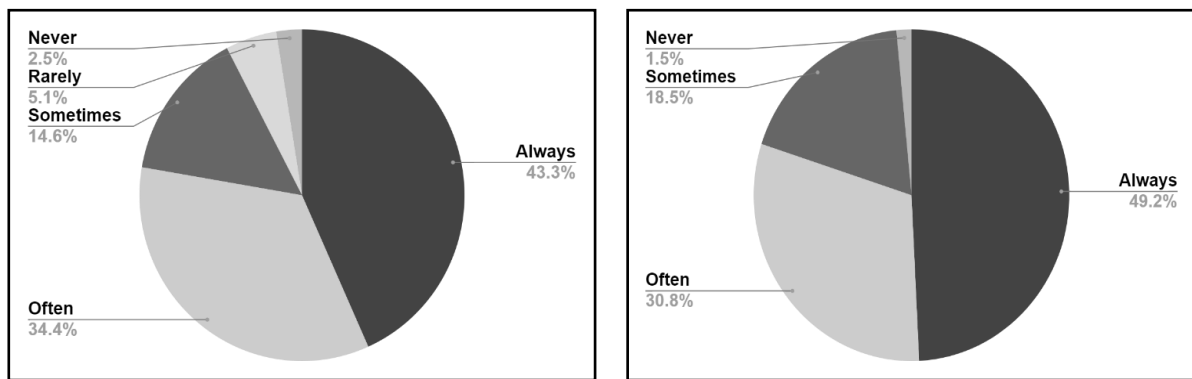
Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 10 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question fourteen (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 1% – 5.9%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Based on our study, {43.3%} <5.9%> [49.2%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] say the athlete is always enthusiastic, {34.4%} <3.6%> [30.8%] say the athlete is often enthusiastic, {14.6%} <3.9%> [18.5%] say the athlete is sometimes enthusiatic, {5.1%} <5.1%> say the athlete is rarely enthusiatic, {2.5%} <1%> [1.5%] say the athlete is never enthusiatic when attending practice or games. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes rated the athlete enthusiatic when attending practice or games to be positive on aggregate {77.7%} <2.3%> [80%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses
Figure 10. Athletes are enthusiastic level when attending practice or games

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 11 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question fifteen (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 1% – 3.8%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Our research shows, {38.9%} <2.6%> [41.5%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] felt the coach always trusted the athlete decision making process, {37.6%} <3.8%> [33.8%] felt the coach often trusted the athlete decision making process, {15.9} <1%> [16.9%] felt the coach sometimes trusted the athlete decision making process, {4.5%} <1.7%> [6.2%] felt the coach rarely trusted the athlete decision making process, and {3.2%} <1.7%> [1.5%] felt the coach never trusted the athlete decision making process during practices and the game. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes, on aggregate, rated the coach's trust level in the athlete to be very high {76.5%} <1.2%> [75.3%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Figure 12 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question sixteen (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.8% – 4.5%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. Our research shows, {38.2%} <1.8%> [40%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] said they got excellent instruction from their coach, {35.7%} <1.2%> [36.9%] said they got very good instruction from their coach, {14.6%} <2.3%> [16.9%] said they got good instruction from their coach, {7%} <0.8%> [6.2%] said they got fair instruction from their coach, while {4.5%} <4.5%> said they got poor instruction from their coach. This correlates with the other results in Figure 7, where both parents and athletes rated the coach's communication skills in stating the athletes' roles and responsibilities clearly to be effective {79.6%} <3.5%> [83.1%], the findings from Figure 12 shows that there is consistency between the results. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes, on aggregate, rated the coach's level of instruction to be effective {88.5%} <5.3%> [93.8%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.
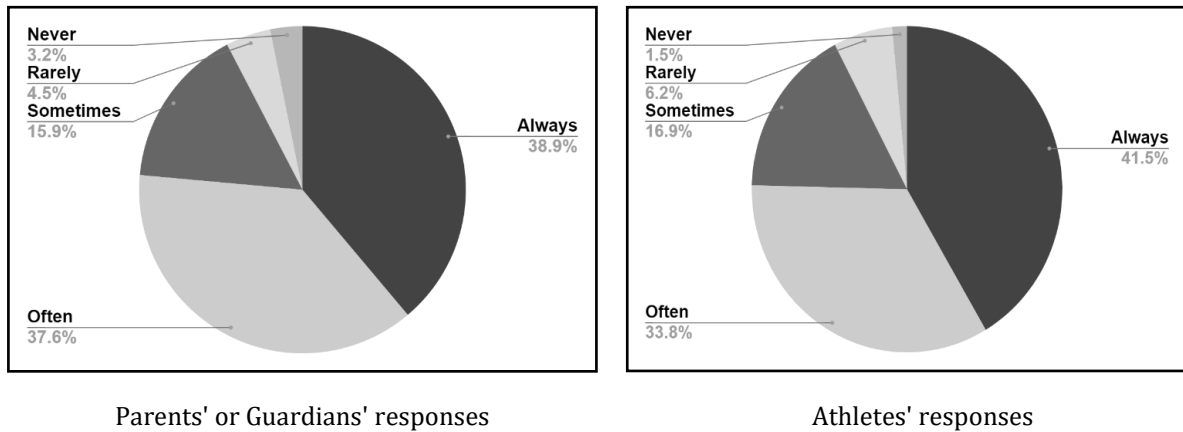
Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses

Figure 11. Coach trusts level of athlete

Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Where:

{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'

[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'

< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses
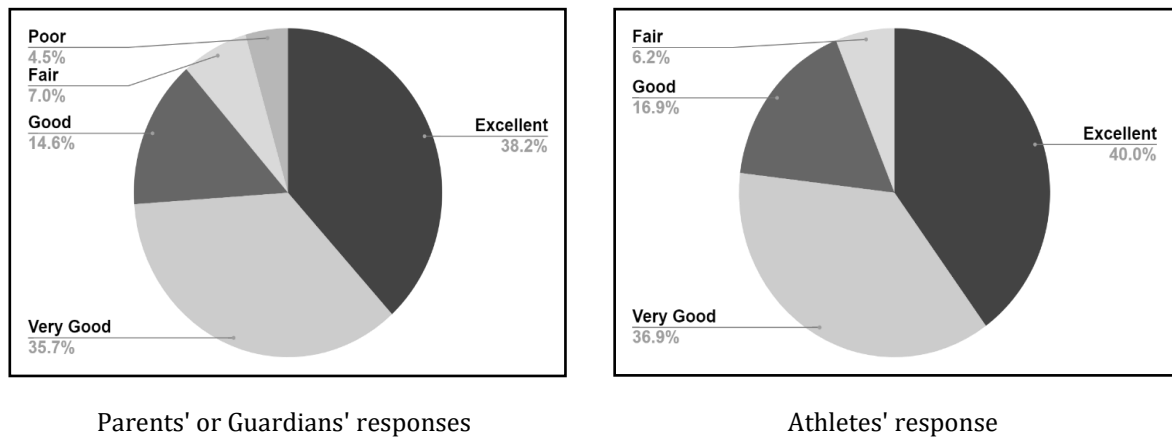

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' response

Figure 12. Rating the coach's level of instruction
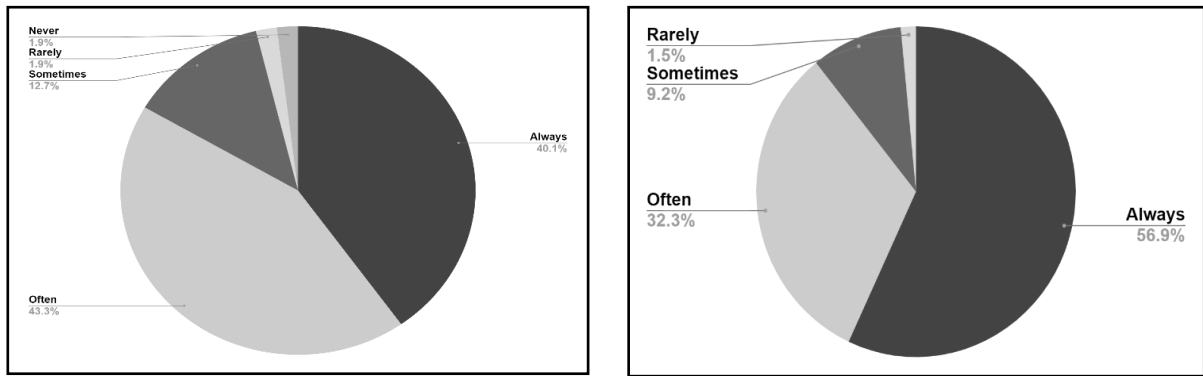
Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Where:

{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'

[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'

< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 13 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question seventeen (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.4% – 16.8%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. The responses show, {40.1%} <16.8%> [56.9%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] said they always respected the coach's decisions and efforts, {43.3%} <11%> [32.3%] said they often respected the coach's decisions and efforts, {12.7%} <3.5%> [9.2%] said they sometimes respected the coach's decisions and efforts, {1.9%} <0.4%> [1.5%] said they rarely respected the coach's decisions and efforts, {1.9%} <1.9%> said they never respected the coach's decisions and efforts in games and practices. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes, on aggregate, respected the coach's decision and effort with an aggregate level of {83.4%} <5.8%> [89.2%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses

Figure 13. Respect levels of the coach's decisions and efforts

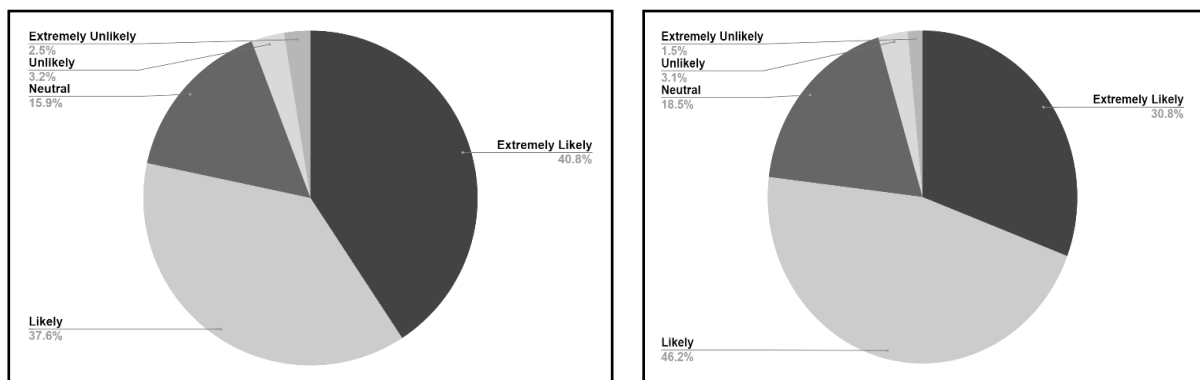**Source**: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Where:

{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'

[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'

< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 14 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question nineteen (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 0.1% – 10%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. The responses shows, that {40.8%} <10%> [30.8%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] said they're extremely likely to recommend, {37.6%} <8.6%> [46.2%] said they're likely to recommend, {15.9%} <2.6%> [18.5%] said they're neutral to recommending, {3.2%} <0.1%> [3.1%] said they're unlikely to recommend, {2.5%} <1%> [1.5%] said they're extremely unlikely to recommend their club to a 1st- 2nd-and-3rd proximate party. This finding is significant because any individual likely to recommend an organization to a third party is also likely to renew their membership or return the following year. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes, on aggregate, said they are likely or more to recommend their current club to others {78.4} <1.2%> [77%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses

Figure 14. Club Yelp rating

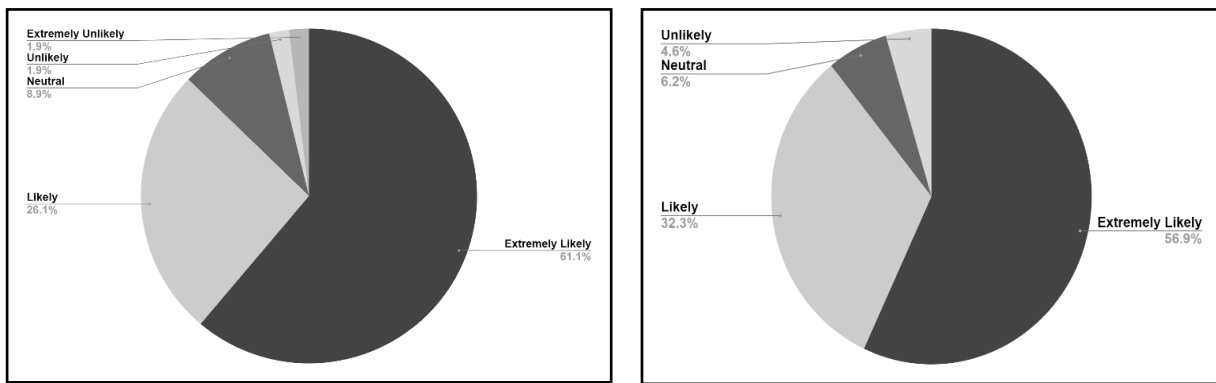**Source**: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)

Where:

{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'

[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'

< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

Figure 15 shows the results from both the parents' or guardians' and athletes' responses to the questionnaire based on question twenty (Jones & Osiobe, 2022). The views were somewhat the same, with a ((+/-) 1.9% – 6.2%) variation in the aggregate responses of the groups. The responses show, that {61.1%} <4.2%> [56.9%] of {parents or guidance} [athletes] said they're extremely likely to continue playing soccer, {26.1%} <6.2%> [32.3%] said they're likely to continue playing soccer, {8.9%} <2.7%> [6.2%] said they're neutral about the situation, {1.9%} <2.7%> [4.6%] said they're unlikely to continue playing soccer, while {1.9%} <1.9%> said they're extremely unlikely to continue playing soccer based on their current coach's experience. In conclusion, the findings show that both parents and athletes, aggregately, said they are likely or more to allow the athlete to continue with the sport in the future based on their current coach's experience {87.2} <2%> [89.2%], highlighting a positive relationship between the responses.

Parents' or Guardians' responses   Athletes' responses
Figure 15. Likelihood to continue with the sport
Source: (Jones & Osiobe, 2022)
Where:
{ } = shows the results of parents' or guardians'
[ ] = shows the results of the athletes'
< > = shows the percentage difference between the parents' or guardians' responses and the athletes' responses

CONCLUSION

It is noteworthy that alliteration on coaching methods suggests that coaches' experiences demonstrate a different coach-athlete relationship in managing the expectations of the parents and athletes. Furthermore, it should be clear that creating an environment that is both positive and challenging for athletes to enjoy. This is an essential component of coaching, promoting the holistic development of an individual. This study implies that athletes and parents need more opportunities to remain satisfied with their current roles within the organization. Thus, turning the focus of youth development into honest conversations with parents and providing more chances for athletes to compete at a higher level seems essential. It should be emphasized by the coaches what the player can do to develop and create an open dialog to assist in the learning phase. This is because parents feel they are at times restricted from being able to get feedback or having honest conversations with their coaches.

Specific recommendations for coaches would be to promote positive learning experiences in their environments to include a sense of enjoyment or fun within the practice environment; be open-minded for growth and provide more opportunities to solve problems, play with a higher team, or more training sessions. Without question being open-minded, any individual must grow. However, educating the coaches to deal with specific situations, especially parent conflict resolution, would be highly beneficial in dealing with the parents'

demands of their athlete. Coaches are more likely to enhance their engagement with the athletes when they have more knowledge to provide instruction and an upbeat feedback style because it plays a significant role in the retention and enjoyment of the team. Coaches are there to develop individuals, and using soccer as a vehicle provides an excellent opportunity to impact an individual's life. This includes the support they provide in understanding the individual and their background. Coaches who show genuine concern for their welfare will create a more positive environment and interpersonal relationships with athletes (Chelladurai, 1990).

This study contributes to the existing literature on coach effectiveness and provides practical recommendations to enhance organizational effectiveness to increase athlete retention rates within youth soccer organizations. The study explored the coach-athlete relationship between coaching behaviors and retention rates in youth soccer organizations through: (a) The parents' and athletes' perceptions of their coach-athlete experience, and (b) The likelihood of athletes continuing to play soccer based on their coaches' behaviors and experiences (see Figures 2 – 15). The ground for better coaches is represented by athlete and parent perceptions of coaching behaviors as they relate to their previous experiences. For example, our study shows that parents or guardians were more assertive in their responses than the athletes. Figures (2, [parents were 4% more likely to use or select "poor" than the athletes]; 3 [parents were 7% more likely to use or select "poor" than the athletes]; 4 [parents were 4.6% more likely to use or select "strongly disagree" than the athletes]; 5 [parents were 0.5% more likely to use or select "never" than the athletes]; 7 [parents were 0.2% more likely to use or select "never" than the athletes]; 8 [parents were 2.6% more likely to use or select "never" than the athletes]; 9 [parents were 1.1% more likely to use or select "never" than the athletes]; 12 [parents were 5.3% more likely to use or select "poor" than the athletes]; 13 [parents were 2.3% more likely to use or slecet "never" than the athletes]; 15 [parents were 0.8% less likely to use or select "extremly unlikely" than the athletes]). On the other hand, Figures 6, 10, 11, and 14 showed some assertiveness when selecting their choices.

Explaining coach effectiveness is inevitably complex, and the need for a comprehensive understanding remains. However, the information provided can help organizational effectiveness improve youth sports retention rates beyond 13 by enhancing coach education. On the contrary, this would require the coach to be open to understanding the importance of meeting the athlete's expectations. Thus, using the information to develop a better coach-athlete relationship improves the experience for all participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors of this work do not declare any conflicts of interest

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