Burnout Factors of High School Basketball Coaches: An Analysis of Head Varsity Coaches in the State of Iowa

Spencer A. Esslinger
St. Cloud State University

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BURNOUT FACTORS OF HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COACHES: AN ANALYSIS OF HEAD VARSITY COACHES IN THE STATE OF IOWA

by

Spencer A. Esslinger

B.S., Iowa State University 1997

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of
St. Cloud State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Science

St. Cloud, Minnesota
August, 2004
This thesis submitted by Spencer A. Esslinger in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

Chairperson

Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Current research is beginning to show evidence of athletic coaches suffering from high levels of stress and burnout within the profession. Much of this research has been conducted at the collegiate level, with little or no regard to high school coaches.

The purpose of this study was three-fold. The first was to determine what factors of burnout could be identified among head varsity basketball coaches in the state of Iowa. Secondly, this study was designed to identify any difference in burnout factors across gender. This study also attempted to address a somewhat new phenomenon in coaching: the pressure and difficulties encountered when dealing with the parents of current players. By examining data, this study was designed to determine if this new problem is a significant cause of stress and burnout.

A researcher designed Coaching Burnout Survey was sent to 350 head basketball coaches throughout Iowa. One hundred eighty of those surveys were addressed to head boy's coaches, and 170 to head girl's coaches. These coaches were asked to complete the survey and return the results as expediently as possible to the researcher. The returned surveys were then analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques along with multiple regression statistics.

The findings indicated that two main predictors of burnout existed among Iowa high school basketball coaches: age and the number of sports that an individual coached. Data also found that although parental conflicts are increasing, making the job more difficult, it has not become a significant cause of stress and burnout. Insufficient data were returned in order to analyze any differences in burnout between genders.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my committee: Dr. Mark Moore, Dr. Rod Dobey, and Dr. Bill Hudson for their time, patience and understanding while guiding me through this study.

I would also like to thank Dr. Mark Moore for his role as my major advisor. Without your help and guidance this study would not have been possible. I cannot thank you enough for your knowledge and understanding.

In addition, I would like to extend special thanks to Kevin Schlagel and Matt Reimer for the opportunity they gave me at this University. Without that opportunity, none of this would have been possible. Thank you both for your understanding and patience, as these are 2 years that I will never forget.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and family. You are all why I’ve become the person I am today. Thank you all for your support during these past 2 years.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A substantial number of high school level coaches are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. The type of coach within this group holds no common theme. Whether younger and inexperienced, or older with years of experience, they are leaving for various reasons. One plausible rationale for the attrition of individuals from the high school coaching profession is burnout.

Burnout is classified as a reaction to chronic stress (Cherniss, 1980; Freudenberger, 1980; Smith, 1986). Current literature suggests the burnout factor in head coaching seems to be greater today than it has ever been (Drake & Hebert, 2002). Substantial amounts of published literature, whether presented in magazines or journals, are focused on the causes, the signs of coaching burnout, and the implications of this state on the health of individuals in the profession. While these articles are quite perceptive in their views, none seem to adequately identify the exact causes of why coaches are leaving their profession.

Therefore one can only assume a multitude of causes contributes to burnout. Stress develops from a wide variety of coaching issues (e.g., budget considerations, coach-athlete relationships, personal coaching expectations, preparation) contributing to higher levels of burnout (Kelley & Gill, 2003). Likewise, as in other occupations,
individuals are not always adequately prepared for the demanding duties of their chosen professions (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). Furthermore, another of the chief factors may be the above average workload of the coach (Raedeke, Warren, & Granzyk, 2002). Concurrently, and perhaps the most published feature explaining the difficulties encountered by today's coaches, is that of parental problems. While not a new phenomenon, problems with athletes' parents are increasing dramatically in the high school coaching profession. Too many parents are too involved with the athletic endeavors of their children. While the goal of many parents is to "be there" for their children, a large number of parents vicariously use their children as a "second chance" for themselves to achieve their athletic aspirations (Heinzmann, 2002). This conviction has been echoed frequently in published literature.

Statement of the Problem

In discussions with current and former high school basketball coaches in the state of Iowa, this researcher has inferred many have either left the coaching profession too early in their careers, or have been entertaining thoughts of leaving the profession. High levels of stress, anxiety and worry are prevalent within the profession, and burnout is quite evident. Many coaches are under a considerable amount of pressure from a variety of entities (athletes, parents, etc.). Consequently, the purpose of this study is to identify and better understanding of the personal and professional factors contributing to burnout in varsity head basketball coaches in the Iowa.
Purpose of the Study

Given the affairs and the atmosphere of the contemporary coaching professions, this study is designed to determine the main factors of burnout among these high school basketball coaches in Iowa. The study also investigated any perceived differences in the levels of burnout factors between male and female coaches.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to determine and define the burnout factors of high school coaches in Iowa. The numbers of coaches leaving the profession increases each year, and research should be applied in order to better understand such trends. The significance of this study is to identify and heighten awareness toward the factors of burnout among high school basketball coaches in Iowa. This examination is being conducted in order to provide this much needed information.

Research Questions

Based on previous research and the researcher’s own empiricism, three questions have been formulated:

1) What multiple factors of burnout were identified by the subjects?
2) Do factors of burnout differ across gender?
3) Is conflict with parents of student-athletes becoming a significant contributor to burnout?
Delimitations of the Study

A delimitation of the study is that it focuses only on head varsity basketball coaches who are employed in the state of Iowa.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were operationally defined:

*Burnout*: a reaction to chronic and continued stress.

*Coaching preparation*: the level in which a coach is prepared before he/she is employed by a school district.

*Coaching Workload*: the amount of duties that a coach is required to do either officially or unofficially as an employee of a school district.

*Perceived leadership*: the way in which a coach perceives him or herself as a leader to his or her team.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

While not found in overly large numbers, there has been research completed on burnout rates and predictors among high school and college coaches. The primary focus of this study is to identify burnout predictors among selected high school basketball coaches in the state of Iowa. This chapter will present a review of literature related to coaching burnout predictors both at the high school and collegiate levels.

Many non-scientific and scientific studies suggest the burnout factor in head coaching seems to be greater today than ever before (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987). Much amount of this literature focuses on the causes of coaching burnout, the signs of coaching burnout and the implications of coaching burnout on the well-being of coaches. Burnout’s most notable feature is a psychological, emotional, and at times, a physical withdrawal from a formerly pursued and enjoyable activity (Smith, 1986). As athletic participation numbers continue to grow at the high school and collegiate level, so do the number of coaches leaving the profession. There are established measuring instruments like the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) designed to identify predictors of burnout among employees. Numerous studies have been conducted on the predictors of burnout (Vealey, Udry,
Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992) as well as the Cognitive Affective Models of Athletic Burnout (Smith, 1986). While these instruments and articles are quite insightful in their views, none seem to adequately describe the perceived causes of burnout.

Likewise, a study completed by Capel and colleagues examined the Relationship of Role Conflict Among coaches (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987).

Each of these studies is very detailed in their findings, and has produced a significant amount of information on an array of factors leading to burnout. Multiple factors have also been researched previously in other publications. These factors vary from the very obvious to the very obscure, such as preparation (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999), and gender differences (Drake & Hebert, 2002). By observing some of these findings, one can gain a better understanding on what many authors suspect are the contributing factors to burnout.

The review will take its form in different sections. Each discusses literature that has been studied in different areas that have been previously defined as predictors of burnout. These areas are:

A) Coaching Preparation,
B) Coaching Workload and Commitment Level,
C) Perceived Leadership,
D) Gender Differences.

Coaching Preparation

As in any line of work, some coaches are not adequately prepared for their duties (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). This suggests the early years of coaching are
potentially the most stressful, and additional support for new coaches is important so they do not feel overwhelmed by stress that could lead to burnout (Kelley & Gill, 1993). Generally, most coaches in Iowa receive, on average, 20 hours of training to prepare themselves for the coaching profession (Iowa Department of Education, 2003). This degree of training continues to be critiqued by numerous investigators in that state, and is the focus of continuing discussion among current coaching professionals. What practitioners need for improvement in real practice (or coaching situations) is experiential knowledge (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). Furthermore, greater experience is associated with lower perceived stress and less stress from coaching issues (Kelley & Gill, 1993). Limited research has been conducted in attempts to investigate the amount of pre-hiring preparation within the high school coaching ranks. Most of this limited research focuses on a higher level of pre-service (undergraduate) education in college will increase the level of knowledge needed to be a successful coach (McKeown, 2002).

Concurrently there has been a significant increase in the level of youth participation in amateur sports (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999): further contributing to the attrition among high school coaches. During 2003, in Iowa alone, over 82,000 male athletes and 59,000 female athletes participated in extra-curricular activities (Iowa High School Athletic Association, 2003). With the numbers of youth participating in sports continuing to grow, coaches are assuming increasingly important roles in the development of youth. Training and development programs designed to prepare,
educate and develop coaches are becoming more and more important, but at this time those opportunities are limited in their existence.

In addition, feedback is viewed as an essential component for younger coaches to gain experience (Maeda, 2001). Yet feedback is rarely sought or disseminated. If it is, it is often communicated in the form of one post-season meeting with a supervising administrator. The lack of attention given to coaching preparation and/or certification is described in literature as one of the potential contributors to burnout. Although this particular research is limited in scope, a considerable amount of research has been done in relation to the pre-hiring preparation education of teachers.

Coaching Workload

Role overload is a major source of conflict experienced by coaches (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987). According to Morley, Aberdeen, and Milislagle (2000), the dual role of teaching and coaching negatively impacts the teaching responsibility, hinders coaching proficiency, and often portrays coaching is more attractive than teaching. At the high school level, coaching jobs are often extended to include many administrative, organizational tasks and responsibilities that likely contribute to overload. These are often given even though a high school coach's primary occupation is that of a teacher (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987).

Being consumed by a multitude of tasks within the time limits of a work day can dramatically raise the level of "perceived stress." Perceived stress relates to an individual perceiving he or she is in a stressful situation, although the level of stress may actually be much lower than perceived. Perceived stress, coaching issues and
coaching problems are positively related to burnout components, as found by Kelley and Gill in 1993. It is also quite evident the teacher-coach, unlike many other service area professionals, experience times during the year that are particularly stressful. An example of this would be conference playoff time. The time period evokes high stress because a respective coach is often trying to maintain the workload of a teacher as well as his or her coaching duties.

The dual role of coaches, most usually as teachers, is another contributing factor to higher burnout rates. Capel, Sisley, and Desertrain (1987) found the varying roles in which coaches found themselves contributed greatly to burnout. Performing the roles of coach, teacher, booster, administrator, father/mother figure and pseudo-parent were some of the most salient factors contributing to increased burnout rates. Coaches are likely to be increasingly affected from burnout due both to intense contact with athletes and to various situational factors within the teaching profession beyond their control. This dual nature of their job evokes a significant amount of stress. Due to the multifaceted nature of the teaching and coaching professions, inter-role conflict may occur in the coaching role due to the primary conflicting expectations from students, parents, administrators, and the local community (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987).

**Perceived Leadership**

In their 1989 study, Dale and Weinberg discussed the relationship between a coach's leadership style as a perceived burnout predictor of that specific style. Coaches adopt many contrasting approaches to leadership. Dale and Weinberg, for the
purpose of their study, classified leadership styles into two different continuums: consideration leadership and initiating structure leadership. Their study revealed a significant difference between leadership style and perceived burnout (Dale & Weinberg, 1989).

Consideration leadership is defined in leadership research as behavior that includes friendship, mutual trust, respect, a certain amount of warmth between supervisor and employees (i.e., players) (Harris & Fleishman, 1958). A large number of coaches, in particular successful ones, would likely fit into this classification.

The other type of leadership style considered by Dale and Weinberg (1989) was an initiating structure leadership style, in which the coach is much more concerned about goal attainment through planning and scheduling (1989). This dimension of leadership in the coaching profession is ultimately more structured and allocates less time on player concerns. This approach may help coaches maintain congruency with stressful and emotional situations without getting emotionally involved, thus lowering their stress levels.

Concluding their study, Dale and Weinberg inferred coaches who display a consideration style of leadership perceive themselves to be more burned out than coaches who exhibit initiating-structure style of leadership. This study’s findings could possibly offer insight into clear predictors of the burnout scenario.

**Gender Aspects in Burnout**

As the participation of female athletes and coaches increases within high school athletics due to the effects of Title IX, the number of female coaches
experiencing burnout could increase (Kelley, 1994). This shows gender also plays a role in the relation to stress and burnout (Drake & Hebert, 2002). Particularly, it has been suggested female coaches tend to be socialized into their roles differently than males such that special expectations are placed on them (Kelley, 1994). The nature of sport is now one the public sees less and less difference in terms of women in sport. The hypothesis of females with higher factors of burnout must be examined, as their numbers in the profession are beginning to increase. While studies show both male and female coaches are experiencing a moderate to high level of stress, Kelley (1994) indicated there may be instances where particular forms of burnout may be occur in females much more than males. Whether those forms are found in the role conflict, the difficulties of balancing families and work (Drake & Hebert, 2002), or simply a variation of gender, they must be studied and analyzed in much greater depth and scope. Most information that exists is male gender focused, and while males have made up a larger percentile of coaches, a detailed assessment of stress and burnout factors must be performed for the female gender as well.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Subjects

The subjects for this analysis were 350 randomly selected male and female head varsity basketball coaches from the state of Iowa. The Iowa High School Athletic Association sets up its basketball teams in four different class sizes, in accordance to the total enrollment of the school at the high school level. The classifications include the following student enrollment levels: 4-A: 562-1883, 3-A: 295-545, 2-A: 152-294, 1-A: 26-150.

A total of 350 individuals were sent surveys, of which 180 were sent to coaches of boy’s teams and 170 were sent to those who coached girls. Of the total number of surveys sent, 77 were returned, for a usable return rate of 23%. This return rate was deemed acceptable by the researcher’s thesis committee.

Instrumentation

The test instrument used was a Coaching Burnout Survey prepared by the researcher. This instrument collected data through a questionnaire that asked coaches to indicate their thoughts using a 5-point Likert Scale, with 5 being the highest rating. Sample questions from the Coaching Burnout Survey were designed as follows.
Devotion to Players

1. My favorite part of the job is working with my players: 1 2 3 4 5
2. I enjoy making time to talk to my players about things other than basketball: 1 2 3 4 5
3. My players make this job "worth it": 1 2 3 4 5
4. Generally, from year to year, it is easy to communicate with my players: 1 2 3 4 5
5. Generally, throughout my career, I have had good rapport with my teams: 1 2 3 4 5

Procedures

The Iowa State Coaches Directory (2003) was used to obtain the addresses of the schools that employ the subjects who were surveyed. Three hundred fifty surveys were mailed to randomly selected head coaches, of which 180 were male, and 170 were female. Surveys were mailed to potential participants during the week of May 24, 2004. The mailed information included the following: a) cover letter; b) the researcher designed Coaching Burnout Survey; and c) return envelope. A follow-up letter was mailed during the week June 21, 2004 as a reminder to all willing participants to return the survey. July 1, 2004 was selected at the cut-off date for returning the surveys.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistical techniques, and multiple regression techniques. The latter technique was used to answer the first research question, while the second and third research questions were answered through descriptive techniques. Before performing the analysis on research question 1, the ratings on the instrument pertaining to stress were aggregately computed to create
a stress index score. Multiple regression was subsequently employed to identify what
demographical variables were significant factors of burnout (the stress index). The
results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter consists of four sections: a) demographic information and descriptive analysis of participants, b) analysis of research question #1, “What factors of burnout were identified by the subjects?” c) analysis of research question #2, “Do burnout factors differ across gender?” and d) analysis of research question #3, “Is conflict with the parents of student-athletes becoming a significant predictor of burnout?”

Descriptive Analyses and Demographic Information

Table 1 identifies that of the 77 coaches who participated in the study, 98% were male.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regard to the age of the respondents, over 60% were under the age of 40, while only 4% were age 61 or above (Table 2).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid 1 21-30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 31-40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 41-50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 51-60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 61 &amp; above</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 identifies that teaching experience varied among the participants, with the largest number of participants having 6-10 years of experience (26%).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Many Years Have You Been Teaching?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>0-5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>66.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Head coaching experience was also well distributed among the respondents, with the largest percentage of coaches classified as having 0-5 years of experience. In addition, 14% had over 20 years of experience (Table 4).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Many Years Have You Been a Head Coach?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents also identified that many coached more than one sport. Sixty-two percent of head basketball coaches responding stated they coached multiple sports (Table 5).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sports Coached?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the previous data, responding coaches found themselves coaching at the following IHSAA classification levels (Table 6).

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>98.7</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Research Question #1: *What predictors of burnout were identified by the subjects?*

Multiple regression analysis shows a significant positive coefficient ($t = 3.96, p > .05$) between age and level of stress. This suggests as age increased stress levels among responding participants also increased. In addition, there is a negative coefficient found between how many sports were coached by and individual and the level of stress ($t = 2.13, p < .05$). This suggests the persons who coached the least number of sports experienced higher levels of stress among the respondents.
Table 7
Multiple Regression Analysis of Stress Predictors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Age</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>2.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many years have you been teaching</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>2.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many years have you been a head coach</td>
<td>-.268</td>
<td>2.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Coached</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>3.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which IHSAA classification</td>
<td>-.102</td>
<td>1.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your team participate in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*How many sports do you coach</td>
<td>-.296</td>
<td>2.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P < .05

Conclusions and Summary to Research Question #1

Multiple regression analysis implied that both the age of the coach and the number of sports coached by an individual are significant factors of burnout (stress). As a coach increases in age, burnout (stress) in the profession becomes more and more prevalent as an issue. Additionally, when a coach increases the number of sports that he coaches, the instances of burnout begin to decrease for an individual.

Analysis of Research Question #2: Do burnout predictors differ across gender?

Due to a low number of returned data by female head coaches, this question could not be accurately assessed. Only one of the returned survey forms was returned by a female participant (.01%). After further investigation, it was found that 47 females are employed as head coaches by the 395 high schools in Iowa offering
basketball as a varsity sport. That number computes to only 12% of all head varsity girls coaches in Iowa.

Conclusions and Summary to Research Question #2

Additional data must be gathered on this question. The low number of female coaches employed by the high schools in the state, and its relation to the burnout issue, made this difficult to answer the particular research question.

Analysis of Research Question #3: Is conflict with parents of student-athletes becoming a significant predictor of burnout?

Five questions within the Coaching Burnout Survey were used to address the issue of coach-parent conflict. Frequency distribution tables were developed using the SPSS statistical package at St. Cloud State University's Academic Computer Service.

Results from Table 8 indicated that 66.2% of the respondents had at least a "considerably" or "always" good relationship with the parents of their players.
Table 8
I Have a Good Relationship with the Parents of My Players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rarely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Somewhat</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Considerably</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>94.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Always</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 reports data related to time spent with parental problems. Of the respondents, 20.8% spent “considerable” amounts of time or more dealing with parental problems, while 42.9% rarely encountered problems with parents.

Table 9
I Find Myself Spending More and More Time with Parental Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Never</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rarely</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Somewhat</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Considerably</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Always</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The coach's perception of parents making the job more difficult was the focus of Table 10. Frequency responses for "rarely" and "never" indicated that nearly one third (31.2%) did not see parents making the job more difficult.

Table 10
Parents are Beginning to Make This Job More Difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>32.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Considerably</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.9</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Always</td>
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<td>18.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decision making and subsequent parental confrontation was the basic issue related to Table 11. As illustrated in that table, 50.7% of the responding coaches indicated rarely or never are confronted by parents. The remaining 49.3% of the respondents reported a fear of parental discussion after decision making to some degree.
Table 11

After Making a Decision, I Often Wonder Which Parent Will Confront Me to Discuss It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Never</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rarely</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Somewhat</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Considerably</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>94.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Always</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ease of job performance and parental involvement is the focus of Table 12. Frequency responses illustrate that 57 coaches (74%) believe their job would be easier with less involvement from parents.

Table 12

My Job Would Be Much Easier with Less Involvement from Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rarely</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Somewhat</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Considerably</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 77 100.0
Conclusions and Summary to Research

Question # 3

Descriptive data implied parental problems had not become a significant factor of burnout. While most coaches agreed their job would be much easier with less involvement from parents (Table 12), the rest of the data was inconclusive in showing that parental issues were causing significant level of stress and burnout among the segment of coaches returning survey form. Conclusions from this data will continue to be discussed in Chapter 5.

Summary

In summary, results indicated the age and number of sports coached were significant correlates of stress. In addition, gender influence on stress level could not be determined because the sample was heavily skewed toward male coaches. Generally, the parental influence on responding coaches did not infer a cause of job-related stress. The following section will discuss and summarize the study.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to gain insight on why head varsity basketball coaches in Iowa were willing to leave their passion and profession. The results obtained through the collection of primary data were used to answer the research questions. The researcher designed Coaching Burnout survey was sent to head basketball coaches across the state of Iowa. Three hundred fifty surveys were sent to active head varsity basketball coaches in the state of Iowa, with 180 being sent to boy’s coaches, and 170 sent to girl’s coaches. Seventy-seven usable surveys were returned and accepted for this study (23%). Multiple regression analysis was used in order to compile the results to answer research question 1. Descriptive analysis techniques were used to gather data and conclude the results for research questions 2 and 3. An inadequate number of female participants, combined with a low percentage of female head coaches in the state, impacted the results of the second research question.
Discussion

Research question 1 was designed to identify factors of burnout among participating coaches. Analyzed data showed that, contradictory to previous studies, as the workload of coaches increased in the form of more sports coached, levels of stress and burnout lowered. A study done by Capel, Sisley, and Desertrain (1987) indicated that role overload in a job contributed to increased levels of burnout and stress. Contrary to that assessment, this study has shown that by increasing the number of sports coached, perceived stress and stress levels actually decreased in number. It can be assumed that as individuals increase the numbers of sports that they actively coach, the time spent focused and worrying on one particular sport begins to lessen, thus, decreasing the amount of stress felt among participants. In addition, as a coach’s age increases, so does the level of stress. Descriptive analyses throughout the study indicate that the older a coach becomes, the more likely he or she is to have a family. One can infer that the time applied by a coach to his head coaching responsibilities limits the amount of time spent with family, thus, inducing more stress related symptoms.

Research question 2 was designed to identify potential burnout factors according to the gender of head coaches in the state. According to related research material, such as the studies done by Kelly (1994) and Drake and Hebert (2002) it was hypothesized that female coaches suffered a higher rate of burnout than men. Unfortunately, high schools in Iowa employ a very low percentage of female head coaches, making this research very difficult. The reason for this low number of female
coaches must be addressed in future studies, not only to help produce better
information on burnout in the state, but also because female athletes constitute nearly
42% of all participants in Iowa. In the era of Title IX legislation, descriptive analysis
reveals only a small number of female athletes are coached by women.

Research question 3 examined whether or not conflict between parents of
student-athletes and coaches was beginning to become a significant factor of burnout.
According to descriptive analyses, while conflict seems to be increasing, most coaches
who replied that the struggle between parents and coaches was not becoming
increasingly difficult. Although data infer this problem is beginning to surface, it is not
generally seen as a serious issue that will likely cause a significant number of coaches
to leave the profession. Instead, it appears from interpreting the research data the time
committed to coaching is much more of a salient factor for current coaches. Time
dedicated to the job increases the amount of time away from families and loved ones,
and this appears to be the main cause for coaches to experience additional stress and a
need to step away from the profession.

Limitations of the Study

A low level of participation by female head coaches was a limitation of this
study. Likewise, while the amount of data received for this study was significant
enough for analyses of data, a larger percentage of returned surveys could have
presented data in a much more significant manner. In addition, descriptive techniques
were used to analyze data pertaining to parental influence. Therefore, cause and effect
between this type of influence and burnout could not be established. Additionally,
multiple regression analysis was utilized to assess demographical variables as significant correlates of stress. Likewise, this analysis could not be used to establish causality.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Additional studies must be focused on burnout factors among female coaches in Iowa. Because of Title IX legislation, the number of females who are head coaches the numbers are beginning to increase nationwide, yet it there is not a significant number of them in the state. Due to this phenomenon, further studies should be focused on why there a low percentage of female head coaches exist in Iowa.

In addition, a very large proportion of surveyed coaches in this study commented on the need for additional undergraduate preparation before taking a job in the coaching profession (Appendix B). Likewise a large percentage of the sample identified the need for a mentoring program between younger coaches and older coaches as an additional need (Appendix C). With these two preparation concerns arising out of this study, additional investigation of pre-employment education and mentoring are warranted.

Conclusion

The results of this study have shown that age and number of sports coached are identified as predictors of burnout, with the time commitment necessary to be successful in the job being a plausible determinant. To be a successful coach one must dedicate a large amount of time to the game, which in turn takes time away from
family and friends. Over a period of time, this dedication to the game can cause additional stress on individual coaches. This is stress that is added to the already present pressures of winning and losing. Successful coaches must be able to balance all facets of life in order to maintain their desire to coach.

Also, the issue of parent confrontation is beginning to slowly show its effect on the coaching profession. Conflicts with parents are beginning to increase in numbers, and it is becoming an underlying issue that takes even more time away from a coach and his other duties.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Coaching Burnout Survey
Coaching Burnout Survey

1. Gender Male ____ Female ____

2. Age 21-30 ____ 31-40 ____ 41-50 ____ 51-60 ____ 61+ ____

3. Marital Status: Single ____ Married ____

4. Have Children: No ____ Yes ____ How many? ____

5. How many years have you been teaching? ______

6. How many years have you been a head coach? ______

7. Gender Coached: Male ____ Female ____

8. Which IHSAA classification does your team participate in? 1A 2A 3A 4A

9. How many sports do you coach? ______

The following questions will measure your level of job satisfaction during the season. Please answer the questions using this scale:

1-Never 2-Rarely 3-Somewhat 4-Considerably 5-Always

**Overall Job Satisfaction**
1. I feel bored with my job in coaching: 1 2 3 4 5
2. I find myself wondering if I should continue in this profession: 1 2 3 4 5
3. I always look forward to the challenges of the day: 1 2 3 4 5
4. I am not affected by wins or losses: 1 2 3 4 5
5. I feel appreciated by others (i.e. administration, players, parents, fans, etc.) during the course of the season: 1 2 3 4 5

**Personal Health During the Season**
1. During the season I often feel exhausted at the end of the day: 1 2 3 4 5
2. During the season I get plenty of rest so I always feel refreshed: 1 2 3 4 5
3. During the season I am a very healthy individual (i.e. exercise regularly): 1 2 3 4 5
4. During the season I always take time to relax and enjoy life: 1 2 3 4 5
5. During the season I often experience headaches, nervousness or other stress related symptoms: 1 2 3 4 5
**Time devoted to Job**

1. My schedule often drains my resources:  
2. I usually need to do things myself in order to get them done right:  
3. I feel comfortable placing duties with my assistant coaches:  
4. During the season, I still have plenty of time to devote to my family:  
5. Other people (players, parents, fans, etc.) demand my time and energy:

The following questions will measure your level of satisfaction with players, your administration, fans and parents of your student-athletes. Please answer the questions using this scale:

1-Never  2-Rarely  3-Sometimes  4-Usually  5-Always

**Devotion to Players**

1. My favorite part of the job is working with my team:  
2. I enjoy making time to talk to my players about things other than basketball:  
3. My players make this job “worth it”:  
4. Generally, from year to year, it is easy to communicate with my players:  
5. Generally, throughout my career, I have had good rapport with my players:

**Support of Administration**

1. I feel confident with the support of my administration:  
2. When faced with difficulties, my administrator is the first person I turn to:  
3. Parents must communicate with me before my administrator will listen to them:  
4. My administrator and I work together well:  
5. I trust my administrator:

**Parents**

1. I have a good relationship with the parents of my players:  
2. I find myself spending more and more time with parental problems:  
3. Parents are beginning to make this job more difficult:  
4. After making a decision, I find myself wondering which parent will confront me to discuss it:  
5. My job would be much easier with less involvement from parents:
**Fans**

1. I appreciate recognition from fans: 1 2 3 4 5
2. Trying to appeal to fans causes me stress: 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am aware that fans want to see my team win: 1 2 3 4 5
4. After losses, I worry about what fans think of me and my team: 1 2 3 4 5
5. I often wonder what fans think of me: 1 2 3 4 5

The following questions will measure contributions to burnout in your profession. Please answer the questions using this scale:

1-Does Not Contribute  4-Contributes Somewhat  3-Contributes Somewhat  4-Contributes Considerably  5-Major Contributor

1. Player Apathy: 1 2 3 4 5
2. Work Overload: 1 2 3 4 5
3. Powerlessness/Lack of Control of Program: 1 2 3 4 5
4. Lack of Respect from Players: 1 2 3 4 5
5. Lack of Variety/Boredom with Job: 1 2 3 4 5
6. Underpaid for Responsibilities: 1 2 3 4 5
7. Lack of Administrative Support: 1 2 3 4 5
8. Lack of Time Spent With Family: 1 2 3 4 5
9. Parental Problems: 1 2 3 4 5
10. Lack of Emphasis on Academics: 1 2 3 4 5
11. Coaching Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5
12. Public Scrutiny: 1 2 3 4 5
13. Poor Team Work: 1 2 3 4 5
14. Wins and Losses: 1 2 3 4 5
15. Support of Public and Fans: 1 2 3 4 5

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you feel your education in college adequately prepared you for a career in coaching? Y N
2. Do you think that additional preparatory classes in college could help young coaches? Y N
3. Would a mentoring program be beneficial to young coaches entering the profession? Y N
4. Do you feel the Board of Examiners should require more education for young coaches? Y N
5. If additional resources were available to you (such as online courses, weekend courses, etc.) that helped coaches prepare for the profession would you participate Y N
APPENDIX B

Letter to Coach
Dear Coach-

My name is Spencer Esslinger and I currently hold the position of Graduate Assistant Basketball Coach with the men's team at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, MN. As part of my requirements for graduation, I am conducting thesis research on the causes of burnout in high school basketball coaches in the State of Iowa.

I am inviting you to participate in the research study. There is no risk involved in this study and at no point will you be personally identified as a participant in this study. By answering this questionnaire, you agree to participate in the study and allow me to use your responses for my research.

This research will provide valuable information that can be used to help all of us in the coaching profession. I would like to thank you in advance for your participation and help in this study. All surveys must be returned by July 1, 2004.

Please use the enclosed envelope to return the survey to me. If you are interested in the results of the survey, my thesis will be on file in the SCSU library, or you may feel free to contact me at anytime.

Please remember that your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact me at 320-308-2176 or my advisor, Dr. Mark Moore, at memoore@stcloudstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Spencer Esslinger
Assistant Men's Basketball Coach
St. Cloud State University
320-308-2176
essp0201@stcloudstate.edu
APPENDIX C

Descriptive Analysis of Survey Questions:

“Do you feel your education in college adequately prepared you for a career in coaching?”
“Would a mentoring program be beneficial to young coaches entering the profession?”
Frequency Distribution

Do you feel your education in college adequately prepared you for a career in coaching?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1  Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>56.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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</table>

Would a mentoring program be beneficial to young coaches entering the profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>70</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2  No</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Additional Comments from Coaches
Additional Comments From Coaches

“I’ve enjoyed my career. The quality of experience is related to the degree of administrative support.”

“The most important thing in coaching is to have a good mentor.”

“Coaches need classes with practical applications, i.e. how to balance teaching, coaching, family, etc., including some suggestions about dealing with administrators, parents, family, etc. New coaches should be required to be assistants for at least one season before being allowed to take a head job.”

“The major consideration now for coaching is the year around preparation and programs for all sports. Athletes are pulled in many different directions.”

“I love to coach at all levels and have had both losing and winning seasons, both parent lynch mobs and parents support along with great family support. However, if this profession ever gets in the way of me becoming a father and husband first, I will make changes.”

“This job is hard, but it is a labor of love. If it was easy, everyone would do it!”

“The rules that have opened up the summer contact have really made basketball a year-around sport, and for me, that is a major contributor to burnout.”

“Since I played for great coaches in high school and college and have the necessary knowledge and interpersonal skills, I have had few difficulties.”

“Our administration often tries to catch you doing something wrong—not what you are doing positively. Parents often play the sport through their son or daughter. They try to coach their child way too much. All think that their child is a star.”

“Parents are one of the biggest problems, along with dedication of the athletes. Most times the kid and parents ideas of what they want are at complete different ends of the spectrum. Kids don’t have the skills and parents think they should be the star. They have blinders on and don’t see the big picture.”