

## Intensity of Interpersonal Relations between an Athlete and a Coach

Yuliya K Zhestkova<sup>1</sup>, Svetlana R Sharifullina<sup>1</sup> and Zinaida M Kuznetsova<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Yelabuga Institute (Branch) of the "Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia

<sup>2</sup>TISBI University of Management, Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia

\***Corresponding Author:** Zinaida M Kuznetsova, TISBI University of Management, Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia.

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### Abstract

The development of high-performance sports is accompanied by a steady aggravation of sports rivalry at various ranks competitions. Interpersonal relations between athletes and coaches are especially important. They are designed to provide training for athletes. We present the results of interpersonal relation studies between athletes and the coach, depend on the sport, age characteristics and level of sportsmanship. In sports activities a coach, carrying out educational work, executes various core functions: management, form, gnostic, regulatory, educational. Each function of a trainer is necessary for an athlete versatile training as it provides decision-making, forecasting, organization, management, coordination, control and correction. Analyzing information, a coach makes management decisions. The correctness of them depends on the success of his athletes. The article investigates the gnostic, emotional, behavioral components of sports activities, their dependence on various factors. The obtained results can give important information about most valuable qualities of a coach for athletes of different sex, age, type of sports activity and level of sportsmanship. The aim of the study was to study the expression of interpersonal relationships between an athlete and a coach. It depends on the sport, individual characteristics of the athlete and the sportsmanship level. Research problem: to reveal the expression of athletes and coaches' interpersonal relationships components (gnostic, behavioral, emotional) depending on the type of sports activity; identify the expression of athletes and coaches' interpersonal relations components (gnostic, behavioral, emotional) depending on gender, age; identify the expression of the athletes and coaches' interpersonal relationships components (gnostic, behavioral, emotional), depending on the sportsmanship level.

**Keywords:** Athlete; Coach; Gnostic Component; Emotional Component; Behavioral Component; Sportsmanship; Sports Activity

### Background

Modern sports training of highly qualified athletes requires use of the necessary progressive knowledge in training of the sports reserve. The professionalism of a coach as a battery of progressive knowledge and skills is particularly relevant. The success of sports activities depends on the relationship between a coach and an athlete. Analysis of scientific and methodological literature shows their relations and the effectiveness of sports activities. An athletes' attitude to a coach is the most important component of a competent coach model [1-5,14]. Interpersonal relations between athletes and coaches are determined by objective and subjective factors. Their identification makes it possible to purposefully manage sports activities. The literature covers some aspects of the coach professional activity, studies the effectiveness of the sports team management, the effectiveness of the coach. The most important aspect of pedagogical activity is the characteristics of the coach personal qualities [6-8].

The quality of the training process primarily depends on the observance of didactic principles based on the study of the athlete physiology, psychology, his capabilities. Interpersonal relations between a coach and an athlete arising in the course of sports activities have a significant impact on the competitive activity effectiveness [9-11].

Many authors note that at different levels of the coach's skills, different components of his activities structure become the leading ones. The skills of the sports reserve education and training require a high degree of pedagogical knowledge and skills development. If any component of a coach pedagogical activity structure is not sufficiently developed, pedagogical influences are ineffective [12]. Taking into account the types of professional activities carried out by a coach, specialists identify the following functions: gnostic, design, constructive, organizational, communicative. Gnostic function provides analysis, generalization and systemic knowledge. Design function provides design development of pedagogical systems and ways of their functioning. Ensuring the training process planning with the selection and compositional construction of means, forms and methods of organizing athletes' activities is carried out by the constructive function. The effective organization of the pedagogical process is provided by the organizational function. The communicative function ensures the effectiveness of interpersonal and business relations between a coach and an athlete [1-3].

The authors of the system approach include the degree of professional competence structural components development. It determines the quality and effectiveness of the coach professional activity [2,4,13].

### Methods

The methodology of relations study between an athlete and a coach by Stambulov A.V. is used in the research [2]. The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, athletes evaluated their attitude to a coach. This technique reveals the relations between a coach and an athlete in three scales: gnostic, emotional and behavioral [1]. Processing and evaluation of the results was carried out by evaluating each question on a scale that coincides with the key estimated at 1 point. The maximum number on each scale-8 points.

The research was conducted in 2016/2017 academic year. 125 students-athletes of I-III courses (77 boys and 48 girls) of the Kazan Federal University (KFU) Elabuga Institute, Russia took part in the research. They were engaged in various sports: individual sports (athletics, swimming, badminton, skiing, boxing), martial arts (wrestling), team sports (basketball, volleyball, football).

The method of variation statistics was used in two stages for processing the results. The first data were grouped for processing on three grounds: by sport (individual, team and martial arts), by sportsmanship level (I, II, III categories, candidate for master of sport and master of sport), by age (I, II, III courses). The method of two-factor analysis of variance was applied at the second stage. Three data sets were prepared (separately for boys-athletes and girls-athletes) to study the combined effect of factors, i.e., sport, sports skill level, the respondents' course of study.

### Methods of mathematical statistics

All the data obtained were statistically processed using the following criteria:

- Test the hypothesis of two mean values difference, a two-sample Student t-test for independent samples and a pair of two-sample Student t-test were used.
- Statistical processing was carried out on a computer using statistical packages SPSS-17, spreadsheets Microsoft Excel.

### Results

The survey was conducted among athletes-students engaged in various sports (individual, team, martial arts).

Table 1 presents the results of athletes with a coach relations expression, depending on the types of sports activity.

In table 1 the gnostic component is expressed differently in different sports and among boys and girls. Gnostic component is more expressed in single combat and less in team sports. Girls-athletes in single combat have a lower rate, a higher rate they have in individual

Components of interpersonal relationships	Gender	Sport		
		Individual	Team	Combat
Gnostic	Boys,	4,94 ± 0,21	4,32 ± 0,26	5,35 ± 0,30
	Girls	5,51 ± 0,21	5,39 ± 0,38	5,14 ± 0,74
Emotional	Boys,	3,40 ± 0,19	3,11 ± 0,18	3,72 ± 0,25
	Girls	4,46 ± 0,26	4,62 ± 0,40	5,29 ± 0,61
Behavioral	Boys,	4,41 ± 0,15	4,19 ± 0,16	4,30 ± 0,19
	Girls	5,22 ± 0,22	5,57 ± 0,26	5,14 ± 0,94
The total value	Boys,	12,75 ± 0,44	11,6 ± 0,42	13,4 ± 0,51
	Girls	15,2 ± 0,63	15,5 ± 0,84	15,6 ± 1,89

**Table 1:** Expression of interpersonal relations “coach-athlete” depending on the type of sports activity.

sports. The gnostic component in boys-athletes is less pronounced than in girls-athletes in individual and team sports. In martial arts boys-athletes have higher rate than girls-athletes. This function is implemented when the coach can accurately predict the results of his athletes, skillfully brings them to the competition, carefully plans the training work with each athlete. As the girls’ rate prevails in individual and team sports, girls-athletes are more in need of the individual approach implementation, more in need of different tips, recommendations, adjustment. Therefore, a coach should be flexible and change his behavior strategies [1].

The emotional component is most pronounced in girls-athletes than in boys-athletes, in all sports, especially expressed in martial arts. It is less pronounced in girls-athletes in individual sports. In boys-athletes the emotional component is most evident in martial arts and less pronounced in team sports.

Indicators of the behavioral component in interpersonal relations are also more pronounced in girls-athletes than in boys-athletes. Girls received higher rate in team sports. The lowest rate they received in martial arts. In young men, the behavioral component is most pronounced in individual sports, it is less pronounced in team sports.

We examined the expression of interpersonal relations between athletes and coaches, depending on the individual properties of personality (gender, age characteristics). Table 2 presents the results of interpersonal relations study between athletes and a coach, depending on gender and training course.

Components of interpersonal relations	Gender	Training Courses		
		I	II	III
Gnostic	Boys, Girls	5,37 ± 0,21	4,72 ± 0,28	4,30 ± 0,26
		5,83 ± 0,31	5,45 ± 0,37	5,08 ± 0,31
Emotional	Boys, Girls	3,10 ± 0,13	3,48 ± 0,23	3,58 ± 0,25
		4,73 ± 0,33	4,03 ± 0,31	4,81 ± 0,43
Behavioral	Boys, Girls	3,92 ± 0,11	4,49 ± 0,19	4,61 ± 0,20
		5,95 ± 0,25	4,95 ± 0,26	4,98 ± 0,34
The total value	Boys, Girls	12,4 ± 0,19	12,7 ± 0,54	12,5 ± 0,63
		16,5 ± 0,76	14,1 ± 0,67	15,2 ± 1,08

**Table 2:** Expression of interpersonal relations “Coach-athlete”.

Table 2 shows that the gnostic component is expressed differently in different courses for boys-athletes and girls-athletes. The most pronounced gnostic component in boys and girls is in the first year, and the least pronounced component is in the 3rd year. High scores of the gnostic component in the first year indicates that the coach needs to carefully plan the training work with each athlete, to give reasonable advice, to properly apply methods, tools for sports training work. The coach in the initial stages needs to establish a good understanding with athletes, to identify their individual characteristics. Girls-athletes need more individual approach of the coach. At high expression of the gnostic component the coach is able to generate sustainable motivation for training and competition.

The emotional component is expressed most in boys-athletes and girls-athletes. In girls-athletes it is expressed much more than in boys-athletes. In boys-athletes the emotional component is less pronounced in the first year, in girls-athletes it is less pronounced in the second year. The emotional component may include individual peculiar typological properties of the athlete: prevailing emotions, excitability and reactivity, features of pre-launch behavior, emotional reaction to monotonous work, reaction to success and failure. The coach should be able to improve the athletes' psyche regulatory mechanisms to withstand the negative effects of pre-competitive situations [9].

The behavioral component manifested itself in different ways: if girls-athletes have maximum values in the first year, boys-athletes have them in the third year. Girls-athletes have minimum values in the second year, boys-athletes have them in the first year. The behavioral component is more prevalent in girls-athletes than in boys-athletes. We did not get a significant difference in students-athletes depending on the course of study. It is obvious that athletes appreciate personal, organizational skills of the coach. They are convinced that they must obey, follow the instructions of the coach, believe in his justice. The coach must be demanding, fair, but also take into account his athletes' opinion. Behavioral functions help the coach to help speed recovery from trainings and competitions. The coach should be able to apply special psychological knowledge and skills.

Results of athletes' interpersonal relations with the coach dependence on the level of sports skill research are presented in table 3.

Components of interpersonal relations	Gender	Level of sportsmanship		
		I category	II, III classes	CMS, MS
Gnostic	Boys, Girls	4,69 ± 0,21	4,70 ± 0,31	5,15 ± 0,29
		6,26 ± 0,31	5,11 ± 0,31	5,36 ± 0,33
Emotional	Boys, Girls	3,34 ± 0,16	3,40 ± 0,25	3,49 ± 0,24
		4,27 ± 0,34	5,29 ± 0,43	4,36 ± 0,32
Behavioral	Boys, Girls	4,14 ± 0,13	4,56 ± 0,24	4,44 ± 0,20
		5,36 ± 0,27	6,03 ± 0,26	4,71 ± 0,30
The total value	Boys, Girls	12,2 ± 0,36	12,7 ± 0,52	13,1 ± 0,58
		14,7 ± 0,80	17,6 ± 0,83	14,5 ± 0,84

**Table 3:** Expression of interpersonal relations between athletes and a coach depending on the level of sportsmanship.

Table 3 shows that the gnostic component is more pronounced in girls-athletes than in boys-athletes. The maximum values of the gnostic component have boys-athletes, masters of sports and candidates for masters of sports, the minimum value have boys-athletes with the I category.

Maximum values of the gnostic component have girls-athletes with the I category, minimum indicators of the gnostic component have girls-athletes with II, III category. The expression of the coach gnostic functions gives the opportunity to see his athletes' manifestation of personal qualities, abilities, will, emotional processes, various (stress) states. Improving individual athletes and teams in team sports is

impossible for the coach without analysis of their mistakes, correcting these mistakes. Although during the game occur situations, when the athlete himself must solve a tactical problem. He has only several seconds to solve this problem [14].

The emotional component is most pronounced in girls-athletes and varies from the level of their sports skills. The maximum values have girls-athletes with mass categories. The minimum values have girls-athletes with first categories.

In boys-athletes the emotional component was most evident in masters of sports and candidates for masters of sports,  $3.49 \pm 0.24$  points. The lowest rate have first-category athletes,  $4.27 \pm 0.34$  points. The expression of the gnostic component allows the coach to build interpersonal relations even with athletes-masters of sports, who also appreciate the coach sensitivity and understanding, trust in relations.

The behavioral component is also mostly pronounced in girls-athletes. The maximum value have girls-athletes with mass categories, less pronounced rate of the behavioral component have girls-athletes, masters of sports and candidates for masters of sports. In boys-athletes the behavioral component is most pronounced in athletes with II, III category and less pronounced in athletes with 1 category,  $4.14 \pm 0.13$  points.

Athletes of high qualification appreciate personal, organizational qualities of the coach, his justice.

Thus, the results presented in table 3 show that all components are more pronounced in girls-athletes but vary from the level of sportsmanship.

Table 4 presents the results of determining the athletes' attitude to the professional activity of the coach.

Study group	Professionalism (%)	Creative approach (%)	Authority of the coach (%)
Young athletes	-	n = 12, 20	n = 48, 80
Athletes dischargers	n = 12, 60	n = 6, 30	n = 2, 10
Athletes level of CMS and MS	n = 12, 80	-	n = 3, 20

**Table 4:** Expression of athlete's relations identifying to the professional activities of a coach.

Table 4 shows that authority of the coach (80%) and his creative approach to training (20% of respondents) are important for young athletes. Athletes with category appreciate the coach for professional qualities (60% of respondents), creative qualities (30%) and authority of the coach (10%). Athletes of high qualification (CMS and MS) appreciate professional qualities of the coach (80% of respondents), authority of the coach (20% of respondents).

In girls-athletes all components of interpersonal relations are more pronounced than in boys-athletes regardless of the sport, age, level of sportsmanship. The expression of the gnostic component is that the girls-athletes are more in need of the coach's ability to accurately predict their results, his ability to lead to competitions, careful planning of work with the athlete. The coach does not train according to the template. He takes into account individual characteristics of athletes. The coach must be able to find and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the athlete. Girls-athletes trust the coach more and don't doubt of his methods and means application correctness in the training process.

The emotional component is expressed in the fact that girls-athletes more emotionally react to any comments of the coach, need his sensitivity, should trust him, enjoy working with the coach. Girls-athletes positively answer the question "Would you like to be like Your coach?".

The behavioral component is expressed in the fact that girls-athletes more appreciate the fair coach, more accurately follow his instructions. They need the demanding coach. It is very important for them to evaluate the coach. They need his attention. To the question "Have You a purely business relations with the coach?" 80% of girls-athletes answered in the affirmative.

To confirm the obtained results of the athletes interpersonal relations components severity as experts lecturers of the psychology and pedagogy faculty (lecturers-experts = 5) were involved. Experts estimated relations "athlete-coach" from 1 to 5 points dividing them on severity scale above average, average and below average. The average scores of the components were distributed as follows: gnostic- 4,57; emotional- 4,43; behavioral- 5,00. As a result of expert estimations generalization the importance for successful sports and professional activity of students-athletes is noted.

To conduct an objective assessment of interpersonal relations between an athlete and a coach a quantitative characteristic of severity level in the form of a scale was developed. A high level is considered within 4.5 - 5.0 points, the average level- within 3.5 - 4.4 points and a satisfactory below the average level- 3.0 - 3.4 points. Results on a scale below 3.0 points correspond to a low level and characterize low severity of the components.

Table 5 presents a substantive description of the interpersonal relations components evaluation.

Components	Levels	Characteristics of severity rating	Rating scale
Gnostic	High	High level of knowledge skills, ability to work in a team	4,5 - 5,0
	Average	Good level of knowledge and skills, good level of contact in a team with a pronounced level of instability	3,5 - 4,4
	Low	High level of knowledge and skills, ability to work in a team	3,0 - 3,4
Emotional	High	High emotional level, brightness, self-confidence, high level of responsibility	4,5 - 5,0
	Average	good emotional intensity, responsibility	3,5 - 4,4
	Low	Manifestation of a satisfactory level of emotional stability, the presence of a superficial sense of responsibility	3,0 - 3,4
Behavioral	High	High level of various means effective use	4,5 - 5,0
	Average	Good level of various means effective use	3,5 - 4,4
	Low	Satisfactory level of various means effective use	3,0 - 3,4

**Table 5:** Characteristics of evaluation criteria for components of interpersonal relations.

In the performance of his professional tasks a coach carries out a variety of important functions. One of them is gnostic (cognitive) function. Gnostic component allows a coach to know the psychological characteristics of athletes: the properties of the nervous system (strength of mobility, balance), the properties of temperament (neuroticism, anxiety level). For gnostic component realization it is necessary to establish good mutual understanding with athletes. The intensity of the coach gnostic component helps to determine the capabilities of athletes in a particular sport, to identify their opportunities in a particular training cycle or a separate lesson.

An important role belongs to the emotional component in the sphere of interpersonal relations between an athlete and a coach. It is important that athletes and a coach know how to get along with each other so that the coach showed sensitivity to the relationships, understanding, feel the mood. Athletes should trust their coach so that, if necessary, the athlete can share his thoughts as with a senior friend. Many athletes would be able to say "I want to be like my coach" [14].

An important role is played by the behavioral function of a coach. Here personal, organizational qualities of the coach are shown. They perform educational tasks. The coach should be a fair person. Athletes should believe him and obey, follow his instructions. Demands should be the same for all athletes. Attention should be paid to all athletes. Everyone should be heard, able to say his opinion.

Evaluation of the relations' final indicator among boys-athletes according to two-factor analysis of variance and variation showed the dependence of the sport gender characteristics. All figures of the girls-athletes are higher than those of boys-athletes. Boys-martial artists highly value the relations with their coach. Girls-athletes also more highly appreciate the relations with the coach in the martial arts. The lowest marks among boys-athletes were put by representatives of team sports. The results of the variance analysis indicate the reliability of intergroup differences (Table 1).

Evaluation of the relations final indicator according to two-factor variance and variation analysis showed dependence on gender and age of an athlete. The highest rate have athletes of the first course. It indicates the important role of interpersonal relations between athletes and a coach (Table 2).

A coach may apply educational measures, taking into account individual characteristics. A coach must be an authority for his students and can gain authority when his behavior is consistent with his worldviews and beliefs. The nature of the relations between a coach and athletes depends on athletes' assessment of the coach personality and activities, his role in shaping of athletes' interest in the sport. If in the system of relations "coach-athlete" forms of cooperation prevail, it will contribute to the positive interpersonal relations in the sports team and the harmonious personality formation.

Evaluation of the relations final indicator according to two-factor analysis of variance and variation (Table 3) showed the highest results in girls-athletes with II, III category. Boys-athletes have the highest score of the coach which is shown by masters of sports and candidates for masters of sports.

Thus, the expression of interpersonal relations between athletes and the coach depends on different indicators: type of sports activity, age of an athlete, sex, level of sports skills. The value of the relations in girls-athletes to the greatest extent determine the level of sportsmanship, then sport, age, course of study. In boys-athletes the value of interpersonal relations to a greater extent determines the level of sportsmanship. The coach, having experience, specific knowledge, skills will help to realize the athlete or team their physical, mental, technical capabilities.

Sports activity involves solving problems of varying complexity. At the beginning of sports activities athletes receive substantial support from their coach. The coach, taking into account individual physiological and psychological characteristics, will be able to see and suggest where and how to use the athletes' will, perseverance, strength, and specific sport skills [14].

A coach-the main figure in sport. He carries out the main educational and creative work. Communication of a coach and athletes should be built as a subject-subject relationship. The student becomes a real athlete, consciously going to the cherished goal only from the moment when he together with the coach conducts creative work.

The coach, who understands his athletes well, always trusts them. Trust in most cases is the desire to justify athletes, stimulates them self-education. Distrust of athletes, underestimation of their capabilities and reassessment of their own strength, reduces the activity and initiative of athletes, worsens relations with them, prevents to achieve high results in sports activities.

The tendency to advise, to show, to prove and to convince a counterweight to the tendency to constantly criticize and to impose the coach opinion has a positive effect on the development of young athletes.

The behavior of the coach, his contacts with athletes largely depends on what kind of person he is. Mastering a successful style of leadership and communication is a serious and long process of self - education.

The effectiveness of the coach's influence in interpersonal relations with athletes is characterized by some peculiarities. This is a belief in the great social importance of his work; serious, thoughtful attitude to any event aimed at the success of the whole business. This is a belief in the success of the work in training athletes for life, work, competition, combined with the ability to see and resolutely overcome the difficulties on the way to the goal. As well as the ability to establish and maintain reasonable relations with athletes, the ability to awaken enthusiasm in them, to make them work at the limit of opportunities. An important condition is professional competence. Professional competence is expressed in a deep and comprehensive understanding by the coach his profession and related knowledge.

### Conclusion

Modern sport requires the manifestation of different abilities from a coach. He should possess all arsenal of modern knowledge, consider psychological, social, material, technical and other aspects of an athlete training. The success of athletes largely depends on the personality of a coach, his knowledge, pedagogical talent, authority, will, ability to generalize creatively. A coach is, first of all, a teacher. For the success of his professional activities a coach must have the knowledge and skills, including the gnostic ability to adequately assess the behavior and status of athletes, their individual psychological features; the ability to find causes of errors in athletes training. Using the results of psychological research, a coach will be able to work more effectively with an athlete. The behavior of an athlete during training or in a stressful competition situation will not be a surprise for a coach. The results of personality testing can be used in individual conversations and consultations to maximize efforts in solving personal problems and minimize them. If an athlete is familiar with the theoretical principles underlying the tests and understands the value of the indicators, he can understand himself more deeply. This understanding will help to improve its results, more serious work in training and more sustainable emotional adaptation.

Analysis of differences in personal profiles of athletes in the team can serve to optimize their interpersonal relations and prevent the occurrence of undesirable interaction forms.

Indicators of certain personality traits, together with the results of conversations, autobiographical data or projective test data thorough analysis, can help identify team members whose emotional adaptation or condition requires special attention either at the moment or during long training or intense competition.

The coach plays a leading role in the formation of interpersonal relations with athletes. The level of the coach positive personal qualities expression - the most important condition for the normalization of relations with athletes, and, consequently, improving the efficiency of training, sports and educational process, sports results:

1. The value of interpersonal relationships estimates in the system "coach-athlete" depends on various factors: sport, the level of sportsmanship, age and gender as individual characteristics.
2. The intensity of the individual components of interpersonal relationships between an athlete and a coach in girls-athletes in all cases of studies are higher than in boys-athletes.
3. The final indicator of interpersonal relations among boys-athletes is most influenced by the sport specifics in interaction with the sportsmanship level and age of an athlete-student. Age and level of sportsmanship have the strongest influence on interpersonal relations in girls.
4. We received high (80% of respondents) and average results of interpersonal relations evaluation between athletes and coaches. Gnostic component was expressed on average and above average level. Low assessment of the gnostic component creates considerable difficulties in the work of the coach with the athlete. The athlete may believe that because of the coach professionalism lack his results grow more slowly than they could. This often leads to the desire of the athlete to change the coach, go to a more competent specialist.
5. High marks of the emotional component (especially in girls) indicate that good interpersonal relations exist between an athlete and a coach. There are no psychological barriers of mutual understanding. It affects the effectiveness of training and competitive activities.



6. All kinds of interpersonal relations components are presented in the work of a coach with athletes. They are most pronounced in the work of a coach with girls-athletes.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript.

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