

# INTERVENTION AND EVALUATION OF THE MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE TRANSMITTED BY A BASKETBALL COACH

**Cristina Conde, Bartolomé J. Almagro, Pedro Sáenz-López  
& Estefanía Castillo**

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ABSTRACT: Coaches are reference models for youth athletes and have a high degree of influence over them, and thus a suitable education is important. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess how a basketball coach progresses in the transmission of a task climate during his basketball training sessions, after participating in a reflective educational program focused on the coach's actions. In this study, a basketball coach and the two teams that he coached participated. All the players were between 14 and 15 years of age. The behavior of the coach was analyzed through an adaptation of the Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS) (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977). The observational analysis was carried out by the research team, who was previously trained. Six sessions of observation were carried out, and inter- and intra-observer reliabilities of 97.6% were obtained. During three months, the coach participated in an educational program consisting of six supervised cycles in which the premises established by Ames (1992) with the abbreviation TARGET were followed, in order to transmit a task climate during his coaching sessions.

The results demonstrate a progression in the climate that was transmitted by the coach. In the first training session, the proportion of the climate that he transmitted as task was 65.67% and the ego climate was 34.43%, while in the penultimate training session it was 85.11% for task versus 14.89% for ego, and this was the session with the greatest proportion of transmitted task climate. These data demonstrate that as the educational program was applied, the coach progressively increased the task climate during the training sessions (Sousa, Cruz, Torregrosa, Vilches, & Viladrich, 2006). It can be concluded that with the application of an educational program focused on the coach's own actions, the climate oriented to task improved in training sessions.

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Cristina Conde García. University of Huelva, Faculty of Education Sciences. Department of the Didactics of Musical, Plastic, and Corporal Expression. Avda. tres de marzo s/n 21071. (Huelva) Spain  
Email: [cristina.conde@dempc.uhu.es](mailto:cristina.conde@dempc.uhu.es)  
University of Huelva

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## **Introduction**

Coaches are reference models for youth athletes and have a high degree of influence over them (Smoll & Smith, 2006). Each interaction between the coach and the player is a suitable moment for the transmission of healthy values and habits, and therefore we believe that it is important that these interactions be positive and help the athletic experience an enjoyable activity. As the practice of competitive sport requires the player to spend many hours with his or her coach, this could contribute to an increase in stress, anxiety, or negative attitudes by the player toward sport (Sousa, Cruz, Vilandrich & Torregosa, 2007). To try to avoid this, it is important that coaches know how to act in these interactions with their players. For this, the application of an educational program that facilitates the necessary strategies to the coaches so that during their training sessions an adequate climate is fostered is necessary. The program was designed to take advantage of the coach's actions through essentially reflective strategies such as maintaining a diary, cycles of supervision, interviews that stimulate recall, observations, or talks with experts (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). According to authors such as Smith, Smoll, and Cumming (2007), a task-oriented climate positively influences cognitive aspects and decreases the anxiety of youth athletes.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to assess how a basketball coach progresses in the transmission of a task climate during his

basketball training sessions, after participating in an educational program. According to previous studies (Sousa, Cruz, Vilandrich & Torregosa, 2007; Smith, Smoll & Cumming 2007; Cruz, Dias, Gomez, Alves, Sá, Viveiros, Almeida, & Pinto 2001), we hypothesized that the basketball coach will improve in the transmission of a task climate during his training sessions as he goes through the educational program with its respective educational cycles.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A male 29-year-old basketball coach participated in this study, as well as the two teams that he was coaching. These teams were a girls under-16 team and a boys under-16 team from the city of Huelva, Spain, and all players were 14-15 years of age ( $M=14.38$ ,  $SD=.52$ ).

### **Instruments**

The behavior of the coach was analyzed through an adaptation of the Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS) (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977). This system measured 12 categories of the coach's conduct, divided into two dimensions: general behavior of the coach and behavior of the coach when responding to the athlete's performance. Our adaptation was to divide each of the 12 initial categories into sub-categories in order to do more precise observations; therefore, there were 21 total items. We used this instrument because we kept previous studies in mind (Torres, García-Mas, Palmer & Cruz, 2008; Sousa, Cruz, Torregosa, Vilches, & Viladrich, 2006; Wallhead & Ntoumanis, 2004) and further we did not find any other that evaluated the different TARGET areas (Task, Authority, Recognition, Groups,

Evaluation, and Time). These previous studies demonstrate that you can use and adapt the CBAS to measure the coach's behavior in different intervention programs focused on task.

**Procedure**

The observational analysis was carried out by the research team, who were previously trained using live and video observations. Various sessions were necessary to achieve inter-and intra-observer reliability of more than 90%. Six observation sessions were done at a rate of one every two weeks, and an inter- and intra-observer reliability of 97.6% was obtained. The analysis of the observations was done assigning 11 items as task and 10 items as ego. The appearance of each of the behaviors that identified the items was recorded and the percentage of each was calculated. For three months, an educational program was applied to the coach which consisted of taking part in cycles of supervision consisting of an interview for planning, observation, and video recording of the session and an interview for memory recall. Six cycles of supervision were carried out and in each one

the topics established by Ames (1992) with the abbreviation TARGET were prioritized, in order to transmit a task climate during their training sessions. At the same time, the coach maintained a diary for reflection after each training session, he was given bibliography for improving the motivational climate, and a couple of talks with experts were given.

**Results**

The results that were obtained demonstrate a progression in the climate transmitted by the coach. As seen in Figure 1, in the first training session, there was a climate that transmitted task at a proportion of 65.57% and ego at 34.43%, while in the penultimate training session, the proportion of task was 85.11% compared to 14.89% ego, and this observation is where the highest proportion of task was transmitted. In the last observation session, high scores for task climate and low scores for ego were obtained, and they were 83% and 17%, respectively.

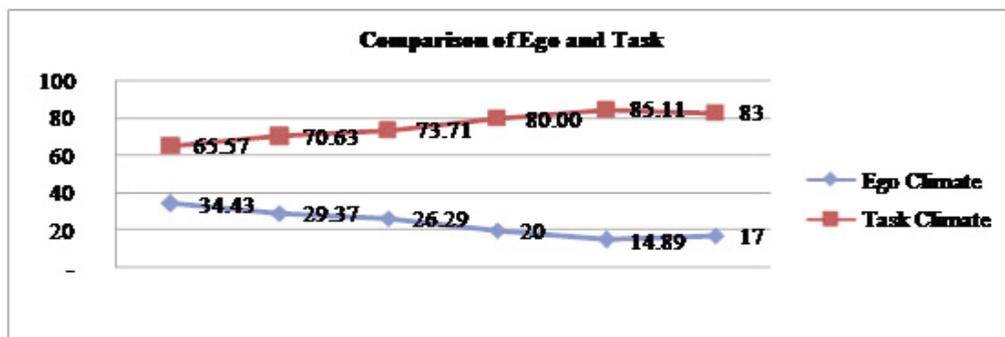


Figure 1. Comparison of Ego and Task.

## Discussion

The purpose of the study was to assess how a basketball coach progresses in the transmission of the task climate during his basketball training sessions, after participating in an educational program. The results demonstrate that as the cycles of supervision in which the TARGET areas were analyzed were being applied, the coach progressively increased the transmission of task climate during training sessions. This datum confirms the results from previous studies (Sousa et al., 2006) where changes have been observed in the behavior of coaches after an intervention in which an individual educational program for football coaches was applied. Therefore, the educational program had a positive effect on the development of the teaching capacities of the coach with the goal of improving the motivational climate during training sessions (Chaliès, Bertone, Flavier & Durand, 2008; Haverback & Perault, 2008). A significant

progression of the task climate in each session was observed, except in the last one where there was a slight decrease, probably due to an important competition that the team had two days later.

Studies such as those by Torregrosa, Sousa, Viladrich, Villamarín and Cruz (2008) demonstrate that the climate promoted by the coach is highly related to the perception that the players have about the coach's behavior. Further, the motivational climate and the communication style of the coaches are very determinant in the fun that the players have as well as their engagement in the sport. In this regard, if our goal is to increase adherence and reduce athletic abandonment, it seems important to educate coaches so that they transmit a task climate during their training sessions.

It can be concluded that with the application of an educational program focused on the coach's actions, the task climate has been improved in the training sessions.

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